

Slide 1 – Title

God's Righteousness and Grace in Christ— the *Divine Exchange*

(A few greetings / opening words first – then **pray...**) **Introduction:**

Today's message is about "identity." If we know what God says is true, and actually believe it... truths such as *knowing we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus*, for instance—then **we can act accordingly.**

Unfortunately, many believers think that following Christ is **more** about "*doing*" more... "*being*" more; having more quiet times; getting into accountability groups, leading *this*, leading *that*, so on, and so on...

It's this wrong kind of thinking that thousands of Christians (including myself at times as well) have no idea that in Christ, we are blessed with **every** spiritual blessing; and that God has **already lavished** upon us all the **riches and glories** of heaven—**exchanging** our dead-to-God spirits with *Christ's Life*.

And sadly, some Christians even think they've fallen *out* of God's will, and that somehow they need to get back *into 'it.'* They think that if they only try harder, give more, pray more, do more, that they'll keep God 'liking' and blessing them...

They may think that they need to constantly wake-up every morning and "*die to self,*" believing that they need to get themselves "*out of the way,*" (like trying to get rid of *who they are* as if they're evil or something)—when in actuality, God has said **no such thing. The truth is, they've already been made 'right'** through Christ—and **have become the *New Self*** through **what Christ had accomplished on the cross.** *In other words...*

The Christian life is *not* a self-improvement program; nor is it a sin-management system of trying to get cleansed, get forgiven, or get 'right,' it's Christ, and His Life in you.

Our Main Scripture Passage for today is:

Ephesians 1:3-12 (NIV) – Slide 2

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

⁴ For he **chose** us in him before the creation of the world to be **holy and blameless** in his sight. In love

⁵ he **predestined** us for **adoption** to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Slide 3

⁶ to the praise of his **glorious grace**, which he has **freely** given us in the One he loves.

⁷ In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

⁸ that he **lavished** on us...

(Ephesians 1:9-10) – *Slide 4*

With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

(Ephesians 1:11-12) – *Slide 5*

¹¹ In him we were also **chosen**, having been **predestined** according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the **purpose of his will**, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the **praise of his glory**.

Slide 6 – Main Outline

Therefore, our Main Outline for this morning is:

We are Blessed, Chosen,
Adopted, Accepted,
Redeemed, and Forgiven.

1. Blessed *Slide 7 – Section Heading*

How are we blessed?

1. We are blessed, **because Christ is in us!**

The Apostle Paul asks the Corinthian believers this question:

Slide 8 **2 Corinthians 13:5b** (ASV 1901) – ⁵ ...Or do you not recognize regarding yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you,...

2. We are blessed, **because we are one Spirit with the Lord?**

Slide 9 **1 Corinthians 6:17** (ESV) – ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes **one spirit with him.**

Slide 10 **(Explanation)** – *Photo of Tea*

The Holy Spirit and our human spirit are united as one. For example, hot tea is a single beverage, but with two **distinct ingredients**. When we brew tea with water, neither the tea nor the water loses their distinct **identity**. But brewed together, the two are mingled together as one.

Our spirit has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:6), who is now in us and is one with our spirit (Rom. 8:16). This is the realization of the Lord, who became the life-giving Spirit through resurrection (2 Cor. 3:17) and who is now with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) as one.

This is truly something **profound**, and yet **so experiential!**

For Example:

Recently I shared at Young Adults “*How to Share the Gospel from the Indwelling Life of Christ*” and explained the differences between just telling people about Christ (*giving information about Him*) **versus** sharing Christ’s Life with them (*by example of expressing His Life*).

Slide 11 – Photo of ice cream

(Give / Describe Example):

Boy or girl eating ice cream... it's the difference between a child going up to one of their friends and letting the other kid have a lick of their ice cream **versus** the child explaining to their friend that the ice cream tastes good.

Slide 12

Psalm 34:8 (ESV)

⁸ Oh, **taste and see** that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

No one comes to Jesus because of *what* we know—it's because we *have tasted* and have experienced the Lord, and have *seen* His goodness.

Example:

Block party on our (the Bellmont's) street (Chelsea Street)...
– describe the **joy**, **freedom**, and **Life** of Jesus seen by those that day!

2. Chosen *Slide 13 – Section Heading*

Slide 14

John 15:16a (ESV)

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and **appointed you** that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,...

1. God chose you to bear fruit—expressing His Life and His Character.

God didn't just save you so that you could go to heaven, be a better person, or have a good life; He didn't come to merely renovate your prison cell—No! ... He came to bust you of it, by taking out of you **your spiritually dead heart** (your dead-to-God spirit) and **exchanging** it with a new heart of flesh (a New Spirit)—expressing His Life, His character and His will, through you.

2. God decided this before creation.

Slide 15 **Ephesians 1:4** (NIV) tells us: – ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love...

3. God also chose you so that you could join Him in His work.

The Bible says, we are **co-labourers** with God:

Slide 16 **1 Corinthians 3:9a** (NIV) – ⁹ For we are **co-workers** in God's service;...



The King James says: – ⁹ For we are **labourers together** with God:...

Slide 17 [And] **Ephesians 2:10** (NLT) says: – ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

3. Adopted *Slide 18 – Section Heading*

Israel was always chosen, but we've been adopted in.

We had no covenant; we were without hope; we were separated from God, we were excluded from Israel.

Slide 19 **Ephesians 2:12-13** (NIV) – ¹² Remember that at that time you were **separate** from Christ, **excluded** from citizenship in Israel and **foreigners** to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.
¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who **once were far away** have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Slide 20 **Ephesians 1:5-6** (NIV) says: – ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—
⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

(Explanation):

Slide 21 **John 1:12** (KJV) – ¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Through adoption, you are legally and fully God's child, having God as your Father. Your status has been elevated through Christ. You are now legally invested with all the **rights, powers** and **privileges of a son or daughter** and heir of the Father—and of a citizen of Heaven.

Therefore...

We are now able to **talk to God** and **relate** to him as a good, good Father, **being led** by the Holy Spirit, **relating to other believers** as members of one family, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. Accepted *Slide 22 – Section Heading*

Your behaviour does not make you more or less acceptable to God.

Performance-based acceptance vs. God's acceptance.

Most people spend their entire lives trying to be accepted. A lot of our behaviours are motivated by a massive need for acceptance. But the truth about you is, you're already accepted by the God who created you!

Slide 23 **1 Corinthians 1:30** (TLB) – ³⁰ For it is **from God alone** that you have your life through Christ Jesus. He showed us God's plan of salvation; **he** was the one who **made us acceptable** to God; he made us pure and holy and gave himself to purchase our salvation.

Therefore...

You didn't earn God's acceptance—God freely gave it to you. He alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. And Jesus is the one who made you acceptable to God. God sent his Son to die for you so that you would be acceptable to him. So, if God has accepted you, why do you need the approval of other people? **Our fear, shame, and rejection GOT EXCHANGED with God's total and complete, full-on and perfect acceptance for all time.**

You are chosen, you are loved, and you are accepted. Let this truth lead you into a joyful, *purpose-filled* life in Christ.

5. Redeemed *Slide 24 – Section Heading*

1. What is Redemption?

- Redemption is the freedom of being alienated from God, being saved from the *dept* of sin—gaining deliverance from spiritual bondage and slavery, **in exchange for Life in Christ**. Most people in the world have no idea that they're enslaved to sin.
- Redemption requires a *payment* to be made for that *dept*. That *payment* was made by Christ, shedding His own blood on the cross. It's His blood that reconciles us to the Father once and for all.

Slide 25 **Romans 5:8-9** (NIV) – ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have **now been justified by his blood**, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

2. Redemption includes justification—being declared righteous and sinless by God's grace.

Slide 26 **Romans 3:24** (ESV) – ²⁴ and [we] are **justified by his grace as a gift**, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus,

3. Through redemption, we gain righteousness.

Slide 27 **2 Corinthians 5:21** (NKJV) – ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might **become the righteousness of God in Him**.

We haven't just been *credited* righteousness, but we've been *imparted* righteousness. In other words...

A **Divine Exchange** has occurred: We have been given the very righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself—making us partakers of His divine nature.

Concerning righteousness...

Slide 28 **Man's way of obtaining righteousness says:**

“More ‘*right*’ behaviour + less ‘*wrong*’ behaviour = Godliness.”

Slide 29 **However, God says:**

“Our righteousness
(which is Christ's righteousness)
+ God's empowerment =
practical Godliness.”

(Man's righteousness vs. righteousness in Christ):

Man's way is an *achieving system* – where “*I*” do the work, out of my *own* self-life resources, living from the outside in...; **versus God's way**, which is a *receiving system* – where the work has been done by God Himself, in us, through the Holy Spirit (Christ's life), from the inside out.

Slide 30 **In other words...**

We are made righteous by the New Birth, *not* by our behaviour.

We need to know that there's **our identity**, and then there's **our actions**.
There's *who* we are, and then there's *Who's* we are—we belonging to Him.

6. Forgiven *Slide 31 – Section Heading*

Slide 32 You are not forgiven because you've stopped sinning—you are forgiven because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

1. **He has made you perfect forever** (not necessarily perfectly behaved).

Slide 33 **Hebrews 10:14** (NIV), **18** (TLB) – ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made **perfect forever** those who are being made holy.



(TLB) – ¹⁸ Now, when sins have **once** been **forever forgiven** and **forgotten**, there is **no** need to offer **more** sacrifices to get rid of them.

Therefore...

You don't have to wake up every day, begging God to forgive you again, and again, and again—It's complete, it is finished, it's done, done, and done. There is no such thing as 'partial forgiveness'

...You and I either have complete, total forgiveness, or we haven't gotten any forgiveness at all.

Conclusion:

Slide 34 So in conclusion, do you know you're the **righteousness of God** in Christ Jesus; **forgiven forever**, **Blessed** in heavenly realms with **every** spiritual blessing in Christ; **Chosen** before the creation of the world to be **holy and blameless** in his sight—loved, **predestined**, **adopted** to sonship; and He has freely **accepted** you in the One he loves.

You've been **redeemed** through the blood of Jesus Christ, **forgiven** of **all** of your sins, in accordance with the riches of God's **grace**—that he has **lavished** upon you.

By His grace:

- You are a son or daughter of the King (Ephesians 1:5)
- You live from fullness-to-fullness because His Life lives in you (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- Because of the finished work of the cross—you experience rivers of abundant grace and life that never runs dry (John 7:38)
- Because of His one-time sacrifice, you're holy, and have been made perfect forever (Hebrews 10:14)
- And He will never let anything separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

This is who he has made you to be... believe in what *He* has said in His Word, and **act accordingly**.

[Pray]