

Romans 3:20-26

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The Lifted Burden

John Bunyan, in his story "Pilgrims Progress", graphically portrayed the point of salvation of young Christian: "Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back."

"He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulder, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do until it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more."

"Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death."

In the footnotes, Bunyan explains the scripture truth of salvation: "Christian had faith; he believed that there was redemption in the blood of Christ, even forgiveness of sins, before he came up to the cross, but now he finds and feels the comfort of it: He has now the joy of faith, the guilt of sins is taken off his conscience, and he is filled with joy and peace in believing."

Some would dismiss Bunyan as a radical puritan; nevertheless, he was faithful, even in prison, to the truth of the gospel message. Unlike many clergy today, Bunyan would not compromise the truth of personal sin and necessity of repentance: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Bunyan would not soften the judgment of Holy God, nor think it distasteful to speak of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

The burden on Christian's back was the weight of sin he felt before a Holy God. Only those who acknowledge their sin and, with the remorse of its burden, turn to Christ in faith for cleansing through His blood, will ever find the peace of salvation. Repentance and trust are, in essence, two aspects of the same decision of faith. Repentance is the heart's turning away from any effort of self by the acceptance of personal spiritual poverty; it is the sorrow of sin and admission of helplessness. Trust is the heart's turning to Christ in belief of His sacrifice on the cross as personal substitute for sin's judgement of death; in belief of His resurrection as victory over death and giver of eternal life.

The great truth of salvation is still sung today: "Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near". Where is your burden?

What is my response:
