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Sin And Human Good

*“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scriptures” 1 Corinthians 15:3*

Intro

There are certain things concerning the gospel that need to be clarified. One of them has to do with the atoning death of Jesus Christ concerning human sin and human good. It is common for Christians to look at the unsaved from the standpoint of sin, while overlooking their human good. And, at the same time, the unsaved look at their good works, while overlooking their sin!

There are many unsaved people out there that lead lives of integrity, morality and good works. There are many non Christians who can put some Christians to shame in the lives they live. The problem is that their good works have mislead many of them and given them a false sense of security about their relationship with God and the future.

Human good refers to the qualities of morality that many unsaved do possess and it refers to the good works that they do; the good and beneficial activities that they occupy themselves with. **Human sin**, or just sin, refers to the bad things that man does.

But what the unsaved fail to see, and tragically what so many Christians are also unaware of, is that when Christ died on the cross he died only for human sin, not human good! When he bore our sins he bore the penalty for our sins. That is, God punished him for every sin that every human has ever committed.

In fact, sin is no longer the issue between man and God. Many preachers mistakenly harp on people's sins in presenting the gospel to them, but sin is no longer the issue. Faith in Christ is the only issue! But there is still the matter of human good. What is there to be done about it?

A. The First Family

When we look at the first family God instructed Adam to offer up a sacrifice to him. This sacrifice was to be a slain lamb which pointed the way to the Lamb of God that would be slain for our sins. There were only two things in view here and they are the sins of Adam and his family, which included all of Adam's race, and the slain lamb to bear our punishment. Nothing is said about human good.

We must bear in mind that Adam's race is capable of not only sin, but also human good. But bear in mind that all of the good that man is capable of doing, and actually does at times, does not compare to the absolute good of a righteous God.

The first family consisted of: Adam, his wife Eve, their firstborn son Cain and then Abel their second son. Now we come down to Cain. When it came time to offer the sacrifice to God, the rest of the family brought the sacrifice that God required, a slain lamb, which was an acknowledgment of their sin and the need for forgiveness. *“And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”* Genesis 4:4

But Cain refused to do so! Instead Cain brought some vegetables that he had raised from the field. *“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.”* Genesis 4:3 When he did this the Lord rejected his offering! *“But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”* Genesis 4:5

His anger, *wroth*, is the word *charah*, which meant to burn with intense anger, but the idea of anger was multiplied in the original, so we can only imagine how livid with rage Cain was over God rejecting his sacrifice. And remember, anger proceeds out of arrogance, so it gives us an indicator of the pride of Cain! The greater the pride, the greater the anger.

So why did Cain offer up vegetables to the Lord and not the sacrifice that God required? It goes back to human sin versus human good. By refusing to offer up the animal sacrifice Cain was saying that he rejected the concept of human sin! He refused to acknowledge the fact that he was a sinner before God. He was also saying that his good works, as symbolized by his offering, were good enough for God to accept!

So the question is, are man's good works good enough for God to accept? This question, and certainly a major issue for all humans on earth, is promptly answered by God himself in person. *“But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.”* **God rejected Cain's offering of good works.** God was saying that man's goodness and man's good works are not at the level for him to accept.

But then we see God trying to persuade Cain to do the right thing by giving him the doctrines on the matter. He didn't tell him that he was wrong and then leave it at that, but went further to try to get through to Cain. *“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”* Genesis 4:7

One of the things that Cain was not aware of was the deceitfulness of sin. **Sin deceives us!** It deceives us into thinking that we're something we're not! *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Hebrews 3:13 Cain didn't think there was anything wrong with him, therefore, in his own mind, there was no reason to require a sacrifice for sin. He thought that he was good enough to be accepted by God in his own person, but he wasn't!

How many people are there like that today? How many people fail or refuse to see themselves in their true light? They think that because they're a good person they don't

need to be saved. That their good works are good enough, but they're not!

Was Cain a sinner like the rest of his family? Yes! Aside from the fact that he had acquired his father's sinful nature, and aside from the fact that God is standing there and telling him he is, there are two things that really stand out. One, is his unbridled fierce rage that he had for the Lord. That should have told him something. And two, there is the matter that he murdered his brother. Pride, anger, hate and murder are certainly evidence of a fallen, sinful nature.

We also want to notice in passing the reaction of pride when one's good works are rejected. The world is full of sweet, polite and really nice people. But when their human good is rejected, when they are brought around to a face to face confrontation with the Word of God over their sinful condition, all that human nicety is **turns to anger**.

B. God's View of our Goodness

God says that, to him, all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* Isaiah 64:6

The word *righteousness* is *tsedeqah* and it refers to a quality or being upright, pure, holy, good and things along that line. With *kol*, *all*, it means to sum up the best that man has, all his righteousnesses, all the good things about him.

Now in the world of men, we are prone to look at things one way. We say, he's a good man, or what an honorable man, or look at all the good things they do in the community, or how they help the poor and so on But in the final judgment it is not our fellow man who will be judging us, but an holy God! So it is not important what we think of ourselves, or what others think of us, **but what this holy God thinks of us!**

How does this holy God view our righteousness and our righteous acts, or good deeds? And the word used here is the word for menstrual rags. It refers to the soiling that takes place during the woman's menstrual period. The comparison is between standing there in a pure, unsoiled, white robe or garment, and standing there with a garment soiled by the cycle of one's period.

So what God is saying is that the best that man has to offer; the collective best of all the good things to be found in the best of a man or a woman, in the eyes of a holy God is like standing there in a garment soiled by menstrual blood!

Now we get down to the issue of Christ dying for our sins. Every place you find this in the old and new testament it is always the same; Christ paid the penalty for our sins. **But there is no place in Scripture that you will find that Christ died for human good!** This becomes a very important point in the final judgment and is brought out very clearly as we go into the book of Revelations.

C. Divine Good Versus Human Good

The difference between the two is that **human good** is that which man, saved or unsaved, can produce out of his flesh nature. Saved and unsaved can be good, moral, philanthropic, give to charities, feed the poor, save the whales and all that. But **divine good** can only come from the new nature, as the believer in Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit, as he or she is doing the will of God. The difference between the two is that the will, the ideas and the power behind it all in divine good proceeds from a new nature, while the other one proceeds out of the flesh nature.

There is a pseudo righteousness, just as there is a pseudo love, a pseudo filling of the Holy Spirit, a pseudo "*holy spirit*" and a pseudo spiritual dynamic. These five are rampant throughout Christianity today. Many Christians are ignorant of the spiritual dynamic found in the new nature and the Holy Spirit and have created an alternate concept. This too is human good motivated by the flesh nature.

The unsaved of America are pushing human good ideas on every aspect of our society. Now there are words you cannot say, political beliefs that you cannot have, cigarette smoking is looked down upon as one of the worse things one can do. In many subdivisions you can't have toys out in the front yard, certain types of grasses have to be planted and hundreds of ridiculous laws people have to obey as human good people seek to create an Utopian society full of Utopian people.

Mankind, like Cain in the beginning, is trying to cover up his sinfulness; he's saying that he is not sinful, as evidenced by all the human good that he does. He has become like the "*white-washed sepulchres*" in the gospels. White on the outside, but full of dead men's bones on the inside. He's like the man who has a house that is full of wood rot, mold and termites, but paints the outside to make people think that it's good.

You say that you would rather live in a society of good people rather than bad ones. I think most of us would too. But remember, that there is a tyranny that comes with human good, as well as the tyranny of bad people. In time human good can take over a nation to the place that it chokes the life and freedom out of it!

One of the problems of human good is that it blinds the unsaved for their need of salvation in Christ. Because they are so good, and do so many good things, they, like Cain, don't see their need of salvation. It also blinds Christians of their need for Bible Doctrine, the doctrines of grace, the true filling of the true Holy spirit, confession of sin biblically, and so many other things pertaining to the true Christian way of life.

We see so much human good manifesting itself in churches today passing itself off as biblical Christianity. Instead of assembling together in a local church for the sole purpose of sitting under the teaching ministry of a man with the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher; we find instead, programs, committee meetings, entertainment, stage productions, the dog and pony show and things that are outright insane! Where did these ideas come from? They came out of the human good of these believers!

D. The Final Judgment

The sins of all mankind, every sin that has been committed, or ever will be committed, was borne by Jesus Christ on the cross. He paid the penalty for **sin**, for man's bad deeds. **But he did not die for human good!**

I imagine there will be many surprised people at the final judgment who will be shocked that their sinful acts will never be brought up! The reason why is that God had already punished his Son as their substitute on the cross. But something will be brought up and that is their good works.

*“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” Revelation 20:12,13*

Sin has been paid for; personal sin is not an issue, so what they are going to be judged by is their works? Are they good enough to get into heaven? The word for *according to* is *kata*, which denotes a norm or standard. But what is that standard by which their good works will be judged? The standard is Jesus Christ! They will have to be as good as Christ is, as righteous as he is, and their good works will have to measure up to the standard of his works of righteousness.

And here's why. The issue is living forever, living with God forever and living with God forever in the place where God lives. And it goes back to the nature of God. If we're going to live forever with God, then we're going to have to possess the same moral quality, if you will, that God possesses.

We would agree that God is good, that he is absolutely good; we call that his righteousness. So, if we're going to live with God, then we're going to have to qualify for that. To qualify then we're going to have to meet a certain standard of righteousness. Now for the believer in Christ this standard has already been met the very moment they believed on Christ as their Savior.

When we believed on Christ God counted (imputation) that faith in Christ as righteousness. *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:5* Faith isn't righteousness, but God counts it as righteousness. And then God justifies, declares us to be righteous, in his heavenly court. *“Therefore being justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1*

This imputation of righteousness and our subsequent declaration of righteousness by God in his heavenly court qualifies us to live in his kingdom of righteousness. God grants to believers in Christ the standard of righteousness that gives them entrance into eternity.

Now we see the picture of the Great White Throne judgment where all will be judged by God. *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”* Revelation 20:11 But what is going on here? What is this judgment all about?

What is going on here is that all those who had not believed on Christ as their Savior in life will be **judged according to their works!** They are not going to be judged for their sins! Their sins were judged by God on the cross and his Son paid the penalty for them – he died for their sins! But their works, their activities will be judged.

You see, God has a record of every single thing that every single person has done in their life, whether good or bad. They have all been recorded in the Books of Works, or literally, in the Scrolls of Works. The name of the person has been entered into them and everything that he or she has done. The question is why?

Remember, it goes back to what we were discussing concerning the matter of being able to live forever with God in his eternal peace. One does not gain entrance into God's kingdom simply because he was a human being and had lived life on this planet. He has to meet a certain standard, a standard of righteousness.

So how is this person supposed to be judged? Well he or she says that they are basically good and have done good things in this life. Fair enough, but let's look at the record. Let's see what the record of their activities have to say about this. The record of their good works on this earth will not only show exactly what they have done, but why. It will even reveal the true motive behind their actions.

So after bringing out every single thing about every single human being, then it goes to the next phase and that is the one of a standard. There has to be a standard by which one's goodness and one's good deeds are judged. And it has to be a standard that is admissible into heaven. The only standard that exists, by which all others are to be judged by, and it's not you or me; it's by the standard of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the only human being to enter into heaven and be accepted by this holy, righteous God. This tells us that **he has met the standard for the quality of righteousness that God requires.** And because he has met God's standard of righteousness, and has been accepted by God, then he becomes the standard by which all others are judged!

What this means that all of these people, who are going to be judged by their works to see if they qualify to enter into God's righteous kingdom, will be compared to the righteous standard of Jesus Christ. They will have to be **as righteous as Jesus Christ** is in every area, in every act, in every word, in every thought. And **no one can compare to Christ's righteousness! He is the Righteous One,** *“Jesus Christ the righteous.”* 1 John 2:1 Every thought, every word, every act, every motive will be carefully scrutinized to see if it's at the level of Christ's righteousness. And every human will fail this evaluation! We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

This takes us down to the next phase of the judgment. They have completely failed to meet the standard that their good works have qualified them to possess a standing of righteousness sufficient to get into heaven, so another book is opened to see if their name is found there; the Lamb's Book of Life. *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”* Revelation 20:12

So there stands the individual before God's court to ascertain if he or she is righteous enough to live forever with God in eternity. The Books of Works are opened to evaluate their good deeds in life. Then their good deeds are compared to the standard of Jesus Christ's righteousness and good deeds. Once this comparison is made then it is evident to all that they fail the test. That is, based upon their good works, they do not possess the quality of righteousness sufficient to enter into God's kingdom.

So the court now goes to another approach and that is to see if their name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. For contained in it are the names of all those who have believed on Christ as their Savior. Having failed to have the quality of righteousness sufficient to satisfy God, based upon their own works, they still have one more option and that is to see if they have righteousness due to faith in Christ.

It is evident from the Word of God that no one will be able to qualify to enter into heaven on the basis of their good deeds. The standard of righteousness that God requires can never be met by man. There is only one man that has ever met that standard and that is the man Christ Jesus! His Book of Life is the record of all those who have believed on him, and it is the record to whom he has imputed righteousness. Therefore it will only these people who will be able to go into heaven. *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”* Revelation 21:27

Now we come down to the tragic part of all this for the unsaved, for those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior; they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was **cast into the lake of fire.**”* Revelation 20:15

Christ died for human sin, but he did not die for human good. If an individual rejects believing on Christ, then he will be judged according to his works. His works will not meet the standard for entrance into heaven. His name will not be found in the Lamb's Book of Life showing that he had been declared to be righteous by God. He subsequently then will be taken and thrown into the Lake of Fire. But one can avoid this tragic end to their existence by trusting Christ as their Lord and Savior. Believe that he died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and was raised from the dead. If you do, God will declare you to be righteous guaranteeing that you will live forevermore.

Pastor Mike

