

Christianity Clarified Volume 57

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[0 : 0 0] Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 1. Changing Sides is Qualitative, Part 7. The term changing sides is coined merely to express what actually happens when someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ.

Many things occur simultaneously at the very point of personal salvation, and the act of changing sides is but one way of expressing it. The most dramatic case of one who did that was none other than Saul of Tarsus.

He so stated it when testifying that he had become a preacher of the faith he earlier persecuted and sought to destroy. That's about as radical as one can get, which is precisely what happens when someone changes sides.

And that's because the sides themselves are radical. Paul expressed that also, addressing the Colossians in chapter 1, when he contrasts coming from the powers of darkness into the kingdom and light of his dear Son.

No doubt about it. Changing sides not only spiritually radicalizes one for the present, but extends the radical aspect into eternity itself in one's new destination.

[1 : 1 5] And when we speak of the change being based not on the amount of righteousness required, but solely on the kind of righteousness required, that is what we mean by quality over quantity.

People seem intent on thinking they can achieve an adequate amount of righteousness that will result in God's acceptance of them. And this is completely contrary to what God requires, because no amount of human righteousness, however great, can satisfy the demands of God in His holiness.

Because the best that fallen man has to offer is a tainted righteousness that is abhorrent to God. But the righteousness that God will accept is that which is consistent with His own character and standard.

Boiled down, this means God, by His very nature, can accept only that which is perfect. Anything less would contaminate His presence. But who among us mortals has that to offer?

Absolutely none of us. And that's the bad news. And it really is bad. So bad, it leaves us alienated from God, as the Scripture says so clearly and frequently, all have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

[2 : 3 3] All are contaminated via our being descendants from our fallen parents. And all are thus alienated from God accordingly. This really is bad news.

And that bad news is what makes the good news good. It's called the Gospel, and it centers upon the only human who ever possessed a righteousness consistent with God's very own character.

It was this one of whom the very voice of God from heaven declared, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, uttered at the baptism of Jesus and again at His transfiguration before Peter, James, and John.

Jesus is described as the sinless Son of God. Christ owned a quality of righteousness, a perfect kind that God could accept.

Is that true of you? If it isn't, guess where that puts you? But the bad news, which is what that is, paves the way for the good news, and thankfully it's next.

[3 : 43] Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 2. Good news cancels bad news. A preacher heard many years ago uttered a statement that really struck a chord as regards reaching people with the Gospel.

And he put it this way, The great difficulty in getting people saved today is we can't get them lost. Hmm. Well, his grammar may have been a little unpolished, but the truth of what he uttered was spot on.

Today's culture is wrapped up in the saying, I'm okay, you're okay, we're all okay. So, what's the problem? What's the problem?

Can anyone honestly glance around or indulge 10 minutes of TV news and ask, what's the problem? Anyone who can has to be in denial.

And as one wag put it, denial is not a river in Egypt. The old preacher was right when noting the difference in today's culture versus that of a generation or two ago.

[4 : 51] Back then, it was generally agreed that we were all less than acceptable to God, and people knew it. An old spiritual told the tale that was undisputed.

Not my mother, not my father, not my sister, nor my brother, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. But today, not so much, because I'm okay and you're okay.

Such a thing as being lost just doesn't cut it anymore. Any attempt to pull these folks out of denial or as brands from the burning is seen as, you're trying to lay a guilt trip on people.

Shame, shame. But apart from people being lost, Jesus Christ is simply out of business. Apart from people's lostness, the gospel has nowhere to go.

The Bible presents the gospel of the grace of God as the divine panacea, the cure, and the only cure for the moral sickness of sin that contaminates and dooms us all outside the refuge of safety.

[6 : 00] And that refuge is the person and work of Jesus Christ. That's God's good news and the only answer to the bad news. Never forget, the good news is good because the bad news is true.

The reality of the bad news necessitates the reality of the good news. And we are so very grateful God was gracious enough to provide it and Jesus Christ was willing to be it.

This sets forth the principle of the quality of righteousness as opposed to the quantity of righteousness. The quality factor means you either have it or you don't. It isn't righteous in a certain amount, but righteousness of a certain kind.

What kind is that? It's perfect. And a perfect righteousness is what we must have for God to accept us. But again, who has that? So how is it fair for God to require and demand something from us that none of us can provide in order for Him to accept us?

What's fair about that? Please give this some careful thought because the case for dealing with all this lies just ahead.

[7 : 15] I think you'll find it enlightening and encouraging. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 3. Righteousness is not quantified.

Not only is the good news qualitative, it also comes with the only built-in basis for assurance of one's salvation. And having assurance that you are saved provides the only rationale for peace and confidence.

Let's look at why it is this way and how it works. As mentioned previously, so long as one regards their salvation and acceptance by God as quantitative, they can never know whether the quantity is sufficient.

By quantity, we mean the extent to which our righteousness is sufficient. We all know our righteousness is not perfect, but is it close enough?

How do you know? How can you know? You can't. And if you are a serious-minded person who takes God seriously, takes heaven and hell seriously, if you don't know whether you've been good enough, prayed enough, given enough, or served enough, then there is no way possible you can know whether your enough is enough.

[8 : 32] You might be just a few points shy. Very few points shy. Too bad. You almost made it.

But your righteousness just wasn't righteous enough. That's the way quantitative righteousness works. It's all about a quantity. A mysterious secret number no one can know is sufficient.

True, there are some people who are so disinterested and uncaring the most they can do is make a joke of the entire issue. But jokesters should beware because the time will come when it will not be funny and no one will be laughing or ridiculing the issue.

They will realize their righteousness, however little or however great, is simply not acceptable to the absolutely holy God before whom they stand.

Lips will quiver and legs will tremble, and for good reason. They didn't make it, and now they know it. Their righteousness, however much it might have been, and however better and more it was than most others, was still not enough.

[9 : 44] How tragic. How utterly demoralizing. And now, as they stand before their maker with their inadequate righteousness, there is no way they can add to it. No bonus points to be added.

No do-overs. No recalculation of the numbers. Maybe something didn't get counted. Maybe God can re-add all your righteousnesses up again. Nope. It was all as correct as God would make it.

Tragedy of tragedies. But God be praised. It is not at all a quantity of righteousness God is looking for, but a quality.

And it is wonderful beyond words. Can't wait to explain it. And we will just ahead. Oh, it is so good.

And it makes all the difference in the world between worrying and sleepless nights and anxiety over whether you've this enough, whether you've that enough, whether you've something else enough.

[10 : 49] Where do you stand? How can you know? This provides the basis for peace, security, and enjoying your salvation. And it's coming.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 4. Righteousness is Qualified. Such an important concept is this. This kind of righteousness that God requires.

And what do you suppose that would be? We have called it a quality of righteousness as opposed to a quantity. That means the kind of righteousness God will accept is not determined by its amount, but by its kind, its quality, not its quantity.

And what quality would it be in order to be acceptable by an infinitely holy, totally righteous God? What do you perceive to be the kind of quality of righteousness God could accept?

Is it not only logical, only consistent that God's standard for acceptance is that which is consistent with Himself? And what would that be? Absolutely holy.

[12 : 00] Absolutely righteous, as He has made it clear repeatedly. Be ye holy, for I am holy. Holiness means separated or apart from.

Separated or apart from what? Sin, unrighteousness, and all it includes. Moral perfection and sinlessness is not only what God requires, it is the only thing God requires.

It is that quality of righteousness earlier described as being consistent with His own being of perfection. And don't think for a moment that God will allow His righteous presence to be corrupted with our pitiful quantity of righteousness that falls miserably short of His requirement.

The prophet Isaiah describes human righteousness, including his own, in chapter 64. And here he declares, Not a pretty picture.

Can you believe for a moment God could be accepting of our righteousness described as filthy rags? How far removed is the filth of that kind of righteousness from the moral perfection and holiness of God?

[13 : 26] Isaiah isn't likening the righteousness of filthy rags to the worst of humanity. He is likening it to the totality of humanity. And it's reinforced everywhere in the Bible, Old and New Testament, as the Apostle Paul thunders in Romans chapter 3, saying, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

It isn't only true of the worst among us, but it includes the best among us. Isaiah not only included himself among sinners with those filthy rags, but the Apostle Paul, whom God used to write one-third of the New Testament, confessed himself to be a chief, one among sinners.

Case closed. Folks, we're sunk. And there's absolutely nothing we can do to clean ourselves up to get beyond the filthy rags and provide the moral, sinless perfection that God requires.

And the only kind He will accept. And it is only when we come to the reality of that that we are a candidate for trading in our filthy rags for a complete change of garments called a robe of righteousness without spot or wrinkle.

And God has one for you. If you're ready for the wardrobe change, your size is on God's rack. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 5, Qualified Righteousness Provided, Part 1.

[14 : 54] It was a very legitimate, even predictable question that was posed earlier. How is it fair for God to require a quality of righteousness from us poor, flawed humans that we cannot possibly provide?

How is that fair? Good question. God obviously thought so Himself. And so much did God agree that it wouldn't be fair. He went to an incredible length to address that very issue.

And here is what God did. He Himself provided what He Himself required from us. That's it.

He not only required the quality of a perfect righteousness, but He went to the extreme of providing it for us and offers it to us as a free gift. That free gift is the very righteousness found only in the person of His Son, Jesus the Messiah.

He is the one whom the Father voiced from heaven at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And why was God well pleased with His Son?

[16 : 04] It was because Jesus was of the same character and essence of Himself. There was a necessary compatibility Jesus possessed as the sinless Son of God, enabling Him to say in John chapter 14, I and my Father are one, and he that has seen me has seen the Father.

The Son is of the same essence, character, nature, and makeup of His Father. That is what enabled Jesus to do what He did. It was because He possessed the unique credentials that made Him alone eligible to provide through His quality of righteousness the redemptive payment for the sins of humanity.

Listen to how God inspired the Apostle Paul to express it in his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 5 and verse 19. Listen to this. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

And again in verse 21, For God has made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And those last two words convey so very much. In Him. They are the way out of the filthy rags of human righteousness spoken of earlier by Isaiah in chapter 64 into the very quality of righteousness that God will accept.

[17 : 37] And those two words, in Him. In Him. But what does that mean? I am not in Christ. I am in me.

How can I or anyone else be in Him? That is, in Christ and become the righteousness of God in Him. Is that possible? It isn't only possible, it is required.

And it is the only way we can obtain a quality of righteousness that God can and will accept. And in addition, it's the only kind of righteousness that can possibly provide any assurance, confidence, or peace.

All priceless spiritual realities God wants you to enjoy. And more about this provision is upcoming. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 6.

Qualified Righteousness Provided, Part 2. 1 Corinthians 15 so clearly reveals God's gracious provision for our salvation, despite the fact that we are all morally and spiritually clothed in those filthy rags of which Isaiah spoke in chapter 64.

[18 : 50] It's bad news for the entirety of the human race, in desperate need for relief and redemption from the curse of sin affecting us all. And against that backdrop, this amazing, gracious truth is found as inspired by the Apostle Paul.

Listen, and be cheered by the message. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Nothing so wonderfully recounts the great length to which God and Christ went to make a perfect quality of righteousness available to us. And it's all about substitution.

Christ died in our place as the substitute for the entire human race. That removed the barrier of sin that stood between fallen humanity and God.

And in doing so, God could and did fling open the gates of heaven making salvation available to all who appeal to Him on the basis of the finished work of Christ.

[19 : 56] In the death of Christ, He made a quality of salvation that is as perfect as Christ Himself available to us poor lost sinners. This concept, when presented from Scripture as was just provided from 1 Corinthians 15, generates predictable questions from those who are seriously seeking for answers.

and chiefest among them are these. First, for whom was Christ's death applicable? Two, how could Christ as one person possibly die as a substitute for the entire world of billions of humans?

Three, why should God provide a salvation and why was Christ willing to provide it? And five, what is the human response to it all supposed to be?

Each of these will be briefly explored. And first, the question, for whom was this substitutionary death of Christ applicable? Answer, it was applicable for all who were under condemnation due to Adam's transgression.

The scope of reconciliation achieved by Christ's substitutionary death was equal to the scope of condemnation achieved by Adam's sin. The substitutionary death of Christ for sin did not ultimately result in all humans being saved, yet it did result in all humans being savable, so that no matter how grievous one's sins might be, he was not beyond the grace of God to save.

[21 : 27] And to suggest that man's sins could be so great as to be beyond God's ability to save would require the sacrificial death of Christ to have been inadequate. Such is an abhorrent thought and disrespectful of the scope and adequacy and efficacy of the Son of God.

But be reminded, because Christ's death was for all of humanity, it was so only by way of provision. The appropriation of that provision by humans involves one's response to that provision, and that will be dealt with shortly.

In the interim, our next segment addresses question number two. How could Christ as one person possibly accomplish redemption for billions? That's next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 7, Qualified Righteousness Provided, Part 3.

It is a logical and understandable question. How could Jesus Christ, being one person, possibly make the payment of the sin debt for the untold billions of people who have lived and even yet to be born?

As a new Christian of many years ago, like 1957, I was intrigued and perplexed by the claim Christ died for the sins of the world. I since discovered the answer to be found in the principle of proportionate or relative value, and stated simply, it is this, the inherent value of the person of Jesus Christ being deity, eternal in his being and creator in his office, as opposed to that of humans, not being eternal and not being creator, but creature.

[23 : 04] What is the difference? Well, the difference is incalculable. The difference is between finite and infinite, between the thing made and the maker which made it.

A crude but easily grasped analogy compares the relative inherent value of the world's population of ants, yes, you heard me, ants, A-N-T-S, ants, to that of one human being.

Wherein is the greater value? While the difference separating man from ants is great, the distance separating God from man is greater. Jesus Christ was able to affect and atone fully for the sins of all humanity of all time based solely on the identity of his eternal personage.

Question three asks for the motive behind God's giving of his son and his son's willingness to be given. The scripture leaves no doubt as to the motivation of God the Father and his son sharing and prompting them to design and execute the most important and far-reaching transaction in all the universe.

Romans 5.8 expresses it as well as any of the multitude of other references supporting it. It states thusly, God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

[24 : 28] And who could overlook John 3.16 that many have memorized how that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And even that is not quantitative but qualitative. And what do we mean? That little word so in the English as in God so loved the world does not at all convey an amount of love that could increase or decrease in intensity.

The Greek original uses the word *hutos* which clearly means a kind of love not a quantity. It means God's love was of this sort or this kind rather than this much because this much means it could increase or decrease and is quantified.

This kind means it is of a quality not subject to increase or decrease but with a fixed qualitative kind of love not subject to change. That is the kind of love with which God loved his fallen humanity.

Indeed it is amazing beyond comprehension. The hymn writer William R. Newell wrote Oh the love of God that drew salvation's plan.

[25 : 41] Oh the grace that brought it down to man. Oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. Such was the motive of both Father and Son in securing our redemption and we are ever so grateful.

Are you? Christianity clarified volume 57 track 8 Responding to Righteousness Provided part 1 And now question 4 surfaces as being among those most likely to be asked by listeners.

It is the issue of our response toward the qualified righteousness God has provided through his son Jesus the Messiah. And there are of course but two responses possible.

They are rejection or acceptance. Rejection is mentioned first because it often is the response upon hearing the gospel the first time. Most who later responded with acceptance admitted their first response upon hearing the gospel was to reject it.

And there are various reasons for that but it is quite customary. Sometimes just the newness of it having never before heard it so that it really personally involves the one hearing it is enough to initially reject it.

[26 : 58] But once they heard it the hound of heaven begins his work. The Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and reveals our guilt very often begins to work on them and this is referred to as being under conviction.

The gospel they heard about their sin and Christ loving them so as to die for them begins to work on them. This is not only a good thing but a blessed thing.

Those having heard the gospel and eventually embracing it will have all eternity to be thankful they did. Well there they are the two and only two responses people can have regarding the gospel and Christ dying for their sin.

But is there not a third? What if I can't bring myself to accept it but neither am I willing to reject it? I prefer to occupy the middle ground as a neutral neither accepting or rejecting.

But my dear friend your reluctance and refusal to come to grips with God's love for you and Christ's death on your behalf please understand there is no middle ground.

[28 : 12] Your position before God is already one that is outside of Christ merely because you are not in Christ. Your current mode and status is already that of non-acceptance which is rejection.

Neutrality is non-existent. Jesus knew whereof he spoke when in Matthew chapter 12 he uttered the words he who is not with me is against me.

Please understand we all began this thing called life with a sin nature all of us it's part of our DNA. Early on we were automatically in a rejection mode.

the gospel caused us out of that into a positive mode of acceptance forgiveness and eternal life through our believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. In Revelation chapter 3 Jesus uses an analogy of a door separating a person from himself.

He says he stands at the door and knocks and if you will open the door he will come in and be the eternal part of your life with a fulfillment you never imagined possible.

[29 : 21] We can surrender our rejection and embrace him with our acceptance. Oh by the way it's also called changing sides.

Christianity Clarified Volume 57 Track 9 Responding to Provided Righteousness Part 2 When anything is provided and offered to us a decision inevitably follows no matter what the thing provided might be.

We may accept it or we may reject it. It is no different with the gracious gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. He purchased our salvation by dying and paying the full penalty of our sin and then in the most gracious act that still defies our comprehension he offers to us the forgiveness of sin and the resurrected life he paid for.

It did come with a price had to be paid and he paid it Jesus paid it all. That made it available to be offered to us as a free gift just as if it had a stamp on it marked paid in full.

What do we have to do in order to have it? Well what choice do you have when anyone offers you a gift of anything? Immediately a decision is necessary.

[30 : 48] With your will your decider you must make a choice to accept the gift or reject it. If you accept it you take it to yourself.

If you reject it you have decided not to accept it. But you will you will make a decision because even not deciding is a decision and a negative one at that.

God has given to each of us a wonderful and powerful capability. It's called human volition another word for our will. It enables us to make choices about a whole host of things that confront us every day.

And it is the use of our will and the choices we make with it that becomes the basis for God's evaluation of the decisions we made with the free moral will he gave us.

There is a thing called accountability or God's final time of judgment and for all who are not in Christ their day of judgment is depicted in Revelation chapter 20 the last book in the Bible and the sobering words are and I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away 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.

[32 : 22] This scene described in Revelation 20 is so sad and so terrible we are told in Hebrews chapter 10 it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Indeed it is so terrible that Jesus died for our sins so that we who are in Christ would never face God in that scene of judgment.

Jesus took our judgment for us but those rejecting Jesus will be left to face God's judgment on their own. Nothing and I mean nothing is as serious as this.

Where are you right now? In Christ or outside of Christ you can change sides. Actually doing it is next.

Christianity Clarified Volume 57 Track 10 Responding to Righteousness Provided Part 3 So this business of changing sides how exactly does one go about that?

[33 : 27] Well here is how you do it. With your will you use the same will you used when you decided to marry and expressed your will at the wedding altar.

It is the same will you used when you decided to buy a car or choose from a menu what you wanted to order for dinner. It is not some different special or mysterious will that you use when you respond to God in accepting Christ as your personal Savior.

You use the same and only will you have, the one God gave you. With it and of your will if you agree you concur that you are just like all the rest of us.

You are a sinner outside of Christ who wants to be in Christ and receive his forgiveness, his life and so much more he has to give for you. To change sides you must admit you are now on the wrong side.

Just like Saul of Tarsus had to admit he was on the wrong side too. before he received Christ as his Savior and became Paul the Apostle. He did it with his will.

[34 : 40] Despite the fact that Saul was a very religious man fully committed to Judaism, he came to admit religion was no substitute for being in Christ. Recall if you will that at the time of the Damascus Road experience, Saul was not merely outside of Christ, he was vehemently anti-Christ.

But when he had to admit he had been wrong, not only about Christ but about himself as well, he was ready to change sides. Saul was not the only beneficiary of that change.

The world benefited in that million cents have changed sides as well and have come over to Christ and his salvation. What about you? Passing from spiritual death to spiritual life, receiving forgiveness of sin and the promise of assurance of eternal life awaits your use of your will, your decider, the act from which you will have all eternity to enjoy in the presence of the one who loved you and gave himself for you.

You can use your will to make this prayer your prayer, provided it honestly represents your decision and it's quite simple. Dear God, there are many things about all this I don't understand, but I do know I am as everyone else a flawed and sinful being.

I admit my sin and I want to thank you for giving your son for my sin and thank Jesus for being willing to be given. I want to turn my life over to you as the rightful owner.

[36 : 18] Thank you for the undeserved salvation. I now look to you for the power and wisdom to lead the new life you have provided for me.

Thank you for all you have done and will do on my behalf. And my dear friend, if that was a prayer you agree with, God will be delighted for your decision.

After all, that's why he and Jesus did what they did. welcome to the family of others who have also changed sides.

Christianity Clarified, volume 57, track 11. Changing sides changes everything, part 1. For you who have made the monumental decision of changing sides, first of all, welcome to the family of God and into the spiritual body of Christ.

You have made the most important decision of your entire life, for which you will be grateful on into eternity. Your decision to respond to the righteousness of God in Christ, you may be sure, has been duly noted and recorded in heaven.

[37 : 28] So many things are now true of you that were not true before you made that decision. In fact, it has been calculated there are over 30 things, all new, that happened or were applied to you at the very point of your changing sides when you believed on Christ as your Savior and Lord.

A complete list of these, with Bible verses that establish them, will be sent to any requesting them. Of course, they are free of charge, no strings attached. Before the immediate, there will be a brief presentation of those that are more basic and necessary for one who has just changed sides to understand.

And here is the first one. It regards your official, permanent standing before God now that you are in Christ. It is different from your temporary state in which you continue to live in this world.

Your permanent and official standing with God is dependent entirely upon what Jesus Christ did for you. Your temporary state in which you continue to live is dependent upon you and the choices you make as a believer in Christ.

The first is permanent and unchangeable because it is fixed on Christ. The second is temporary and subject to change. The change comes as a result of your spiritual growth, development, and maturity that you attain as a believer in Christ.

[38 : 52] And it is critical you understand these differences. Your permanent state with God is such because of your status in Christ. Your temporary status is subject to growth and development as you mature spiritually in Him.

You cannot grow or change in your position because it depends solely on who you are in Christ and it is fixed and fixed for eternity.

But your temporary existence as a believer today is very much subject to change as you grow and develop in your faith. Let's begin with your official status or standing before God as a new Christian who just changed sides.

As hard as it may be for you to believe this, it is true of all who have changed sides because God says it is. And here is what He says concerning your righteousness in His sight.

It's found in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 21 where we are told that God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we in union with Him might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

[40 : 07] How righteous is that? It's a perfect righteousness and it is your new position or standing with God. You knew this thing is called good news, didn't you?

Well, this is just a part of it with more to come just ahead. And it is for all who have changed sides. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 12, Changing Sides Changes Everything, Part 2.

God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us so that we might possess the very righteousness of Christ. As a result, our new status with God is one that is as righteous as Christ Himself.

This is true of all who have changed sides and accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. And right now some of you are thinking, are you serious?

I am not even close to being as righteous as Christ. Jesus had the quality of righteousness that is perfect. I am far from perfect. There is nothing perfect about my righteousness, even though I change sides.

[41 : 17] I'm not perfect. Well now, you'll just have to take that up with God because He says you are. He does? But how can that be?

I know what I am, and God knows me even better. So there is no way God can look at me and call me perfect. But He does. How could He do that?

He does that because Jesus is perfect and you are in Him. That means the moral perfection of Jesus has been applied to you, and that became your new official standing before God.

This is not subject to change. It cannot increase or decrease. It is as fixed as Jesus is before His Father, and your being in Christ means you share His righteousness so that God accepts His Son, He also accepts you on the same basis.

Jesus paid for your sin, and He gave you as a gift the very righteousness He bought and paid for by dying for your sin on that cross. Don't you see it?

[42 : 26] This is why it's called good news. Of course it sounds too good to be true. But the good news is, it is true. God made Jesus to be sin in our place.

He then accepted the payment Jesus was willing to make for the sin of the world. When someone changes sides and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, God places that payment for sin that Jesus made to the account of all who are in Christ.

That means His righteousness becomes your righteousness. His life becomes your eternal life. It means positionally, judicially, legally, in the eyes of God, all who have changed sides are viewed by God as having been on that cross, dying with Jesus, then buried with Jesus, then raised with Jesus, then ascended to heaven with Jesus.

This is all involved from being in Christ. And this is just a part of what this means. It's even more than that. Possessing the very righteousness of Christ is, in fact, the only righteousness God can or will accept.

And being in Christ, all this involves so much more. And to call this good news is actually quite an understatement, is it not?

[43 : 53] Think of it. The very righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to your account simply on the basis of your believing in Him. You need more?

It's next, upcoming. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 13, Changing Sides Changes Everything, Part 3. The difference between our official position in Christ and our present performance as a Christian is like night and day.

This is because our official position is perfect, while our present performance is far from it. But the one that counts with God and for eternity is not determined by our performance, but by our official position.

And the official position for all who have changed sides is that of being in Christ. This means the very righteousness Christ possesses has been placed to our account, not on the basis of our worthiness, but on the worthiness of Christ.

We can all envision a man who has been charged with violating the law. He's ordered before the judge, and the day of his appearance has come. The judge reads the charges brought against him and then asks, How do you plead?

[45 : 12] Guilty or not guilty? The man hangs his head and mutters, Guilty, Your Honor. I was wrong in what I did, and I admit it.

The judge responds with, Based upon your acknowledgement of guilt, the law stipulates you to be fined \$1,000 or 60 days in jail. Which will it be?

The man replies, Well, Your Honor, I'm flat broke and can't pay the fine. I'll just have to go to jail to pay my debt to society. At that, the judge steps down from his bench, removes his robe, walks over to the bailiff of the court, and peels off ten \$100 bills from his own pocket, turning then to the defendant the judge announces, Your fine has been paid.

You are free to go. That may well be far-fetched here on earth among us mortals, but you need to know that is exactly what has happened in the law court of God's heaven.

But it was not money that secured our freedom and allowed God to dismiss the charges against us. It was precisely as the Apostle Peter stated in his first letter, chapter 1, where he says, You know, you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish.

[46 : 44] Picture, if you will, yourself in the court of God when charges are brought against you. The finding is, as it is with us all, guilty and deserving of the severest of punishment.

But Jesus took our penalty, and we are set free. Christ died for our sin, and when you change sides, his paid penalty was put to your account.

But wait. Jesus didn't deserve to die, and you don't deserve to go free. Precisely.

You are starting to get the picture. Grace is amazing, isn't it? And you haven't seen anything yet.

The grace of God. My, oh my. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 14. Changing Sides Changes Everything, Part 4.

[47 : 50] Changing sides and the reality of it are quite overwhelming. If you have done that, you are already beginning to experience unexplainable changes occurring in your own mind.

Don't be surprised if you are puzzled at what is taking place in your very being. Something is stirring in you you do not understand. That is natural for anyone who has just changed sides.

No one can have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and never be the same. Jesus himself described it as being born again. What you are experiencing right now is standard for all who have changed sides.

This is just the beginning. For those who have not changed sides, either because you are unaware of what it is all about, or for any who have heard the gospel but are unwilling to change sides, you have no clue as to what we are even talking about.

To you, this may well all be just so much religious gobbledygook, as in, what in the world is this man talking about? Well, I'm sorry that I can't explain it so you could understand it, because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are a foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned or understood.

[49 : 19] The natural man, or woman, is the one who is just as they were born, as opposed to one who has been born again and has changed sides.

They, as a result, are no longer a natural person, but have actually connected with the supernatural. Oh, they look the same, but they are not the same inwardly.

Their human spirit, which is their real identity, has undergone a spiritual process called regeneration. It is a passing from spiritual death and separation from God into spiritual life and being placed in Christ with God.

I know it sounds incredibly otherworldly, because it is. Nothing supernatural belongs to this world.

This world knows only what we call the natural. No one can move into the supernatural apart from connecting with the supernatural creator and redeemer, and that's what happened, among many other things, when and if you change sides.

[50 : 35] I, your speaker, changed sides in 1956, and I am the first to confess there remains much about what actually happened to me and in me that I simply do not understand to this day.

On the other hand, I am but a finite human, not beginning to grasp the infinite God and his ways. But what little I do understand causes a deep surge of gratitude to well up in me every time I think on the little I do know.

You, who have also changed sides, can identify, or you are beginning to identify, really something, isn't it?

Isn't he? Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 15, Changing Sides and Guilt Dr. Carl Menninger, founder of the famous Menninger Clinic in Kansas, was heard to say the following in a public lecture he was delivering several years ago.

If guilt and fear could be eliminated, we could empty a large percentage of the patients in our mental institutions. Now that sentiment from Dr. Menninger sounds vaguely familiar to that of our earliest parents named Adam and Eve.

[52 : 01] They told God, who had to search them out, that they hid from him because they were naked. Here appeared the first case ever of guilt and fear.

The guilt came from having disobeyed the Creator, and the fear came from what the consequences of that would be. The consequences turned out to be precisely what God said they would be when He warned them not to eat of a particular tree.

The human race has been and is now struggling with guilt and fear and all the related negatives that attend them. There is perhaps no greater consequence that locks us into guilt and its misery as that of denial.

That's the big item that prevents guilt from being dealt with properly. And what would that entail? It entails denying denial and coming up to grips with the reality that the greatest reason people have guilt feelings is because they are guilty.

Denying one's guilt only prolongs and intensifies it. The only true remedy is to get honest with yourself, for starters. Admittedly, that can be hard to do.

[53 : 23] But it is critical, or you can forget about ever getting rid of guilt. While it's true, some sensitive souls may have feelings of guilt that are not based in reality at all.

It's called false guilt that has no real justification for guilt behind it. But even though their guilt feelings are not valid, they still tend to produce the same anxiety and unease as real and justified feelings of guilt.

Still, the only true remedy begins with taking responsibility and admitting your guilt is the result of something you said or did that was wrong. This is a step that is so critical, yet one most are reluctant to take, so they remain a captive of their guilt.

But it's only in admitting it that you can begin to deal with it. And when you do, then the remedy of God's forgiveness can be applied, but not until it is admitted.

David the shepherd boy who became the king had a heavy dose of guilt he carried. Adultery and murder are about as heavy as guilt can get. Psalm 51 records his taking responsibility in admitting, I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me and deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God.

[54 : 48] Forgiveness is not available unless admission and confession precedes it. Then the release from guilt by the infusion of forgiveness is available.

And how extensive it is, is next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 16, Changing Sides and Forgiveness Forgiveness has the sweetest fragrance known to man.

The release from guilt is an enormous burden lifted from our being. But it has to begin with the admission of wrongdoing. In the case of Changing Sides, it is the frank admitting to God that we know we are what the Bible says we are.

We personally are included in the all of Romans 3.23 that says, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That is nothing more than facing reality.

And God is a God of reality, not fantasy. He absolutely loves to hear sinners admit and confess their sin to Him because then He can do something else He loves. He can forgive.

[55 : 56] God's forgiveness is always available. But until confession and admission of sin are in place, forgiveness has nowhere to go. Forgiveness cannot function without something to forgive.

Our applying to God for this forgiveness by admitting our sin is simply stepping into reality. It is nothing more than trafficking in truth. And God is very high on truth.

Little wonder Jesus said in John chapter 8, And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And we ask, free from what?

Free from sin and guilt and the consequences. What else is there to be freed of that really matters? Let's emphasize this. We are simply talking about truth.

Truth is that which corresponds to reality. God loves truth and reality, and He traffics in nothing else. When we get real about our sin, God gets real about our forgiveness.

[57 : 00] Do you realize that God wants you to be free and enjoy your forgiveness even more than you do? And do you understand why that is? It's because that's why Jesus died on that cross.

It was to set you free from sin by paying its penalty in your place. Jesus, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for you and me, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him or through Him.

And, dear friend, if that doesn't overwhelm you, you just don't get it. Because if you do get it, it will get you, and you will never, ever be the same.

Colossians chapter 2 contains a truth inspired by God and written by the Apostle Paul, telling the Colossian recipients of this letter, Did you get that?

God in Christ has forgiven you all trespasses, you who have changed sides. That is your official standing or status before God, all trespasses forgiven.

[58 : 11] Think of fully, freely, forgiven forever. Does this mean God's forgiveness extends to sins I haven't yet even committed?

Of course! Be reminded, when Jesus died for your sins, they were all future. Now, exactly, how do we appropriate that fully, freely, forgiven forever provision?

We shall see just ahead. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 17. Appropriating God's Forgiveness, Part 1.

If it is true that God wants to forgive us even more than we want forgiven, then how do we appropriate that? Because we truly do want His forgiveness, don't we? It is appropriated the only way it can be.

It is by faith. And biblical faith is not some nebulous, mysterious, warm, fuzzy kind of feeling. Neither is faith merely thinking positively or trying to muster up your belief that is contrary to the evidence.

[59 : 19] Faith is synonymous with the word believe. We appropriate God's forgiveness by believing we are forgiven simply because God says we are. That is, of course, assuming you have met the qualification of admitting your sin and have placed your trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, who died for your sin.

You did that as an act of your will. If you have not done that, forgiveness is not available to you. That's because you have to give God's forgiveness something to be applied to.

But not having admitted your sin and wanting to turn from it, God sees nothing in you to which His forgiveness can be applied. Please understand the way this works and doesn't work.

Forgiveness is not yours if you are able to believe it, otherwise it isn't. But forgiveness is yours if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ for your sin, whether you believe it or not.

This is because God's extending His grace and forgiveness to you is an accomplished reality regardless. Then the question arises, If God has forgiven you, why would you not believe it?

[60 : 31] The answer is, Well, say you, I don't feel forgiven. But if God has truly forgiven me, why would I not feel forgiven? And don't you have to feel forgiven in order to have been forgiven?

No, not at all. This is because we are forgiven and justified by faith in Jesus Christ as an act of our will, not on the basis of our feelings. Our feelings are the result of our personal emotional wiring and chemistry.

Some of us tend to feel things more quickly and frequently than others. That's just the difference in people. And as valuable as our emotions are, and as legitimately different as they are from others, they are not the basis for the reality of our forgiveness.

Only the Word of God and what it declares is sufficient for a task like that. Please hear the Word as stated in Romans chapter 5. Immediately following the truth that Christ was raised from the dead after having died for our sins, we read, Did you get that?

Because we have acknowledged our sin and put our trust in Christ as our Savior and substitute, God says He declares us to be righteous or justified before Him simply on the basis of having believed.

[62 : 00] And we believe it because God says so, whether or not we feel it. The question is, Is God worthy of being believed?

Does He have more credibility than our feelings? He is surely to be trusted solely on the Word He has given. More about this is next.

Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 18, Appropriating God's Forgiveness, Part 2. It is a big item. Really huge. It is called in Scripture, Justification by Faith.

And more than any other issue, This doctrine was at the very core of the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther. The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant faith revived under Luther both believed in salvation by grace, and still do.

The difference was, and is, How is God's grace administered to the individual? According to Rome, it is through the sacraments, including water baptism for babies, washing away the original sin in which the baby was born, the confirmation through which one is instructed in doctrine, then the receiving of Holy Communion, by which one receives Christ physically by mouth, through the bread by the priest, confession to a priest followed by penance, whereby the priest tells you what your penalty would be to atone for the sins you confess, and then the absolution also granted to you by the priest.

[63 : 36] Hence, justification or salvation was derived through the sacraments provided by the Church. These contribute to the individual becoming justified or declared righteous before God.

No one is in position to provide and administer the holy sacraments, except the Church through the priest. Hence, there is no salvation apart from the Church, because it alone is the caretaker and provider of the sacraments.

Contrary to this, the bombshell that stunned Martin Luther was his discovery that justification of the sinner, which declared one to be righteous before God, is simply on the basis of faith, that is, by believing only, apart from any involvement of the Catholic Church or any other Church, making personal salvation the prerogative of each individual, apart from any and all sacraments.

How, then, did one receive salvation and forgiveness from God? According to the Scriptures, simply by faith, that is, solely on the basis of the individual believing as an act of the will.

The Latin expressed it as sola fide, or faith alone. And it was Romans 1.17 that struck Luther like a theological thunderbolt.

[65 : 00] The just shall live by faith. Actually, the Apostle Paul was quoting a passage from the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk. And here there are multiple questions. The just shall live by faith.

First, who are the just? Well, they are obviously those who are justified or declared to be righteous by God. But how did they get that way? On what basis?

It was by faith. That is, the just shall live by faith. And it must surely mean spiritual life, not physical life. Physical life is experienced by everyone who is simply alive, even atheists.

The context establishes it is spiritual life or connection with God that is clearly in mind here. And how a person becomes spiritually alive toward God is precisely what the Bible tells us.

And it is just ahead. More coming. It is simpler and yet even more profound and grand. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Tracks 19, Appropriating God's Forgiveness, Part 3.

[66 : 08] A definitive passage relating to the subject at hand, Appropriating God's Forgiveness, is found in Romans chapters 3 through 5. They spell out the Apostle Paul's inspired declaration of The just shall live by faith so clearly.

Please read them. Romans chapters 3 through 5 in particular. Added to that is the passage all should commit to memory, whether Protestant or Catholic.

It's Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 through 10. And here is what the Spirit of God inspired St. Paul to write to those who formerly were pagans worshiping multiple false gods.

Said he, For by grace you have been saved through faith. And that salvation is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Saved by grace refers to our eternal salvation.

- [67 : 12] Grace is the platform, the motivation behind it all, and it is the undeserved favor of God. This favor, coupled with undeserved love, mentioned in verse 4, stating, God who is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, these two attributes of God, his love and his grace, were the twin pillars of what motivated God and his son Jesus to do what they did to make the salvation of us undeserving sinners possible.

It was all about that cross and Christ who knew no sin being made sin for us. That was how God demonstrated his incredible love for us.

His love and his grace, shared by and provided through his son. So we are told it was love and grace as the basis for it all.

But what then was the vehicle, the pipeline? That is, how did God's love and grace get appropriated or received by man? The apostle tells us it is by grace through faith or through believing.

That is justification by faith or becoming righteous before God on the basis of believing. Just believing? Well, anybody can do that.

- [68 : 39] Precisely. That's why it's called good news. There are no religious hoops through which you must jump. Nothing you need join, no amount of money you must give or pledge.

You merely believe in, place your trust in Jesus Christ to be saved. But why should you do that? Because you, like all the rest of us, are a sinner. Unclean morally and spiritually before God.

And you probably know it. If you didn't, you've been told now. And Jesus, who died to pay for your sin, is not merely your hope of salvation.

He is your only hope, because God says so. He was provided by grace, and he is received by your believing on him as your substitute for sin.

By grace, we are saved through faith, believing on him. And if you have done that, you are justified by faith. If not, you aren't. But you may.

- [69 : 39] And decision time for you is up next. Christianity Clarified, Volume 57, Track 20 Your Greatest Decision Ever Your appropriation of God's forgiveness made available to you is indeed the greatest decision you could ever make.

And it is so for at least two reasons. Number one, it is great because it involves he who is greatest of all and what he did for you. Nothing in the universe or of all time exceeds what God did through his Son when he provided him to be your substitute.

And in tandem with that, Christ's willingness to be made sin for us out of love for us and obedience to his Father, this all simply surpasses any transaction one could ever contemplate.

And secondly, it is great because it not only reconciles you to God by removing the sin barrier against you, but it fits you for heaven itself to enjoy the presence of God throughout eternity.

There you have it. If you have it. All through life we are confronted with decisions to make, large and small, important and unimportant.

- [70 : 56] But this is the one beyond which there is none greater. God has given you a mind enabling you to receive and process information, then to reach a decision as to what you will do about that information.

And what you will do involves volition, the will he also granted you. With it, you make your decision about the information, which was, God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Having heard the information, you process it. You mentally weigh it. Is it true or not true? If you deem it to be untrue, you can't be blamed for rejecting what you do not believe to be true.

But if it is true, it would be your greatest folly to disregard or to reject it. There are eternal consequences. All of the Bible attests to the accuracy and truthfulness of the account of Jesus Christ, who he is, why he came, what he did, for whom he did it, and why it matters so much, even into eternity.

And you may simply respond by telling God you accept it because he says it is true, and that is good enough for you. You can simply tell God you accept the gift of forgiveness purchased for you by his Son Jesus, and that you here and now wish to place your trust, your confidence, your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

[72 : 37] And you will be justified by faith, that is, by believing, that is, declared by God to be accepted by him because you are now in Christ.

Now, you have succeeded in changing sides. Now, you are forgiven all trespasses. Now, you become a child of God.

Now, you have a new destiny. Now, you have passed from death unto life. Now, you may rejoice with the millions before who have done the same.

Now, you are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Now, you have been born again. Now, you have eternal life. All of this and much more is the portion of all who have made this decision.

May God enlighten you more and more day by day as to all he has done on your behalf. You have appropriated God's salvation, being justified by faith.

[73 : 33] Amen and amen. Christianity Clarified, volume 57, track 21. A preview of upcoming volume 58. Because it has been some time since Christianity Clarified has dealt with the issue of evangelism and personal salvation, it was deemed necessary to devote this 57th volume to it.

Our prayer and intent is that many who have heard the content on radio, electronically online, or through a personal compact disc, have as a result seen the need to change sides and has in fact done so.

You will have all eternity to be so grateful that you did. Thank you for being a part of our audience through whatever the medium.

For our upcoming volume 58, Christianity Clarified returns to the subject matter before we took this detour to provide the concluding volume 57.

Consequently, volume 58 will engage the efforts of the Apostle Paul to persuade Israel of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

[74 : 46] And he will continue to have dramatic success among Gentiles, for which we today are grateful. Thank you so much for being a part of our listening audience.

This is Pastor Marv and the good folks at Grace Bible Church. We wish you God's blessing and good listening for the upcoming volume 58.