

2017 September - October #59

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“Is the Protestant Reformation of any relevance anymore?”

This was a question posed by a friend of mine on Facebook a few months back. He asked it in response to a statement made to him by one of his Roman Catholic friends, a professor of theology:

“...Most of us Catholics know that we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone!”

If you're familiar with the Protestant Reformation you'll realise the impact of that statement. A Roman Catholic Professor just reiterated two of the five solas of the Reformation--the five “alone” phrases or slogans that summarised the convictions the Reformers had about the essentials of Christianity.

1. Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority.

2. Sola Fide (“faith alone”): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

3. Sola Gratia (“grace alone”): We are saved by the grace of God alone.

4. Solus Christus (“Christ alone”): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Saviour, and King

5. Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone.

“
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When the Protestant Reformation began, not many Catholics knew these solas let alone believed them. But that was 500 years ago. October 31, 1517. Have things changed since then?

According to Catholic philosopher, Peter Kreeft, quoted in the Christian Post (May 31, 2017), when it comes to bridging the divide between Catholics and Protestants, “much more ecumenical progress has been made in the last 50 years than in the last 500....God is working

especially hard to unify His people in light of how society is crumbling; a new reformation is underway, he says.”

So, is the Protestant Reformation still relevant today? Here’s why I believe it is. So long as there is a setting of the authority of the Church above the authority of the Word of God, or the power of the State above the power of the conscience, the Protestant Reformation will always be relevant.

You see, while I believe the heart of the gospel was expressed in the teachings of the Reformation, it was the Protest of the German Princes at Spires in 1529, that revealed the essence of the Reformation.

Daubigne (in his ‘History of the Reformation’) explains, “Now this protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of



the Church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate; and the authority of the Word of God above the visible church. In the first place, it rejects the civil power in di-



vine things, and says with the prophets and apostles: We must obey God rather than man. In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes farther: it lays down the principle, that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God.” Bk 13, Ch 5.

The formal protest was against a proposed decree by the German Emperor at the behest of the Roman Catholic Church. The decree in part required that ministers “preach the Gospel, explaining it according to the writings accepted by the holy Christian Church.”

The Protestants maintained that the Bible is its own interpreter and that anyone, when led by the Spirit of God in their study of the Scriptures, is able to arrive at its essential truths. Moreover, they affirmed that no one had the right to prevent a person from obeying the dictates of their conscience. When you prevent a person from obeying their conscience, you deny them the right to obey God. That is a form of oppression.

As Seventh Day Adventists, and Reformers in particular, we know by experience what oppression of conscience means. Many of the pio-

neers of the Reform Movement were imprisoned over their right to obey their conscience. Some even paid for that right with their life.

Today, in many countries around the globe, this freedom is being eroded. In some countries it is largely denied. Bible students will recognise that this is to be expected. The apostle John was shown a great movement of religious oppression in these last days, with a particular focus:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 12:17)

“
Today, in many countries around the globe, this freedom is being eroded

It is the Word of God that reveals to us the commandments God wants us to keep. It is the fourth in particular that the vast majority of the Christian world ignores. The Sabbath of the Bible, God’s holy day (Isa 58:13),

instituted and blessed at Creation (Gen 2:2,3) and proclaimed at Sinai (Ex 20:8-11) as part of the ten commandments, will continue as the day of worship in the new heavens and new earth (Isa 66:23).

While the Christian world continues to ignore this command, upholding Sunday as the day of worship rather than the day God commands us to keep, they are denying the first Sola of the Reformation--Sola Scriptura. The arguments put forward in favour of Sunday are founded either upon Church tradition or the teachings of men -- teachings that make the Sabbath commandment of none effect.

That's why Sola Scriptura will be a distinctive mark of God's people of the last days. Those who take the Bible to heart, obeying its precepts, will find themselves the object of ridicule and oppression. Sad to say, this oppression will come largely from those who profess to be stewards of Sola Scriptura - our Evangelical friends.

Kreeft is right when he says, "a new reformation has begun". The problem is, in view of the crumbling of our society, we end up finding the current reformation going on between our Catholic and Evangelical friends more relevant than the one that led to the distinctive truths that make us who we are as a people. While comforting as it may feel in an increasing irreligious society, we need to remember to not allow our commonality with Catholics and Evangelicals deter us from our mission under the third angel's message.

"There are persons who claim to be guided by the Spirit, and yet they are led contrary to the commandments of God. The spirit by which they are

directed is not the Spirit of truth. For the word of God declares, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." It is not enough to give a nominal assent to the truth. Its principles must be interwoven with our life and character. And we may well be afraid of those who make exalted professions, but who do not obey the words of God. There is safety alone in taking the Scriptures as our guide of life and action. Says the prophet, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Martin Luther exclaimed, "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the foundation of our faith." It is the work of the people of God to hold up the Bible as the standard of religion and the foundation of hope." (Review and Herald, November 5, 1889.)

It was a rejection of Sola Scriptura, along with its sacred truths, that led to the Reformation. As long as there are those who place the tradition of the Church or the opinions of men above the Bible, the Protestant Reformation will always have relevance.

~ Paul Chapman.

Schofields Church Cooking Demonstrations

Once again it was time for the Schofields Church to hold another series of cooking demonstrations.

These were held during the last three Monday evenings of October 2017. Together with Lidia, Amy, Vivian

and myself and various others, we have cooked samples for an average of 60 -70 attendees each night.



These presentations get underway with 20-30-minute talks on various health topics by our talented guest speakers; this time Dot Illlic and Domenic Polistina. They talked about the importance of oral health, our diet, depression and what to eat to steer away from it.

Our demonstrations then start with Lidia and myself alternating between creating 3 to 5 dishes each night. We show the process of each dish while our trusty helpers out-the-back, plate up the dishes that we prepared that day for samples, for the attendees to try while watching us make it in front of them.



QLD Spiritual Conference

Queensland Conference was held at Baden Powell Park at Samford Village. We came aside from our busy schedules and enjoyed Christian fellowship in the beautiful hills of Samford. We were spiritually blessed with the messages presented.

Our theme “Two Ways Two Crowns” was thought provoking as we considered our direction, life interests,

The delicious recipes we had the first night were: Quinoa Bites with Vegan Aioli, Black Pasta with Baked Veggies and Carob Chia Pudding. The second night: Eggplant Sesame Fritters, Green Bean Sesame, Stuffed Baked Capsicum and Blueberry Citrus Cheesecake. Lastly, we had Savoury Jackfruit Pie, Mung Bean Fettuccini, and Melon Sago.

Always a huge “thank you” to all those that helped throughout the day in preparing and cooking samples, and also those who served the food in the evening and helped clean up.

“

They talked about the importance of oral health, our diet, depression and what to eat to steer away from it.

I praise God for his blessings, for giving the opportunity to spread the word on good, nutritious food and as it says in Genesis 1:29 “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”

~ Rosetta Ilic



and the effect of our daily choices.

Yes, we came to bless and be blessed as we contemplate the lessons given in this inspired theme given so many years ago. It was very nice to

have our guest speaker Nathan Tyler and his family during camp, also the Brown's family that came all the way from Coleambally to be the cooks and we all enjoyed the delicious meals.



We had about 60 people attending the Conference and on sabbath we were blessed with many visitors. Here are some beautiful and inspirational quotes read at camp:

“In the vision given me... I was shown this earth, dark and gloomy. Said the angel: ‘Look carefully!’ Then I was shown the people upon the earth. Some were surrounded by angels of God, others were in total darkness, surrounded by evil angels. I saw an arm reached down from heaven, holding a golden scepter. On the top of the scepter was a crown studded with diamonds. Every diamond emitted light, bright, clear, and beautiful. Inscribed upon the crown were these words: ‘All who win me are happy, and shall have everlasting life’.

“Below this crown was another scepter, and upon this also was placed a crown, in the center of which were jewels, gold, and silver, reflecting some light. The inscription upon the crown was: “Earthly treasure. Riches is power. All who win me have honor and fame.” I saw a vast multitude rushing forward to obtain this crown. ...” Testimonies for the Church Vol 1, page 347

“... I saw the distinction in these

roads, also the distinction between the companies traveling these roads. The roads are opposite; one is broad and smooth, the other is narrow and rugged. So the parties that travel these roads are opposite in character, in life, in dress, and conversation.” Spiritual Gifts Volume 4b page 13.3

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” Proverbs 21:2

What did happen?

Activities included: Spiritual meetings, discussion groups, walks, orienteering, water activities and workshops on different topics. It was good to see everyone involved and helping out. We all are looking forward to our next Conference here in Queensland and we thank God for the privilege that everyone has had to be together for a long spiritual weekend.

May God bless you all.

~ Jacob De Souza

Baptism: Sugin Kim

Sabbath 9 September was a beautiful occasion for all who attended and especially the Korean Group in Brisbane. Members and friends of



the Korean group met together with members and visitors of Pimpama and Clayfield churches to witness the baptism of Sugin Kim (also known to us as Peter) and Hogyeon Kang (also known as Josh).

It was a joy to have visitors and friends from the Korean and Pimpama groups for the Sabbath School and Divine Service where we considered the importance of salvation and how and when we can be saved. We also realised that in any country it is illegal to bury a live person hence with baptism the great importance of the old man being dead and the new man being risen in Christ.

After a combined lunch, we all proceeded to the place of baptism where our Korean Minister Br Kang shared some truths from the Word of God and all praised God in song as the brethren went into the waters of baptism. Many who wished to commit or recommit their lives to God came forward following the baptism and special prayer was made for them in their walk with God.

~ Anonymous



Baptism: Sr. Raewyn Wales

On Sabbath afternoon, the 7th of October 2017, family, members and guests of the Queensland Conference gathered together by the shores of Phill Hill Conservation area in Paradise point, Gold Coast to witness the baptism of Sister Raewyn Wales.

none of this was experienced. Sister Raewyn is happy to be back in New Zealand and is continuing to shine for Christ in her community.

We welcome Sister Raewyn Wales officially as a member of God's Church.

Our prayers and best wishes are with her as she endeavours to follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus.

~ Reported by Jacob de Souza



Sister Raewyn's testimony was an inspiration to us all who attended the Sabbath fellowshipment. As Sister Raewyn, a New Zealander, was getting baptised in Australia, where we have "all sorts of strange and deadly creatures", she was initially a bit concerned that crocodiles, eels, snakes, and crabs would be sneaking past her while she was in the water. She was very pleased and grateful that



Condolences to the Hughes Family

We would like to express our sincere sympathies to the family of Erick William Jack Hughes; who fell asleep in Jesus on the 9th October 2017, caused by a heart failure while in Lightening Ridge.

Our dear brother will be missed by many for his cheerful attitude at our conferences and main events. May the memories he left live in our hearts until we meet once again at Jesus' feet!

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF"

Eric William Jack Hughes was born 21 February, 1920 at Junee, NSW. His parents moved to a farm close to Wagga and Jack attended the public school at South Wagga. His father was building a new house on their new farm called "Clearview" situated on Holbrook Rd, Wagga. The move

was hurried along as Jack's mother did not like the worldly influence of the town on their young family. Jack continued to live on this same farm until the close of his life. He had three sisters and one brother.

Sadly, the brother was killed by a car accident at 24 years of age not too long after Jack returned from three and a half years in the army. This brother was a twin to his sister, Alma.



Jack Hughes' experience in the army was an interesting one. Before enlisting, he asked the Baptist minister if he should join the army.

The Baptist minister told him, anyone who does not join the army is a coward and there will be no cowards in heaven. Because of this, Jack joined up. Jack underwent army training at a camp near Goulburn. During this time he met an SDA family, who changed his prejudice of Adventists. They used Bible evidence to support that Saturday is the true Sabbath and not Sunday

as changed by man. Soon Jack wanted to be baptized. After Bible studies and time, he and a couple of other soldiers were baptised and became members of the SDA church.

At another point in the training Jack asked their commanding officer if they could have Sabbath off from a training exercise and from carrying arms. He told them to get a letter from their minister. They went to see the Union President at Wahroonga. When they explained to the minister their request, he laughed at them. He said, "My son is flying bombers over Germany, bombing women and children and I believe he is quite justified." The young soldiers were shocked. All be it, the exemption letter was given.

During his time in service, he was employed as a runner to run messages. As there was time between each duty, Jack convinced his officers he could read the Testimonies (sent to him by a SDA lady) whilst waiting for an order. He had something like seven hours a day to read.

When in active service in Papua New Guinea, Jack was a nurse in the hospital as part of his duty in the medical regiment. As he was treating injured and broken-spirited soldiers who had been sent back from the frontline, Jack explained to them how God tells us to love our enemies. This resulted in the soldiers not wanting to return to the fighting. Jack was transferred immediately to kitchen duties.

I believe Jack's experience proves Ellen White's statement that in the

army we cannot obey God and our commanding officer at the same time.

Jack married Linda Hore in 1946. Three children were born to the marriage – Trafford, Neridah and John.

In the early years of the marriage, the SDA people in Wagga asked Jack to visit a few local members (one of them being Sr Shirley Mat-thies' grandfather) who had recently left the church and joined the SDA Reform Movement. He was chosen to go as they said he had read the Testimonies and he could be an influence to win them back. However, when he had visited them, he was convinced their position was correct, especially on the war stand. Jack soon joined the Reform Movement after further studies.

He showed a great interest in the benefits of living a healthy life. He practised vegetarianism in the army and claimed to be much much stronger than all his counterparts who ate meat. His grandchildren also remember visiting their grandfather on the farm and helping to make healthy lollies from nuts and dried fruit by winding the handle of his mincing machine.



He showed a great interest in the benefits of living a healthy life.

Jack lived a long life of over 97 and a half years and sadly passed away on 9 October, 2017.

Jack was a missionary-minded

person throughout his life. He was always talking to people about God and the wonderful plan of salvation. Where and whenever opportunity arose, he would sing to people. All of his songs were his own compositions and gave a good message.

Uncle Jack's hope was to gain heaven and live with Jesus. We share his hope and look forward to spending eternity together with all the faithful.

~ Memories by Robert and Mary Wiseman

An Ode to Brother Jack

At very first glance

I thought, "Who's this?"

It's brother Jack Hughes

Who sings before pews

Something we ought not to miss.

Brother Jack sang of God's love

And Jesus above

Who intercedes for us with crying

These songs are renown

And will always redound

In view of a world that is dying.

That a man such as he

As he only could see

Love in all of God's creation

He would sing a song here and there

So beautiful and fair

That brought delight and elation.

Oh Brother Jack Hughes

Who sang before pews

Until that great day in heaven

Will no longer be heard

To sing a bright word

On that day we count number seven

~ Written by Craig Cunningham

Condolences to Stamenkovic Family

It is always with sorrowful hearts, that we express our deepest sympathies to the families of those who have gone before us. Once again, our hearts go out to the family of late Sister Desanka Stamenkovic, who fell



asleep in Jesus on the 17th September 2017. Sister Stamenkovic was a member of the Slavic Church. May God strengthen each one as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

Eulogy as portrayed by her family:

Desanka Ilic later known as Desa and also to many as Baba, was born on the 30th April 1928 at Guberevac. Guberevac is a village in the municipality of Sopot, Serbia.

She was the middle child of three; Mara, Baba and Branko. Baba also had a half-sister who tragically died in her 20's. Baba was the last surviving child of the three siblings.

Baba met Jimmy, her future husband, at a gathering where music was played. Baba and Jimmy both loved the piano accordion.

On February 2nd, 1953 they were married. Later they became parents to four beautiful children: Miriam, Dawn, Sandra and John.

Life was difficult in then called Yugoslavia and Jimmy heard that Australia was a lucky country; so, on January 29th, 1970 the family arrived in Sydney. Coogee Immigrant Hostel was their home for a short time. Eventually, they made their home in Granville.

Baba had worked for a short time in Sanitarium, AWA and Rolf Simmons.

In 1982 Baba and her husband moved to Moree and lived in Adelaide Street. Her husband became a resident at the Fairview Nursing Home in 2013 and passed away in 2015. Baba became a resident in 2014.

After a short illness, Baba passed away, on Sunday 17th September 2017 around 9:45pm. During the last few days before falling to sleep she was able to speak and see her four children, five of her grand-children and one great-grandchild. Her end was peaceful. Her son John and daughter Dawn and son-in-law Alan were with her when she fell asleep.

There was no pain, but during that time in Baba's room there was a blessed peace.



Sister Stamenkovic was a member of the Slavic Church

Baba was a lady of simple means with a loving heart. She shared her love in growing flowers, she shared her love with animals and she shared her love with everyone. This is why people loved her and always sharing an open house with all people. It was no secret to Baba's love as she had a faith in God and shared this love to all saying: hello brother, hello sister... Baba and her husband loved God and were devoted to the faith of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement.

Baba is survived by four children, eleven grand-children and five great-grandchildren. Children loved to eat Baba's doughnut 'krofne', as she was one of the best doughnut makers and she also crocheted some amazing danglings to give to her friends.

Baba had very limited English, but had learnt how to express love for the grandchildren. The XPT as it pulled in to Moree station packed with people, maybe gave her this saying as she said to the children: "I love you full train".

Baba will be remembered by many as a beautiful kind soul who always had a smile on her face. We look forward to meeting again at Jesus feet.

~ Reported by Lidia Voncina

In Loving Memory of Matangaro Jacobs Nee Kainuku

It is with a sorrowful heart that we had to say goodbye to a wonderful inspirational woman, known to us all as 'Mata'. We at the Schofields Church were privileged to have known Mata for only a very short time, less than a year, before she lost



her battle with cancer. Mata was truly a motivator to many as she was so on fire for the Lord. She loved studying God's Word and sharing the truth with her family and friends. Her passion and enthusiasm for spiritual things was something to be admired.

Mata was born on the 28th March 1965, and sadly fell asleep in Jesus on the 6th September 2017, at the very young age of fifty-two, leaving behind her husband, children and grand-children.

Our deepest sympathies go out to Mata's family during this time of sorrow. May God truly comfort each one of you.

We look forward to that wonderful reunion at the coming of Jesus with all those who have gone to rest in Him.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the

former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4.

~ By Lidia Voncina

Mata's Funeral

If there is one thing in common that everyone said about Mata Jacobs, it was about her unrelenting love and care of every single person that she came across. Her door was always open, anytime and to everyone who needed love, compassion and care. This included her care and passion to serve those less fortunate which saw Mata, leading out a team on the streets of Mt. Druitt cooking for the homeless and giving clothes and encouragement to all who would allow her. From the time that she gave her heart to the Lord, Mata never looked back and made it her sole purpose to praise him and to lead others to Christ.

Our Mata had such a vivacious and energetic personality that we never imagined that her life would end so soon. However, the hand that set the stars in the sky and the planets in their course had a different plan and so Mata succumbed to lung cancer in a few short months after being diagnosed. Her funeral, which was held at Schofield Church on Tuesday 12th of September was perhaps her parting gift to her sorrowing family and friends. Despite all our grief, it brought together over 200 people, family and friends who had been touched and loved by Mata one way or another. With the church filled to overflowing, her brothers and sisters, children, cousins and friends gave beautiful testimonies of the woman they had dearly loved. Her favourite song, "I must Tell Jesus" is a reminder of how closely she walked with the Lord, always encouraging others to come to Christ and never let go of that faith.

Mata had a deep assurance and belief that one day she would rise and meet

the Lord in the air. Mata had the gift of exhortation and she never withheld a word of hope and courage where it was needed. In the last weeks of her life she continued to exhort and encourage those around her to stay faithful, to never give in to Satan's temptations and to finally be overcomers in our faith.



Mata had the gift of exhortation and she never withheld a word of hope and courage where it was needed.

Nothing seemed to dampen her spirit nor her faith and trust in the God who had so completely redeemed and loved her. It reminds me of the verses that are found in Job, in fact, it seems to me that there is a great parallel between Mata's experience and Job's. The parallel is found in the sense that both were suffering from disease and Job understood that he would see God in spite of all his suffering because he knew the God he served so well. So well, that he was able to utter the most beautiful and faith filled words that I hope will be burned into our memories forever.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job 19: 25-27

Our deepest love and sympathies are with her family, especially Calvin, Adriana, June, ... And Ben.

~ Daniela Balarezo



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Declared Righteous and Made Holy - Part 2

In Part 1, I mentioned that the objective (legal) work of justification by faith is never independent of the subjective (transformative) work of God within the human heart, for it is only the contrite and humbled that can appreciate the great gift of righteousness received by faith alone. I will continue to expound on this in this second part and quote Scripture references that show how, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, you are not only declared righteous by faith but made holy by faith. But I want to make something clear at the outset. The righteousness that justifies us before God is Christ's alone – received by faith alone. The process of sanctification is not a work to justify us before God, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Does this surprise you? It surprised me too. No doubt, because it's so natural for us to want to take some credit.

I also mentioned that in the Christian life, there is a counterfeit that masquerades as holiness – called sanctimoniousness. People caught up in this counterfeit are driven by a desire to justify themselves and to establish their own righteousness, but in doing so, they cannot submit themselves to the righteousness of God – for that is received only through faith. You will need to read Part 1 to understand that, and what I'm going to share in this article.

The process of sanctification or making holy, begins with the process of justification by faith, because to be made holy means to be cleansed from moral defilement. It is futile to attempt to make ourselves holy or righteous. Only God can cleanse us from moral defilement, for

“who can bring a **clean** thing out of an **unclean**? not one.” Job 14:4

Our moral defilement is found in three things: our guilt, our sinful dispositions, and our defective ideologies. True holiness then begins with being forgiven, because it is nothing else but the blood of Jesus that removes our guilt. And it is only by the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour that our sinful dispositions can be transformed, and our defective ideologies corrected.

Notice how the Apostle John associates justification with sanctification.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins [declared righteous] *and* to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness [made holy].” 1 John 1:9

John makes it clear to me that God is not only concerned with clearing your guilt, but with cleansing you from what led to your guilt, in order that you might not sink into the same wrong-doing.

However, I think where confusion exists, is when we begin to think that

the process of sanctification within us, makes it possible for us to be accounted righteous outside of justification by faith. We begin to think that at some point in time in our sanctification, we will reach a point of obedience where we will no longer need the righteousness of Christ to cover us because our righteousness will be equal to his. Imperceptibly, we begin to think that sanctification will produce a righteousness equal to that of Christ's by a life-long process of striving and faithfulness. But the Apostle Paul tells us that the only way to be accounted righteous before God is through righteousness by faith – outside of our own works of obedience.

“

What is justification by faith? It is justification by faith. The works of faith are not included in it.

“...to him that **worketh not**, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth **righteousness without works.**” Romans 4:5-6.

What is justification by faith? It is justification by *faith*. The works of faith are not included in it. Is there another form of justification before God available to the sinner outside of faith? I have not found it in the Scriptures. It only exists outside of Scripture.

“

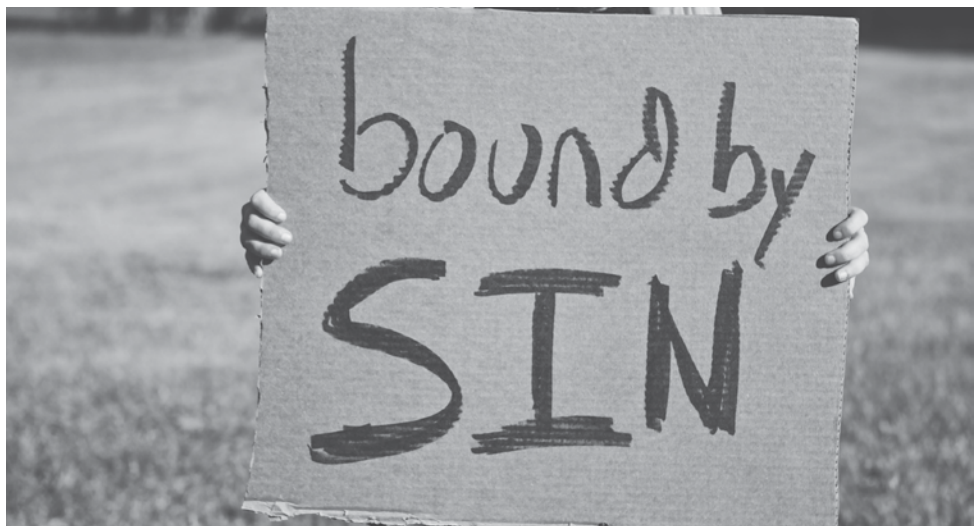
Now, we know whose righteousness it is that declares us righteous, but whose righteousness is it that makes us righteous?

But what I do find in the Bible is that whom the Lord forgives, he also makes holy. So, while there is a work of grace that has happened outside of us to justify us (Christ's life and death), there is a work of grace happening within us to bring us to faith, repentance, confession and obedience – not to justify us – but to heal us from sin.

Now, we know whose righteousness it is that declares us righteous, but whose righteousness is it that makes us righteous? Be careful. It is here that our walk can take a turn along the counterfeit path of holiness. Notice this verse.

“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19

This verse speaks of two men. The first is Adam, and the second is Christ. Because of Adam's transgression, we weren't only declared a sinner, but made one. In the same manner, we aren't only declared, but made righteous – notice – through our obedience? No. It is by the obedience of ONE man that we are



made, not just accounted righteous. We had nothing to do with the disobedience of Adam, we had nothing to do with the obedience of Christ, but it is as we belong to one or the other that we take on the nature of one or the other. We were made sinners by the natural birth; we are made righteous by being born again of the Spirit of God.

It is so important to notice here that it is not our obedience that makes us righteous, but Christ's obedience that does so! Here, human nature begins to scream and get agitated, but, but, but... don't we have something to bring to the justification table? In terms of merit and righteousness, nothing! In terms of sinning and falling short – plenty. It is here that we take comfort in the truth that it is for the ungodly that Christ died, and

that it is the ungodly that God justifies by faith.

But as I mentioned, God is not only interested in justifying us by faith, but in purifying our hearts by faith. The work of redemption is complete! For what good would it do that I be forgiven for my past sins, and yet left to grapple with my sinful disposition and defective reasoning? Praise God! He saves me not only from my guilt, but what led me to that guilt!

So how does God cleanse you from guilt, sinful dispositions and defective reasoning? Three things: the blood of Jesus, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. I'll cover this in Part 3.

~ Gerson Robles





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