

God's Perfect Offer

by Bill Carico

I frequently am privileged to discuss the gospel (which literally means “the good news”) and the Christian faith in general with people from all walks of life. Many who profess they are believers in Jesus admit to never really having a clear understanding of the gospel and consequently are still striving to keep the law to become righteous. So I explain why such effort is futile and only brings more guilt and condemnation upon them since no one can become righteous by keeping the law. By the way, being righteous basically means being morally acceptable to God according to His standard of holiness and purity.

To properly understand the Christian faith, a foundational truth is that our reconciliation with God, and consequently our ongoing relationship with God, is based on God giving us the very righteousness of Christ as a gift through faith. That's right, the good news is that when we trust in and receive Christ as our savior, we are given the holiness and purity of Jesus to have as our own righteousness. We also need to recognize that God's grace is poured out on us in abundance, and comes in an unlimited supply, which means God's grace is inexhaustible. When you consider all this is offered freely because God loves us unconditionally, then you have a trio of truths that are foundational. God has called all believers to become His ambassadors to tell others how they can be reconciled to God.

An important summary of these foundational truths is found in these verses:

Romans 3:20-24 - *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This **righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Romans 5: 17 *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the **gift of righteousness** reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.*

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation:** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has **committed to us the message of reconciliation.** We are therefore **Christ's ambassadors**, as though God were making*

*his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in **him we might become the righteousness of God.***

Sometimes the conversation is with an individual, sometimes I'm speaking to a group of people. Naturally there is nothing more important than understanding God's terms for reconciliation with Him, and the basis for having a relationship with Him. It is also important to discuss these truths among other believers, just in case they are caught up trying to earn their righteousness by keeping the law and doing good deeds. Again, many preachers mix law and grace which is why so many people misunderstand the Christian faith.

Often I begin a conversation mentioning that I frequently discuss matters of faith with people who have a common misperception about Christianity. For example, ask someone what they think Christianity is all about, and 9 out of 10 people will answer that our relationship with God is based on how well we behave or live based on a whole lot of rules, and/or how much good we do for others.

I also enjoy telling a story about Andrew Jackson when he was President of the United States and a tricky legal situation that arose in 1830 in the case of the U.S. against George Wilson and John Porter. Both men were tried and convicted on several counts of robbing and wounding a mail courier, and were sentenced to death by hanging. Porter was executed, but as it turned out President Andrew Jackson pardoned Wilson.

<http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/32/150/case.html>

Surprisingly, Wilson refused the pardon, which raised a new legal question never before posed. Which prevails, the pardon or the rejection? The case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that while its hard to conceive how someone might refuse such a valuable gift as a pardon from the death penalty, a pardon only has value if it's accepted, so Wilson won the argument and lost his life.

But for the sake of discussion, do you think Wilson would still have rejected the offer if President Jackson had offered to adopt Wilson and become his lifelong personal friend? I'm talking about a full adoption, making Wilson a legal heir to Jackson, thus giving him access to all of President Jackson's resources. But even if Wilson became an adopted child and heir of Andrew Jackson, he still may never to spend much personal time with a busy President and get to know him well. So, an offer of life-long friendship would assure Wilson he would have a close personal relationship with Jackson and have unlimited access to him. Also, what if Jackson also offered Wilson an ambassador's position? How could anyone in their right mind reject such an offer?

As good as Jackson's offer might sound, it falls far short of what God is offering each one of us: eternal life through faith in Christ. God's offer of a full pardon, full adoption, the righteousness of Christ, personal friendship with Jesus is just part of what the Bible calls "the Good News." Christ also sent the Spirit to live in us so He can live through us. Why would anyone reject this offer? God's offer only has value to us if we receive/accept it.

I use the acrostic **PARFAIT** to explain God's perfect terms for reconciliation. As I mentioned, many Christians I speak with have never heard of the things I point out because their church has people focused on keeping the law and not sinning to earn favor with God. They . This is the wrong focus. God's perfect terms for receiving eternal life are:

P - God offers all humanity something like a Pardon but in fact its much more, and its certainly not like parole. Jesus paid for our sin and took our punishment upon himself. He gave His life and died a substitutionary death (he died in our place) that satisfies God's perfect justice. All who receive Christ are born again and live by the Spirit.. (2Cor 5:17) *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature ; the old things passed away ; behold, new things have come.* Thus Jesus did not become flesh and come to condemn the world but to save us. (John 3:17 points this out and follows the oft quoted John 3:16)

A - Adoption - we become children of God, legal heirs, kings kids (see John 1:12). "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" Romans 8:17

R - Righteousness - those who accept God's terms of reconciliation are given the perfect righteousness of Jesus. (see above 2 Corinthians 5:17-22) This is the foundation of our faith and practice. (Feel free to mention Resurrection, Redemption, Ransom, Rebirth, Regeneration, Repentance, and Reconciliation)

F - Friendship - (see John 15:15) Our relationship with God is very personal. Jesus calls us *friend*. Jesus becomes our *faithful friend*.

A - Ambassadorship - we serve as ambassadors to deliver God's *message of reconciliation* to others. (again the verses are 2 Cor 5:17-22) An ambassador is defined as an accredited diplomat sent by a country as its official representative to a foreign country.

I - Immunity - Someone serving as an Ambassador in a foreign country has diplomatic immunity under that country's laws. They shouldn't break the law, but if for some reason they did, immunity means they can't be arrested or prosecuted. An Ambassador who breaks laws will likely be recalled (lose their position) but they cannot be punished under the

law. Those in Christ are actually under a new law, written on their hearts. "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Heb 10:16. Romans Chapter 14 describes this new law of love and liberty (see all of Romans 14). James 2:12 "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom (under the law of liberty)..."

T - Truth and Trust - The Holy Spirit is called the **Spirit of Truth** lives in us to teach, comfort, guide, and empower us. When Jesus came (the Word became flesh) and dwelt among us he was "full of grace and **truth**" (John 1:14). *Jesus said "I am the Way and **the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through me.**"* (John 14:6) Also you are Trusting that the resurrection is True and Trusting the One who laid down His life for you. *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.* (John 15:13) Truth means - *You shall know the **Truth** and the **Truth** shall make you free.* (John 8:32)

Jesus believed he was God, so he was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord.

PARFAIT is the French word for perfect. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about God's terms for reconciliation with you and me, and about our ongoing relationship with Him. The Gospel is the perfect offer indeed.