

Acceptance with God

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Many people hesitate to make a start to serve the Lord, because they fear that God will not accept them; and thousands who have been professed followers of Christ for years, still doubt their acceptance with God. For the benefit of such I write, and I would not bewilder their minds with speculations, but will endeavor to give them the simple assurance of God's Word.

A PURCHASED POSSESSION

"Will the Lord receive me?" I reply by another question: Will a man receive that which he has bought? If you go to the store and make a purchase, will you receive the goods when they are delivered? Of course you will; there is no room for any question about it. The fact that you bought the goods, and paid your money for them, is sufficient proof, not only that you are *willing*, but that you are *anxious*, to receive them. If you did not want them, you would not have bought them. Moreover, the more you paid for them the more anxious you are to receive them. If the price that you paid was great, and you had almost given your life to earn it, then there can be no question but that you will accept the purchase when it is delivered. Your great anxiety is lest there should be some failure to deliver it.

Now let us apply this simple, natural illustration to the case of the sinner coming to Christ. In the first place, He has bought us. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." 1 Corinthians 6.19, 20

The price that was paid for us was His own blood—His life. Paul said to the elders of Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20.28. "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [manner of life] received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1.18, 19. He "gave Himself for us." Titus 2.14. He "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Galatians 1.4

He bought not a certain class, but the whole world of sinners. "For God so loved *the world*, that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3.16. Jesus said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6.51. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5.6, 8

The price paid was infinite; therefore we know that He very much desired that which He bought. He had His heart set on obtaining it. He could not be satisfied without it. See Philippians 2.6-8; Hebrews 12.2; Isaiah 53.11

IT WAS HIS BARGAIN

“But I am not worthy.” That means that you are not worth the price paid, and therefore you fear to come lest Christ will repudiate the purchase. Now you might have some fear on that score if the bargain were not sealed, and the price were not already paid. If He should refuse to accept you, on the ground that you are not worth the price, He would not only lose you, but also the amount paid. Even though the goods for which you have paid are not worth what you gave for them, you yourself would not be so foolish as to throw them away. You would rather get some return for your money than get nothing.

But, further, you have nothing to do with the question of worth. When Christ was on earth in the interest of the purchase, He “needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man.” John 2.25. *He made the purchase with His eyes open, and He knew the exact value of that which He bought. He is not at all disappointed when you come to Him and He finds that you are worthless. You have not to worry over the question of worth; if He, with His perfect knowledge of the case, was satisfied to make the bargain, you should be the last one to complain.*

For, most wonderful truth of all, He bought you for the very reason that you were not worthy. His practiced eye saw in you great possibilities, and He bought you, not for what you were then or are now worth, but for what He could make of you. He says: “I, even I, am He that blots out thy transgressions for Mine own sake.” Isaiah 43.25. We have no righteousness; therefore He bought us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Says Paul: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2.9, 10

HOW CHRIST GETS GLORY

Here is the whole process: —

“We all . . . were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2.3-10

We are to be “to the praise of the glory of His grace.” This we could not be if we were originally worth all He paid for us. There would in that case be no glory to Him in the transaction. He could not, in the ages to come, show in us the riches of His grace. But

when He takes us, worth nothing, and at the last presents us faultless before the throne, it will be to His everlasting glory, and then there will not be any to ascribe worthiness to themselves. Throughout eternity, the sanctified hosts will unite in saying to Christ: "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5.9, 10, 12

THE DOUBTING "BUT"

Surely all doubt as to acceptance with God ought to be set at rest. But it is not. The evil heart of unbelief still suggests doubts. "I believe all this, but—" There, stop right there; if you believed you wouldn't say "but." When people add "but" to the statement that they believe, they really mean, "I believe, but I don't believe." But you continue: "Perhaps you are right, but hear me out. What I was going to say is, I believe the Scripture statements that you have quoted, but the Bible says that if we are children of God we shall have the witness of the Spirit, and will have the witness in ourselves; and I don't feel any such witness, therefore I *can't* believe that I am Christ's. I believe His Word, but I haven't the witness." I understand your difficulty; let me see if it cannot be removed.

As to your being Christ's, you yourself can settle that. You have seen what He gave for you. Now the question is, "Have you delivered yourself to Him?" If you have, you may be sure that He has accepted you. If you are not His, it is solely because you have refused to deliver to Him that which He has bought. You are defrauding Him. He says, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Romans 10.21. He begs you to give Him that which He has bought and paid for, yet you refuse, and charge Him with not being willing to receive you. But if from the heart you have yielded yourself to Him to be His child, you may be assured that He has received you.

Now as to your believing His words, yet doubting if He accepts you, because you don't feel the witness in your heart, I still insist that you don't believe. If you did, you would have the witness. Listen to His Word: "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.*" 1 John 5.10. To believe in the Son is simply to believe His Word and the record concerning Him.

And "*he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" You can't have the witness until you believe; and as soon as you do believe, you have the witness. How is that? Because *your belief in God's Word is the witness*. God says so: "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" Hebrews 11.1

If you should hear God say with an audible voice that you are His child, you would consider that sufficient witness. Well, when God speaks in His Word, it is the same as though He spoke with an audible voice; and your faith is the evidence that you hear and believe.

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Romans 7.16. How is the witness given? By the Word. There the witness is written, and the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance the words recorded.

This assurance does not warrant us in relaxing our diligence and settling down contentedly, as though we had gained perfection. We must remember that Christ accepts us not for our sake, but for His own sake; not because we are perfect, but that in Him we may go on unto perfection. He blesses us, not because we have been so good that we have deserved a blessing, but in order that in the strength of the blessing we may turn away from our iniquities. Acts 3.26. To every one that believes in Christ, the power—right or privilege—is given to become the sons of God. (John 1.12. margin.) It is by the “exceeding great and precious promises” of God through Christ that we are “made partakers of the Divine nature.” 2 Peter 1.4