

WORD FOR THE DAY: Imputation

March 8

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

Job asks one of the great questions of the Bible in chapter 9, verse 2 of the book bearing his name: *“But how can a man be righteous before God?”* Indeed, the Bible repeatedly teaches that God is righteous and that man is not.

Because of original sin every person is conceived with an unrighteous sin nature (Psalm 51:5; 58:3) and subsequently lives a life marked by personal sin (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:10). This state of unrighteousness is the opposite of God’s nature and is marked by crookedness, wrongness, injustice, and rebellion—and this is the condition of all mankind.

At the cross, however, man’s sin is imputed to Jesus. At the same time the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to man. Jesus is punished for an unrighteousness not his own and man is bestowed the righteousness that belongs to Jesus. Martin Luther called this “The Wonderful Exchange.” It’s also called imputation.

Because we are saved by Christ’s imputed righteousness, instead of our own self-righteousness we can move from being people who are always promoting our spiritual resume to confessing our spiritual rap sheet. Here’s what that looks like.

- The RESUME approach says, “Look, look at what all I have done for God.” “I give. I volunteer. I’m tolerant of others. I even recycle. I’m a good person.”
- The RAP SHEET approach says, “Look, look at what all God has saved me from. I’m a wretch. I lust. I lie. I’m selfish and conniving. I take advantage of others... I’m no good.”
- But Jesus...let me tell you about Jesus. Let me show you Jesus’ RESUME, because I get to submit it as my own.

Knowing this, the answer to Job’s question is clear. An unrighteous person can stand righteous before a Holy God not by their own works, but solely by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

- Some of the harshest words in the Bible are from Jesus to men who promoted their own self righteousness. Are you ever guilty of looking to your own righteousness instead of looking to Christ’s?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Lord, help me to avoid building a spiritual resume and rest in the imputed righteousness of Christ. The only thing I can contribute to my salvation is the sin, and I thank you for taking it upon yourself and giving me your righteous record. Amen.