



SONS & DAUGHTERS
How the Gospel Makes Us
Authentic
Week 3

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Erick Cobb and Covenant Grace Church.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

Of all the people on the earth, Christians should be the most genuine. Why then do we

run into phoniness in the church? Why would Christians engage in dishonesty? Rather than share some sordid story of my own personal experience, let me explain why Christians sometimes engage in inauthentic behavior, not being themselves.

When we rely on what we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God, we cannot face our sin because it is too frightening. People always lie because they think it brings some benefit. It's the same thing when we lie to ourselves. It's to our "benefit" not to look at

ourselves too closely. We don't want to be too honest about our sins. In short, phoniness in the church comes from depending upon our own righteousness. This means we must not understand the "received righteousness" bought for us in the gospel, what's called imputed righteousness or gifted righteousness.

Big Idea: The gospel allows us to be honest with ourselves, with others and with God.

Today, we're only going to look at one single Bible verse that teaches us two important truths.

Hebrews 10:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

So, what is the great news this verse is telling us? By a single offering... the sacrifice of Christ on the cross God made us perfect

forever in a single act while at the same time He is changing us daily, making us more like Jesus. What Jesus actually accomplish for you on the cross is so mind boggling that you have to repeat it to yourself often, because it sounds just too good to be true.

By this one sacrifice God has made you perfect. “Wow. Wait a second. That would be great news, but I know I’m not perfect.”

The first thing to notice is this — the verse says that we are perfect now — why? Because of our behavior? No, it says we are made perfect by this one offering — the death of Christ on the cross in our place. You're not perfect in God's sight because of your behavior. You're perfect in God's sight because He has washed away all your sins by the blood of Christ. But it's not just that you have a clean record. Your record of sins has been replaced by the perfect life of Christ. This is called The Great Exchange.

Now, notice the tense. It's past tense. You have been made perfect by the life and death of Jesus Christ. It's who you are now. You have been made perfect in God's eyes by the blood of Christ.

You are declared perfect. That is your position. Think of it like a title. This is the rank that God has given you because of Christ. You are declared to be a four star general. That is true of you. In the same way, God has

declared you to be clean in His sight. Perfect not by your actions. Perfect by the actions of Christ.

1. By the gospel you have been made perfect already.

When you put your faith in Christ you were declared perfect, righteous. Because of Christ everything about you is now right in God's eyes. Now that you've been declared to be like Jesus in God's sight, you now live into

that declaration by learning what exactly Jesus is like.

Now, notice what else it says:

Hebrews 10:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Let's continue with our four star general analogy. Now that you've been declared to be

a four star general, you now live into that role, that position by learning what exactly it is that four star generals do. That's the second part —you are being made holy. Now that you've been declared holy by the life of Christ, God is working holiness in you. He's making you holy.

So, when you object: "I know I'm not perfect," you're right. But that's the second part. The first part is so important to grasp, because if we miss it, that's when the second part becomes the reason we hide ourselves from others and don't face our sins. The first part is

that you are declared perfect now. You've been made perfect in God's sight by the death of Christ, so you don't have to worry about earning His acceptance. He accepts you. He loves you. You're His child. That's a done deal. You've been made perfect.

Often when parents see their new born baby for the first time, what do they say? "He or she is perfect." This child hasn't done anything yet. The baby doesn't know how to talk or walk or do anything for itself, yet the parents say, "He's perfect. She's perfect." But

they know the child even though it can't do anything right then will grow up.

It's the same sort of thing when we are first born again. God says of us, "He's perfect. She's perfect." And because of the death of Christ in our place, when God says we're perfect it's not just an emotional sentiment, but a legal declaration before all the universe. And with the Holy Spirit inside of us, God knows we're going to grow into the perfection of His Son.

2. Now that you've been made, He is also making you.

That's the second part. But if you don't get the first part down pat, you will always be working from a mindset of making yourself acceptable to God, which is always a failing endeavor, because you will never be perfect.

Here's why this mindset is so damaging. It's like an adopted child who is working hard at

getting the family who adopted him to adopt him.

Confidence in the righteousness of Christ that's given to us, gifted to us, equips us to be honest. We don't have to pretend. You can always be honest about your condition because your position. Your acceptance with God is secure.

3. Faith in received righteousness allows us to be honest.

Faith in our position (that we're perfect in God's sight because of Christ) allows us to be honest about our condition (that we're not perfect at all).

It all boils down to how well you understand justification by faith alone. So, let's take a little test that World Harvest Mission devised. I'll give you two choices and you pick one.

Hebrews 10:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

- A. Justification is a single act of God for us.
- B. Justification is an ongoing work of God in us.

- A. Justification means “to make righteous.”
- B. Justification means “to declare righteous.”

- A. Faith plus works = salvation (justification)

- B. Faith in Christ alone = salvation (justification) plus works**

- A. Imputation (crediting) means not counting us guilty for our sins and counting us as righteous as Christ.**
- B. Imputation means only not counting us guilty.**

- A. The nature of faith is to receive Christ.**
- B. The nature of love is to receive Christ.**

- A. Faith alone justifies by uniting us to Christ.
 - B. Faith alone with baptism justifies by uniting us to Christ.
-
- A. Justification frees us from all responsibility to obey the law of God.
 - B. Justification is a declaration that we are righteous and a pardon of our sins, which set us free to obey God's law by faith.

Hebrews 10:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

It's good to remember four things about justification:

- **Something is taken away.** Christ's death in our place (substitutionary atonement) secures for us the forgiveness of past, present, and future sins.
- **Something is given.** Christ's perfect obedience to the law (righteousness) is credited to us as our own righteousness.

- **This is a once-for-all-time legal act.**
- **It is received by grace** through the instrument of faith alone, and it not tied to our performance.

Faith is like an electrical cord in your home. It's the instrument through which the power of electricity travels. The cord is not the power. In the same way, faith is the instrument through which the power of the Holy Spirit works.

Psalm 34:5 (NIV)

**5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with
shame.**