

Subject: Good Friday Reflection: The Greatest Exchange in History

Resources: [[TEACHING LINK](#)] AND [DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES LINK]

Dear Church Family,

What's so good about Good Friday? Our Savior died taking on our sin that we may be restored with a new life eternally in His presence. Wow!

On Good Friday 2026, we examined what may be the most compact yet comprehensive statement of the Gospel in all of Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:21. In just over 20 words, Paul captures the entire redemptive work of Christ. We explored the hill outside the city where Jesus hung between heaven and humanity, bearing not just physical suffering, but something far more profound—He who knew no sin became sin for us. This was not a defeat, but the cost of redemption being fully paid. When Jesus declared "It is finished," He was not whispering in despair but making a declaration that the debt was paid, the burden lifted, and the way opened for our reconciliation with God.

Summary: The sermon explored the three movements of 2 Corinthians 5:21 —Jesus' sinlessness, His becoming sin for us, and our becoming the righteousness of God in Him. We examined why Jesus had to be without sin to serve as our perfect substitute, the staggering cost of Biblical grace versus cheap grace, and the transformative power available to us through the greatest exchange in history. This truth has profound implications for our spiritual life; we are called to live not in cheap grace that costs us nothing, but in Biblical grace that transforms everything—our identity, our character, and our daily walk with Christ.

Takeaways:

1. Jesus' sinlessness was essential for our salvation. Unlike any before or since, He remained perfectly faithful to God's will, never bowing to temptation, making Him the only acceptable sacrifice for our sins.
2. Biblical grace is costly, not cheap. Jesus becoming sin for us reveals both the holiness of God and the utter stench of sin, while demonstrating a grace that demands a right response of sacrifice and offers freedom we did not deserve.
3. Through Christ's sacrifice, we become the righteousness of God. This is the greatest exchange—our dirty rags for His holy ones—giving us new life, conforming us to His image, and marking us with the fruit of the Spirit.

As we move forward from Good Friday toward the celebration of Resurrection Sunday, let us not take lightly what Christ has done. The question remains for each of us: Is this

Good News for you? Do you trust Jesus with your life? True trust believes He is our sinless Lord, that He died for you, that He defeated death, and that He invites you into His victory.

May we live as new creations, treasuring the gift of Jesus Himself—the ultimate treasure chest of grace for daily living.

In beautiful transforming love of Jesus,

Pastor Jim

Slide 2

Made to be Sin

2 Corinthians 5:21

Good Friday 2026

I. Opening

On a hill outside the city, as the sun dimmed and the earth held its breath, a Man hung between heaven and humanity.

He had healed the sick, opened blind eyes, and spoken words that carried the weight of eternity. He had never lied, never sinned, never turned from His Father. Yet here He was—lifted up as though He were the worst of men.

A soldier nearby muttered, “If He is righteous, why is He here?”

No one answered.

But unseen, something far deeper than nails or thorns was taking place.

Every hidden sin, every act of rebellion, every whispered lie, every violent thought, every selfish ambition—gathered, as though summoned from every corner of time. The betrayal of friends, the pride of kings, the secret guilt buried in quiet hearts—all of it pressed in, converging on Him.

Not just placed upon Him—but counted as His.

The One who knew no sin was being treated as sin itself.

And in that moment, the fellowship He had always known with His Father seemed to fracture. The sky grew dark, and from the cross came a cry that echoed through heaven and earth:

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

It was not the cry of defeat—but the cost of redemption being fully paid.

He was not becoming sinful in nature—He remained pure—but He stood in the place of sinners, bearing their guilt as if it were His own. [Justice did not overlook sin; it met it, fully, in Him.](#)

And then, with breath nearly gone, He spoke again:

“It is finished.”

Not a whisper of despair—but a declaration. [The debt was paid.](#) The burden lifted. [The way opened.](#)

Three days later, on the day we celebrate Easter, the stone would roll away.

And those who once carried their sin had a choice to give its impossible load to the One offering to carry it for them.¹

II. Introduction: The Gospel in One Verse

1. Having come into Jerusalem at the head of a victory parade, we are now to witness to the weight of sin bearing its full weight on the Christ. [There are many that read the words of the Gospel and miss its life-giving truth.](#) There are many that read the words and ignore, diminish, or even rewrite them to be slaves of their own desires.
2. At just over 20 words, our passage in focus today is the Gospel in one verse.

Slide 4

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” - **2 Corinthians 5:21**

¹ OpenAi. (2026). ChatGPT 5.3, primary prompt “Short story on Jesus became sin”

We will use this text as the outline in celebrating and drawing closer to Jesus.

Slide 6

III. 2 Corinthians 5:21a: Jesus Had NO Sin

1. That Jesus was sinless is a simple truth claim made and witnessed to repeatedly in Scripture. Lots of people claim lots of things, yet we rightly test their claims AND we rightly ask “so what”, “why is this important”.
2. That Jesus was sinless is a witness to His character and it distinguishes Him as Lord. So, let’s start here with a review of who Jesus is...In no particular order of priority, Scripture testifies that He is both the source and essence of these things AND NOT simply something He does:

• Spirit	• Life
• Unique	• Eternal
• Holy	• Transcendent
• Self-sufficient	• Immutable
• Omnipotent	• Omnipresent
• Sovereign	• Faithful
• Love	• Truth
• Good	• Wise
• Just	• Merciful
• Gracious	• Wrathful
• Forgiving	• Patience
• Righteous	• Kind
• Creator	• Redeemer

Slide 8

3. While all true, distilling God down to these traits and attributes risks missing Him. For He is more than the sum of these parts. Some other ways we can describe the indescribable God include:

Slide 10-14

- A. God is knowable, but not exhaustible.
- B. He is infinite in being, yet intimate in presence.

- C. He is higher than the heavens while being closer than your next breath.
- D. He has uncontainable glory, yet is so personal as to call you His child.
- E. He is both Lord and servant.

Because God is all of these things and far more, He describes Himself as “I AM”.

4. In our verse today, we read Jesus knew NO sin. Unlike any before and any since, He was perfect; that is without blame. He both knew and remained faithful to God’s will. Even having been tempted by the Great Deceiver, as we read in **Hebrews 4:15**, He NEVER bowed to those temptations.

A. This is the “why” of Him being sinless is so important. It was God himself that introduced the sacrificial system all the way back before banishing Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden when He slayed and covered them with animal skins to hide their sin (Gen 3:21). In the OT texts of **Exodus 12 and 20**, we read of the institution of sacrifice and in the **book of Leviticus** the various offerings are defined. Additionally, (in the NT) **Hebrews 9:22** says that without the shedding of blood, there is no “pardon” for one’s sins.

B. Because of His great love, God chose to not leave us helplessly broken, but instead inserted Himself in the fabric of time in giving the sacrificial system. The ultimate purpose of this system was to offer “the way” of atonement and restoration of Gods people (both Jew and Gentile) with Himself...since none could fulfill the law perfectly, this way was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, as numerous New Testament passages proclaim, including John the Baptist, having seen Jesus, stated in **John 1:29**: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

C. Hallelujah and amen. If there is a Messiah and Jesus is He, we no longer have to bear the penalty of our sin because the

Gospel (or Good News) is that He took that penalty for us. But for Him to be that substitute for us, He must have been without sin!

5. So, how can we know that Jesus was? I am glad you asked. While we can point to many things, here are enough reasons for us to believe:
 - A. The Roman authorities, specifically Pontius Pilate, said so (Jn 18:38);
 - B. His disciples said it was so (1 Pe 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5; Paul here in 2 Cor 5:21);
 - C. Jesus challenged His enemies to convict Him of Sin, but none could (Jn 8:46); and
 - D. The Jewish authorities were left with raising up false witnesses (Mt 26:59-60).
 - E. One other extraordinary way we know He was sinless is because He died, rose again, and His sacrifice was accepted by the Father (Romans 5:10; Hebrews 10:12) as presented in the book of **Acts 1:9-11**.

Next up, we have part-b.

Slide 18

IV. 2 Corinthians 5:21b: Jesus Became Sin for Us

1. There is a penalty for sin that must be paid. As we have catalogued, it must be paid by the blood sacrifice of a perfect substitutionary offering – the Lamb of God. No, sinless Jesus was NOT made into sin, but He bore the penalty of our sin at an inconceivable cost that the door may be thrown open for our restoration to Himself. Indeed, His loving sacrifice was prophesied some 2,700-2,800 years earlier in Isaiah 53:4-6, NLT

Slide 20

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,

a punishment for his own sins!
⁵ But he was pierced for **our** rebellion,
crushed for **our** sins.
He was beaten so **we** could be whole.
He was whipped so **we** could be healed.
⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God's paths to follow our own.
Yet the LORD laid on him
the sins of us all.
[Isaiah 53:4–6, NLT]

2. The reality of Jesus' sacrifice carries two enormous thoughts for us this Good Friday:

A. First, that God was the only one that can meet the perfect standard **AND** that He was joyfully willing to go to the Cross of Calvary speaks of both His holiness and goodness **AND** the utter stench and evil of sin.

B. Second, Jesus' sacrifice speaks of the enormous cost of Biblical grace.

i. You see, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer described, cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the church, for we bask in its faux comforts all-the-while we are drawn away from God's authority, will, and high calling. **Cheap grace subtly encourages the replacement of "He" with "me" as the sovereign One.** Cheap grace is a grace without cost.

ii. The grace of Jesus, Biblical grace, is NOTHING like the cheap grace of religion masking man's lust for power and control. **Biblical grace:**

- ... compels our voluntary sacrifice;
- **Biblical grace offers unwarranted forgiveness;**
- Biblical grace is the source of our freedom;
- **Biblical grace is birthed in His love and does what is right in God's eyes without regard for oneself...it is**

Godly grace because it is not self-serving in any way, but cares about the highest good for the other...it is the kind of grace that functions as a beautiful expression of the awesome love and fear of the Lord.

- iii. Simply put, God's grace is a never-ending treasure chest for daily living offering meaning, purpose, and eternal value. Jesus became sin that we may have this treasure chest.

Do you know what this treasure really is? It's the victory of freedom found exclusively in Christ. In His grace, He gave Himself to be sin in giving Himself to you and I, AND that is part-c of our verse today!

Slide 22

V. 2 Corinthians 5:21c: That We Might Become the Righteousness of God.

1. This is often referred to as the greatest exchange in all of history. My dirty rags for His holy and pure ones.
2. As **2 Corinthians 5:17** says, the child of God is a new creation in Christ Jesus. As His child, by virtue of His sacrifice, we have the working power of God in us...a power that, among other things,...
 - A. gives us new life (Gal 2:20) hungering and thirsting for righteousness (Mt 5:6) as we live in the freedom of His forgiveness (2 Cor 3:17);
 - B. conforms us increasingly into glorious His image in character and conduct (Ro 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4);
 - C. make us fruity...that is, marks our life with the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control;

and so much more. Oh, how I wish we could camp here for a couple of hours! How glorious it is to read of the transformation, hope, and assurance of victory we have in Christ.

VI. Closing: Trust Jesus

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” - **2 Corinthians 5:21**

1. Is this Good News for you? **In order to be a Christ follower, you must trust Jesus with your life**...indeed, one that knows Jesus as Lord will desire to live his or her life for Him.
2. The trust in view is a firm belief that (a) Jesus is our sinless Lord, (b) **He did go to the cross, where He died for you**, (c) that He defeated death, **and (d) that He invites you into His victory**. This trust is in the person of Jesus Christ as presented in the Bible and NOT in some form of man determined religion.

If you have, but never confessed this trust and invited Christ to be your Lord, you are ready to become a Christ follower. **If this is you, please join me in this prayer. Get rid of the noise and the doubts...**

2 Corinthians 5:21 Made to be Sin

I. Opening: Short Story On Jesus Becoming Sin

II. Introduction: The Gospel in One Verse

- The gospel in one verse...just 20 words.

Additional Scripture References: 2 Cor 5:21

III. 2 Corinthians 5:21a: Jesus had NO Sin

- That Jesus was sinless is a witness to His character and it distinguishes Him as Lord.
- We no longer have to bear the penalty of sin for Jesus did that for us!

Additional Scripture References: He 14:15; Ex 12, 20; He 9:22; Jn 1:29, 18:38; 1 Pe 2:22, 1 Jn 3:5, 2 Cor 5:21; Jn 8:46; Mt 26:59-60; Ro 5:10, He 10:12; Acts 1:9-11

IV. 2 Corinthians 5:21b: Jesus Became Sin for Us

- Biblical grace is life transforming and comes at an enormous cost. This grace pours from God's never-ending well of His transformation love.

Additional Scripture References: Is 53:4-6, NLT

V. 2 Corinthians 5:21c: That We Might Become the Righteousness of God

- The greatest exchange in all history...our dirty rags of sin for His glorious holiness.

Additional Scripture References: 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20; Mt 5:6; 2 Cor 3:17; Ro 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4

VI. Closing: Trust Jesus

5-Day Devotional **2 Corinthians 5:21** **Made to Be Sin**

Day 1: The Sinless One

Reading: He 4:14-16; 1 Pe 2:21-24

Devotional: Jesus stands utterly unique in human history—fully God, fully man, yet completely without sin. He faced every temptation we encounter, yet never yielded. This isn't merely impressive moral achievement; it's the foundation of our salvation. Only a sinless sacrifice could satisfy God's perfect justice.

Today, reflect on what Christ's sinlessness means for you personally. He understands your struggles intimately, having faced them Himself, yet He offers more than sympathy—He offers victory. Because He was tempted and remained pure, you can approach His throne confidently, knowing He both understands your weakness and provides grace to overcome. His perfection wasn't distant holiness; it was love made tangible for your redemption.

Day 2: Becoming Sin

Reading: Isa 53:4-12; 2 Co 5:21

Devotional: On that dark Friday, something incomprehensible occurred. The sinless Son bore the weight of every rebellion, every betrayal, every hidden shame—yours and mine. He didn't become sinful in nature, but stood in our place, receiving the punishment we deserved. The Father, who cannot look upon sin, turned His face away, and Jesus cried out in anguish. This wasn't theatrical suffering; it was the actual cost of your redemption. Consider the depth of love required for such sacrifice. He willingly embraced separation from the Father so you would never have to.

Today, sit with the weight of what your sin cost Him, not to wallow in guilt, but to marvel at grace that would pay such a price.

Day 3: The Cost of Grace

Reading: Ro 5:6-11; Eph 2:1-10

Devotional: Grace isn't cheap sentimentality or casual forgiveness. Biblical grace cost God everything. While we were still sinners—actively rebelling, indifferent, hostile—Christ died for us. This grace doesn't minimize sin; it confronts its full horror at the cross. Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned against "cheap grace" that demands nothing and transforms nothing. True grace radically reorients our lives. It's not a license for comfortable religion, but a call to costly discipleship.

Today, examine your understanding of grace. Have you reduced it to mere forgiveness without transformation? God's grace is a treasure chest offering daily power for holy

living. It demands your whole life because it gave everything for your redemption. Receive it fully, and respond with surrendered devotion.

Day 4: New Creation Identity

Reading: 2 Cor 5:14-21; Gal 2:20

Devotional: The moment you trusted Christ, the greatest exchange in history occurred. Your filthy rags for His perfect righteousness. Your death sentence for His abundant life. You are now a new creation—not merely improved, but fundamentally transformed. The old has passed; the new has come. This isn't aspirational language; it's present reality. God's Spirit now dwells within you, conforming you to Christ's image, producing fruit that reflects His character.

Today, live from your new identity rather than striving toward it. You are already righteous in God's sight through Christ. This truth doesn't promote complacency; it empowers transformation. When temptation whispers your old name, remember who you truly are—beloved child, forgiven saint, new creation in Christ Jesus.

Day 5: Trust and Transformation

Reading: Ro 8:28-39; Phil 2:12-13

Devotional: Trusting Jesus means more than intellectual agreement about historical facts. It's firm, life-orienting belief that surrenders control and embraces His lordship. You trust that He is sinless, that He died for you specifically, that He conquered death, and that He invites you into His victory. This trust transforms everything—your priorities, relationships, fears, and hopes. God's power now works within you, creating both the desire and ability to live for His glory.

Today, examine where you're holding back trust. What areas of life remain under your control rather than His lordship? True trust produces visible transformation—love replacing selfishness, joy transcending circumstances, peace amid chaos. Confess Jesus as Lord not just with words, but with surrendered living. His resurrection power is available for your daily transformation.

Small Group Study Guide

2 Corinthians 5:21

Made to Be Sin

Opening Prayer: Begin by thanking God for the sacrifice of Jesus and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to His truth.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Jesus had NO sin (He was perfectly sinless)
2. Jesus became sin for us (He bore our penalty)
3. We might become the righteousness of God (the great exchange)

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. **Understanding Jesus' Character:** The sermon listed many attributes of God (holy, eternal, faithful, loving, just, etc.). Which of these attributes is most meaningful to you personally right now? Why?
2. **The Necessity of Sinlessness:** Why was it essential that Jesus be completely sinless in order to be our sacrifice? What would have changed if He had sinned even once?
3. **Evidence of Sinlessness:** The sermon provided several witnesses to Jesus' sinlessness (Pilate, disciples, His own challenge to enemies). How does this evidence strengthen your faith? What questions does it raise?
4. **Personal Reflection:** How does Jesus' perfect obedience to the Father challenge or encourage you in your own walk with God?
5. **The Weight of the Cross:** The opening narrative described sin "converging" on Jesus—not just placed upon Him but "counted as His." How does this image deepen your understanding of what happened at the cross?
6. **The Cost of Grace:** The sermon contrasted "cheap grace" with Biblical grace. What are some examples of cheap grace you've seen in modern Christianity? What makes Biblical grace costly?

7. Isaiah's Prophecy: Read Isaiah 53:4-6 together. How does this Old Testament passage, written 700+ years before Christ, impact your understanding of God's redemptive plan?
8. The Father's Forsaking: Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What does this moment reveal about the cost of our salvation? How should this affect how we view sin?
9. The Great Exchange: Describe in your own words what "the great exchange" means. How have you personally experienced this exchange in your life?
10. New Creation Living: According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, believers are "new creations." What evidence of new creation should be visible in a Christian's life? What evidence do you see in your own life?
11. The Fruit of Righteousness: The sermon mentioned the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Which fruit do you see growing in your life? Which needs more cultivation?
12. Transformation Process: Romans 8:29 says we're being conformed to Christ's image. What does this ongoing transformation look like practically? Where do you need transformation most right now?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Practicing Gratitude: Each day, spend 5 minutes reflecting on one aspect of Jesus' sinless character and thank Him for being your perfect substitute. Journal about how His perfection covers your imperfection.
2. Awareness of Sin: Since Jesus bore the weight of sin, take time to honestly assess areas of sin in your life. Confess these specifically to God, receiving His forgiveness and asking for transformation. Consider: Are you treating sin casually or with the seriousness it deserves?
3. Grace Audit: Examine your life for "cheap grace"—places where you're taking God's grace for granted without allowing it to transform you. Identify one area where you need to move from cheap grace to costly discipleship.
4. Reminder of Identity: Write out 2 Corinthians 5:21 and place it somewhere you'll see daily. When you face temptation or condemnation this week, remind yourself: "I am the righteousness of God in Christ."

5. Share Your Story: Prepare to share with one person this week how Jesus' sacrifice has changed your life. Focus on the "great exchange"—what He took from you and what He gave you.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Thank God for sending Jesus as our sinless substitute
- Confess areas where you've taken His grace for granted
- Ask for power to live as new creations
- Pray for anyone in the group who needs to trust Jesus for the first time

Discussion Questions

2 Corinthians 5:21

Made to Be Sin

1. How does understanding Jesus as both fully divine and fully human deepen your appreciation of His willingness to bear the weight of sin on the cross?
2. In what ways does the concept of Jesus being 'made sin' for us challenge or expand your understanding of the justice and mercy of God?
3. Why was it essential that Jesus remained sinless throughout His life, and how does this truth impact your confidence in His sacrifice for you?
4. What is the difference between 'cheap grace' and biblical grace, and where might you be tempted to settle for cheap grace in your own spiritual life?
5. How does the reality that Jesus experienced separation from the Father on the cross inform your understanding of the cost of your redemption?
6. What does it mean practically to become 'the righteousness of God' in Christ, and how should this identity shape your daily choices and relationships?
7. Isaiah 53 prophesied the suffering servant hundreds of years before Christ. How does fulfilled prophecy strengthen your trust in the reliability of Scripture and God's redemptive plan?
8. The sermon describes God as 'knowable, but not exhaustible.' How does this paradox affect the way you approach your relationship with Him?
9. If the sacrificial system from the Old Testament pointed forward to Jesus, how should we read and apply Old Testament passages about sacrifice today?
10. In what specific areas of your life do you need to move from merely knowing about Jesus to actively trusting Him as Lord?

Dinner Conversation Starters

2 Corinthians 5:21

Made to Be Sin

1. The Weight of Sin and the Love of God

The sermon described every sin—“every whispered lie, every violent thought”—being counted as Christ’s on the cross. How does thinking of sin this way change how we view Good Friday? Does it change how seriously we take our own sin? How does it deepen (or challenge) your understanding of God’s love?

2. Jesus’ Sinlessness: “So What?”

We heard that Jesus “knew no sin” and that this mattered so He could be our perfect sacrifice. Why do you think it’s important that Jesus was completely without sin? If someone asked, “Why does it matter that Jesus was perfect?” how would you answer? Does His sinlessness make Him feel distant or more trustworthy to you?

3. Cheap Grace vs. Costly Grace

The sermon contrasted “cheap grace” with true, biblical grace that cost Jesus His life. What do you think “cheap grace” looks like in everyday life or in churches? Where are we tempted to want forgiveness without real change or obedience? How can our family honor the “costly” grace of Jesus in how we live and treat others?

4. The Great Exchange

We heard about “the greatest exchange in history”: our dirty rags for Christ’s righteousness. In your own words, what does it mean that we “become the righteousness of God in Him”? How might your life look different if you really believed you were fully forgiven and made new? Can you name one area where you’ve seen God already changing you?

5. Trusting Jesus with Your Life

The sermon ended by saying that to follow Christ is to trust Him with your whole life. What do you think it practically means to “trust Jesus” this week—not just believe facts about Him? Is there any area of life (school, work, relationships, future plans) where it’s hard to trust Him? What is one specific step of obedience or surrender each of us could take in response to what Jesus did on the cross?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

2 Corinthians 5:21

Made to Be Sin

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Jesus Took Our Punishment So We Can Be Close to God**: Jesus “became sin for us” so we could be close to God and forgiven. When you disobey (lie, grab a toy, say unkind words), there is a “penalty”—like a time-out or a consequence. Jesus took the biggest “time-out” for our sins on the cross, so now we can come to God, say “I’m sorry,” and know He forgives us.

Discussion Questions:

- a) When you do something wrong, how do you feel inside?
 - b) What do you think Jesus wants you to do when you feel that way?
 - c) Next time you hurt someone with your words or actions, how can you remember that Jesus already paid for that sin and wants you to tell the truth and say sorry?
2. **Choosing Kindness When Friends Are Mean**: Because Jesus was sinless and took our sin, we are called to live differently—more like Him. When friends say, “Don’t play with her,” or “Let’s laugh at him,” you can remember that Jesus took your wrongs and gave you His goodness. That means you can choose kindness instead of meanness.

Discussion Questions:

- a) What should you do if kids at school are making fun of someone?
 - b) How can you show Jesus’ love to someone who is left out?
 - c) If you join in being mean, how can you make it right afterward?
3. **Being Careful with Screens and Shows**: Jesus was pure and without sin; following Him means we take sin seriously, even in what we watch and listen to. Some shows or videos make bad things look funny or okay—like disrespect, lying, or hurting others. Because Jesus died for those sins, we don’t treat them as jokes.

Discussion Questions:

- a) How can we tell if a show is okay for us to watch as a family who loves Jesus?
- b) What should you do if a video or game makes you feel yucky inside or shows things that are wrong?
- c) Who can you tell if you see something online that you know isn’t pleasing to Jesus?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Taking Sin Seriously—Even When “Everyone Is Doing It”**: The cross shows that sin is so serious Jesus had to die for it; “cheap grace” says sin is no big deal. You might see friends cheating on homework, lying to teachers, or gossiping in group

chats. It's easy to think, "It's not a big deal." Good Friday reminds us sin cost Jesus everything.

Discussion Questions:

- a) Can you think of a time friends wanted you to do something you knew was wrong (cheating, lying, gossiping)? What did you do?
- b) How does remembering what Jesus paid on the cross change how you think about "small" sins?
- c) What is one specific situation at school or in your friend group where you need courage to do what's right?

2. **Living the "Great Exchange" in Digital Spaces:** Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness; our online choices should reflect that new identity. In chats, DMs, or game chats, it's easy to hide behind a screen—sharing hurtful memes, excluding others, or using harsh words. Being "the righteousness of God in Him" means we represent Jesus even when nobody sees us.

Discussion Questions:

- a) Have you ever seen someone being made fun of in a group chat or game chat? How did you feel?
- b) What could it look like to be like Jesus in that moment—what could you say or not say?
- c) If you have already sent something unkind or joined in, what would a Jesus-like response be now (apology, deleting, reaching out to the hurt person)?

3. **Costly Grace and Peer Pressure:** The sermon contrasted "cheap grace" (forgiveness with no change) with real grace that calls for sacrifice. Sometimes following Jesus will cost you—maybe you lose popularity, miss out on a joke, or feel different because you won't join wrong behavior.

Discussion Questions:

- a) Can you think of a time when doing the right thing might have cost you something (friends laughing at you, not being "cool")?
- b) How can remembering what Jesus gave up for you help you give up something for Him?
- c) What is one "costly" choice you might face soon (party, language, media, copying answers), and how can we as a family support you?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Identity Online: Sinless Savior, New Identity:** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Online, there's pressure to build a certain image—perfect, funny, flirtatious, or edgy. The sermon teaches that your core identity isn't your "feed"—it's that you're in Christ: forgiven, made new, and righteous in Him.

Discussion Questions:

- a) How much do likes, comments, and followers affect how you feel about yourself?
- b) In what ways do you feel pressure to present a certain version of yourself online that doesn't fully match who you are in Christ?
- c) If you really believed you already have God's approval in Jesus, how might that change what you post, watch, or comment?

2. **Cheap Grace in Friendships and Dating**: Cheap grace says, "God forgives, so I can do what I want." Real grace changes how we treat others. You may hear: "It's just a joke," "At least we're not doing what other kids do," or "It's just online flirting." But if Jesus paid so much for sin, we don't treat people's hearts lightly—especially in relationships.

Discussion Questions:

- a) Where do you see "cheap grace" among people your age (using "God forgives" as an excuse)?
- b) In friendships or dating situations, what are some ways teens justify crossing lines Jesus died for (sexual joking, pressure, manipulation)?
- c) What might it look like for you to practice costly grace in a relationship—loving someone well even if it costs you comfort, popularity, or what you "want" in the moment?

3. **Standing Apart in Group Chats, Servers, and Social Circles**: Because Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness, we are called to live differently in the middle of "normal" culture. Group spaces can normalize trash talk, bullying, crude humor, and sharing questionable content. Being in Christ means your words and choices are different—even when that makes you stand out.

Discussion Questions:

- a) Think of your main group chats or online spaces: what kinds of things are considered "normal" there that don't match Jesus' character?
- b) What are some specific, practical lines you want to draw (what you won't send, laugh at, or support)?
- c) If stepping out of that behavior makes you seem "uncool" or even gets you pushed out, how does the cross (Jesus being rejected for you) help you endure that?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

2 Corinthians 5:21

Made to Be Sin

1. Identity

Bible Reference: 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Application: Your identity is not your “aesthetic” or brand; in Christ, you are already accepted, forgiven, and righteous before God. You don’t have to compromise to belong.

Scenario: In a group chat, everyone starts roasting someone who isn’t there. You feel pressure to drop a “funny” insult to stay relevant and liked.

Discussion: If you really believed you already have full acceptance in Christ, how would it change what you say (or don’t say) in that moment?

2. Temptations and Relationships

Bible Reference: Hebrews 4:15 – “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Application: Jesus understands your temptations in relationships and online life, but He never sinned. He’s not just an example—He’s your help when pressure hits.

Scenario: You’re messaging with someone you like. They start pushing for more flirtatious or sexual content, saying, “Everyone does this; it’s not a big deal.” What do you do?

Discussion: How does knowing Jesus faced real temptation (but didn’t give in) affect how you respond when you’re pressured to cross physical or digital boundaries?

3. Cheap Grace VS Costly Grace

Bible Reference: Isaiah 53:5–6 – “He was pierced for our transgressions... and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Application: Your sin cost Jesus His life. “Cheap grace” shrugs at sin; real grace makes you want to walk away from what nailed Him to the cross.

Scenario: Your friends share a “just a joke” meme that is clearly racist, sexist, or cruel, and ask you to repost or like it.

Discussion: If you picture that sin as part of what Jesus carried on the cross, how does that shape whether you repost, like, or stay silent?

4. Words, Chats, and Mental Health

Bible Reference: Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up...”

Application: Your words—spoken and typed—either corrode people or build them up. As someone made righteous in Christ, your tongue (and thumbs) are meant to heal, not harm.

Scenario: A friend opens up about mental health struggles in a private chat. Others respond with dark humor and dismissive comments. What do you do?

Discussion: How can your response in that chat reflect the building-up, grace-filled speech this verse describes—and what might you need to avoid saying?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.