

## Rest for the Weary

In this series of articles from John 2:23-25 we've been reminded that—although man looks on the outside—God looks on the heart. Sadly, after the Fall of Adam into sin, the heart of mankind exposes who we really are. In and of ourselves, we're sinners *desperately* in need of a Savior. Even though Jesus knows what's in the heart of man, he didn't leave us to die in our sins but provided salvation for sinners. Jesus lived the perfect life that we're required to live and went to the cross to pay the sin debt of all who turn to him by faith. That's why Romans 5:8 should never get old for genuine Christians. "...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We're saved—*not by what we do*—but by what Christ has already done on behalf of his people. That's why Romans 4:5 is so amazingly encouraging! "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."

One Reformed scholar has said that Christians can sometimes have a "seesaw theology: on opposite sides are our view of man and our view of God; when one is up, the other is down. The better we think of *ourselves*, the less we will care about *God* and his Word; the more we exalt God and his Word, the more humble and lowly we will be." He goes on; "For this reason, worldly churches are always churches that will not teach the truth about sin.... To be a godly church, and one in which God's power is at work, we must humbly admit and proclaim our sin and then wholly rely on the good news of God's grace for sinners in Jesus Christ." As we conclude today, I want to suggest a few ways that we can apply what we've learned in this series to our daily lives.

—Because Jesus knows us from the inside-out, there's never any need to pretend that we're better than we really are. We can, foolishly, weary ourselves trying to gain God's approval by our imperfect obedience. And because we've sought to obey on some level, we can wrongly believe that God is somehow bound to think well of us. And yet, if we think on what we've learned in this series, we know that God knows every sinful thought and imperfect deed and he chooses to save his people—not because of our imperfect lives—but because of Jesus Christ.

—Just like the miracles/signs that blessed many in Jesus' day, when wonderful blessings come into our lives it's right to praise God for his bountiful provision. And yet, God's many blessings can never be the *substance* of our belief in Jesus. We don't believe in Jesus based on what he provides for us materially. We believe in Jesus because our hearts have been opened, by the Spirit, to the truth of the amazing gospel of grace.

—As Christians continue to study God's Word we will see more clearly our willful disobedience as well as our daily shortcomings. And yet, we don't have to be discouraged because we know that God is at work to grant us repentance from our daily sins. By his Word and Spirit we're growing spiritually and are enabled, by grace, to be pleasing to God.

—Jesus is himself perfect, but he sympathizes with us. He knows the struggles and weaknesses that men and women face. "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.”  
Hebrews 4:15

—Because of Christ we can go to God in confidence with our prayers. “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

—Even as God knows that sinful and fallen mankind is fickle and hypocritical, he also knows and loves his *genuine disciples*. He hears our cries and sees our tears. He knows when we’re hurting and is always eager to come to our aid and give us relief as only he can do.

There’s so much more that we could add to our application, but this will suffice for now. May God graciously continue—by his Word and Spirit—to show us our sin and the answer for our sin in Jesus Christ. Even though we sin daily in thought, word and deed, may we continue to rest—not in our own imperfect righteousness—but in Jesus Christ who *himself* is our perfect righteousness. Jesus gives rest to the weary.

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