

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
“THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION” part 4
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Gracious heavenly Father, we are absolutely dependent upon Your grace this morning for us to understand anything of the supernatural ministry of the word of God. So, Father, we pray that Your Holy Spirit will lead us, and perform His job description of guiding us into all truth. And let it be done for Jesus' sake, that we might behold You more clearly. Amen.

The last couple of weeks, we've been in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, beginning at verse 17. Let me read that all the way down to the end of the chapter. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, beginning at verse 16. Today we want to come to the conclusion of this wonderful section on ministry. This is the word of the Lord from the 16th verse down to 21.

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: We've been talking the last couple of weeks about how God prepares us for ministry, and gives us the presentation of ministry. He prepares us for ministry by reconciling us to Himself. We talked about three important words—the word propitiation, in which God removes His wrath from us. God's wrath is appeased because of the sacrifice of Christ. We talked about the word reconciliation, where the alienation of God is removed from us. And third, we talked about expiation, which is the pardoning and the forgiveness of sins. Now those are the three concepts that deal with how God prepares us for the unique ministry He has given us. And notice, the presentation of our ministry is a verbal proclamation of the gospel of Christ. He has given us the message of reconciliation. We are not manipulators; we are messengers, we're ambassadors.

Now in verse 21, which we want to deal with today, it's a summary statement of how all of this is possible. So let me reread verse 21 of chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians. This is a summary verse, which talks about the reconciliation that occurred, why the reconciliation occurred, and why you and I now have the ministry of the message of reconciliation. “For our sake He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Now, if you were to ask me what is the most important word in all of the Scripture, if you were to tell me it is grace, I could not argue with you, because all of salvation is of

grace, unmerited favor. So I would not argue with you on that. Someone might say it's love, and I certainly could not find fault with that either, because God is love. We experience God's love in our salvation, so certainly God is a God of love. But if you were to ask me what is the most important single word in all the Scripture, in my mind it would be the little Greek word *huper*, which means "in behalf of." It's the word that we translate "for," or "in behalf of" in verse 21 of chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians. "He made Him, who knew no sin, to become sin in our behalf." It's the word *huper*. *Huper* is the Greek transliteration of the words "in behalf of."

Now let me explain why that's so important. The whole concept of the substitutionary work of Christ is really wrapped up in that one little word. It reveals the glorious doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ, which is the basis of our being new creatures, which we just read about. It's also the basis of our becoming ambassadors, which we just read about, and for us to proclaim the message of Christ.

Now the concept of the substitutionary work of Christ is the reason that you and I are new creatures in Christ. And the beauty of this concept that is translated "in behalf of," or "for," helps us to look at the one word this morning to help us understand the significance, because there are three dimensions of that word "for," or "in behalf of"—*huper*—that we need to take a look at.

I want you to notice, in this wonderful doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ, three aspects. First of all, the subjects of substitution, the sacrifice of substitution, and the satisfaction of substitution.

The subjects, the sacrifice, and the satisfaction. Let's first of all take a look at the subjects who are in this grand drama known as the substitutionary work of Christ. Now three persons are always found in any drama of substitution. Someone must determine that substitution is necessary. Somebody has got to determine that. Someone must be willing to stand in for the person who needs to be substituted for. And thirdly, somebody must be in need of a substitute. So somebody has to determine that substitution is necessary. There has to be a willing substitute who says, "I will be the substitute." And there is a third party who says, "I need to be substituted for."

Now in athletics, the coach determines that somebody needs to be substituted for. There's another player on the team who says, "I'm willing to be substituted for." And thirdly, there is a player who needs the substitution. So, in any grand drama of substitution, you're going to have three players. Someone determines, somebody is willing, and somebody needs.

Now, when you take a look at all these, let me introduce you to the three in this particular verse. First of all, let's take a look. The One who determines that substitution is necessary is God Himself. But one of the things I want to encourage you to do, men, is when you're looking at a passage of Scripture, look to see God behind the verses. Let me show you what I mean.

There are three players in this grand drama of substitution. The first One is God. This verse does not describe the God fashioned out of man's thoughts, or of our own imaginations. The God of this verse is the God of the Scripture, who is represented by three attributes found in this particular verse. In other words, look behind the words

when it says, “He became sin for us who knew no sin.” In other words, look behind those words, and say, “What do I see about the character and the nature of God?”

I see three characteristics of God’s nature in this word. “God made Him, who knew no sin.” When you take a look at that verb and that subject, “God made,” that is describing something about God. Let me give you three descriptions.

First of all, the God of the Bible is a sovereign God. “God made.” He is the one who determined that substitution was necessary. Only a sovereign God can do that. “God made.” He is a God who has absolute authority. He is a God who has absolute power to do exactly as He pleases. Therefore, He determines that substitution is necessary. There is no law higher than God’s law, no standard higher than God’s standard, for He is the standard of Himself. There is no will higher than God’s will. God does everything according to the counsel of His own will.

Let me read this quote from Charles Spurgeon about the God whom we worship. Spurgeon writes this about God’s sovereignty. You see, when you take a look at that phrase “God made Him, who knew no sin,” you take a look at that phrase “God made.” And you say, “Lord, help me to understand You behind those words “God made.” That’s all I’m doing. I’m looking behind the words and seeing God Himself.” That is how you want to have the greatest degree of Scripture study, to see God behind the words.

So here is what Spurgeon says about “God made Him, who knew no sin.” “Over the head of God there is no law. Upon His arm is no necessity. He knows no rule but His own free and mighty will. And though He cannot be unjust and cannot do anything but good, yet in His nature He is absolutely free, for goodness is the freedom of God’s nature. God is not to be controlled by the will of man, or the desires of man, nor by fate in which the superstitious believe. He is God, doing as He wills in the armies of heaven, and in this lower world also. He is a God, too, who gives no account of His matters. He makes His creatures just what He chooses to make them, and does with them just as He wills. God is good, but God is sovereign, absolute, knowing nothing can control Him. The monarchy of this world is no constitutional and limited monarchy. It is tyrannical. But it is absolutely in the hands of an all wise and sovereign God. He is the God of predestination, the God upon whose absolute will the hinge of faith does turn. This is the God of the Bible, whom we adore, no weak, pusillanimous God, who is controlled by the will of man, who cannot steer the ark of providence, and a God unalterable, infinite, and unerring.”

Now that’s what you see when you take a look at that phrase “God made Him, who knew no sin.” What does that mean—“God made?” It means that He is sovereign. God can do what He wants. That’s the God that he’s describing in this verse. So we need to understand, first of all, that the first attribute you see in this passage is that the One who determines that substitution is necessary, is that God is sovereign.

The second quality I would call to your attention is this. The God of the Bible is a just God. Not only is He a sovereign God, but He is a just God. You can see that in the sovereign description of His character in those words, “He made Him, who knew no sin.” He’s the One who determines that substitution is necessary. Now He could not have done

that if He were not sovereign. His justice is inferred in this passage, because Christ's sacrifice is a great plan to satisfy justice.

Again, let me describe this justice of a Holy God, as written by Charles Spurgeon. "The God of the holy Scripture is a God of inflexible justice. He is not the God that some of you adore. You adore a God who winks at your great sins. You believe in a God who calls your crimes peccadillos and little faults. Some of you worship a God who does not punish sin, but is so weakly merciful, so mercifully weak, that He passes by transgressions and iniquity, and never enacts a punishment. You believe in a God who, if man sins, does not demand punishment for his offense. You think that a few good works of your own will pacify Him, that He is so weak a Ruler that a few good words uttered to Him in prayer will win sufficient merit to reverse the sentence upon your sin, if indeed you think you ever sinned at all, or He ever passes sentence upon your sin. The God of Scripture is a Ruler, who when His subjects rebel, marks the crime, and never forgives them, until He has punished it, either upon them, or upon His appointed Substitute."

God is a God of inflexible justice. That's what you see in that verse. "God made Him, who knew no sin, to become sin *huper*, on our behalf."

Now the third quality I see in that phrase is this, that God is not only a sovereign God and a just God, but He is a God of grace. The God of the Bible is a God of grace and mercy. Now don't think that I'm contradicting myself when I say that the same God who is inflexibly severe and never pardons sin without punishment is also a God of supreme grace and mercy. As a Ruler He will chastise, but as a Father, He loves to bestow His loving blessings upon us.

Consider. Look at yourselves, brothers. Do you have saving faith? Are you new creatures? Then you know, more than anybody else, the gracious love and mercy of a holy God who is just, who is sovereign, and who is gracious, because you've experienced His love in your own salvation. Don't ever doubt God's love for you if you are in Christ, because you're a new creature. God is a sovereign God, He is a just God, and He's also a gracious and loving God. Don't ever doubt that, if you've experienced saving faith, because you know yourselves that you are new creatures.

Now the God in whom these three attributes harmonize—unlimited sovereignty, inflexible justice, and loving grace—is the One who determines that substitution is necessary. Let's look at the second player. The second player in this grand drama is Christ Himself, the Son of God.

Now notice the description of His perfection. He knew no sin, or had no sin, as some Bibles translate it. But it does not say this: "did not sin." There's a huge difference. We already know that Christ did not sin because of His sinless perfection and perfect obedience. But this says more. It says this: "He *knew* no sin." He knew no sin by thought, He knew no sin by birth, He knew no sin by original or actual sin, and He knew no sin of mouth, hand or mind. He was pure, perfect, spotless as a man could be, because of who He was, and who He is as God. He was a Person totally incapable of committing anything that was offensive to God. And He is the One who says, I will be the willing Substitute. God says that substitution is necessary. God the Son says, I'll be the Substitute.

Let's look at the third player. There are three players in any grand drama of substitution. Somebody determines that substitution is necessary. "God made." Christ says, I will be the willing Substitute. Who is the third player? Let's take a look at this. I've thought about the best way to describe this person, and I can't. All I would say is, look at yourself. Turn your eyes within, and look upon yourself. Examine yourself. Examine yourself, and you will see, if you're really honest with yourself, that you and I are the third persons in this grand drama of substitution. We are the ones who need to have a substitute. Be honest with yourself. You need the substitute; I need the substitute; we are the third players. We are the ones who are the offense to God. We are the ones who are His enemies. We are the ones who offended Him. We are the ones who need substitution. God is the One who determines it. Christ is the One who is willing. And you and I are the ones who need it.

So let's take a look at the sacrifice. We've seen the subjects in the grand drama of substitution. Now let's take a look at the sacrifice. "God made Him, who knew no sin, to become sin *huper* on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ." What about the sacrifice, the substitution? It says "to be sin for us." That's where you get the little word *huper*, for us. Now let me describe this sacrificial work and the sacrifice and substitutionary work of Christ in the mindset of the Hebrew person, of the Hebraic mindset. It's how they viewed this concept.

To understand this concept of substitution and the sacrifice, you've got to go to Galatians chapter 3, verse 13. On the cross Jesus is cursed by God. Now, when you and I think of a curse, we think of voodoo, or dolls and pins, or we think of it in terms of being irritated, like "curses foiled again." We have such a shabby understanding of this Hebrew concept of being cursed.

Now Paul is thinking of the cross in Old Testament terms. Look at the book of Deuteronomy. Blessings or curses were based upon obedience or disobedience. If you were obedient, you were blessed; if you were disobedient, you were cursed. The example would be Deuteronomy, chapter 28, verse 15. "Cursed be every aspect of your life, because you have forsaken Me." You see, that's the mindset that Paul is using. He is thinking about the cross in these Hebraic terms.

Participant: That's Deuteronomy what?

Bruce: Deuteronomy 28:15.

So what does it mean to be cursed? So what does he mean when he says that Jesus on the cross was cursed by God? Now the central benediction used by the Hebrew would be that found in Numbers chapter 6, verses 24-26. "May the LORD bless you and keep you. May the LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. May the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His peace." That is the most important verse in all of the Scripture to the Hebrew, because it talks about God's presence, in the form of the definition of the word "face." May God lift up the countenance of His face upon you, and give you peace. You see, the greatest desire for the Hebrew was for someone to see God face to face. That was his greatest desire. That's why Numbers 6 is the most important verse to the Hebrew, because he wanted to

see God face to face. To the Jews, the greatest blessing was to be able to look at God eyeball to eyeball, to see Him face to face.

Now they had experienced many miracles as a country—the deliverance from Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea. But the Jews were never, never satisfied with miracles, because the one thing they wanted was that they wanted the blessing of seeing God face to face. That’s why Moses asked God, “Let me see your face.” You see that in Exodus 33:18-23. But God said, “You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live.” You see, the greatest desire of Moses was, I just want to see Your face. God says, Moses, if you see My face, you can’t live. And so, he only saw the back side of God.

That is also why Jesus’ disciples asked him to “show us the Father” in John 14 verse 8, because they wanted to see God’s face. They wanted His presence. They wanted to be in His presence. You see, the Hebrew word for “face” means “presence.” He said, “I want to be in God’s presence, and I want to experience that.” And so they said, “Jesus, show us the Father.” They wanted to see His face. They wanted to be in His presence in John 14, verse 8.

And you notice that, after the Fall, an angel was placed at the garden to prevent man from seeing God. Blessedness, in the Hebrew mind, was measured in terms of how well and how clearly they could see God, in terms of being closer and closer, in the very presence of God.

Now that great desire is fulfilled for us in Christ, when we see a verse such as 1 John 3:2. “When He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is.” That is fulfilled in the Person and work of Christ. The great desire of the Hebrew nation was to see the face of God. That’s fulfilled only in the Person and work of Christ. If you’re a new creature, that will happen to you one day. You will be in God’s presence, and you will see Him face to face, because that great blessing and desire is fulfilled in the Person and work of Christ.

Participant: Praise God!

Bruce: But to whom is that gift given? Jesus answers that in the Beatitudes. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” So the great wish of the Hebrew is to see God.

Thus, the great curse would be the opposite, wouldn’t it be? If the great blessing was to see Him, the great curse would be the opposite. That means that God would turn His back. He would depart and leave them isolated from His presence in every phase of their lives. That was the great curse. He would remove His presence from them, and that was the great curse.

Now some people say that war is hell, and it is. But God’s presence can still be seen in hellacious war. Some say, “The situation I find myself in is hell.” Do not ever compare your earthly circumstances as hellish, compared to the absolute removal of God’s presence. If you want to experience absolute hell, that is the removal of God’s presence from you. Some say there is no lake of fire, but hell is separation from God. The worst thing that could happen to us is to be cursed by God, and to be out of His presence.

Now the Hebrew understood this knowledge. Let's take this to Good Friday. Now do you understand what I'm saying? You're either blessed by God's presence, or you're cursed by God's presence. That was the Hebrew mind. That is how Paul is writing this verse in 2 Corinthians 5:21. "God made Him, who knew no sin, to become sin in our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God." Now let's apply that to Good Friday, and the horrors of the cross. For the message of the cross is not the agonizing death, because of the joints coming apart, or the nails, or the spear in His side. Thousands died the same way, and many people had much more vicious deaths than Christ did. In fact, Christ's death on the cross was very short. The message of the cross is this: it is the curse upon Christ, as my Substitute. That's the message of the cross. It's not the nails. It's not the crucifixion. It's the fact that Jesus was cursed!

Now what does that mean? It means that God removed His presence from Him. The message of the cross is this, that God cursed His son upon the cross and removed His presence. It means this. Jesus is the only Man ever to have suffered the unspeakable horror of the unmitigated curse of God in His death. Jesus is the only Man who ever experienced the unmitigated horror of experiencing the unmitigated curse of God in His death. That's the pain of the cross, not the spear, the nails or the sword.

Several years ago, there was a movie called "The Passion of the Christ," by Mel Gibson. People said, "You've got to go see it." And I said, "No."

And they said, "Why not?"

I said, "Because it will never be gruesome enough."

They said, "I saw the movie, and it was so horrible."

How can it be horrible? You can't even compare the horribleness of the picture to the unmitigated curse of God. You see, my objection to the movie was that you can never describe the curse of God! It wasn't horrible enough! It wasn't terrible enough! And yet, we got all excited about the picture of the death of Christ being so horrible. It wasn't horrible enough, because you can't describe God being cursed! The Son of God was cursed! God removed His face from Him. Why do you think Christ cried out, "Eloi, eloi. Lama sabachthani?" Why have You cursed me? "Why have You forsaken Me?" It's because, at that moment in history, God removed His face from the Person and work of Christ, and, for the first time, a human being was experiencing the unmitigated horror of God removing His presence. That's the message of the cross. The Substitute was cursed, *huper*, on your and my behalf.

Jesus is the only Man who has ever suffered the unspeakable horror of the unmitigated curse of God in His death. Now compared to this curse, brothers, I'm not even sure that Jesus was aware of the nails or the spear, because at that moment in time, He was cursed by God.

You see, the significance of the cross is the mode of death. It was a Roman, pagan, non-Jewish form of death, to experience the curse of God as a Hebrew. Darkness comes over the earth. Why? Because God removes the light of His countenance from the Person of Christ. At that moment, everything went dark, because God removed His face from the face of the earth, from the presence of Christ, in the middle of the day, and God removes His presence. God cursed the perfect Substitute, the spotless Substitute *huper*,

on behalf of you, and on behalf of me. God turned out the lights by removing His presence. And Christ cries out, not from the nails, but because, as a Jew, he knew at that moment in time the horrors of being cursed by God, the curse of all curses. He cries out, “Why have You forsaken Me?” He wasn’t crying out because of the pain in His physical body. He’s crying out because of the pain of this: God had removed His face from Him, and He knew at that moment that He was cursed *huper*, on behalf of you and me.

Our Substitute drinks the cup. The lights are turned out, and He screams. He screams. That is hell, being cursed by God. But at the same time, the demands of God’s justice were met. And friends, I’ll tell you what, that is not fair. It is just, but it is not fair. It is not fair that Christ was cursed *huper*, for you or for me. But it is just, because God is a sovereign God, he’s a just God and he’s a gracious God. Inflexible justice! He must either punish the sin upon you, or punish the sin upon our Substitute. Our Substitute drinks the cup, the lights are turned out, and He screams. The demands of God’s justice were met *huper*, on behalf of us.

Now fairness would demand that we pay the price ourselves. But justice accepts a Substitute. Then God turns on the lights again. His presence returns to Christ. And Jesus says this, “Into Your hands I commend My spirit.” He is in the presence of God again. The atonement is over. The substitution has been completed. Satisfaction has been given, and we are free from the law of sin and death, as a result of this, *huper*, on behalf of you and me.

Now our Substitute says to us, “Come, My beloved. Inherit the kingdom, which My Father has prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And then God the Holy Spirit takes that message to work, and begins to apply it to the hearts, as the good news of the substitutionary work of Christ is preached. And dearly beloved, there is only one reason why any of us are in the kingdom of God. It has to do with satisfaction. God is satisfied, because substitution has been completed.

You see, there are three subjects, one who determines substitution is necessary, one who is willing to be the substitute, and one who needs to have the substitution applied to him. The sacrifice has been completed. The satisfaction has been accomplished. And the reason that you and I are now members of the kingdom of heaven, and the reason you and I are new creatures, is because of the satisfaction of the substitutionary work of Christ. Let’s just quickly talk about satisfaction.

Participant: May I ask you a question before that?

Bruce: Yes.

Participant: When God removes His presence, is that the same kind of thing as when the garden of Eden was closed up and gone, and that He would leave the Jews as they were coming out of Egypt? Is that the same kind of thing?

Bruce: No. There was only one time He ever removed His facial presence, and that was at the cross. Now, there are times when we don’t feel His presence near us. But there is still light, isn’t there? If you want to know what would happen if God removed His presence, the Scripture has already told you. What would happen? Darkness! You see, that’s why we are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light! You see, if you want to know what happens when God removes His presence, we already

know that. It goes black, because He has removed His face from us! So we have never experienced that yet. So the removal of His presence was in degrees, but not in totality. That only came at the cross. And we know what that would be like. If God removed His presence, it would be totally black, because we would be thrown back into the kingdom of darkness. That's why your salvation is always described in terms of being translated from darkness, from the curse, into light and into the blessing. That's because of the substitutionary work of Christ.

Participant: Being a father, I can't imagine what God went through Himself when it says, He made His Son to be sin.

Bruce: That's hard for us to understand. There's only one reason.

Participant: Yeah.

Bruce: God loved you enough. Do you understand that? How can you ever question God's love circumstantially? You and I have the audacity to say, "Things aren't going well at work. God must not love me." How absurd that is! How offensive that is! When God has substituted His Son at the cross, made Him a curse on your behalf, and you have the audacity to say, "I don't feel God's love!" What's wrong with you, men? My goodness, all you have to do is look at your salvation and know this. God loves me because of the substitutionary work of Christ! Grow up! Quit looking at circumstances! Look at your salvation! That's what Paul is saying! He's saying, God has reconciled you! That's the message you give to the world! Tell them about the substitutionary work of Christ! You've experienced His love! God loved you enough that He sent His only Son. He didn't form a committee! He sent His Son because He loved you enough. You see that in the cross! Yes, Dan?

Participant: I understand that Christ paid the price for our sins. But do we not have a little bit of a price to pay on our own, still?

Bruce: None.

Participant: None.

Bruce: None. That's paid for! That's the whole point of satisfaction. Now there are consequences to our sin. The payment of our sin has been covered. Why is it you and I feel guilty? Sometimes, because we choose to feel guilty. Oftentimes, we resurrect our guilt. You've got to realize that satisfaction has occurred.

Let me describe that for you. If we need to go into this in greater detail next week, I will. But satisfaction has occurred. God determined that substitution was necessary. Christ was the willing Substitute, and you and I were substituted for. Now here's the satisfaction. Satisfaction has occurred. God, the sovereign, just, gracious God, who determined that satisfaction was necessary, looks at the drama of substitution and says this: I'm satisfied. The exchange has been made. Christ the Son, the perfect, spotless, willing Substitute, looks at the drama of substitution, and He says this: I will see the fruit of the travail of My soul. He looks at you who are in Christ and says, It was worth it to go through hell *huper*, in behalf of you. Jesus says this: I am satisfied. You are the fruit of My obedience. Yes?

Participant: It would be accurate to say that we don't have any debt to pay like you were just saying. But I believe this, that God does sometimes discipline us who are his.

Bruce: That's different.

Participant: It's not punishment, but it's correction.

Bruce: That's different. There's a difference between payment and discipline.

Participant: Sometimes we see it, however, inaccurately.

Bruce: We look at it incorrectly.

Participant: But it's not punishment; it's correction.

Bruce: God disciplines those whom He loves! Accept this discipline as God's love! Do you understand what we're talking about? This is the greatest picture of God's love for you, the substitutionary work of Christ. He disciplines those whom He loves. But the payment has been taken care of, and God says, I'm satisfied. There has been a great exchange *huper*. Justice has been met. I'm satisfied. Christ says, I'm satisfied. It's taken care of. You are the fruit of My obedience, He tells you and me. And the persons who have the most difficult time accepting the satisfaction are us. By even your mere questions, you are implicating the fact that you don't understand, that I don't understand, that satisfaction has occurred! Your sin has been covered. You are now justified by faith alone. You've been given the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That's how He views you! You and I need to act like that now!

God the Father is satisfied with the sacrifice. God the Son is satisfied with the sacrifice. And God pity you, my friends, if you're not satisfied with a redemption like that. God pity you, if you live to derive your satisfaction from anything other than the substitutionary work of Christ—from your position, your possessions, the people you know, your positions in life. If you're deriving your satisfaction from those, you have no understanding of the satisfactory work of *huper*. And God pity us, men, if you and I are deriving our satisfaction from anything in life, except from the substitutionary work of Christ. May God have pity upon us, if we look to our work, to our jobs, to our families, to our children, to our wives, to our spouses, to derive satisfaction. That is the quickest way to destroy a family, to look for satisfaction in people.

Satisfaction is found in a Person, at the cross. God is satisfied. Christ is satisfied. Are you satisfied? Do you understand what the word *huper* means? The exchange has been made, *huper*, in behalf of you. Now do you understand why Paul says this? "But thanks be to God, who always," always, always "leads us in triumphal procession in Christ," because God the Father, who determined that the satisfaction is necessary, is satisfied! The exchange has been made. Christ, the willing Substitute, is satisfied, because the exchange has been made—Him for you!

Now, are you satisfied? Do you really understand the satisfaction you and I need to apply to our lives, realizing that God the Father is satisfied, and God the Son is satisfied? And you and I have the audacity to trust other things for satisfaction in life. Have pity upon us, men, if we do that, because that is an offense to God, because the inflexible justice of God has been met, and He alone is satisfied, because He is the one who determined that it was necessary. Yes, Dean?

Participant: Bruce, in our sins, how does this play out in our souls? Is He removed from us, because He can't be in the presence of sin? You know, when I'm sinning, is God not with me?

Bruce: Of course He is, because the exchange has been made. This is a great exchange. The substitution has occurred. God is inflexible in His justice. Remember the statement that God never lets sin go unpunished? He's either going to punish it in you, or He's going to punish it in our Substitute. *Huper* says this: He punished it in whom? In the Substitute! He didn't punish you. "The soul that sins, it shall die." Are you alive? Why? Because of substitution! "The wages of sin is death." Are you alive? Why? Because of substitution! You see, there has been an exchange that has been made! *Huper.* That's the significance of this word. The great exchange is that Christ paid for your sin. Are you satisfied with that? Or are you looking for other things in your life to derive satisfaction, to help you enjoy your experience in life? Have pity upon us, men, if we do that, because you have no understanding of the substitutionary work of Christ. *Huper.* That's why I say it's the most important word in all the Scripture, because it implies everything.

Participant: You know, there are some people who do teach that if you sin, God removes Himself from you. But Paul said, Wait a minute! There was *one* propitiation. Christ died once.

Bruce: Once for all.

Participant: He can't go back and die again, so you're covered!

Bruce: That's the satisfaction part, brothers. Do you understand this? God is satisfied with the exchange! He has paid the price for you. He took care of all of your sins.

You know, that's the beauty of justification. You get credit for what? The exchange that has been made! You get credit for what? The sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That's how God looks at you. You were justified by faith alone, because of this great exchange, because of the substitutionary work of Christ, because of that one little word, *huper*, in behalf of. Just think on that word, in behalf of. Yes, Dick?

Participant: Bruce, as you say that, for myself, and I would think for other men in this room, that we don't ever fully embrace the sinfulness of man, and what Christ did on the cross for us. I mean, I think daily, we get a greater understanding. I mean, I understand the concept of the imputed sin on our part, and the righteousness from Christ. But to really embrace and understand how wicked we are, and how gracious God is, I mean, I think that's a growing sensitivity.

Bruce: It's called Christian maturity.

Participant: Right!

Bruce: Maturity! That's how you mature in Christ! You see, it all starts with how you view sin. Remember Bishop Rodgers a couple weeks ago, teaching us the history of the doctrines of Arminianism and semi-Pelagianism? That all starts with your view of sin. If you believe that sin is just something that you do, and not something that you are, you're going to have a whole different view of the cross. If you have a low view of sin, you're going to have a low view of the cross. If you have a low view of the cross, you're going to have a low view of God. Now let's reverse it. If you have a low view of God, you're going to have a low view of the cross. If you have a low view of God, you're going to have a low view of sin. It works both ways. That's why I started with

understanding that when you look at the words “God made,” you see three characteristics of God. God is sovereign, God is just, and God is loving and gracious. You see that in those words. You’ve got to look behind the words of the Scripture, men, and see the character and nature of God, because your view of God shapes everything.

And so, you’re absolutely right, Dick. Our grasping this is an aspect of our Christian maturity. You know, we’re touching the real heart of God here. Do you understand the significance of that little word? I could just spend hours reflecting on this word *huper*, on behalf of me! It describes God’s love for me in my sinfulness. He did this on behalf of me! How can I not give Him loving obedience? That’s why obedience in the Scriptures is a love response. It’s not a duty! We have a duty to be obedient, but the motivation is this: it’s a love response to what God has given me in the substitutionary work of Christ. Why am I motivated to do good works? It is not to earn my salvation. It’s to express my gratitude for it, because I understand this. I understand *huper*. So I’m going to work my butt off, just to express my gratitude for *huper*. That’s your motivation! The reason you do good deeds is not to earn any merit. It’s to express your gratitude for your understanding of this great concept of the substitutionary work of Christ. That’s our motivation, men. It’s an attitude of gratitude. And we ought to be the most grateful people in the world, because God is satisfied. Christ is satisfied. The problem is, you and I are not, because we’re always looking for the next good deal.

You’ve got to understand that, in *huper*, satisfaction has occurred! And the reason that you and I are in the kingdom of God is one word only, and that word is satisfaction. It has been satisfied! That’s the message of reconciliation. Go preach that to the world. That’s your job. Tom?

Participant: Another thing people think is that, through the death of Christ, we have been cleaned up. We’re made clean now. And what I see in 2 Corinthians is not if anyone is in Christ, he is a renovated creature, he’s new.

Bruce: You’re brand new! And the reason? Satisfaction! Do you understand that? Next week, we’ll talk a little bit more about satisfaction. Would that be helpful?

Men: Yes.

Bruce: All right. We’ll do that next week to wrap this up. But the whole point of this is, God is satisfied, brothers. Christ is satisfied with the exchange, *huper*. We just need to figure out, am I satisfied with him, and trusting Him? Yes, Matt?

Participant: Just a question. Not that it matters, but the darkness over the land for the three hours? I always thought of that as regional. Do you think that was universal, that the whole world and the whole universe was dark?

Bruce: Yes, because He’s the Creator. All lights went out; the world was gone, as far as I understand it. The whole world was black for those three hours, and that’s because of this. God removed His face! He removed His presence. You see, that’s the significance of that great verse in Numbers 6 to the Hebrews. “May the LORD bless you and keep you. May the LORD make His face to shine upon you.” They wanted His presence. If you want to know what would happen if God removed His presence, you already know that. Darkness! And that is why your salvation is described in Colossians as being

transferred from the kingdom of darkness, which is away from the presence of God, into the kingdom of light, into His presence, because God is satisfied with the exchange.

Next week, we'll talk about satisfaction. May God help us understand the magnificence of that little word *hyper*, on behalf of.

Let us pray. Father, it's overwhelming, what we see behind the words of Scripture, because the whole design of Scripture is for You to reveal Yourself to us. Father, thank You for revealing Your character, your nature of justice, of mercy and grace, and Your sovereignty to us today in this little passage. Help us understand that You are satisfied, that Christ is satisfied. And may Your Holy Spirit develop within us a spirit of satisfaction in the Person and work of Christ alone, for Jesus' sake. And all the brave men said, "Amen!"