

# "The Great Exchange"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Five. We're at the very end of the chapter and we will just be covering one verse today because I thought this verse was so sweet, so rich, it warranted our full attention for this time.

I hope you have seen the theme working through Psalm 22, which then Jesus quotes on the cross. And I think what is behind that is revealed in what we will study today.

But I want you to think of the person who has hurt you most in your life. The person who has caused you the most pain. What would it take for you to forgive them?

What would it cost you to let go what they have done to you? Keep in mind I'm not talking about what it would take for them to make things right.

That's justice. What I'm talking about is forgiveness. A pardon. What would it take for you to not? What would it cost you to let their crimes go without them doing anything to make it up to you?

[ 1 : 14 ] That's forgiveness. We know that people in jail, they don't earn pardons when they finish their jail time. They either pay their time, do their time, or they get a pardon.

It is either justice or mercy. So here we're talking about forgiveness. An easy way to think of the cost of forgiveness is to think of money.

If someone owes me \$100 and I forgive that debt, it costs me \$100 to do so. I'm out that money. It doesn't appear in my pocket as soon as I forgive them.

When I forgive that debt, I'm the one who loses out. So when we forgive others, there's a price. Most of you will have at some point in your life been abused, betrayed, robbed, or despised.

If you forgave the person who did that to you, the cost was the treatment you suffered in the loss of vengeance or justice.

[ 2 : 31 ] Last week, we remembered that God has made peace with us. That he has brought forgiveness and reconciliation. We learned in verse 19 that God does not impute or charge our transgressions to us.

It says, that is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing, that is charging, their trespasses to them. He forgave us.

Now let's look at verse 21 and see what the cost of that forgiveness was. Verse 21, for he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.

That we might become the righteousness of God in him. This is the price of our redemption. Earlier, I gave the example of forgiving a \$100 debt.

We know that when you forgive, that money doesn't just appear back in your pocket. So too, when God forgives our sin, the wrath and the judgment that was waiting for that sin doesn't just disappear.

[ 3 : 50 ] It must go somewhere. That wrath is charged to Christ. Here we have the cross explained.

God forgives us in Jesus by punishing him for our sin. It says, he made. That is that God made Jesus to be sin.

Jesus is made to be sin in such a way that sinful humanity in all of its brokenness is united with him. Then the wrath that should fall on humanity, on evil, on us for our evil, falls on him. It's like if you imagine a man swapping coats with a Jew so that the soldiers would see his star and take him away instead of the Jew.

Jesus takes our sinful rags, not your clothes, but the clothing of your soul that's wrapped up in sin.

[ 5 : 06 ] He takes those onto himself, lays them on his own shoulders so that when the Lord punishes those who are stained with sin, he punishes Christ instead of you.

This is how God reconciles us. He doesn't impute our sins to us. Instead, he makes his son bear those very sins.

I mean, have you ever been wrongly accused? Have you ever paid the price for someone else's behavior? It's one of the things we hate the most in life.

Getting punished for that which we didn't do. Maybe you're a kid and your brother breaks the window, but you're the one who gets blamed for it. Or even worse, getting arrested for a crime that you didn't commit simply because you match a description.

Or someone accuses you falsely and you suffer loss of reputation, imprisonment, and all sorts of things, despite having done nothing wrong.

[ 6 : 21 ] But this is not what happens to Jesus. He does not have this forced on him.

People in those situations, the tragedy happened to them, not by their own choice. But Jesus chose to suffer this indignity, this injustice.

How bad it is when you are punished unwillingly for someone else's wrongdoing. What would it take for you to choose to be punished for someone else?

He chose to suffer. He wasn't framed, but he volunteered. Know this when you look on the cross.

This is no accident of history.

Jesus is not a hapless victim. Just another person crushed by oppressive rule. He is God in the flesh.

[ 7 : 24 ] Come to bear your sins away. Jesus knows exactly what he's here for. When he comes into Jerusalem, he knows what awaits him.

In John 12, verses 27 and 28, he says, Now my soul is troubled. That is, that he knows what is coming for him.

And his soul is troubled. But what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No. But for this purpose, I came to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. He knew what the price of your redemption would be. He knew it enough that it shook him to his core.

And his prayer here is not, Lord, lead me out of it. But this is exactly why I was put here. Notice, too, what is said of him in verse 21.

[ 8 : 31 ] He who knew no sin. It is more unbelievable because of this. It is hard to suffer for someone else's failures.

It is even more so significant to do it when you are completely guiltless. When you have never wronged anyone.

When you have been perfect in all that you have done and said. This is the pure and spotless lamb we are talking about.

Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus. And he was the one who's made to be sin. Christ Jesus.

Christ Jesus. Like, if I was to get wrongly accused for something, it would not be as much of an injustice as it is to Christ.

Christ Jesus. I mean, I've done bad things my whole life. And I've gotten away with many of them. I've lied and never been caught.

[ 9 : 32 ] I've been selfish and no one's realized it. I've used my money for my own pleasure. Time and time again. I've done sin and never had to pay for it.

And so if something unjust happens to me. Well, doesn't that kind of even the scales a little bit? I get away with things I didn't do and then I get punished.

I get away with things I did do and then I get punished for things I didn't do. It's kind of even, right?

But Jesus had no hidden sins to pay for.

You know, if someone is a murderer and while they're fleeing the scene of a murder, they get hit by a car, I don't feel so bad for them.

But when someone is at a soup kitchen and they get shot and mugged in an alley, I feel a bit worse.

So too, when we look and we see that the one who is punished for others' sins is the one who never sinned at all.

[ 10 : 47 ] It magnifies the nature of it. Jesus never did anything wrong. Like, we can't fathom this.

No one I have met is like this. I mean, some of you I've barely interacted with and I could probably come up with a way that I know that you've sinned.

We all sin and fall short of the glory of God, except for this man. There is no situation if you had his whole life laid out moment to moment that you would be able to say that was the wrong choice.

He wasn't loving there. Oh, he manipulated that for his own advantage instead of for the advantage of others. He is perfect. 33 years of sinless perfection.

If sin was a person and you asked him about each and every one of us, he could list all of our crimes.

[ 11 : 58 ] He would have mounds of firsthand knowledge of just how black and depraved our hearts are. But if you asked him about Jesus, he'd have nothing to say.

No secret vice to reveal. No hidden thoughts. Not even sins that are acceptable to the people around him. Nothing.

It's like being a plumber and finding after 33 years that one of your work shirts that you wear all the time is unstained and untormented.

It never happens. It's unthinkable. But that is this man. 33 years of sinless perfection.

The glorious, sinless Christ is the one who is united with all your filth and crime. He made him to be sin who knew no sin.

[ 13 : 08 ] He on that cross is cheated like he had cheated on his spouse. Like he had lied for his own gain.

Like he had stole, manipulated, lounged about lazily. Like he was uncaring and apathetic like we are. He who never sinned.

He who never sinned. Was treated like he had done every one of yours.

And if you, if you ever struggle and wonder whether Jesus was really sinless, like, I mean, come on, who could be that perfect?

Look to what the people who lived with him every day say. They spent three years with him day in and day out. They walked together.

[ 14 : 03 ] They ate together. They slept together. And here is what they say about him. Well, I mean, these are the people to ask.

I've met some great people in my life, but none of them have come even close to convincing me that they're perfect. You could not ask me about anyone in my life.

And I would tell you that they're perfect. Not a single person. Yet these people, this is what they say. First Peter 2, verses 22 and 23.

Peter, who lived with Christ every day for three years, says of Jesus. Jesus, who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth.

Who, when he was reviled, did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously.

[ 15 : 09 ] And if you think that they just said that, that they made up a hero, know that they went to their grave for preaching those truths. If I want to make up a lie for my own advantage, I drop that lie when people are trying to kill me for it.

You know? So if they say that he had no sin, you can trust it. Know that on that cross that Jesus willingly chose, the father treats the spotless son like a murderer.

The good shepherd is treated like a murdering, idolatrous, adulterating, homosexual, greedy, drunken, reviling, swindling thief.

The one who never sinned is treated like that. So why? Why would this happen?

I mean, that's about the greatest miscarriage of justice that I can ever imagine. This happened because such were some of you.

[ 16 : 32 ] Because those very sins that he was treated for were your crimes, were the things that you did wrong. Because we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53, 6. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. On that cross, your crimes are what he is paying for.

He was made to be sin. Consider this. Habakkuk 1, 13 says of God, You are of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on wickedness.

God could not look on you because of your filth. Because of my filth. And the spotless son of whom he says, I am well pleased, is made to be so vile that the father turns his face away.

His wrath is poured out. That's why Jesus cries, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Because he is made to be sin and the father is of purer eyes than to look on it.

[ 17 : 52 ] And instead of the loving face shining on the sun. Wrath is turned against him. How deep the father's love for us.

How vast beyond all measure that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure. How great the pain of searing loss.

The father turns his face away. As wounds which mar the chosen one bring many sons to glory. This is what happens on that cross.

That the wrath of the Holy Father is poured out on the spotless son so that wretched sinners might go free. It's like the lambs on the day of atonement.

If you read in Leviticus 16, you will learn about the Jewish day of atonement ritual. Where God instructs them to kill one lamb as a sacrifice for sin.

[ 18 : 59 ] And then they would take another lamb. They would place their hands on it to show a symbol of them putting their sins on this lamb. And then they would send it into the woods.

That is just like our sins are laid on Jesus. Our iniquities. He was made to be sin.

And then he carries them far away. Your sins are carried far away in Christ. When he makes him to be sin.

There is therefore now no condemnation for you who are in Christ Jesus. Once Jesus pays for them, you are free. No more wrath exists for you.

If he makes the spotless son pay for it, there is no more price left. And see why the Lord of glory would leave his throne to endure this.

[ 20 : 06 ] See why the king of righteousness would be crushed as a sinner. He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.

For our sake, for your sake. He was crushed. He did that for you. You know what the point of all of this, of the cross, of all of the suffering, of the wrath being poured out?

It was for you. God looked. God looked. And he knew that Elorian and Sybil and Andy and Tony, that all of you would be here.

And he said, this is the way in which I will take their sins. I will send my son to die and I will make him to be sin. This is the price of our salvation.

Come behold the wondrous mystery. Christ the Lord upon the tree. In the stead of ruined sinners hangs the lamb in victory.

[ 21 : 23 ] See the price of our redemption. See the father's plan unfold. I mean, will you put your trust in this Jesus?

What greater price has anyone paid for your life? Who has a higher bid? Who has done more for you than this man?

Than this son of God? Will you receive this? Or will you trash it? Will you hear this beautiful price that was paid for you?

And then throw his story in the trash and go live for your TV, for your relationships, for your job, for your health, for the approval of others? Will you live for these instead of him?

Who died for you? If you have trusted in Jesus, this is the price paid. This is the cost of your forgiveness. Paid by God himself.

[ 22 : 38 ] But see the purpose of God roll even further out. Why did God make him to be sin? Well, the second half of the verse, that you might become the righteousness of God.

When Jesus is busy being made like your sinfulness, God is busy making you into his righteousness. This is the great exchange.

This is your trade with Jesus. This is what you get out of it. Your criminal record, your crimes, your rap sheet is given to Christ.

And his faithfulness, his perfection, his station, his love from the Father becomes yours. Who's ever gotten a better deal than that?

Your sins, you give them up, he pays for them, and you get all of his righteousness. God looks on you and he sees his son.

[ 23 : 52 ] And he sees you like he sees his son. Will you accept this trade? I mean, is the deal sweet enough for you?

Is there anything else? Like, this is not an infomercial. You don't need a, but wait, there's more. This is everything. All you have to do is bring your debts and give them to him.

If you will let them go and put them on him, he will bear them all away. And you can have Christ's righteousness. Mary, I have a deal to offer you.

If you let me pay your next phone bill, you can have the check for \$100. Deal? Deal? It's an exemption.

Yeah. That's just a small example of what Christ does. You can have the Savior.

[ 25 : 05 ] But that's just a small example. That's a real check, by the way. That's just a small example of what Christ does. He pays our bills. And in return, he gives us his riches.

I mean, what love is this? You would be a fool to turn it up. Notice, too, how this all comes about. That we might become the righteousness of God in him. You aren't saved with Jesus. You aren't his plus one at the gym getting in on his membership. You are his bride. His body. You are united with him. The only way you can have this salvation is if you are joined with him like a wife is joined to his husband.

[ 26 : 06 ] And even more than that. Listen to how Ephesians 5 verses 31 and 32 speaks of this. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.

And the two shall become one flesh. That's marriage. No, that's not what Paul says. Paul says, this is a great mystery.

But I am speaking of Christ and the church. That the son leaves the father and becomes united with his wife, his bride, the church, you and me.

When we believe on Christ, when we really and truly believe, we are united with him. And this union is how we are saved.

Like a poor family being saved by marriage with a rich family. Like a family with a bad reputation marrying a family with a good reputation to bring honor and respect.

[ 27 : 14 ] We bring nothing to this wedding. But our filthy garments. We bring nothing but our husband is pleased to have us in all of our emptiness.

In all of our barrenness. He says, that is my bride. And I will love her till the end. We are joined with him.

And this is how he can pay for our sins. Because he can't just randomly get your sins. And you get his righteousness.

No, it is done by your joining with him. When it says he made him to be sin. It speaks of God uniting you with Christ.

Uniting you and all of your sinfulness with Jesus. He becomes one with us. And one with our sin too.

[ 28 : 18 ] This is the way that he can pay. Because if he has been united with our sin. Then too, when he is punished, our sin can be punished.

And this too is how we become God's righteousness. When you are married to him. In that wedding, we become one with the righteousness of God.

And all you have to do is accept his proposal. Jesus, down on one knee, says, repent and believe. And marry me. And all you have to do is say, I do, I will. I will receive you, Lord. Do not think that you have to be good enough.

He proposes to you in your rags. Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest. This beautiful wedding is only for those who aren't good enough.

[ 29 : 24 ] Is only for those who know that they aren't good enough. And that their only hope is in a savior. That is this good. Let not conscience make you linger.

Nor a fitness fondly dream. The only fitness he requires is to feel your need of him. Does this not make perfect sense?

I mean, imagine a man marries a woman with mounds of college debt. Her debt becomes his. And all of his wealth becomes hers.

So, too, on the cross, you are married to Christ. Your debts become his. And his wealth becomes yours. That is what happens when you trust in him.

And just as the first part of this shows how God brings about our reconciliation. So, too, this being made the righteousness of God is the way that he makes us new.

[ 30 : 33 ] You'll remember a few weeks ago. I preached on 2 Corinthians 5.17. That tells us, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, all things have become new. This is how God makes you new. He makes you into the righteousness of Christ when he marries you together.

This newness is what God has made you to be. And if you have already been made the righteousness of God, then start acting like it.

If God has made you into his righteousness, how are you then going to go out and continue in sin? Live like you are.

If you're married, don't live like a single person. It's an affront to your marriage. If you're married to Christ and you have his righteousness, don't live like a sinner.

[ 31 : 40 ] Live like the wife of the perfect spotless husband. Hate sin, for you have seen what it cost your Savior.

Love righteousness, for you have seen at what price it was purchased for you. In this verse is a clear picture of the gospel.

For he made him to be sin who knew no sin. For us. So that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

I urge you to memorize this verse. It's short, it's sweet. Work it down into your hearts. Preach it to yourself daily.

Remember what it teaches. God has made the one without spot and blemish to be united so closely with yourself that he could be punished for all of your vileness and sin.

[ 32 : 45 ] Rejoice in this great salvation so rich and so free. Know of no better news.

No greater truth to speak than that the Lord of creation, the sinless, spotless lamb, would allow himself to be made sin for you.

And wrestle with God every day until your heart sings with joy at this. If you're tempted to be down, wrestle with these truths until there are tears in your eyes.

Be ready to sacrifice everything for the one who did this for you. Be ready to receive the best deal that you've ever had in this great exchange.

Let us close in prayer. Lord, Father and heavenly God, the one who would do such wonderful works as this. We confess that we are not righteous.

[ 33 : 54 ] But thank you that we have made us, that you have made us as righteous as your son.

Allow us to live out these truths and to rejoice in them every day.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.