



In an attempt to be a congregation that is God-centered, Christ-exalting and Holy Spirit-inspired, having a perspective assessment is a necessary thing. The natural sinful tendency of all Christians, and therefore church ministries, is to make more and more of man and less and less of God. But we must fight this perpetual drift. One of the foundational and most significant areas where this drift away from God-centeredness and into man-centeredness can occur is with regard to the gospel. The gospel is the “good news” that sinful men and women can be forgiven, cleansed, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and given the position of eternal children of God. But this is not all the Bible has to say about the gospel. The gospel continues in the Christian life as “good news” while the sinful, selfish and weak child of God is practically transformed into the image of the Lord with ever increasing glory.

If we drift with the gospel we will drift in everything. To protect this tendency we must understand what the Bible teaches about the gospel. In an effort to solidify our understanding, we will look at what the Bible has to say about the gospel as it relates to the believer’s justification and what the Bible has to say about the gospel as it relates to the believer’s sanctification.

## **The Initiation of the Gospel for the Child of God** **Justification – Accepting the Gospel**

### **The Gospel is God-centered**

It is impossible to understand the gospel biblically if we do not understand what it is to be God-centered. God is the sovereign Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of His world. (The Eternal Glorious God is illustrated in Figure 1.) His triune glory is superior to everything and it always will be. Since this is true, God is not at fault to be self-exalting, because to exalt anything else above His own glory would be idolatry. Since God is properly God-centered it is reasonable to conclude that His people should be God-centered. Or to state it another way – God is joyously passionate about His own glory and His people should be as well. With that understanding firmly in place we must acknowledge that God will never set aside His sovereign glory for anyone at anytime.

Isaiah 48:9 & 11 *“For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.... For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? **My glory I will not give to another.**”*

## The Eternal Glorious God

The triune God exists in glorious eternal contentment and makes Himself known to sinful men



Figure 1

### It's Not About Man

The fact that all God does He does for His glory demands that we joyfully affirm that the gospel is God-centered and not man-centered. God does not pursue man's salvation for the sake of man, but for the sake of His glory. This has been consistently expressed in the Old Testament regarding man, Israel and the new covenant.

Isaiah 2:22 *"Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for **of what account is he?**"*

Jeremiah 17:5 *"Thus says the LORD: **Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength**, whose heart turns away from the LORD."*

Ezekiel 36:22–23 *"<sup>22</sup> Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: **It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup> And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes."*

Ezekiel 36:32 *"**It is not for your sake that I will act**, declares the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel."*

### God's Glory Provides Security

God's commitment to Himself above man is a source of great security to His followers. Since the gospel of our salvation is for the glory of our God, the assurance of our salvation is not established or sustained by our devotion to God, but by His devotion to save us to the glory of His grace. Because of God's devotion to His glory in salvation, we are the recipients of unmerited favor and we are as secure in Him as He is glorious. When God created man, it was for His glory. When God recreated man through the gospel, it was for His glory. Man is created for the glory of God and man is saved for the glory of God. All of earthly life and all of eternal life is for the glory of God.

Isaiah 43:7 "...everyone who is called by my name, **whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.**"

Ephesians 1:4–6 "<sup>4</sup> ...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> **to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**"

Ephesians 1:11–12 "<sup>11</sup> In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> **so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.**"

### **The Standard Of Good Is God**

God is not a corrupt egomaniac. God is the fully righteous and holy God who manifests His benevolence through saving compassion that satisfies true justice. God is holy and righteous and He is the standard for all that is good and righteous. What is good and just is not established by popular vote, but by the character and biblical communication of God. It is out of God's goodness and for His glory that God makes Himself known on the earth.

Deuteronomy 32:4 "*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*"

### **God Dwells In Unapproachable Glory**

The glory of God's righteousness and holiness is so intense He is unapproachable. He is not to be trifled with as if He were some play toy for man's entertainment. God is not an old grandfatherly figure full of passivity and cuddliness. God is not mankind's divine buddy. God is a righteous and just God, who abounds in love and compassion, who all men do well to fear.

Exodus 33:20 "*But,*" he said, "*you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.*"

1 Timothy 6:15–16 "...*He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,* <sup>16</sup> *who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*"

Psalms 33:8 "<sup>8</sup> *Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!* <sup>9</sup> *For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*"

Habakkuk 2:20 "*But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.*"

### **Understanding John 3:16**

If we do not understand God's righteous holiness we cannot appreciate the magnitude of His love and kindness. It is with full regard for His righteousness and justice that in love He sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. One of the most familiar verses to the general populous of the United States is John 3:16. Yet this familiar verse cannot be properly understood without a proper appreciation of the righteous justice of God. God's love is great because God sent His only Son into the world as a sacrifice of atonement. "*In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" (1 John 4:10) In this light we can see that John 3:16 is not the man-centered verse it is

often interpreted to be. "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16) This is a God-centered verse showing the significance of the justice of the God of love that was realized by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

The information that follows is not meant to be a rigid timeline, but a presentation of truths occurring at the time of salvation. Many things happen simultaneously and some things follow others as God moves in the hearts of sinful people with the gospel of justification.

## God's Pursuit of Sinners

In the light of God's glorious righteousness, the Holy Spirit regenerates and convicts men and women of their sinfulness

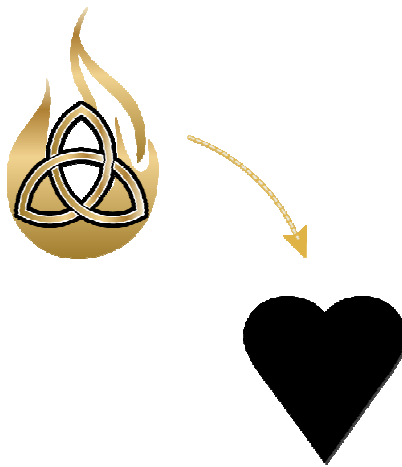


Figure 2

### The Arrows Of God's Influence

What does God use to bring about change in the hearts and lives of people? The initiative taken by God to reveal His gospel truth can come in a mixture of ways. God uses the general revelation of creation to speak to people (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20). God uses the circumstances of life (both blessing and hardship) to awaken people to His presence and His ways (Psalm 139:7-12; Isaiah 45:7; Matthew 5:44-45). God uses a person's conscience (Romans 2:14-15). God uses people and the church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; Colossians 4:5-6). God always uses His word in the Bible, books, pamphlets, song, and verbal communication (Psalm 19:7; 119:130; Romans 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Colossians 3:16; 1 Peter 1:23). God is the glorious and primary mover behind all these things as He effectually presses upon people and moves them according to His redemptive purpose. The gold arrows on these graphics are used to help illustrate the gospel of justification and depict God's influence as described above.

### Natural Man Is Spiritually Dead

Men and women will only appreciate God's gospel glory when their hearts are awakened to their sinfulness and God's righteousness by His grace. Divine initiative is essential because in their natural condition men and women are spiritually dead and insensitive to the things of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18 "**For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**"

1 Corinthians 2:14 "**The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**"

Romans 3:11 "...no one understands; no one seeks for God."

Romans 8:7 "**For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.**"

Colossians 2:13 "**And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our**

trespasses...”

## **Regeneration – The Gift Of Spiritual Life And Sensitivity**

God’s gospel work flows from an awareness of sinfulness resulting from the spiritual life God gives to those He came to save. Without spiritual life nothing happens. Regeneration is essential to awaken our awareness of God’s holiness and our personal sinfulness.

Ezekiel 11:19–20 *“<sup>19</sup> And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup> that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”*

John 3:3 *“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”*

John 3:5–8 *“<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’”*

John 6:44 *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”*

John 6:63 *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”*

John 6:65 *“And he said, ‘This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.’”*

1 Corinthians 12:3 *“Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”*

For unbelieving people to become responsive to the things of God, God must first grant them spiritual life.

## **Attention Please!**

When God moves to reveal Himself to man, He does so in a variety of ways. At times they are pleasant and at times they are painful, but they are always for His glory.

Isaiah 45:7 *“I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.”*

Ecclesiastes 7:14 *“In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other...”*

Lamentations 3:38 *“Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?”*

God may reveal Himself through creation, conscience, relationships, health, accomplishments, disappointments, failure, hurt or a variety and combination of many things. Through these stimuli people become increasingly aware of God and the eternal significance of life. This awakened awareness can cause feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, which bring about much soul searching.

## Sinners In Defiance Of God

As God continues in His saving pursuit of men and women He will use creation, people, the Bible, books, sermons, advice, etc. to direct the hearts of people to the truth. The truth is, God is the righteous authority in life, we are all violators of His standards and His justice demands our judgment.

Romans 3:10–12 *“<sup>10</sup> None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”*

Romans 3:23 *“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”*

We do not always display our sinfulness by doing what is overtly vile and wretched. We show that we are sinners by living self-absorbed, self-consumed lives making much of us to the dishonor and diminishment of God. This is also seen when we do “good things,” because we do them for self-satisfaction and self-glory, being completely insensitive to the fact that we bear the image of our Creator and anything “good” we do would only be a reflection of our Creator God.

## Born In Sin

We sin because we are sinners; we are not sinners because we sin. When we sin, we do what is natural. What is natural is to make much of us while disregarding God. This is what Adam did in the garden when He disregarded the instruction of God and thought he knew what was best and what he deserved. He bought into the lie of Satan that God was holding out on he and Eve, not wanting them to realize their full potential. He chose self-satisfaction over satisfaction with God and His ways. As the father of us all, the consequences of his decision are passed on to all of us as his descendents. In Adam we are all sinful from conception (Psalm 51:5) and subject to the just judgment of God, which is damnation in the torment of hell, separated from the blessing of God forever.

Romans 5:12 *“Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...**”*

Ephesians 2:1–3 *“<sup>1</sup> And **you were dead in the trespasses and sins** <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, **like the rest of mankind.**”*

Matthew 13:36–42 <sup>36</sup> *Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” <sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. <sup>41</sup> **The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***

Revelation 20:11–15 <sup>11</sup> *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.*

*From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. **And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.**<sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.<sup>15</sup> **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

### **Justice Demands Judgment**

God is love, but He cannot overlook the sin of men and women because God is also just. All sin must be punished. It cannot be ignored.

Galatians 5:19–21 “<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,<sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that **those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

Romans 2:8–9 “<sup>8</sup>...for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **there will be wrath and fury.**<sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek...”

Romans 6:23 “**For the wages of sin is death...**”

2 Thessalonians 1:9 “*They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might...*”

If we get what we deserve we receive the judgment of eternal separation from the blessing of God to experience eternal torment in hell.



## God Moves Sinners to the Cross

God uses the awareness of sinfulness to drive a sinner to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing

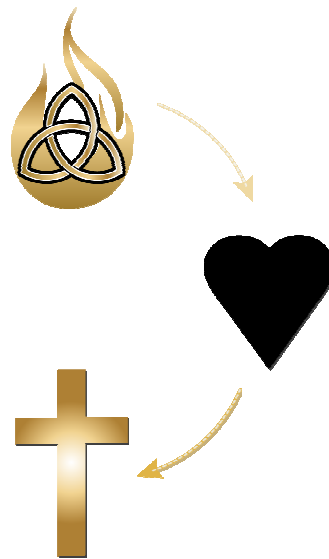


Figure 3

### Personal Effort Is Useless

The standard of God's righteousness is not revealed so we know what we need to do, it is revealed so that we realize we are sinners. God does not convict us of our guilt in regard to sin so that we will feel bad and try to do better by renewing our efforts to obey Him, go to church and be nicer to people. Feeling badly and trying to do better are not going to help us.

Romans 3:20 "*For **by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.***"

Galatians 2:16 "...yet we know that **a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**"

Since personal effort is useless the hope and help a sinner needs must be found outside of himself or herself. The Spirit of God brings deep conviction for sin and then presses the sinner to acknowledge their hope is found, not in the pursuit of personal betterment, but in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

### Jesus The Savior

Our hope is found outside of ourselves. Having violated God's righteous standard our sin has to be punished. We will either suffer eternally in hell or a sinless human sacrifice will need to be offered to appease the righteous wrath of God. The way of forgiveness and cleansing has been prepared by Jesus who took on human flesh, lived a sinless life and willingly gave Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of those who come to God by trusting the saving work accomplished by Jesus.

Romans 3:21–25 <sup>21</sup> *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—* <sup>22</sup> **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:**

<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."

Isaiah 53:5–6 <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and **the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**"

1 Peter 2:24–25 <sup>24</sup> **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.** By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

### The Holy Spirit Illuminates Jesus The Savior

It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of God's chosen that reveals the righteousness of God, the culpability for personal sinfulness and the reality of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life, shows the sufficiency of Jesus Christ and moves God's people to trust in Him alone as their salvation and righteousness.

John 16:8–11 <sup>8</sup> And when he comes [the **Helper – Holy Spirit**], **he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:** <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

Titus 3:4–7 <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit**, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The reality of God moving men and women's sinful hearts to the forgiving grace of the Savior is made known through humility and brokenness. This does not mean that a highly emotional response is necessary, but it does mean that deep contrition for sin is humbly realized before the Lord of glory. For many people this is a very emotional experience. For some it is not.

### Salvation Is All Of Grace

This is done completely by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This is the glorious and gracious work of God, not the work of man.

2 Corinthians 5:17–18 <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> **All this is from God**, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation..."

Ephesians 2:8–9 <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. **And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God**, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Since the Scripture is clear that salvation is all of grace, then the repentance and faith that are made evident are the result of God's grace as well. Yes, God's people respond with repentance and faith, but their response is not from their own unaided resources.

## God Gives Repentance and Faith

Repentance from the old man-centered way of life to faith in Christ and the promises of God

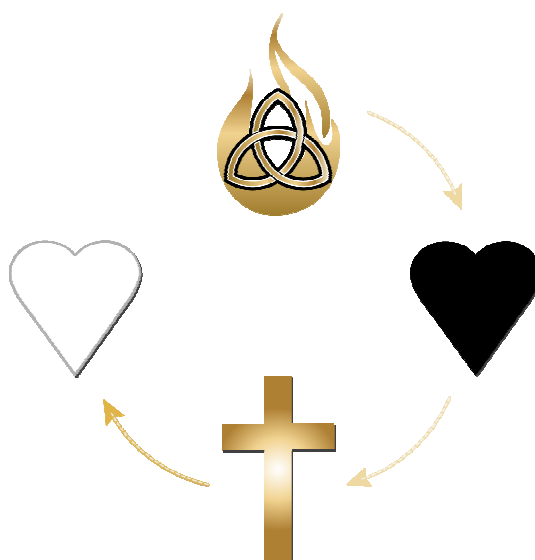


Figure 4

### Repentance And Faith Are Gifts

Repentance and faith are not the work of man; they are gifts of God. From the work of the Holy Spirit to drive us in our sinfulness to the finished work of Jesus, believers are inspired by God to manifest repentance and faith. Peter gave clear testimony to the Jewish leaders during the early days of the church that repentance and faith were gifts from God to Israel and consequently, they cannot be the work of man.

Acts 5:30–32 <sup>30</sup> *The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.* <sup>31</sup> *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, **to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*** <sup>32</sup> *And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”*

Later Peter again gave testimony to the leaders of the church in Jerusalem how he witnessed the evidence of the Holy Spirit at the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius and his household. The leaders of the church validated these conversions acknowledging that repentance was a gift from God and therefore, not a work of man.

Acts 11:15–18 <sup>15</sup> *As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.* <sup>16</sup> *And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’* <sup>17</sup> *If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”* <sup>18</sup> *When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then **to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.**”*

This same concept is reinforced by the Apostle Paul in his instructions to Timothy on the best way to handle opponents to the gospel ministry.

2 Timothy 2:24–26 <sup>24</sup> *And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,* <sup>25</sup> *correcting his opponents with gentleness. **God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,*** <sup>26</sup> *and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”*

Every aspect of salvation is the work of God on behalf of sinful men and women. God empowers us through His Spirit to respond to the gospel with repentance and faith so that salvation is fully the work of God and not the work of man.

1 Corinthians 1:30–31 “<sup>30</sup> And **because of him you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, “**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**”

### **Confession Of Faith**

Yes, true believers repent of their sins and call out to God in faith, confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord. But we must understand that before it was a confession of the lips it was a conviction of the heart made real by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:9–10 “<sup>9</sup> ...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

When we cry out to Jesus, we can rest assured God has already done an amazing work in our hearts. God brings joy and hope to our hearts because of the work of Jesus and we gladly confess Him as our Savior and Lord.

## God's Declaration of Righteousness

By Faith the People of God are credited with the righteousness of Jesus

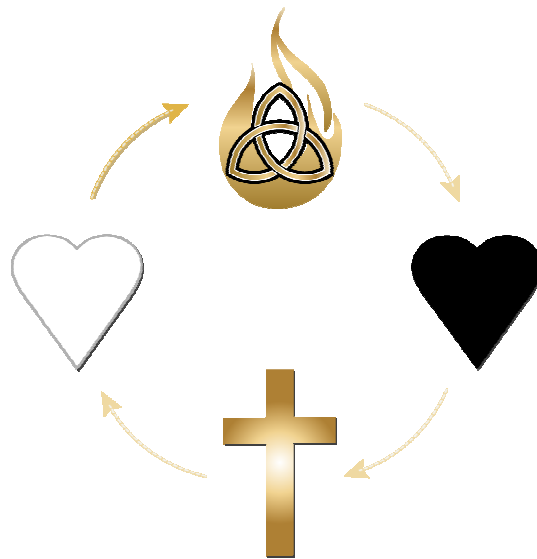


Figure 5

### Declared Righteous In Christ

The fullness of salvation is culminated in the believer's justification. Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He forgives our sins in Christ, grants to us Christ's righteousness, and declares us genuinely righteous in His sight. This is not supernatural smoke and mirrors. This is a true spiritual reality for every Holy Spirit empowered believer in Jesus!

Romans 4:25–5:2 <sup>25</sup> [Jesus our Lord] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. <sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”  
Romans 5:17 <sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and **the free gift of righteousness** reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.”

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.**”

Philippians 3:8–9 <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith...**”

Every child of God stands before God cleansed, forgiven and clothed in the very righteousness of Jesus. What was impossible for us was made possible by the grace of our God through His glorious gospel. This is the great exchange – we give Jesus our sin and He gives us His righteousness. We didn't earn it, we didn't deserve it, but God did it to magnify His mercy and His grace. This is the God-centered gospel of justification! It is a one-time occurrence, but an eternal reality.