

14. THE NATURE OF GRACE WHICH CHRIST PURCHASED

Christ has purchased for us three great Blessings. These are acceptance with God, sanctification from God, and the many great privileges with and before God.

1. Acceptance with God. If we are not in Christ, we are alienated from God, by sin. Therefore, the first work of purchased grace is to restore our acceptance with God. The enmity between us and God was removed by Christ's death and resurrection. This removed sin and its guilt.

However, removing the enmity is only half the story. Although Adam might have been innocent before his disobedience, he did not possess the righteousness to be completely accepted by God. He must not only have negative righteousness by not doing certain things, he also needed positive righteousness by doing certain things to honour God. So, we need perfect righteousness to be accepted by God. This perfect righteousness is only available in the life of the Lord Jesus. This is obtained on our behalf by Christ's perfect obedience. By His obedience we are made righteous. This is our righteousness before God. We are now accepted before God - having had our own sin removed, and righteousness bestowed.

2. Sanctification from God. Through Christ we are both acceptable with God but also to God. That means that not only have we been saved, but we are being washed and prepared for our lives in heaven. Therefore, Christ removes the defilement of sin, but also bestows cleanliness upon us. Because of the presence of indwelling sin, the sanctification process is an ongoing operation - as a bride is beautified for her groom. By the grace of sanctification, all the pollutions of our actual transgressions are taken away. As every single sin has a price that has to be accounted for, it is only by the continual washing of the sanctification process, that we grow in the grace of sanctification.

It is God's plan that we as Christians should do the good works that God has set aside for us on becoming His people. But how can we as imperfect people do works which are acceptable to God? This is made possible by the grace of sanctification which cleanses all our duties from defilement. Are not our good works accounted as rewards to us in heaven, as these are the works that will follow us? The Lord Jesus washes away any impurities from our good works as they are presented to God. These works go through the refiner's fire, and the dross is burned up. We will not recognize these works in heaven, as what was sown in imperfection, will be reaped in perfection.

This cleansing of our natures, persons and duties has its whole foundation in the death of our Lord and Saviour. It is for this very reason that we can say with Paul in **ROM 8:1** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"

The Blood of Christ is shed for us, cleansing, and purging us as it is sprinkled on us and our works. This sprinkling comes from the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process. The blood of Christ not only removes defilement of Sin, but also gives purity.

The Spirit of holiness is given to us to dwell in us. Christ procures for us the Spirit of holiness. And it is by this indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that we are renewed day

by day. Habitual grace is given to us to oppose the principle of lust that is in us by nature. The actual ability to perform any Spiritual duty is given to us in Christ Jesus. **JN 15:5** "Without me you can do nothing". The influences of grace and the strength to do, is from our Lord Christ. This grace is said to be renewed because every act calls for new supplies of grace. So purchased grace gives us the Spirit of holiness, habitual grace, and actual ability to carry out every Spiritual duty.

3. Privileges with and from God. The first privilege we enjoy from God by being born again, is that we have been adopted into the family of God. We therefore enjoy all the benefits of now being part of this very special family. These privileges are discussed more fully in Chapter 17, in which we discuss the rich teaching of John Owen on what God has bestowed on us as His children through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.