

INTRODUCTION

If you are going to interview for a new job, you want to know what the salary is, but you also want to know what the "fringe benefits" are. The benefits I'm going to talk about today are not "fringe" by any stretch of the imagination. Instead, they are core, central, solid benefits that are ours as followers of Jesus Christ. I call them the "blessed benefits of God's love."

You may wonder sometimes what the connection between faith, hope and love is. You hear those three used a lot. Well, we've been talking about faith because it is faith that receives God's grace. Last week we talked a little bit about hope. Today, we are going to talk about love. The thing our world really needs today is something to hang their hopes on. There is so much hopelessness out there.

Maybe you heard about the guy who was taking a stroll one evening, and he started crossing a bridge. He looked over there and saw a stranger poised on the edge of the bridge getting ready to jump over and commit suicide. The guy walking said, "Whoa! Wait a minute! What are you doing?" The man said, "Well, life is just hopeless, and I'm just going to jump off the bridge and end it all." The walker said to him, "Now, listen. Let's make a deal. Give me five minutes to tell you why life is worth living, then, you can have your five minutes, and you can tell me why life isn't worth living." Ten minutes later both of them jumped off the bridge. There is a lot out there to cause despair. I think the greatest time to be a Christian is right now because we have a message of hope to offer to the people out there who don't have any hope.

It is beyond my imagination to think how people who are not Christians can cope with the suffering, pain and demands of life without Jesus Christ. I recently read a book called *A View From A Hearse*. It's a book about the Christian view of death and dying written by Dr. Joseph Bailey, a clinical psychologist and Christian. He writes about being in a hospital trying to console a single mother whose small boy had a terminal illness and was about to die. He speaks to her from the Christian perspective, and this is what he said to her, "Even though the medical outlook is hopeless, we can still have hope. We can know that when our child dies, he will be completely removed from sickness and suffering, and he will be completely well, and happy." That's what we believe as Christians. But the mother was not a Christian and she said to Dr. Bailey, "If I could only believe that! But I don't believe it. When he dies, I'll just have to cover him up with some dirt, and then try to forget that I ever had him." Doesn't that break your heart? Isn't that so sad to think there are people out there who don't have the hope we have as Christians? How different her view was from King David's, who when his little child died, said, "He cannot return to me, but I can go to him." As Christians, we have hope.

Today we look at Romans 5. It is a great passage of scripture. It is the hope we have that is born with the realization of God's love for us.

Romans 5:5. "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

You see, at just the right time when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare

to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more, shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

BENEFIT #1: GOD LOVES YOU—EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A SINNER

1. Our natural condition

As a believer, if you can understand these four benefits we are given in this passage of scripture, you’ll walk out of here so excited you’ll have to backslide to go to sleep at night! The benefits start out basic, and then they get deeper. Here’s benefit number one: God loves you even though you are a sinner.

a. Powerless

When we come to this passage of scripture, we are given a picture of who we really are—and it’s not a very flattering picture. The first thing I want you to see is our natural condition summed up in three words. Number one, the Bible says we are powerless. Verse 6 says, “when we were still powerless.” That means you and I do not have any strength or power on our own to improve our condition. The next time you are in a bookstore, walk over to the section labeled “self-help”, and look at the people who are standing there, buying these books and reading about how to deal with the problems they have. They think by reading a book, reading some new little philosophy, some little key, some little secret, they can improve their lives. The sooner you admit you are powerless to deal with your problems on your own, the sooner you can allow God to give you power to deal with them. So, number one, you admit you are powerless.

b. Ungodly

Number two, we have an ungodly condition. Are you still looking at verse 6? “Christ died for the ungodly.” When the Bible says you and I are ungodly, it means when you take all of those positive attributes of God, the exact opposite is true of me and you. For instance, God is perfect. We are imperfect, undoubtedly. God is love. You and I are not very loving in and of ourselves. We are ungodly. God is forgiving. You and I don’t forgive very easily. We like to hold a grudge. God is compassionate. You and I are in and of ourselves are not very compassionate. In other words, for every positive attribute of God, the opposite is true of me and you.

c. Enemies

Here’s the third condition. It says we are enemies of God. Look at verse 10, “For if when we were God’s enemies.” When it says you and I are God’s enemies, it doesn’t mean God is at war with us, it’s like the United States of America has some nations we have severed diplomatic relations with, it doesn’t mean we are shooting bombs at them, but in a sense they are our

enemies and we have no relations with them. When the Bible says you and I are enemies of God, he does not mean he is personally at war with each one of us, it means our sin has severed spiritual relations with God, and we don't have any real true relationship with him because that's who we are.

Look at those three words: Powerless, ungodly, enemies of God and then look at your neighbor. Doesn't that describe who they are? That's true. That's true about everybody else, but then if you look at verse 8, it says, "While we were sinners, Christ died for us." It's talking about us. It's amazing how we like to try to cover up our sin. The hymn "At the Cross," was written by Isaac Watts. When it was first written, it talked about, "should he devote his sacred head for such a worm as I?" You say, "Why does it say a worm?" Because in the book of Psalms, David, when he realized his own sinfulness, said, "I'm a worm. I'm not even a man." Some hymn editor read that, and said, "That's not very nice. People don't like to sing about what worms they are, so let's clean it up a little. Let's say 'for such a sinner as I.'" There are other denominations that have changed it even more, and it doesn't even say a sinner, it says, "Would he devote his sacred head for such a person as I." We try to make ourselves look good.

I was recently reading about some of this computer dating that is going on. I just thank God I am married, and I don't have to do this computer dating thing. It's these single people. They go in and fill out a profile about who they are, and then the computer matches them up with somebody else, and then they meet that person. I heard a recent survey and study of these dating services determined 99% of people lie on those applications. If you are doing that, don't expect to get what it says you are going to get. A man may weigh 270 pounds, and he writes down 190. He may be 5'2" and he writes 6'2" or something like that. Then when these two get together, they say, "Who are you?" Garbage in; garbage out. They try to lie about who they are. Let's just admit it. In and of ourselves, there is nothing lovable about us.

2. God's supernatural character: Love demonstrated by Jesus' death

God doesn't love us because we are lovable. God loves us because it's his character and nature to love sinners. In fact, if you want to contrast our condition, look at God's supernatural character. Love demonstrated by Jesus' death. That's his character: Love, demonstrated by Jesus' death.

Parents, may I give you a little parental advice? Please, never, ever say something like this to your children, "You'd better behave or God won't love you." because it's not true God loves children whether they are good or not. God also loves big people whether we are good or not. Moms and Dads, never tell your children, "If you act nice, God will love you more." That's not true, either. God loves us unconditionally no matter how we act. Once you realize how much God loves you, it makes you want to clean up your act, and allow him to clean up your act. God demonstrated his love.

I memorized Romans 5:8 in the King James Version years ago when I was in college. "But, God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Let me show you what that means. Here is God in his holiness and here we are in our sinfulness. God made the first move. He initiated reconciliation. God did not look at us as sinners and say,

“Okay, you sorry sinners, when you clean up your act, when you get better, when you straighten up, then I’m going to love you.” No, he loved us first. He moved first in reconciliation.

I need to put a little parenthesis here for husbands and wives. Husbands, you are to love your wife the way Christ loved the church. Husbands, let me tell you at least one thing that means. It means anytime there is a problem with you and your wife, *you* initiate reconciliation. One hundred percent of the time, husbands. Why? Because God initiated reconciliation. Husbands, if you are going to love your wife the way Christ loved the church, it means you will move first to make sure there is reconciliation in your relationship.

Sometimes, husbands bow up and say, “Well, when she comes crawling on her knees to me, I just might forgive her.” That is the most ungodly, most un-Christlike attitude you can have. Husbands, if there is something between you and your wife, you don’t have to agree, and you don’t have to accept what she is saying, but you are the one who initiates reconciliation because God moved first. End of sermon on marriage.

a. Who would you die for?

Back to the sermon on salvation. God demonstrated his love in that Jesus died for us. We need to ponder an interesting little topic for just a moment. Look at verse 7. “Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man” There have been people who have died for good people through the years died in their place. There are a couple of questions I want you to ask yourself right now. Number one, whom would you die for?

Sometimes I get who and whom mixed up, but I think English teachers would say that’s an object in this case, so “whom” is correct. Whom would you die for? If I were to ask you, “Who are those people in your life that, given the opportunity where either they would die, or you would die, you would step in and die in their place?” is there anybody like that in your life? For me, there were some people like that. I would like to think I would die for my wife. I would like to think I would die for my two daughters. I would like to think there are some friends I would die for because I love them that much. My list is not very long. Sometimes, people will die for good people, but not too often. The Bible says it’s rare.

I think about this week at our capitol how those Capitol Police died protecting some of those visitors when that maniac went in there shooting a gun. I think about how our Secret Service Agents have already predetermined that if someone shoots at the President, they are going to stop the bullet. They’ve already decided that. But, that’s rare. What you need to think about right now is whom would you die for? You probably have a list.

b. Who would die for you?

The second question is totally different. Think about this one. Who would die for you? Is there anybody you are absolutely certain, given the choice, given the opportunity where you die or they die, who would step in for you? Can you think of anybody like that? That list may be totally different than your first list. I don’t know the answer to the first question. Only you know that. But I can give everybody in this room an answer to question number two—Jesus. Jesus has

already done it for you. It baffles my mind to think if you had been the only sinner on planet Earth who needed someone to die for you, he still would have died just for you or just for me. So, benefit number one. It's not a fringe benefit, it is a core benefit. God loves you even though you are a sinner!

BENEFIT #2: JESUS DIED IN YOUR PLACE—SO YOU WOULDN'T SUFFER PUNISHMENT

1. As our sinless substitute, Jesus satisfied the demand of God

Here's benefit number two. It gets a little bit deeper. Jesus died in your place so you wouldn't suffer punishment. Look at the last part of verse 8, "Christ died for us." That phrase for us means "in our place." He died as our substitute. Then, look at verse 9. And, please circle a couple of words, "Since we have now been justified by his blood." Circle blood. "How much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him." Circle wrath. There are two elements to the death of Christ pointed out here. First of all, as our sinless substitute, Jesus satisfied the demand of God. You ask, "Well, what was the demand of God?" I told you this is deep. This is meat you are going to have to chew on, and if you don't really chew on it a lot, you'll get spiritual indigestion. The demand of God from the beginning of the revelation was for the forgiveness of sin, there had to be blood shed. You look at me and you say, "Now, pastor, why is that?" My honest reply to you is, "I don't know." I don't have to figure it out to accept it. I'm just told from the revelation of God that something about the shedding of blood and the forgiveness of sins go together in the mind and heart of God. Maybe it's because as the book of Leviticus says, "Life is in the blood." The writer of Hebrews, I think, comes close. Look at Hebrews 9:22, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." So, God had a demand that blood would be shed for sins to be forgiven, and when Jesus died as my substitute, he was taking my place, and it was his blood that was shed. As it says here, "my justification occurred by the shedding of his blood."

Remember those questions when I said, "Who would you die for?" The fact that Jesus died for you and for me is an amazing statement about the depth and the height and the breadth of God's love. Most of you remember where you were when you heard the news on April 19, 1995. At 9:02 a.m. a yellow Ryder truck left in front of the Alfred P. Murrow Federal Building in Oklahoma City exploded. 168 people died. 19 of them were children. 850 others were wounded. All of America came to a stop as we mourned together. I don't know about you, but it would have been a little bit easier for me to take if it had been some Libyan terrorist. The fact that it was a clean-cut American soldier, one of us, was a little bit tougher for me to deal with.

A jury of his peers determined Timothy McVeigh is guilty of the deaths of those 168 people, and he has been sentenced to die. Right now he is awaiting execution. I am sure there will be appeal after appeal. The question I want to ask you this morning is this: Is there anybody in this room willing to stand up right now, and say, "Pastor, I am willing to go up to the Federal Penitentiary where Timothy McVeigh is walk into his cell, and say, 'Timothy McVeigh, I love you. I love you so much that I am willing to die in your place. I will accept your death sentence. Now, you are free to go.'" Is there anybody in this room that loves him that much? "Forget it." That's exactly what I would say. I'll be the first one to say I'd better sit down quick because I don't I

don't love him that much. in fact, I don't love him. I still have a feeling of animosity in my heart. That's because of my own fallen, sinful nature. No one in here loves him that much. Let me ask another question that's related. Could you imagine the mother or the father of one of the children who were killed in that explosion going into his jail cell and saying, "Timothy McVeigh, I forgive you. I set you free. I'll take your punishment." I can't imagine that.

Do you want to know how much God loves you? That's exactly what he said to you and to me. You and I are guilty of the death of Jesus Christ. It was my sin that killed Jesus. It was as if I had that hammer in my hand pounding those nails into his flesh. It was as if my hands fashioned that crown and put it on his head. It was as if I held that spear that thrust up into his heart. You and I are guilty, but God loves us so much he was willing to allow Jesus to die for us as our substitute. That's amazing when you think about it. He satisfied the demand of God.

2. As our sinless substitute, Jesus absorbed the wrath of God

The second thing I want you to see is as our sinless substitute Jesus absorbed the wrath of God. That's something you have to consider. Look at the last part of verse 9, "We are saved from God's wrath through him." When I say Jesus is our substitute, what I'm saying is we believe in something called the "substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ." This means when he died, he became my substitute. Do you know what a substitute is? Have you ever been playing sports and are on the sidelines when the coach says, "You go out on the field and take the place of number 22," and number 22 goes and rests. If anyone deserves to die for their sins, it's me and it's you, but Jesus stood in my place. He became my substitute. Those of you who go to the movies know all these stars that make a lot of money, any time they are in a movie and there is an action scene or a fight or something dangerous, that's usually not them. It's what they call a stunt double, a stand-in. That's what Jesus did for us. When it came to the point of death and pain, he stood in for us. He became my substitute. What breaks my heart is today you don't hear much about the "substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ." There are entire denominations that have gone through the hymn book and removed every song about the blood of Jesus Christ from the hymn book because they think it's old-fashioned, it's gory, it's gross and it's ugly. Friend, I'm here to tell you, you don't have a gospel of Jesus Christ without the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. You cannot have your sins forgiven without the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. He was my substitute. He died in my place. He absorbed the wrath of God.

Do you want to know something really deep? Try to pay attention, because it may make your mental computer overload. Jesus Christ died on the cross. He hung there for six hours. For three of those hours there was total darkness from 12 noon until 3 p.m. In those three hours, Jesus absorbed the wrath of God? He experienced Hell for me and for you. What is Hell? First of all, we know Hell is darkness, outer darkness. It became midnight at noonday. He was in outer darkness. Hell is torment. You say, "Is there really fire in Hell?" Well, it's at least that bad, probably worse, but the pain most of us fear the most is the pain of fire, and Jesus experienced the fiery torment on the cross. He was hurting so much he cried out, "I thirst." It wasn't just the physical torment—it was the spiritual torment when he became my sin and your sin, and all the sins of every person in the world. Then, Hell is also separation from God. When I think about Hell, I don't think the darkness is the worst thing about it. Some of you who aren't Christians, you think you are going to Hell, and there will be bright lights and party time for all of eternity.

WRONG! There will be outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, torment. I think the thing that will make Hell the worst is that separation from God. There is no sense of the presence of God. As bad as this world is right now, there is a sense of the presence of God. You don't know how bad it is when that sense is removed. Do you want to know how bad it is? When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he experienced separation from God, and cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Darkness, torment, separation from God he experienced Hell for me and you. God's wrath fell on him as my substitute. I'm mighty glad it did, aren't you?

BENEFIT #3: JESUS LIVES IN YOU—SO YOU CAN DISPLAY HIS CHARACTER

God loves you. Here's benefit number three. Christ Jesus lives in you. Jesus lives in you! So, you can display his character. Look at the last half of verse 10, because the first part talks about how we have been reconciled to him through the death of his son. Watch this! "How much more having been reconciled" I want you to help me by reading the last word in this verse out loud. "How much more having been reconciled shall we be saved through his what is it?" His LIFE. We are saved through his life. You say, "Wait a minute, I thought we were saved through his death. This says we are saved through his life. What life are we talking about?" What are you thinking right now when I talk about the life of Jesus? Some of you right now are thinking about, "Well, for 33 years he taught, he did miracles, he lived on planet Earth. I don't think that's the life that it is talking about. I don't think it is talking about a life Jesus lived two thousand years ago in Palestine. It's talking about the life Jesus lives right now in me and in you. He is alive today! It's talking about right now, the present life he lives in me and in you. This is really deep, and I hope you understand this is not some spiritual milk you can slurp down. This is spiritual meat you are going to have to chew on to understand. But, the key to victory and power in the Christian life is Christ living his life through you.

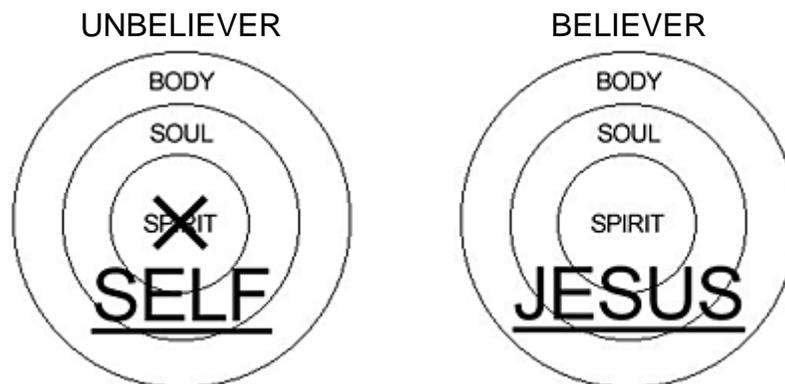
If you want to read a great book, read "The Saving Life of Christ" by Ian Thomas. Today, it is still in the top five Christian books I've ever read in my life. How do you express that? Well, I think Paul expressed it in Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Christ lives in me! The life I live in the body I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Let me try to illustrate with a couple of diagrams. Draw two circles, side by side. The one on the left represents a natural person, a person that's not a Christian, an unbeliever. All of us are made up in the image of God, and God is a threefold person, a triunity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When it says we are made in the image of God, we are a triunity, body, soul and spirit. With your body you relate to the physical world. With your soul you relate to the social world and with your spirit you relate to the spiritual world.

I hope you understand that's what makes you different than a monkey, or a dog, or a cow. You and I have a spirit. They don't. Animals have bodies and they have souls. They have personalities, but they don't have a spirit. Have you ever seen cows coming to church and worshiping God? Have you ever seen dogs and cats coming to worship service? We had a wedding last night. By the way, we really did have a dog get loose, and come in before the wedding. I'm not talking about a bridesmaid; I'm talking about a real canine. The bridesmaids were beautiful. I'm talking about a real canine got in here before the wedding, and we got rid of

him. Why don't dogs come to church? Why don't cats go to catechism or something like that, and study about spiritual things? They are clueless. They have no idea of God. You and I do.

If you look at the circles again, you will need to put an X in the one on the left side because for a person who is not a Christian their spirit is dead, or dormant. Look at the circle on the right. That represents a person who is a Christian. When a person becomes a Christian, they receive light in their spirit and their spirit becomes alive. Draw a line in the bottom segment of each circle. In the left hand circle write the word "self" because basically a person who is an unbeliever is full of "self." You can use the word "ego." You can use the word "I." A person who is not a Christian basically lives an egocentric existence. They are the center of their entire universe. They determine the value of everything by the way it affects them, the way they feel about it, what they think about it. "Me" is at the center. The whole universe revolves around them. A person can be a lost person, and they don't have to be a serial murder, or a rapist, or a bank robber. They can be nice, but they are just a "self-centered" person. By the way, some of you who are still so full of "stinking self", need to ask yourselves if you have ever come to a place in your life where you have dethroned "self" where, like Paul said, "self" has been crucified.



Look over at the right circle and write the word "Jesus" inside it. The difference is "Christ" is in you, filling your spirit, filling your soul, and yes, in a person with the Holy Spirit even indwelling your body. This person on the right, a true believer, lives a "Jesus-centered existence." No longer is "ego" at the center of their own little universe, but Jesus is the center of everything.

The secret to living the Christian life is not trying to imitate Jesus. It is not trying to perform all these Christian acts in the strength of your flesh because Jesus said in John, 15:5, "Without me, you can do nothing." The secret to the Christian life is allowing Jesus simply to control every part of your life so his character is just displayed.

I've illustrated it this way before, but let's do it again. Here's a glove. Here's a glove which is empty, of course. Here's a glove that represents a person who is not full of Jesus. Okay, glove. Pick up that cup. Come on, you old sorry glove! You old backslidden, sinful glove, pick up that cup. Okay, glove. Pick up this watch. You nice looking, handsome glove, please pick up that watch. I can be angry or I can be nice, but that glove is not going to do anything until it is filled with something. When it is filled with something that has the ability to do it, it's a simple matter

to do what it is supposed to do. It's not the glove that is doing it. It's me and the glove that's doing it. Some of you have had surgery, and that surgeon slips on gloves, but you would never say for one moment you were operated on by surgical gloves. You were operated on by the skill and the knowledge and the technique of the surgeon's hand that was in that glove.

Here's the application. You as a person cannot love unlovely people. Aren't you tired of being frustrated trying to love all these unlovely people? You as a natural person cannot forgive people who do you wrong. You cannot rejoice in the Lord always. You cannot give thanks for all things. There are so many things in the Christian life you can't do on your own, but Jesus in you can do it. So, it is a matter of surrendering every moment to the light of Jesus in you.

Those of you who want some theological words to write down and impress folks at work tomorrow when you were saved, that's justification. One day when you die and go to heaven and are like Jesus, that's glorification. This process I'm talking about right now is sanctification. It's Jesus working in you—it's a process. In fact, it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

BENEFIT #4: WHEN YOU REALIZE THESE BENEFITS—YOU WILL SHOUT FOR JOY!

God loves you and you are a sinner. Jesus died for you so you wouldn't have to suffer punishment and Christ Jesus lives in you so you can display his character. Here's benefit number four. All I have to do is mention it. When you realize these benefits, you will shout for joy! If you have some fringe benefits on your job like hospitalization, and yet you still go down to the hospital and you pay your own money for it, you're the one who loses out. You're not taking advantage of your benefits. If you go through the Christian life miserable, you're just not realizing the benefits that are yours.

Look at verse 11, "Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God." I'm convinced most Christians haven't caught on to this. Why? I see a lot of Christians who haven't lost their salvation, but they've lost the joy of their salvation. I told you if you could just get a hold of this, and hang in there with it, and understand it, and believe it, you'll walk out of here shouting for joy! Life is tough, but with Jesus you can make it through any challenge.

CONCLUSION

I want to close by telling you several weeks ago my boyhood hero rode down his last Happy Trail. Roy Rogers was my cowboy hero when I was growing up, and you kids don't know anything about Roy Rogers, but he was a good man. In fact, in every show or movie Roy Rogers was in, he never shot anybody dead? Instead, he shot the gun out of their hand. He was a great shot. He never killed anybody. And at the end of those shows, he always had some positive, personal word to share and they would always end the show with that old song that some of you still remember:

Happy trails to you

Until we meet again

Many times this was on network television. You talk about how much it's changed since then. Roy Rogers led people in what he called "The Cowboy's Prayer" on national television. He'd say, "Pray this prayer after me." It went something like this:

Oh, Lord, I reckon I'm not much by myself
I fail to do a lot of things I ought to do
But, Lord, when the trails are steep and the passes are high
Help me to ride it straight the whole way through.
And when in the falling dust, I get the final call,
I do not care how many flowers they send to my funeral
Above all else the happiest trail
Will be for you to say to me
"Well done, my friend."

And he died not long ago. And the King of Kings said to the King of the Cowboys,
"Well done, good and faithful buckaroo!"

If you want to live a life of happy trails now with the happiest trail, then you understand.

OUTLINE

BENEFIT #1: GOD LOVES YOU—EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A SINNER

1. Our natural condition:

- a. Powerless
- b. Ungodly
- c. Enemies

2. God's supernatural character: Love demonstrated by Jesus' death

- a. Who would you die for?
- b. Who would die for you?

BENEFIT #2: JESUS DIED IN YOUR PLACE—SO YOU WOULDN'T SUFFER PUNISHMENT

As our sinless substitute, Jesus:

1. Satisfied the demand of God

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22

2. Absorbed the wrath of God

BENEFIT #3: JESUS LIVES IN YOU—SO YOU CAN DISPLAY HIS CHARACTER

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. *Galatians 2:20*

UNBELIEVER

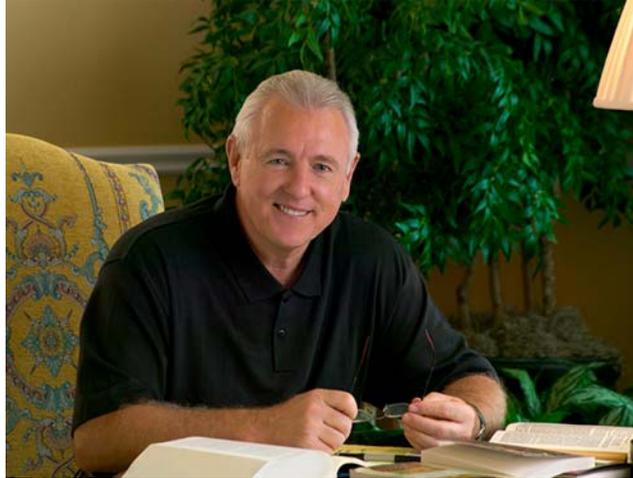


BELIEVER



May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *1 Thessalonians 5:23*

BENEFIT #4: WHEN YOU REALIZE THESE BENEFITS—YOU WILL SHOUT FOR JOY!



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes