

A sermon outline for the Season of Lent

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Anchor verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21

"Imputed righteousness"

1. Introduction: *2 Cor 5: 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The sermon title is "Imputed righteousness". I Googled this title and was surprised by everything that showed up on the Internet. Here follows but a few of the almost 400000 websites that came up:

a). **to impute:** to attach to a person responsibility (and therefore financial liability) for acts or injuries to another, because of a particular relationship, such as mother to child, guardian to ward, employer to employee, or business associates.

Example: a 16-year-old boy drives his father's car without a license and runs someone down. The child's negligence may be imputed to the parent, or, in the reverse, a mother drives her car and collides with a truck driven over the speed limit, and her baby in the front seat of the car is badly injured, in part due to not being put in a safety seat with a seat belt. The mother's negligence can be imputed to the child in any claim on behalf of the child against the truck driver.

b). **Imputed liability** is a legal term that assigns liability for an injury to a person who did not cause the injury but who has a particular legal relationship to the person who did act negligently. It is also referred to as imputed negligence. Legal relationships that can lead to imputed negligence include the relationship between parent and child, husband and wife, owner of a vehicle and driver, and employer and employee.

(Afrikaans: middellike aanspreeklikheid; toegerekende aanspreeklikheid;

Soos in die sin: Die minister het middellike aanspreeklikheid vir die nalatigheid van beamptes in sy departement.

Toegerekende aanspreeklikheid is altyd gegrand op 'n verhouding tussen mense: ouer - kind / werkgever - werknemer / Eienaar en gebruiker.)

c). **Imputed righteousness** is a concept in Christian teaching which proposes that the "righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers" – that is, we are treated as if it were ours, through faith. It is on the basis of this "alien" (i.e. from the outside) imputed righteousness that God adopts sinners to become his children and find them "not guilty" in spite of their sinful nature and disobedient lives.

The Bible teaches that we are saved through justification (meaning found "not guilty") by the imputed righteousness of Christ received through a faith relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

In our text we read about 3 persons. We need to understand the role of each of them to understand its message and find comfort in its teaching. The three persons mentioned are: God, Christ and the sinner. Before we can look at the meaning of Christ's imputed righteousness, we need to look at and understand something about these three persons.

A The first person that we meet is God, the Father. He is the God of heaven and earth; the God of Abraham, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Creator and Sustainer of all of creation, the God of grace and mercy.

Our God, revealed in Scripture, has three great attributes according to our anchor verse:

Firstly, he is a sovereign God. Our verse says, God "made" Christ to be sin. That was God's sovereign will and act. He alone is God and has the authority to do whatever he has to do in accordance with his

holy, divine character. No one has more authority than God. He does not ask permission from anyone and is not accountable to anyone. He alone is God. He is our sovereign God!

Secondly, God is just. From beginning to end, our verse is about the justice of God. God's justice makes this demand that sin needs to be punished. Regardless of the circumstances. God's justice must be satisfied. God does not wink at our sins. His justice is not appeased with so called good words or even prayers. God punishes sin, because God is just.

Thirdly, God is gracious. Our verse makes it clear that it is God's grace that made Christ to be sin for us. In his justice, God is gracious and does not desire the death and punishment of his children.

During this Lenten Season, it is this God that we worship - a God of truth, of justice, of grace, of mercy, of love. He "made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21).

B The second person that we meet in the anchor verse is Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God: of one substance with the Father, co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent with the Father. He was born of Mary, became a human being in every way, except for sin. He was a man of suffering, of pain, of anxiety, of temptation - who was crucified and who died for our sins.

Our verse is clear that Christ "had no sin" (2 Cor 5:21) He did not inherit the guilt of original sin and lived a sinless and pure life since his conception till his death. He did not allow the evil that surrounds us all to ever enter into his deeds or his heart.

No matter what the temptation and no matter how hard the struggle or how great the fear, Jesus never sinned. He remained perfect. As our verse says, he "had no sin" (2 Cor 5:21). Unlike us, he perfectly reflects the image of God:

(Heb 1:3) The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being ...

Jesus had no sin. He was not under the dominion of sin and death. He had no guilt. He was never oppressed by sin or Satan. Jesus had no sin.

C The third person that we meet is the sinner. Paul says "we" are the sinners. Not only the drunkard, the addict, the liar, the thief, the blasphemer, the idolater or the convicted murderer. We all are. Who is the sinner? Everyone who has broken a single commandment of God! Everyone who fails to love God above all and their neighbour as themselves. You and me - we are the sinners.

3 - In closing, imputed Righteousness, again.

We have met the three persons of our anchor verse. Now, during the Lenten Season, lets learn about the divine grace of God, revealed through the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Imagine a court-room. God, the Father, is the judge. You, the sinner, is the defendant. God delivers the verdict that you are guilty and you cannot escape by pleading "Not Guilty" and you can not run away.

God is just - thus you have to be punished. God also is merciful and he wants to save you. What will he do?

Christ makes the difference. The imputed righteousness of Christ makes the difference. It is Jesus who says:

"Treat me as if I were the sinner and treat the sinner as if he were me." Christ stands in the sinner's place.

Christ's righteousness is imputed on me and my guilt is imputed on Christ!

The sinner stands in Christ's place. Christ stands in the sinners place. That is imputed righteousness!

Our verse says: "God made him who had no sin, to be sin" (2 Cor 5:21). Our sin was transferred to Christ. Think about this:

Jesus was made to be sin. This means that he was treated as if he had mocked the image of God he received. This means that he was treated as if he was oppressed by sin and death. This means that he was treated as if he was guilty and as if he was in the grip of evil.

Jesus was made to be sin. This means that God's wrath and anger against sin was placed upon him.

Jesus was made to be sin. He took the sinner's place. So, "in him we become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

Christ's righteousness - his perfect life and obedience to death, was transferred to us. It is as if I have never sinned. It is as if I have been perfectly obedient and if I am as righteous as Christ himself - without sin, or shame.

This is imputed righteousness. Notice what God has done: He has satisfied both his justice and his mercy. Sin is punished in Christ and grace is shown to the sinner.

During the Lenten Season we see Christ's broken body and we see Christ's blood poured out for us. We see Christ punished for our sins. We see ourselves clothed with Christ's righteousness.

During Lent we can see more clearly and understand much easier the imputed righteousness of Christ.

This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.