

Hebrews 1: 3, 8, and 9; “Christ’s Purging of Our Sins”, Sermon # 4 in the series – “Holding Fast our Confession”, A Communion Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 1st, 2012, in the Morning Worship Service.

Each one of us here this morning needs to ask ourselves this question; whether Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, has purged my sins? Has He taken away my sins; even mine? Did He make the necessary satisfaction for the punishment due to my sins at the cross? Or have I continued to this very day to refuse to see my great need of His saving help? He certainly bore the sins of all of God’s Elect there at the cross; but the question that I am asking is whether you have transacted this wonderful gift of eternal life with Christ Himself? Have you come to true and saving faith? Have you received Him and been given the right; the authority, and the power to become a child of God? Has He; and indeed is He even presently on this very day, purging you of your sins? That is the all important question which each of us must answer. For, if you fail to answer this question, or if you neglect to attempt to answer this question; it will be eternally fatal to your soul. However, if you can answer this question positively; that Christ has purged your sins, and is purging you of your sins; you will be experiencing the reality of the “Oil of Gladness” which the Father and the Son will anoint you with. The Holy Spirit will be working in your heart continually. And the gladness of a having cleansed conscience and a clean heart will be upon you and working in you continually. This is what we want to examine this morning more closely before we remember our Lord in the Supper. We want to look, 1st of all, at the factual reality of our sins being purged. Then we want to see, 2ndly, how Christ continues to build righteousness into our lives by His purging us of our sins. And then 3rdly, as we surround the Lord’s table, we want to see that Christ was the recipient of the greatest gladness of any man, because of His sufferings and resurrection. And He dispenses this gladness to us His companions, as well.

1st of all – The Factual Reality of our Sins being Purged. (verse 3)

It says here in verse 3 - “Christ being the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” These are the facts of what Christ did to procure the blessings of salvation for us. God the Father spoke the Incarnation of the Son, His only-begotten; who was brought forth from all eternity, having agreed to perform this mighty work of our redemption in time and space. “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4: 4) In order to purge us of our sins, Christ had to take upon Himself human nature and come into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh as a

little baby. It was not a romantic thing at all to be born in the stable at Bethlehem. It was not a safe thing for Him to have done, seeing as Satan would attempt to use Herod to destroy Him at His birth. This earthly proud king did not want any rival, and so under the guise of worship, sought to kill the young Christ Child. When the Magi, who truly did come to worship Christ and to give Him their gifts, were warned by the angel not to return to Herod to tell him where the Child was, Herod became exceedingly angry and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts from two years old and under. The King of Glory had to be, as it were, hidden away in Egypt by his parents until Herod was dead. And even then they could not return there again, but later came and settled in Nazareth, in order that the Scripture would be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene." These are the facts of the beginning of the gospel. Christ came forth, as it says in Isaiah 11: 1 – "a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch growing out of His roots." His living in Nazareth, and being called a Nazarene is related to the Hebrew word "Netzer" which means "the branch", or "a shoot or a sprout". It was called this because of the multitude of plants and trees that grew there. Satan tried to cut off this Branch before He would purge our sins. But God the Father would not permit this. Instead He would have Him grow up before Him as a plant of righteousness and accomplish our salvation through His being "cut off for our transgressions."

Isaiah 53: 1 – "Who has believed our report?" "And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground." "He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him." Verse 8 – "He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation?" "For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken." Daniel Chapter 9, verse 26 – "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself." Jesus grew up as a tender plant from God. We would see nothing special about Him, but He would be the One, and the only One, who could come and be "cut off" for our transgressions. He was not cut off because of His own sins; for He had none. And so God highly exalted Him for this blessed work; declaring Him by His resurrection to be our only Savior and Lord. He is to be worshiped and His name is to be magnified and adored for this greatest of all works! This, His work of redemption, is a finished and completed work. At the cross, His work was to "finish the transgression", it says in Daniel 9, verse 24. He would "make an end of sins". He would "make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness". He would seal up the vision and prophecy, and anoint the Most Holy place". He did this by the shedding of His own precious blood. He purged our sins there at the cross.

This word for purged is “katharismos” in the Greek. Webster’s Dictionary says that it means: “to atone for; to make satisfaction for; to extinguish the guilt of a crime by subsequent acts of piety or worship, by which the obligation to punish the crime is canceled.” That is what Jesus did in by living His life always loving God with all of His heart. That is what Jesus did at the cross, when in love, He suffered there for our sakes. He knew that we could not save ourselves, or change our own heart. He knew that each one of us was too weak spiritually to accomplish the changes that were needed. But the Dictionary also goes on to say that it means: “To expiate guilt or a crime, and it is to perform some act which is supposed to purify the person who is guilty.” It is some act which is accepted by the offended party (God) as satisfaction for the injury (our sins against Him); that is, some act by which His wrath is appeased, and His forgiveness procured. It is this use of the word “purify”, in both of these senses, that I would like us to think about before we take the Supper. In the New American Standard this sentence in verse 3 is worded, “When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” So to “purify” in this sense means to expiate, or to atone for. It means to give cleansing of sins. I believe that this includes not only the cleansing of the conscience of the believer in his or her initial conversion, where the believer exercises faith in the finished work of Christ at the cross and is justified. But I also believe that it means that Christ made an atonement (a covering of grace) for the on-going purification of our heart. Christ works in our hearts to bring us to the place where we will consciously and deliberately deal with all the remaining corruptions of our heart. He sees clearly whether we are taking up the good work of mortification of sin. And He and the Father and the Holy Spirit see when we do not take the initiative to put to death the deeds of the body. God then chastens us for our good, so that we might share in His holiness as it says in Hebrews 12 10. His atonement for sin is not a covering for sin, that we might continue in it. It is a covering so that we might come to a true and thorough repentance over every sin. It is a covering also for our righteousness, which is as filthy rags in His sight. His atonement covers all the lacks in our obedience; all the ways that we fall short of the glory of what He is doing in our hearts and our lives. This is what Jesus died to purchase for every believer. He meritoriously has purged us from our sins at the cross. He then faithfully applies the merit and the favor of His suffering on our behalf; to us when we are converted to Christ, and also as we walk with Him every day. Listen to 1 Corinthians 6: 9 – “Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” “Do not be deceived.” “Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” “And such were some of you.” “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” Not only is there justification mentioned here, but there is also the Spirit’s washing and our being set apart to all

of God's good purposes in relation to what we will become as Christians; that is, our pursuing holiness and Christ-likeness. This work of the Spirit, based upon Christ's purging of the believer's sins at the cross, really gives them the sufficient and powerful grace to changing in their heart and life to become a person whom God is pleased with; not just a person whom He accepts.

In Hebrews Chapter 9, verse 11 it says, "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation." "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." And in Hebrews Chapter 9, verse 22 says – "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (That is; there is no forgiveness and no cleansing of the heart) "Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." You and I who believe in Jesus Christ's sacrifice and offering up of Himself at the cross for our sins; we are the "heavenly things" spoken of here. We are destined for heaven and for eternal glory because of what Christ has done for us in His purging of us from our sins. Because He has done this work at the cross we are forgiven, we are justified, and we are being sanctified and are being made fit "vessels" to spend eternity in the glory of heaven with Him. Our sanctification, our being made holy, our becoming more holy, without which no one shall see the Lord, is all based upon the sufferings of Jesus at the cross. Will you not glory in these facts of your salvation as you come to the Lord's table to partake of the Supper? Jesus has suffered so that you might be forgiven. Jesus has suffered so that you might be pure and holy and be called one of God's saints.

So let us see 2ndly then - How Christ continues on in His good work; to build righteousness into our lives by His purging us of our sins. (Verses 8 and 9)

"But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.'" "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." When the Lord Jesus purges you of your sins, He also places you in a kingdom; His Church. It says here that the scepter of that kingdom is a scepter of righteousness. This is what He rules by, in His Church. He rules in righteousness and He rules by righteousness. He governs His saved and redeemed people. He not only purges them of their sins initially in their Christian life, through the New Birth; giving them the grace of faith in order to believe in Christ and be justified. But, as I have been trying to convince you, He purges them also of their sins in an on-going sense, so that they will become branches of His own faithful vine, and learn to bear fruit in righteousness for Him to the glory of God. You can see that this is the sense of the word "purge" or "purify" which is given to us in an illustrative form, in Jesus' teaching in John 15,

verse 2. Please turn there with me. Jesus says, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it (kathairo) so that it may bear more fruit.” The King James Version says, “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, then God will not only forgive you of your many sins; but Christ Himself will also purge you or prune you of all those sinful things that you might be trying to hold on to, after you are converted to Him. This is done so that you might bear even more fruit for Him. Christ purged us from our sins once for all by the shedding of His precious blood. But the efficacy of that blood continues to be applied to the many areas of the believer’s life that need to change in order to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ. Christ knows those thoughts: those desires of sin that still lurk in our hearts, and would bring harm to our soul, and to our fruitfulness in His service. He purges us of these. And as we examine ourselves, may find that we have many sins of our mind and heart that need to be cleansed. These need to be purged from us in order that we might truly honor and serve Christ with our life. Remember David’s prayer in Psalm 51, verse 7? “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” “Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.” “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.” You see, there was least one major time in the life of the “man after God’s own heart” when he needed to pray in this way. But I am saying that there are many times in the life of a believer when he should examine himself and when he should pray in this same way. Do you remember what Solomon said in his prayer at the dedication of the temple? He says in verse 38 of 1 Kings Chapter 8 – “Whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You know the hearts of all the sons of men), that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which gave to our fathers.” Let me ask you now, as you will come down front to partake of the Supper in just a moment; What about you? Christ has purged the sins of all of His Elect people at the cross. But how do you know that you are one of them? You “examine yourself to see if you are in the faith.” You test yourself to see if Jesus Christ is in you. The way that you know if you are a true Christian is whether His power is at work in you to bring you to repent of every sin, and not to hold on to one of them; no matter how you have treasured it in the past.

In Chapter 12 of 2nd Corinthians, Paul gave them a list of the things which he feared that they had not dealt with in their lives. He mentions contentions, jealousies, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults. He thought that when he came to them that he would have to

mourn over those who had sinned before and had not repented of their sexual uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they had practiced. But Christ applies His powerful grace to our hearts so that we might be purged, cleansed and purified from our sins each and every day. Let each of us deal with our own heart over these things if we find them in ourselves, so that God and the church do not have to deal with them in discipline. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light; we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse (katharizo) us from all unrighteousness.” Again this means to purge and to purify us from our sins in the everyday, most practical, and holy sense.

The Apostle Peter in his 2nd Epistle says in Chapter 1, verse 5 – “But also for this very reason (that is, because we have been given many precious and magnificent promises and by them we have escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust), giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” “For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “For he who lack these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed (that he was purged) from his old sins.” Are you cleansed from your old sins? Are you being cleansed and purged from sins as you discover them in your heart? Christ is the One and the only One who can cleanse you from all of your sins. We must ask ourselves these questions because “the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Christ’s kingdom”. If Christ has died for your sins, how can you still live in them? If Christ loved righteousness and hated lawlessness while He walked here upon the earth; then shall not we who walk the earth now do the same? These words describe for us the essence of Christ’s holiness. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. This is what He would have you to pursue. Come down to the front now, and we will partake of the Supper after we examine ourselves and hear a few words of encouragement.

3rd - As we now have come to the Lord’s table, we want to see that Christ was the recipient of the greatest gladness of any man, because of what His sufferings and resurrection have accomplished. But He dispenses this gladness to us His companions, as well.

Look at verse 9 once again. Speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, it says, “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” I want you to see here that there was a reward for Jesus’ love of righteousness and hatred of lawlessness. It was that He was anointed with the oil of gladness more than His companions. It was because He loved doing the right things and hated even the

thought of doing the wrong; that He lived the sinless life that we celebrate today. It was because He loved doing every particular of the Father's will, in the keeping of His commandments, that God gave Him this greatest of gladness in His heart. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne on high. The word, "Therefore", in verse 9 of our text is the word that determines when Christ became the recipient of this gladness. It was after Christ had finished His work of redemption that He received this reward. It was when He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven that He became the recipient of the greatest gladness that any man has ever known. Listen to Hebrews Chapter 9, verse 11 – "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation." "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" This is what the Father bestowed, and this is what gave the Lord Jesus the greatest gladness of any man. It was His being able to open the door of eternal life to you, and to pour into your heart the blessings of the salvation of your soul from beginning to end. He does this for every one of the multitude of believers whom He, as the One Mediator between God and men, brings to God. God the Father anointed Him with this gladness which He still has, even today, in bringing the reality of these spiritual blessings to us here this morning who are gathered in His name. He has the oil of gladness above any other man. But He chooses to share that with us in the gift of His Holy Spirit to you. You who believe in Jesus are His companions, and you shall be His friends forever. Let us rejoice and be glad for all the eternal and everlasting good He does for our souls. And, let us study to love righteousness and hate lawlessness, even as He did. If you love Him you will keep His commandments," He says in John 14: 15. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." He is the One who lives in Your heart and who can give you continual joy and gladness for what Christ has done, what He is doing, and what He will do for you. He has anointed you with His Spirit.