

A Lesson from Real Life

by E.J. Waggoner

First published in *The Present Truth*, May 31, 1894

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

1 Corinthians 4

²⁰ The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

The promises of the gift of the Gospel are not matters of mere theory, but a fact. And in order to show us the reality of the power, Jesus Christ came to earth and demonstrated it in such a way that all can comprehend it. In the life of Christ we shall find every Gospel truth illustrated. Let us see something of how the above text worked in real life.

The Illustration of Healing

A woman whose life had been slowly and steadily wasting away for many years, and who had spent all her living in a vain attempt to recover her health, and was only made to suffer the more from the experiments of many physicians, heard of the great Physician, and went to Him. She was tempted, and the multitude of people pressed about Jesus so closely that she could scarcely approach Him.

Matthew 9

²¹ But she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

Her faith was rewarded, for as she touched the border of His garment, immediately she was fully healed.

Although Jesus was crowded and jostled by the people, He instantly detected that gentle touch. That touch was different from every other, because it was the touch of faith, and drew power from the person of Jesus. When the disciples wondered that in the midst of such a crowd He should ask, “Who touched Me?” He said,

Luke 8

⁴⁶ ...Somebody has touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

That power was the power of His life: for it supplied the woman's need, and what she wanted was life.

Here we have something that our mind can lay hold of, and our senses can appreciate. A real thing was done. Something real went from Jesus into the woman. It was not imagination; it was not a figure of speech; but it was an actual fact that the woman was healed. She had the life that she before lacked, and that life came from Jesus.

We can never know what life is,—only its Author can understand it,—but we do know the need of it, even of the righteous life of Christ; and here we are to see how it is obtained.

For the words of Jesus to that poor woman show that she was healed in the same way and by the same means by which we are justified and have peace with God. He said unto her,

Luke 8

⁴⁸ Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole; go in peace.

If we should apply the words of the Apostle Paul to her particular experience, we might read,

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being [made whole in body] by faith, [she had] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps this may enable someone to grasp more fully the reality of the righteousness which comes by faith of Jesus

Christ.

Forgiveness of Sins

Nothing is said about forgiveness of sins in this instance, but we may be sure from other instances that such faith as the poor woman had brought healing of soul as well as the body.

But no one need have a doubt as to whether this is really parallel to *Romans* 5:1, and an illustration of the truth there stated, for we find the same words used with express reference to sins. In the preceding chapter (*Luke* 7) we are told of the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, after her tears of repentance had washed them. Jesus did not repel her, but said to her,

Luke 7

⁴⁸ Your sins are forgiven.

And then followed words almost identical with those with which He dismissed the poor woman of whom we have been reading. To the woman who was well in body, but morally diseased with sin, Jesus said,

Luke 7

⁵⁰ Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

Compare this with:

Luke 8

⁴⁸ ...Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace.

This proves beyond all possibility of doubt that the same thing is done in the forgiveness of sins that was done in healing the woman with the issue of blood. The method is the same, and the results are the same.

Therefore as we know that something real was done for the diseased woman, so we may be sure that something real is done for the repentant sinner. Just as something real, although invisible, went from Jesus into the person of the dis-

eased woman, making her perfectly well and strong, even so we are to know that something real comes from Christ into the person of the repentant sinner, making him whole, and free from sin.

That something is nothing less than the actual life of Christ.

1 John 1

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

⁷ If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The blood is the life; and so it is the life of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from sin. This is what we read in *Romans*, in continuance of the statement that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Imputed Righteousness

Many think that the forgiveness of sins by the imputed righteousness of Christ, is something that exists only in the mind of God. Of course they acknowledge its reality, yet at the same time they do not realize it. There is always something unreal about it in their minds.

The trouble is that they fail to grasp and to make real the living connection between Christ and them. There is between the true disciple and Christ, a connection as real as that between the vine branch and the parent stock.



The forgiveness of sins is too often thought to be illustrated by the payment of a poor man's debt by a rich friend. If a rich man pays the debt of a poor man, then the shopkeeper credits the poor man with the sum, and the record on the books shows that the debt is canceled. Of course the poor man is benefited, but he does not actually receive anything that will keep him in future. But it is different when God for Christ's sake forgives his sins.

Christ...

Galatians 1

⁴ ...gave Himself for our sins.

His life is given to be manifest in our mortal flesh:

2 Corinthians 4

¹¹ ...that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Just as the sap flows through the vine to the farthest branches, and just as the life of Christ went into the poor, diseased woman, to make her perfectly well, so the sinless, endless, inexhaustible life of Christ flows into those who have faith in Him, to cleanse them from sin, and to make them walk in newness of life.

Perfect Obedience

His life on earth was one of obedience to the commandments of God:

John 15

¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

The law of God was in His heart:

Psalms 40

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God: yes, your law is within my heart.

So that His very life was the fullness of the law. He fulfilled

the righteousness of the law:

Matthew 5

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

That is, the fullness, the perfection of the law, appeared in His life. And it is by this life that we are saved. It is not that we are accounted righteous because Jesus of Nazareth was righteous eighteen hundred years ago, but because...

Hebrews 7

²⁵ ...He ever lives...

Hebrews 13

⁸ ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,...

...to save by the power of His endless life, all that come to Him.

Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of the law, in order...

Romans 8

4 ...that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The *Revised Version* reads,

“That the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us,”

...and gives “requirement” in the margin, as an alternative.

The idea is, therefore, that Christ kept the law, in order that its utmost requirement might be fulfilled in us. Not by us, but in us: for whereas we have no power to do even what we know to be right, Christ dwelling in us does the right by His own power through all our members when we yield them to Him. This He does for all who trust Him. And thus it is that...

Romans 5

¹⁹ ...by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Summary

We may thus note two things:

1. How we are made partakers of Christ's life, and
2. What the nature of that life is, and what it will be in us.

The miraculous healing of the poor woman shows us the first. The second we learn by reading the ten commandments, and by studying the life of Christ.

All that was in His life when He was on earth, is in it now, and that is what He gives to us.

And that which was not in His life cannot possibly be given to us in it. Everything that is not in His life is sin, and Christ is not the minister of sin.