



Perfect Obedience of Christ

Galatians 5:1-6 Matthew 5:17-48

March 3, 2024

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This is what God requires of you:

**You must be perfect
as your Heavenly Father is perfect.**

Matthew 5:48

ANYTHING SHORT OF THAT MEANS THAT YOU ARE LOST FOREVER.

To be perfect in God's eyes means that you must be holy, righteous, and obedient every moment of every day of your life, from conception to death, in every single thought, word, and deed. There can be no exceptions, there can be no slip ups, there can be no mistakes, no weak moments; there can be no accidents, and no stray thoughts nor misplaced words. Every thought, every word, and every action must be in full accord with God's 10 Commandments and His holy will. Anything short of perfection excludes you from salvation. Anything short of that and you are lost forever.

I think it's pretty easy to see how we could never earn our own salvation. Because of sin in our lives we cannot live a perfect, holy, righteous, and obedient life. And because of sin in our lives, anything we try to offer God is tainted with sin --- you might say that everything about us “stinks to high heaven!¹” ☹

¹ This is the terrible and destructive result of Original Sin in our lives. Original sin totally and thoroughly corrupts you: “Your understanding is darkened; your will is enslaved; your conscience is perverted; your

St. Paul puts the nail in the coffin in Galatians chapter 3 when he wrote this²:

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. Galatians 5:2-4

If you depend on yourself for salvation in any way, shape, or form, then

1. Christ is no advantage to you
2. you are obligated to be perfect
3. you are severed from Christ
4. and you have fallen away from grace.

Salvation is always, and in every case, by faith alone in Christ alone.

We know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16

But why is that?

Why is salvation found only in Christ?

Because He is the only One Who is perfectly holy, righteous, and obedient every moment of every day of His life, from conception to death, in every single thought, word, and deed. This is called the doctrine of the **“Perfect Obedience of Christ.”** When Jesus said that you must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect, He was referring to Himself. Only the Son of God can fully obey the commands and will of God the Father. And that is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was crucified for us in Jerusalem.

affections are depraved; your heart is corrupted; your mind is at enmity with God, and your actions are self-centered.

Professor Richard E. Muller, CTS, Fort Wayne, class notes

² The Galatians were being misled to believe the living a Jewish religious life would earn them salvation – and circumcision was the sign of that; “circumcision” is the New Testament shorthand way of referring to that kind of thinking. Today, his words apply to any effort a person attempts to contribute to their own salvation. (Its frequently referred to as “works righteousness”.)

Jesus lived a perfectly obedient life under the 10 Commandments for us and our salvation. Everything the Law of God required of us He fulfilled. He was completely holy, and 100% pure in all things. He did all of this for us and in our place. This perfect and holy life is credited to you as righteousness; it is given to you as a gift of grace; it is why Jesus is the only Savior!

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as SONS. Galatians 4:4-5

Jesus not only lived a perfect life for you; but He also died on the cross for you. The will of God the Father was that the Son would die for the sins of the world. The penalty of death that was over us was taken by Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:4-6

In order to be our Savior, Jesus did two things for us: *He was perfect* and *He was punished* for us and our salvation³. His living and His dying for us is called the “**Perfect Obedience of Christ**.”⁴

To prove that all of this is true, and to give you absolute assurance in Jesus as your Savior, God the Father raised Him from the dead on the Third Day.

³ “To reconcile man unto God, our High Priest (Jesus) had to do two things: He had to satisfy the demands of God's holiness by His active obedience (His perfect life), and also the demands of God's justice by His passive obedience (His perfect death). *A Summary Of Christian Doctrine*, EWA Koehler, p. 112

⁴ What we should have accomplished, namely, the fulfillment of the whole law, Christ is done for us. He has fulfilled the law for us. What we should have suffered, namely, the punishment for our sins, and God's wrath in time and eternity, that Christ has suffered for us when he gave his back to the smiters and when his side was pierced on Golgotha. *Abiding Word*, 1947, II.331

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God the Father confirming that Jesus is the Savior, that the Father has accepted His Son's perfect life for us, and that our sins truly have been punished and paid for in the suffering and death of Christ on the cross.

- ➡ Through faith in Christ you are perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect.
- ➡ Through faith in Christ your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees.
- ➡ Through faith in Christ you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
- ➡ Through faith in Christ your sins are forgiven, so you don't have to cut off your right hand or gouge out your right eye.
- ➡ Through faith in Christ you will survive death and escape the final judgment and the fires of hell.

All of those things that we heard in the Gospel of Matthew are fulfilled in Jesus; and through faith in Jesus, God the Father considers you to have fulfilled them as well.

That means that you are well pleasing in God's sight. You do not have to spend your life trying to please God; in Christ you are perfect in the Father's eyes, and your sins have been forgiven! You cannot get any better! And so, you are to spend your time living a **thankful life**, listening to the Word of God and putting it into practice. In **praise and thanksgiving** to the Lord, you love your neighbor and shower them with good works and good words. **In response** to the gift of salvation and the love of God in Christ, you live your life differently than those who do not know Christ. You are filled with the Holy Spirit and things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control are a normal, everyday part of your life.

What God requires of you is this:

That you must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

Thanks be to God, that through the Lord Jesus Christ, you are perfect in God's eyes and your sins have been paid for!

Amen!

God the Father, in the Name of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we rejoice in the eternal salvation that you have freely given us. We thank you for Jesus' perfect life, and His sacrificial death, which rescues us from our sin, and death. Grant us deep faith and understanding in the perfect obedience of Christ, so that we may never attempt to earn our own salvation, but to fully trust in your Son and His work for us. In His Name we pray, amen!

Galatians 5:1-6

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Matthew 5:17-48

[Jesus said,] “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and

the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

