

CHRIST OUR CURSE FOR OUR GAIN

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I love the gospel. But I have a tremendous burden pressing upon my soul. I wonder how many professing Christ-knowers and Jesus-lovers actually *know* and *believe* the biblical gospel. Just what *is* the real good news of salvation? What really *took place* at the cross? What did *God* do? I believe that Galatians 3:13 is one (of many!) clear statement that strikes at the very heartbeat of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:13 says that “Christ became a a curse for us.” Here, I will provide 6 ingredients to this phrase in understanding the gospel.

1. Know the **BIBLICAL CHRIST** (*Christ...*)

For Christ to save, one must possess the *saving* Christ. Lots of religions have a Jesus where he may fill the role of a teacher, a wise sage, a miracle worker, a prophet, or something else. The question then must be: what does the *Bible* say? How does the Word of God describe this Christ? He, being fully and truly God, descended from heaven, born of a virgin, he lived a perfect and righteous life obedient to Law of God. Never having sinned, he was rejected by men, delivered to death, and crucified a horrifically public and shameful death. More than that, on the cross, God crushed Him under the weight of the divine fury of righteous wrath in being the sin-bearer for His people. That means that the biblical Christ became the propitiation of His people. He appeased and satisfied the Father’s just wrath by taking all the sins of His elect upon Himself on the cross. Then when he drank that “cup” in full, he exclaimed in triumph: It is finished! This Christ was buried, then He rose up from the grave showing Himself alive for forty days to many hundreds of people. Then he ascended physically and visibly into heaven to be with His Father where He is seated at the right hand of the Father in glory where He intercedes for His own. Is this *the Christ* you know? Do you trust in *this* substitute? Do you know Him? Own Him as your own Savior? Trust His blood to shield you from God’s wrath?

2. Know the **GREAT EXCHANGE** (*Our...*)

The text says that Christ redeemed us! What a glorious phrase! The very heart and soul of the gospel message is that God punished Jesus for my sin in my stead. He died for me, meaning in my stead, for me, in my place! He redeemed us by being *our* curse! To think of the almighty arrows of divine rage that were aimed and ready to fire at our fully-deserving and wholly-defenseless souls and then at the perfect moment, Christ the divine Son steps in, receives the fulness of all the blows of all the arrows and all the divine punishment and hatred so that you are shielded and spared and safe *hiding in Him*. He took it all! He paid for it all! Your life is found in *His death*. His death results in your everlasting gain! Never see the substitution as old and outdated news. Never get past the phrase: Jesus died *for* me. In this great exchange, God’s wrath is satisfied and your life is spared! In Him, you live! Rejoice!

3. Know the **DIVINE CURSE** (*Curse...*)

The Holy Spirit guided Paul’s hand to write down that Christ became our “curse.” He became a curse *for you*. Paul says that the one is cursed who does not abide by all things written in the Law to perform them (Gal 3:10, 13)! How impossible it is to attain our own standing of righteousness before God! When Israel was on the doorstep of entering the Promised Land, God declared that if Israel did not obey the Lord God, to do all His commandments, that all these curses would come upon them and *overtake them* (Deut 27:15). The rest of Deut 27 (the long chapter!) surveys the many (!) curses that God Himself would bring upon Israel if she faithlessly disobeyed God’s covenant and rebelled. Paul’s point comes into focus here. Just as Israel of old failed to obey the covenant and received the covenant curses, so we too, have disobeyed God and have sinned against Him and thus sit under the everlasting curses of this covenant-God who will -- and must! -- punish sin. Behold the power and righteousness of God. God brings extraordinary plagues on sinners. There is no remedy, no hope, no abatement, no rest, and no mercy for those who persist in willful sin and unbelief and who die in this unregenerate state. O what an awful & infinite curse!

4. Know the **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS** (*For Our...*)

The dark thunderclouds break as the gloriously blinding rays of sunlight burst in as Paul says that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law having become a curse for us (Gal 3:13). Christ became our curse *for our gain*. Something happens to us at the moment of salvation. The Scripture declares that for those for whom Christ died, He took their sin. But the Word also testifies that those who believe in Jesus Christ alone are counted righteous *in Him*. Our sin is reckoned to and put upon Him. And His righteousness is reckoned to and put upon us. Our lawlessness is given to Him and His righteousness is given to us. Our transgressions and heinousness is imputed to Christ on the cross and His obedience and holiness is imputed to us by faith. This is the splendid reality of double-imputation. It's the glorious and heart-stirring truth that the Bible speaks of frequently. Through the obedience of the One man (Christ) the many will be made righteous (Rom 5:19). Through faith in Christ, we are found *in Him*, not having our own inherent righteousness derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, namely, the righteousness which comes *from God* on the basis of faith (Phil 3:9). God made Christ to be our sin so that we may be the righteousness of God *in Him* (2 Cor 5:21). Behold the comforting assurance that when God looks upon one of His children, He beholds them through the righteousness of Christ -- indeed, the festal robes of Christ Himself are shrouded over us!

5. Know the INFINITE GAIN (*Gain...*)

Jesus Christ became your curse so that you can receive infinite gain! Paul speaks of it in these terms: "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" is yours in Christ (Eph 1:3). Amazingly and almost incomprehensibly, Paul declares that for those who suffer the loss of all things and count all self righteousness to be heaps of trash and filthy garbage, these believers gain Christ (Phil 3:8b). What an unspeakable reality to gain Christ! To lose everything in all the universe and yet to gain Christ is to have *all!* Christ is all in all. To have Christ is to have everything! What infinite gain comes to the child of God (even the weakest saint and the most newborn child of God!) who possesses Jesus Christ as His own! Salvation is not *only* about gaining the glory of Christ in the future (2 Thess 2:14) and dying is "gain" (Phil 1:21). It's about possessing Christ and living all out for Him *now* (Phil 1:21a) and rejoicing in this ever-flowing spring of infinite love and joy welling up in our souls as children of God. To have Christ is to have gained *everything*. Never lose sight of the wonder of having Christ live in you -- the hope of glory! Immeasurable gain!

6. Know the FIXED SECURITY

The text in Galatians says that Christ became a curse for us (Gal 3:13). The work of salvation is always a *complete* work. Always does God perfect redemption for all of His elect and *never* does God go back on His work and come up short with an *incomplete work of salvation*. For God to save, He saves completely -- to the uttermost. When Christ became our curse, He took *all* our sin and bore it all *in full* on the cross. Those who are His, by repentance and faith in Him alone, have the guaranteed promise that this divine curse that once loomed over our necks has now been satisfied on Christ and now there's nothing but grace, glory, love, security, and promises that are ours! Rest in this security. Focus on this fixed standing you have in Christ. Never does God lose one of His children. When He begins a work in a soul, He *will* carry it on to completion till the day of Christ Jesus. Nothing, no one, ever could separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ! Find comfort in your soul in the procured, promised and perfected salvation that Christ effectually achieved for you! Stand in awe of His glory as you stand in this grace robed in His righteousness! Rejoice and be glad. Your everlasting glorification will come! Your curse-bearer is your everlasting protector and He will carry you, as a Father would his own children, safely home to behold His face everlastingly!