



*The Lord Is Worthy
Of All Praise*

A Teaching Outline

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Our worth to God

We are raised up to set together in heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-9

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Paul emphasizes that we do not need to live any longer under sin's power. The penalty of sin and its power over us were miraculously destroyed by Christ on the cross. Through faith in Christ we stand acquitted, or not guilty, before God (Romans 3:21, 22). God does not take us out of the world or make us robots—we will still feel like sinning, and sometimes we will sin. The difference is that before we became Christians, we were dead in sin and were slaves to our sinful nature. But now we are alive with Christ (see also Galatians 2:20).

Because of Christ's resurrection, we know that our body will also be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:2-23) and that we have been given the power to live as Christians now (1:19). These ideas are combined in Paul's image of sitting with Christ in "the heavenly realms" (see the note on 1:3). Our eternal life with Christ is certain because we are united in his powerful victory.

When someone gives you a gift, do you say, "That's very nice—now how much do I owe you?" No, the appropriate response to a gift is "Thank you."

Yet how often Christians, even after they have been given the gift of salvation, feel obligated to try to work their way to God. Because our salvation and even our faith are gifts, we should respond with gratitude, praise, and joy.

We become Christians through God's unmerited favor, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves. While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Matthew 6:25-34

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

[26] Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? [31] Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Because of the ill effects of worry, Jesus tells us not to worry about those needs that God promises to supply.

Worry may

- (1) Damage your health,
- (2) Disrupt your productivity,
- (3) Negatively affect the way you treat others, and
- (4) Reduce your ability to trust in God.

Worry immobilizes, but concern moves you to action.

To "seek the Kingdom of God above all else" means to put God first in your life, to fill your thoughts with his desires, to take his character for your pattern, and to serve and obey him in everything. What is really important to you? People, objects, goals, and other desires all compete for priority. Any of these can quickly become most important to you if you don't actively choose to give God first place in *every area* of your life.

Planning for tomorrow is time well spent; worrying about tomorrow is time wasted. Sometimes it's difficult to tell the difference. Careful planning is thinking ahead about goals, steps, and schedules, and trusting in God's guidance. When done well, planning can help alleviate worry.

Worriers, by contrast, are consumed by fear and find it difficult to trust God. They let their plans interfere with their relationship with God. Don't let worries about tomorrow affect your relationship with God today.

You are of more value than the sparrow.

Matthew 10:31

Fear you not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Jesus said that God is aware of everything that happens even to sparrows, and you are far more valuable to him than they are. You are so valuable that God sent his only Son to die for you (John 3:16).

Because God places such value on you, you need never fear personal threats or difficult trials. These can't shake God's love or dislodge his Spirit from within you.

This doesn't mean, however, that God will take away all your troubles. The real test of value is how well something holds up under the wear, tear, and stress of everyday life. Those who stand up for Christ in spite of their troubles truly have lasting value and will receive great rewards.

God has thoughts of peace toward you.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

We're all encouraged by a leader who stirs us to move ahead, someone who believes we can do the task he has given and who will be with us all the way. God is that kind of leader. He knows the future, and his plans for us are good and full of hope.

As long as God, who knows the future, provides our agenda and goes with us as we fulfill his mission, we can have boundless hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain, suffering, or hardship, but that God will see us through to a glorious conclusion.

God commendeth his love toward us.

Romans 5:8

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were still sinners— these are amazing words. God sent Jesus Christ to die for us, not because we were good enough, but just because he loved us. Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you, remember that he loved you even before you turned to him.

God's grace is sufficient for you.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Although God did not remove Paul's affliction, he promised to demonstrate his power in Paul. The fact that God's power is displayed in our weaknesses should give us courage and hope. As we recognize our limitations, we will depend more on God for our effectiveness rather than on our own energy, effort, or talent. Our limitations not only help develop Christian character but also deepen our worship, because in admitting them, we affirm God's strength.

God gave his son so we could have everlasting life.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The message of the Good News comes to a focus in this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay.

Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that he had bought for us. When we share the Good News with others, our love must be like Jesus'—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

All things work together for good to those who love God.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

God works in "everything"—not just isolated incidents—for our good. This does not mean that all that happens to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world, but God is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-range good. Note that God is not working to make us happy but to fulfill his purpose.

Note also that this promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who love God and are called by him, that is, those whom the Holy Spirit convinces to receive Christ.

Such people have a new perspective, a new mind-set. They trust in God, not in worldly treasures; their security is in heaven, not on earth. Their faith in God does not waver in pain and persecution because they know God is with them.

The son of God loved and gave himself for us.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

God looks at us as if we had died with Christ. Because our sins died with him, we are no longer condemned (Colossians 2:13-15). *Relationally*, we have become one with Christ, and his experiences are ours. Our Christian life began when, in unity with him, we died to our old life (see Romans 6:5-11).

In our daily life, we must regularly crucify sinful desires that keep us from following Christ. This, too, is a kind of dying with him (Luke 9:23-25).

And yet the focus of Christianity is not on dying but on living. Because we have been crucified with Christ, we have also been raised with him (Romans 6:5).

Legally, we have been reconciled with God (2 Corinthians 5:19) and are free to grow into Christ's likeness (Romans 8:29). And *in our daily life*, we have Christ's resurrection power as we continue to fight sin (Ephesians 1:19, 20). We are no longer alone, for Christ lives in us—he is our power for living and our hope for the future.

The kindness and love of our saviour has appeared toward man.

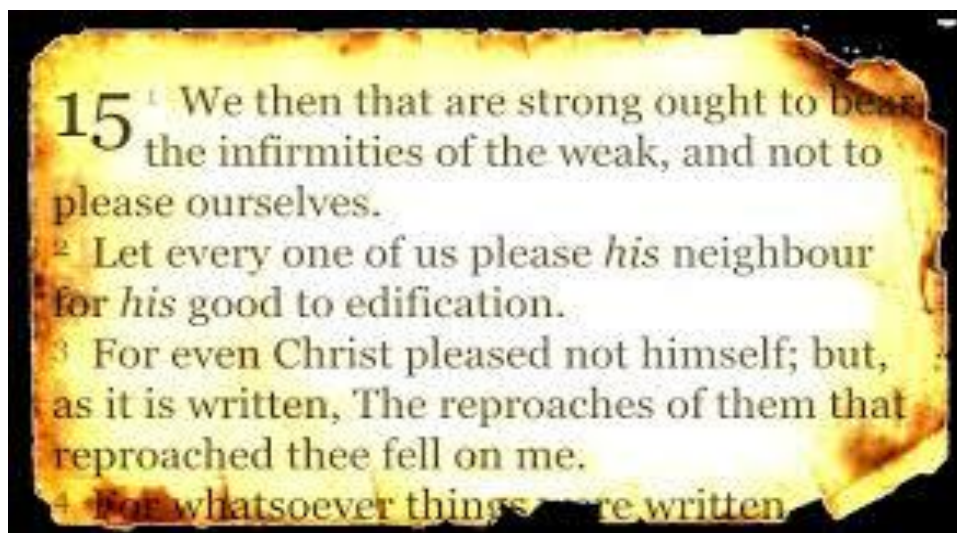
Titus 3:4-7

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Paul summarizes what Christ does for us when he saves us. We move from a life full of sin to one where we are led by God's Holy Spirit. *All* our sins, not merely some, are washed away. Washing refers to the water of baptism, which is a sign of salvation. In becoming a Christian, the believer acknowledges Christ as Lord and recognizes Christ's saving work.

We gain eternal life with all its treasures. We have a new life through the Holy Spirit, and he continually renews our hearts. None of this occurs because we earned or deserved it; it is all God's gift.



When we are weak, then we are strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

When we are strong in abilities or resources, we are tempted to do God's work on our own, and that can lead to pride. When we are weak, allowing God to fill us with *his* power, then we are stronger than we could ever be on our own.

God does not intend for us to be weak, passive, or ineffective—life provides enough hindrances and setbacks without us creating them.

When those obstacles come, we must depend on God. Only his power will make us effective for him and will help us do work that has lasting value.

Come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer is our approach to God, and we are to come "boldly." Some Christians approach God meekly with heads hung low, afraid to ask him to meet their needs. Others pray flippantly, giving little thought to what they say. Come with reverence because he is your King. But also come with bold assurance because he is your Friend and Counselor.

You are precious in the sight of the Lord.

Isaiah 43:4

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

God created the people of Israel, and they were special to him. God redeemed them and called them by name to be those who belong to him. God protected Israel in times of trouble. We are important to God, too. If we claim to belong to God, we must never do anything that would bring shame to him.

Going through rivers of difficulty will either cause you to drown or force you to grow stronger. If you go in your own strength, you are more likely to drown. If you invite the Lord to go with you, he will protect you.

God gave other nations to Persia in exchange for returning the Jews to their homeland. Egypt, Ethiopia, and parts of Arabia (Seba) had attacked Persia, and the Persians defeated them. 43:5, 6 Isaiah was speaking primarily of Israel's return from Babylon. But there is a broader meaning: All God's people will be regathered when Christ comes to rule in peace over the earth.

The Lord looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

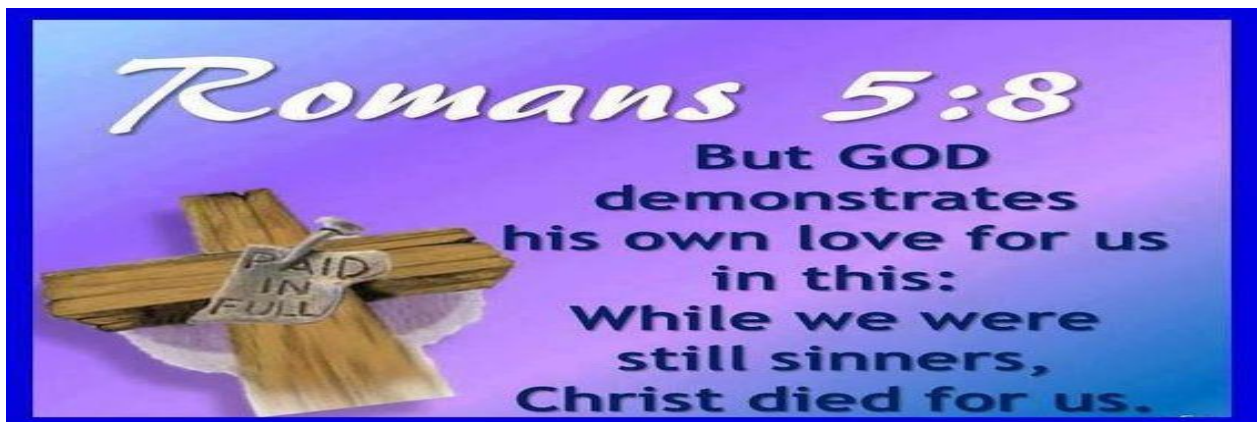
1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Saul was tall and handsome; he was an impressive-looking man. Samuel may have been trying to find someone who looked like Saul to be Israel's next king, but God warned him against judging by appearance alone.

When people judge by outward appearance, they may overlook quality individuals who lack the particular physical qualities society currently admires. Appearance doesn't reveal what people are really like or what their true value is. Fortunately, God judges by faith and character, not appearances. And because only God can see on the inside, only he can accurately judge people.

Most people spend hours each week maintaining their outward appearance; they should do even more to develop their inner character. While everyone can see your face, only you and God know what your heart really looks like.



Christ died for those without strength.

Romans 5:6-8

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

All three members of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father loved us so much that he sent his Son to bridge the gap between us (John 3:16). The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to fill our life with love and to enable us to live by his power (Acts 1:8). With all this loving care, how can we do less than serve him completely!

We were weak and helpless because we could do nothing on our own to save ourselves. Someone had to come and rescue us. Christ came at exactly the right time in history—according to God's own schedule. God controls all history, and he controlled the timing, method, and events surrounding Jesus' death.

Not even a sparrow falls without the knowledge of God.

Luke 12:6-7

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Our true value is God's estimate of our worth, not our peers' estimate. Other people evaluate and categorize us according to how we perform, what we achieve, and how we look.



Prayer to salvation.

Lord God in heaven, I come to you in the name of Jesus.

I acknowledge to you that I am a sinner, and

I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived;

I need your forgiveness.

I believe that your only begotten Son Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross at Calvary and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin.

Your Holy Word declares in Romans 10:9 that if we confess the Lord our God and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.

Right now I confess Jesus as the Lord of my soul. With my heart, I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

This very moment I accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior and according to His Word, right now I am saved. Amen

References:

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print