

GOD'S MERIT & POWER

S111A 0723 23P

There are two great hindrances, naturally speaking, in every human being when they are born. These hindrances, if not eliminated, will shut out the entire power of God and rob us of all the help He desires to give us.

God is always at our side, in the person of the Holy Spirit, with a love that desires to deliver us out of all our troubles and make us perfectly happy. In other words, He wants to restore us to conditions as they were in the Garden of Eden, the place from where Adam fell.

The first hindrance to enjoying the blessings Jesus Christ restored to us, is human merit. In our natural state we are always seeking after some merit of our own to gain God's favor. We were born with the obsession that God will help us if He can find something good in us, but we will have His disfavor if He does not see some merit in us. It is true that God had a plan like that in the Old Law, but not because He wanted us to seek His favor that way, The only reason the Law plan was given was to induce man to try his very best to obey it, and expose the idea that he could merit God's favor by his own action's.

God gave the children of Israel the Law, and with that He offered the greatest inducements for them to do their best. In other words, the better a person was of themselves, the more blessings he would receive. His blessings depended upon how good he was in his own strength, which would be his own merit, and the most dreadful and terrible things were predicted for those who did not please God and obey the old Law.

God had only one object in giving the Law—He knew that man could never obey it, try as he would, but he would never have found it out until he had done his very best and failed. When he had utterly failed, then he knew beyond all shadow of doubt, that all his self-effort ended in utter failure and could never commend him to God one moment.

The final result of the Jewish nation trying to please God by their own efforts, was that they committed the worst crime since the creation of the world--murdered the Son of God. That was the result of man's efforts, a case of Cain all over again. Cain brought the fruits of his own efforts as an offering to God, in order to get back to Him and gain His favor. Abel brought a

lamb, something that God had created, and God accepted that in preference to Cain's. Cain, as a result, went out and murdered his brother, just as the Jewish nation murdered Jesus Christ. That is the inevitable result of trying to gain God's favor by human merit.

We cannot gain God's favor by anything we do or fail to do; we already have God's favor through the great work of His Son on Calvary's Cross. He provided this new plan when man utterly failed under the law. God presented a new order, where He was not only to furnish all the merit, but also the power to live right.

This Gospel Age is under the Blood of Christ, which is the only merit God requires. He does not take account of human actions good or bad, but only takes account of the Blood of His Son. We are to live by His power, instead of human power and merit. It is a wonderful thing to have all the merit and power provided by God, which makes Him all and in all.

2nd Corinthians 5:18, *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."*

The great practical result of this: the very moment we depend on Jesus Christ as our merit, we automatically become the full righteousness of God. Abel was the example in the Old Testament and Cornelius in the New Testament of depending on the merits of the Blood. All the merit God required was a blood sacrifice, a lamb in Abel's case, and the Blood of Christ in Cornelius's case. The very moment they accepted the Blood alone as their merit, they were delivered from every power of sin, Satan, and filled with God's righteousness.

When Abel killed that lamb and God saw it, He told him, "Because you have depended on the blood of that Lamb, I have accepted it as your death and you have died to all the sins you inherited from your father, Adam; you have the old nature and the power of Satan taken away and now have my own righteousness.

That is what Hebrews 11:4 means, *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."*

We have another case like that in the New Testament when Peter came to see Cornelius, he told him

how Jesus Christ was slain and hanged on a tree, and that was all the merit God required. Then Peter ended his discourse in Acts 10:43, *"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."*

What was the result of Cornelius believing and accepting those facts? Verse 44, *"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."*

They were made free from everything of the old life and were cleansed from all sin and filled with God's righteousness, just by accepting the death of Jesus Christ as their death to every evil thing, which was true whether they believed it or not. As they accepted those facts, they were automatically set free without any merit of their own. That was in effect many years before Cornelius heard it, but until he believed it, he did not receive the benefits of it. When they once saw that God did not require any merit of their own, they were able to believe and receive without any trouble.

Cornelius was told the same thing as Abel, only in different language. When they accepted the testimony about the blood sacrifice, Abel the lamb, and Cornelius the Christ, God's righteousness took possession of them. That is exactly what God tells us in Romans 6:1-11, *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ

our Lord.” The facts are that if one died for all, then all are dead, that we now live not unto ourselves, but unto Him that died and rose again. Paul said in Galatians 6:14, “*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*”

He meant that the Cross of Jesus Christ has made us as free from all allurements, the power of sin, and all the trouble and diseases of the world just the same as if we had been lying in a cemetery; and all the world has become as powerless to harm us as if it was dead and buried. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, in God's sight it was exactly the same as if we came back to live entirely new Persons—a Christlike person spiritually, a person with perfect health, perfect peace, and a person who is under the full control and protection of God, the same as Adam was before he fell.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has become our death and resurrection. For us to receive the benefits of this, we are to take the position that God says we are to take in Romans 6:11, and to not see ourselves where we think we are or where Satan says we are, we are to see ourselves where the Cross of Christ and His resurrection has placed us and that is where God says we are. The result will be that sin, sorrow, sickness, poverty, and trouble of every kind will not be able to touch us. We are not under the Law, where man had to depend on human efforts and merit, but are under the Blood of Jesus Christ, where God forgives everything and gives us everything without any merit on our part.

We were all born with the idea that we can accomplish all results in our own strength, but there is no greater hindrance in receiving God's blessings than human power and effort. We need to see and understand that in this Gospel Age we cannot mix God's power and human power together. If we accept the Gospel plan and are seeking to walk in the light of it, we will find out, and the sooner the better, that we can never use one human plan or a particle of human power or effort in getting help from God. The least human device and effort we use will shut out the entire power of God.

It is the same in healing. There are many other things a person can depend on besides the medical field. Some people depend on their natural health or on the

climate. It is very easy for people to think they are trusting God for their health while down in their hearts they are expecting help from the climate they are living in, or on dieting, fresh air, etc.. God is seeking to teach us all these fine points and lead us to the place where we can honestly say that ‘all our help is coming from Him alone. The very moment we depend on the merits of Jesus Christ, instead of anything in us, the full power of the Holy Spirit will take possession of us, just as it did Cornelius. It could not be otherwise. When we depend on the power of God instead of our own efforts and human help, His entire power will work for us instantly and do whatever we desire done.

We are not to lie around and play sick one moment after we have laid aside every human dependence forever and have asked God for healing. No matter how weak a person may be, or what condition their body is in, the very moment they lay aside all human help, finally and forever, they can move out in perfect health and act like a perfectly well person.

That is what it means to depend on the power of God instead of giving in to our feelings. The very moment we lie down because we feel sick, that moment we have ceased to depend on God but are depending on the ‘rest cure’. ‘Playing well is the only Scriptural way.’ There have been many people who have gotten the most remarkable healings by ‘playing well’, instead of lying around ‘playing sick’.

God didn't tell the Israelites how to get well. He told them they were already well. What He meant was that when the little lamb died, and they sprinkled its blood on the door of their houses; it was the same as if they died and were immune to all disease. They were free from every pestilence, sickness, pain, trouble, and sin.

In the same way, that lambs' death meant that they also had died to every evil thing. They did not have to be told how to get well. They were only told what that lamb's blood meant to them--that they were now restored to perfect health and when that lamb died, every disease that could touch them died with it, and they were just as dead to disease as if they had died themselves. They were told to eat their supper in haste, with their clothes on, their shoes on their feet, and get ready for a long journey.

Exodus 12:11, “*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover.*”

What health and protection they received, even a dog could not move his tongue against man or beast of the children of Israel. Exodus 11:7, “*But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*” We should get just as much greater protection as the Blood of Christ is greater than the blood of the lamb in Egypt and the power of God is always present with us to change every unpleasant condition.

Paul sums up everything in 1 Corinthians 2:2-5, “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*”

The point is that when every human plan is out of the way finally and forever, the great love and power of God will work for us and change every unpleasant situation. It does not make any difference what it is, whether the smallest or the greatest detail of our life, when we depend on the merits of the Blood, the power of God will work for us instantly.'

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has forgiven and cleansed our hearts from all sin and filled us with God's righteousness-made us new persons. His death was our death to all sickness, disease, and every evil thing, and His resurrection was our resurrection to a new life of perfect health and protection. His death was also our death to all burdens and troubles, and His resurrection was our resurrection to a new life of perfect peace and happiness. The very moment we are willing to believe these things, which are true whether or not we believe them, God's power will make them absolutely real in our lives.

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