

## The Whole Christ

By Sinclair Ferguson

### Lesson 2: Grace in the Gospel (Chapter 2)

Now that we have become familiar with the history of the controversy, we can begin to dive into the issues that this controversy raised. The first issue that will be discussed has to do with the way in which we \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. How do we preach or talk about the gospel? How does the Bible present Christ and the gospel to the lost? These are some of the foundational questions that the Marrow men believed were at stake and were being misunderstood.

*“The Marrow Controversy raised a major question about how the gospel is to be preached...the controversy was about the offer of the gospel. But much more than the semantics of gospel presentation was at stake. The issue was the heart of the gospel itself. The Marrow Men were concerned to stress the importance, and true nature, of God’s grace. This they saw is rooted in a yet deeper issue: the nature and character of God Himself revealed in the gospel.”*

Is Christ to be offered only to a select few people or is He to be offered to \_\_\_\_? Does a person have to qualify the gospel offer or limit it? An example of this would be to say something like, “Christ saves the elect alone, therefore, if you are one of the elect the gospel is for you” OR “The evidence of one’s election is repentance, therefore, if you are manifesting the fruit of election, you have access to believe in Christ”. The Marrow Men rejected such offers of the gospel and instead stressed, “*Christ is to be offered to all men everywhere without exception or qualification.*”

We must remember that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to save all men (we are not dealing with the idea of efficacy here). So, a minister can call all sinners to Christ, and this does not violate the idea of \_\_\_\_\_ atonement.

*“Boston....wanted to stress that the gospel’s center is found in Jesus Christ Himself, who has been crucified for sin and raised for justification, with the inbuilt implication that Christ Himself thus defined and described should be proclaimed as able to save all who come to Him.”*

The gospel is good news for all people because Christ is to be \_\_\_\_\_ offered to all people. This is the way that the Scriptures present the gospel.

*“The offer of the gospel is to be made not to the righteous or even the repentant, but to all. There are no conditions that need to be met in order for the gospel offer to be made. The warrant for faith does not rest in anything in ourselves. Indeed, it cannot.”*

*“Boston felt the sheer graciousness of the Christ of the gospel was being stifled by a Calvinism that had developed a preaching logic of its own and had become insensitive to the style and atmosphere of the New Testament. In his view God’s particular election had too easily been distorted into preaching a doctrine of conditional and conditioned grace.”*

*“The subtle movement from seeing forsaking sin as the fruit of grace that is rooted in election, to making the forsaking of sin the necessary precursor for experiencing grace. Repentance, which is the fruit of grace, thus becomes the qualification for grace.”*

This confusion results ultimately from \_\_\_\_\_ the fruits of the gospel from the gospel itself. All blessing are ours in Christ. Christ is the gospel. One cannot possess the fruits of the gospel without first possessing Christ. Salvific blessings are hidden in Him. Once we understand this, we will begin to see the necessity of the concept of union with Christ. The NT primarily talks of the saints as those who are “in Christ” or “in Him”.

*“If this is not the overwhelmingly dominant way in which we think about ourselves, we are not thinking with the renewed mind of the gospel. But in addition, without this perspective it is highly likely that we will*

*have a tendency to separate Christ from His benefits and abstract those benefits from Him as though we possessed them in ourselves.”*

Boston wrote, *“You must first have Christ Himself, before you can partake of those benefits by Him.”*

We must think in terms of \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. As union with Christ begins to dominate our understanding of the gospel we will then begin to talk about salvation as *“being ours in Christ and not merely through Christ”*.

Boston wrote, *“I prefer to keep the phrase ‘in Him’ rather than change it to ‘by Him’ because in my opinion it is more vivid and forceful. For we are enriched in Christ, because we are members of His body, and we have been ingrafted into Him; and furthermore, since we have been made one with Him, He shares with us all that He has received from the Father.”*

As union with Christ becomes the center of one’s theology the focus will not be on the benefits of Christ but will rather be on Christ \_\_\_\_\_.

*“This focus on benefits has a profound impact on how we understand and preach the gospel, and, almost imperceptibly, Christ Himself ceases to be the central and becomes a means to an end.”*

*“What we receive in the gospel is not benefits but Christ and that therefore the focus of public preaching and private pastoral ministry must be to set forth Christ.”*

## **The Marrow of Modern Divinity**

By Edward Fisher (notes by Thomas Boston)

### **Chapter 1-The Law of Faith (the Covenant of Grace)-**

Chapter 2 starts with Antinomista asking Evangelista to explain the law of faith. He replies first by saying that the law of faith is the same as the covenant of grace (aka the \_\_\_\_\_). Evangelista starts his discussion by talking of the covenant of redemption. There were two things that needed to be done in by this covenant: 1. God’s justice had to be satisfied & 2. Man had to be repaired.

*“Which two things must needs be effected by such a middle and common person that he had both zeal towards God, that He might be satisfied; and compassion towards man, that He might be repaired: such a person, as, having man’s guilt and punishment translated on Him, might satisfy the justice of God, and as having a fulness of God’s Spirit and holiness in Him, might sanctify and repair the nature of man.”*

In a footnote on this section Boston writes, *“Thus the groundwork of man’s salvation laid in the eternal counsel; the sanctification of the sinner, according to our author, being as necessary to his salvation as the satisfaction of justice; for indeed the necessity of the former, as well as that of the latter, ariseth from the nature of God, and therefore is an absolute necessity.”*

After talking of the eternal purpose of grace, Antinomista then asks Evangelista when God first \_\_\_\_\_ this promise to mankind.

Ant. *“Tell us, when the Lord began to make a promise to help and deliver fallen mankind?”*

Evan. *“Even the same day that he sinned, which as I suppose, was the very same day he was created.”*

Boston provides several other sources that agree with this idea. He also gives several reasons to support this:

*“Because of the devil’s envy, who, it is likely, could not long endure to see a man in a happy state...If man had stood more days, the blessing of marriage would have taken place, Adam would have known his wife, and begot a child without original sin...The Sabbath was no so much appointed for meditating on the works of creation, as on the work of redemption...He fell so soon, that the work of redemption might be the more illustrious, since man could not stand one day without the Mediator’s help.”*