

Freely Received Pardon and a Costly Sacrifice

We do **not** have to pay for our existence.

We do **not** have to pay for being chosen and adopted by God as His own.

John 15:16 [NIV] *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

We are chosen by God.

Jesus had to pay dearly for our redemption from sin, it costs us nothing.

Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9 [NIV] *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions, it is by grace you have been saved.” ... “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast.”*

We **cannot** purchase our salvation.

Forgiveness is free, we do **not** have to earn forgiveness.

To be loved by God is **free**.

To receive the Holy Spirit in our lives is **free**.

All that is necessary for our salvation is free.

The costly things in our lives come with the response that God desires we make to what He has provided freely for us all.

There is **no comparison** between the size of God’s gift to us and our gift in return.

The disparity is this; a kind person gives us a million pounds and in return we send them a “*thank you*” card.

Matthew 18:23-27 [NIV] *“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ **The servant’s master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.**”*

We are freely forgiven the debt we owe God for all the sins we have committed.

Matthew 18:28-35 [NIV] *“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow-servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ **“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. “Then the master called the servant in.*

*'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. **"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."***

We are asked to forgive others their sins against us, a mere speck compared to what we owe God if He decided to "call in" our debt to Him.

What then is the cost that God is asking of us?

Let us look at some of the "Kingdom" parables that focus on our part in our salvation.

Matthew 13:44 [NIV] *"The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure hidden in a field**. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."*

Sold everything to buy the field in which was hidden the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 13:45-46 [NIV] *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a **merchant looking for fine pearls**. When he **found one of great value**, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."*

Again **sold everything** to gain the Kingdom of God.

Gaining the Kingdom of God is very expensive, this is **not** saying we purchase the Kingdom of God for salvation is free.

These people did **not** make a loss **but a great profit by their decision to risk all** to obtain the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 16:25 [NIV] *"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

The cost is the total commitment to Jesus Christ and the mission He has from the Father.

Luke 18:15-17 [NIV] *"People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, **"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."***

We have to trust Jesus as a little child trusts their parents.

Mark 10:17-27 [NIV] *"As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. **"Good teacher,"** he asked, **"what must I do to inherit eternal life?"** "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. **"No-one is good, except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.'**" "Teacher," he declared, **"all these I have kept since I was a boy."** Jesus looked at him and loved him. **"One thing you lack,"** he said. **"Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."** At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"** The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, **"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."** The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, **"Who then can be saved?"** Jesus looked at them and said, **"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."***

Earthly values must be relegated to a distant second place.

Luke 14:25-27 [NIV] *“Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate [love less by comparison] his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, **even his own life**, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

To follow Jesus the Son of Man into the Kingdom of God, everything in our physical life, even our close-loved family, must take second place to Jesus Christ and becoming His disciple.

Luke 9:62 [NIV] *“Jesus replied, “No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

Seeking the Kingdom of God is a **lifetime commitment with no turning back** to this world’s culture.

John 3:3 [NIV] *“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*

We have to **begin our life anew in an intimate relationship with God** as a new-born baby does with its physical parents, **total dependency**.

Acts 14:21-22 [NIV] *“They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “**We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,**” they said.”*

Paul is a living example of the many hardships we may be expected to go through to enter the Kingdom of God.

What we are talking about is a total surrender of our lives to Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 [Message Bible] *“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: **Take your everyday, ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life, and place it before God as an offering.** Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”*

A complete surrender of our body, mind and spirit [intellect] to Jesus Christ.

Allow our minds to be re-directed by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:3-21 [Message Bible] *“I’m speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, **it’s important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.** In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. **Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around.** The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn’t amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvellously functioning parts in Christ’s body, **let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t.** If you preach, just preach God’s Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don’t take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don’t get bossy; if you’re put in charge, don’t manipulate; if you’re called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don’t let*

*yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face. Love from the centre of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. **Don't burn out; keep yourselves fuelled and aflame.** Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. **Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder.** Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality. Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. **Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down.** Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody. Don't hit back; **discover beauty in everyone.** If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it." Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good."*

God is asking for a total submission of our will and our life in the service of others as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 19:6-9 [NIV] *"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and **his bride has made herself ready.** Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (**Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.**) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."*

Although the bride of Christ is clothed with the righteous acts of the saints, plural, Christ marries only one bride, **not** many.

The love we have for other Christians, we must be united as one by that love.

Revelation 11:15 [NIV] *"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

The many kingdoms of this world become the one Kingdom of Jesus Christ, just as the many Christians of this world become one bride of Christ.

John 14:20 [NIV] *"On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."*

One in Jesus Christ.

It is only by the total surrender of all that is "self" to God that we become that one bride of Christ in that one Kingdom of God.