4. The Cost of Rest (3Q 2021—Rest in Christ)

**Biblical Material:** 2 Sam. 11:1–2; 2 Sam. 12:1–23; Gen. 3:1–8; 1 John 1:9; Ps. 51:10.

**Quotes**

- The work of restoration cannot begin until a problem is fully faced. *Dan Allender*
- Will we choose to be the ‘pieces’ that our sin has blown us into? Or will we turn to the God who can pick up each one and gently assemble them into the ‘whole’ that we’ve never known simply because it’s a ‘whole’ that He has never forgotten? *Craig D. Lounsbrough*
- When God restores you, you might not see all the changes at once. You’ll begin to notice parts of you that were broken are no longer that way. Then one day, you realize you’re an entirely different person than you used to be. That’s grace. *Andrena Sawyer*
- When God forgives, He at once restores. *Theodore Epp*
- By a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade. *Desiderius Erasmus*
- Jesus Christ became Incarnate for one purpose, to make a way back to God that man might stand before Him as He was created to do, the friend and lover of God Himself. *Oswald Chambers*

**Questions**

When it comes to salvation, why do our ideas reflect what we most want? Is our problem with God simply a question of feeling guilty? How do we understand what God does for us in terms of the good news? Why is forgiveness not enough? How can we explain salvation without using legal language? How does restoration relate to God’s character?

**Bible summary**

2 Sam. 11:1–2 introduces David’s sin with Bathsheba, while 2 Sam. 12:1–23 is the prophet Nathan’s rebuke to David and the consequences of the sin. Gen. 3:1–8 recounts the beginning of the Fall. “If we confess our sins, he is trustworthy and right so that he can forgive us our sins and make us clean from all that is not right in us.” 1 John 1:9 FBV. After his sin with Bathsheba, David prays, “Create a pure mind in me, God, and make me trustworthy again.” Ps. 51:10 FBV.

**Comment**

In many ways the “rest” referred to here is actually “restoration.” David was not praying for peace and quiet in Psalm 51, but the mending of the broken relationship he’d caused with God. He wanted to be healed so he was “right” with God once more. Notice that the “cost of rest” is nothing to do with some cosmic accounting process of balancing bad with good, or the payment of penalty. In fact to speak of a “cost” is less than helpful because then we tend to see what happens as a transaction, when in reality it is a healing process. In the same way as a physician has to act to help heal a sick patient, so God has to intervene to bring us healing from the damage of sin. But God is not “counting the cost,” and neither should we. He acts because that is the kind of person he is.

Yes, we need to accept that we are sinful people and need to be restored just as David prayed. But we do not need to develop images of some mechanical or commercial transaction to
explain how Jesus makes us right. Yes, we can say that it “cost” Jesus to leave heaven and come to this world and die at our hands. But that is not the same as him making some payment with some currency, whether we speak of paying with his life or with his blood. Rather, this is God’s freely-given grace to save and heal us from our fatal disease of sin. Yes, we look for rest from the condemnation and guilt of sin. But this is found not in a declaration that we are “not guilty,” but a process of change from the inside out by which God restores us into his image once again.

God’s revelation of salvation through Jesus is expressed in terms of divine healing of the sin-damaged individual. It surely is no coincidence that having been announced as the one who makes God known (John 1:18), Jesus spent the vast majority of his ministry in acts of physical healing. Jesus told those around him: “When you see me, you’re seeing the one who sent me.” (John 12:45 FBV) and “If you had known me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, do you know him and you have seen him… Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:7, 9 FBV).

So what happens to us if we fail to see salvation as healing? Well, if we only see it as fixing our legal problem, of rectifying our legal standing before God, of being a contractual process by which our legal guilt is expiated, then...

As Jesus said to the religious systematizers of his day, preoccupied with judicial, forensic salvation: “Your sin (that fatal sickness) remains.” A preoccupation with legal demands, legal payment and legal consequences leads to the worse kind of legalism: the making legal of the cross of Christ. Even the Pharisees didn’t manage that!

Concentrating on the legal and judicial, the guilt-payment and expiatory penalties means that we fail to see the cross as the remedy for sin as an attitude, rather than some legal compensation for sin as an external action. For if we do not come to him who can heal us, if we do not accept his gift of sight, and if we remain blind guides leading others and all falling into the ditch (see Matthew 15:14), then how can God help us?

As God said to his people of old, “I am the Lord who heals you.” (Exodus 15:26 FBV). This is his salvation—healing all the wounds of sin, curing the sickness of evil, and restoring us once more into full spiritual health: remade into his glorious image. This is his salvation, so fully and freely demonstrated in Jesus and made available to all who will. This is his salvation: brought to us by God himself.

**Ellen White comments**

The great Physician co-operates with every effort made in behalf of suffering humanity, to give light to the body, and life and restoration to the soul. And why is this? Satan came into our world, and led men into temptation. With sin came sickness and suffering, for we reap that which we sow. Satan afterward caused man to charge upon God the suffering which is but the sure result of the transgression of physical law. God is thus falsely accused, and his character misrepresented. He is charged with doing that which Satan himself has done. God would have his people expose this falsehood of the enemy. To them he has given the light of the gospel of health, and as his representatives they are to give the light to others. As they work to relieve suffering humanity, they are to point out the origin of all suffering, and direct the mind to Jesus... As with his blessing health returns, the character of God will be vindicated, and the lie thrown back upon Satan, its originator. {Christian Educator, October 1, 1898 par. 9}