THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

Christ + Nothing: Understanding the Finished Work of Salvation

Adult Bible Study / Discipleship Teaching Resource

Purpose of the Study

This study develops the central argument of Christ + 0: the saving work of Jesus Christ is complete and sufficient. Eternal life is God's gift, received through faith in Christ rather than completed by human performance. Repentance, obedience, baptism, confession, surrender, commitment, and good works have important places in Christian discipleship; the crucial question is where they belong. When responses that properly follow salvation are moved into the condition for receiving salvation, the basis of assurance shifts from Christ's finished work to the believer's performance.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the difference between a gift and a wage in Paul's presentation of salvation.
- Show why Christ's declaration, “It is finished,” is central to assurance.
- Explain the significance of the seated Christ in Hebrews as evidence of completed sacrifice.
- Distinguish the condition for receiving eternal life from the fruit and responsibilities of Christian discipleship.
- Use clear salvation passages to evaluate claims that add human performance to faith in Christ.
- Help believers move from repeated self-examination toward confidence in the sufficiency of the Savior.

Key Biblical Texts

John 3:16–18	Romans 3:21–28	Galatians 2:16
John 5:24	Romans 4:4–5	Galatians 3:1–14
John 6:47	Romans 6:23	Ephesians 2:8–10
John 19:30	Hebrews 10:10–14	1 John 5:11–13

Suggested 60-Minute Teaching Schedule

- 0–7 minutes — The central question: Has Christ done enough?
- 7–15 minutes — Gift versus wage: grace and works
- 15–25 minutes — “It is finished”: the completed work of Christ
- 25–34 minutes — The seated Christ: one sacrifice, once for all
- 34–44 minutes — Christ plus something: moving good responses into the wrong place
- 44–52 minutes — Assurance: knowing rather than endlessly measuring
- 52–60 minutes — The Rule of the 200 vs. the 2, application, and discussion

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1. The Central Question: Has Christ Done Enough?

Many Christians affirm that salvation is by grace and still live as though something remains to be supplied by them. The resulting questions are familiar: Was my repentance sincere enough? Did I surrender enough? Have I remained faithful enough? Did I confess enough? The focus gradually moves from the sufficiency of Christ to the adequacy of the believer's response.

Christ + 0 redirects the question. The issue is not, “Have I done enough?” The issue is, “Has Christ done enough?” The gospel's answer is yes. Christ does not need our help to save us. The believer's confidence therefore rests in the object of faith—Jesus Christ and His finished work—not in the believer's ability to measure the quality of his own performance.

Teaching emphasis: Assurance becomes unstable whenever its foundation is moved from an unchanging Savior to a changing human performance.

2. Gift Versus Wage: Grace and Works

Romans 4:4–5 and Romans 6:23 establish a basic distinction. A wage is earned; a gift is received. Once something must be earned, it no longer functions as a gift. Paul therefore places the person who works and the person who believes in deliberate contrast when discussing justification.

Ephesians 2:8–10 preserves both sides of the Christian life. Salvation is by grace through faith and is not the result of works; yet those who are saved are created in Christ Jesus for good works. Works matter profoundly, but their location in the sequence matters. They are the fruit of salvation, not the price of it.

Ask the class: What happens to the meaning of “gift” if the recipient must first complete a spiritual performance before the gift becomes his?

3. “It Is Finished”: Nothing Remains to Be Added

John 19:30 gives the study its controlling image: Jesus declares, “It is finished.” The book emphasizes the finality of that statement. The saving work is not paused, awaiting the believer's contribution. Christ's sacrifice does not become sufficient only after repentance reaches the proper emotional intensity, surrender becomes complete, or religious performance reaches an adequate level.

If the work is finished, additions cannot complete it. This is the theological problem with every “Christ plus” formulation. Even when the added requirement is something good and biblically commanded in its proper place, making it part of the basis on which eternal life is received shifts confidence away from the finished work of Christ.

Key question: If Christ declared the work finished, what remains for the believer to add to make the saving work complete?

4. The Seated Christ: The Work Is Done

Hebrews supplies a second powerful image. Under the old covenant, priests stood repeatedly to minister and offer sacrifices that could never finally take away sins. Christ, by contrast, offered one sacrifice and sat down. Hebrews 10:14 describes the effectiveness of that one offering as extending forever to those being sanctified.

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The seated Christ is therefore not a picture of inactivity but of completion. He does not stand waiting for another sacrifice. His redemptive work is sufficient. Christian rest is not spiritual passivity; it is the active confidence of someone who lives from an accomplished salvation rather than striving to finish it.

Teaching contrast: The priests stood because the sacrificial work continued. Christ sat down because His offering was complete.

5. Christ Plus Something: Good Things in the Wrong Place

The manuscript repeatedly distinguishes between things that are biblically important and making those things conditions for receiving eternal life. Sorrow over sin, baptism, confession, surrender, commitment, obedience, and good works can all belong meaningfully in the life of a believer. The problem arises when one of them is moved from response or discipleship into the condition for salvation.

This is the concern Paul addresses in Galatians. The Galatian error did not remove Jesus; it added law observance to Christ as necessary for full standing before God. Paul's alarm shows that adding a human requirement to grace does not strengthen the gospel. It changes its basis.

Sequence matters: After faith, obedience and good works are the fruit of new life. When human performance is made a condition for receiving salvation, grace is no longer being treated as gift.

6. A Closer Look at Common Additions

Repentance and sorrow: Biblical repentance must not be turned into an unmeasurable emotional threshold: “How sorry is sorry enough?” The focus of saving faith remains Christ.

Confession: The book distinguishes judicial forgiveness from family fellowship. It treats 1 John 1:9 as instruction to believers concerning fellowship rather than an added condition for obtaining eternal life.

Baptism: Baptism is a meaningful and commanded testimony of identification with Christ, but it must not be made the Savior. The believer already has one.

Surrender and commitment: Wholehearted discipleship is a worthy Christian response, but assurance cannot rest on determining whether one's surrender was sufficiently total.

Good works and perseverance: Good works belong to Christian growth and witness. They do not become a second payment added to Christ's completed work.

7. Assurance: God Intends the Believer to Know

First John 5:11–13 is central to the book's pastoral concern. John writes so that those who believe in the name of the Son of God may know that they have eternal life. Assurance is therefore not presented as arrogance. It is the natural result of trusting a promise whose reliability rests upon God.

Performance-based systems make assurance structurally difficult because the believer must continually ask whether enough has been done. The standard becomes movable: enough sorrow, enough surrender, enough obedience, enough perseverance. The finished-work approach places certainty outside the believer's fluctuating condition and in Christ's completed work and promise.

Pastoral emphasis: The object of faith is everything. Assurance looks outward to Christ before it looks inward at the quality of the believer's performance.

8. The Rule of the 200 vs. the 2

Christ + 0 introduces a practical interpretive principle called the "Rule of the 200 vs. the 2." The manuscript argues that the New Testament contains a large body of clear passages presenting belief in Christ as the condition for eternal life. Difficult or apparently conflicting passages should therefore be read in light of the repeated, clear salvation statements rather than used to overturn them.

The principle is an application of reading clearer passages alongside more difficult ones and paying close attention to audience and context. John 6:47, Acts 16:31, John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8–9, and Romans 4:5 are among the passages the book uses as anchors.

Classroom caution: This principle should encourage careful contextual interpretation, not dismissal of difficult texts. The task is to ask what a difficult passage is actually addressing and how it fits the broader biblical testimony.

9. Three Witnesses to the Finished Work

The Cross — "It is finished." Christ declares the saving work complete (John 19:30).

The Seated Christ — One sacrifice is sufficient. Hebrews presents Christ seated after accomplishing purification, in contrast to repeatedly standing priests (Hebrews 1:3; 10:11–14).

The Resurrection — The crucified Christ lives. The gospel does not end at the tomb. The risen Christ is the living Savior in whom eternal life is received and the believer's confidence rests.

Practical Exercise: Audit the Additions

Invite participants to write down conditions they may consciously or unconsciously have attached to assurance of salvation. Examples from the book include: "I must feel sorry enough," "I must surrender everything," "I must be baptized before it counts," or "I must maintain a certain standard going forward." Then evaluate each statement against the clear salvation passages studied in this lesson.

- What does the passage actually say is the condition?
- Is the added requirement part of receiving eternal life, or is it a response that belongs to discipleship and fellowship?
- Does this belief place assurance in Christ, or does it force me to measure myself?
- What clear biblical promise should replace the performance-based condition?

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the distinction between a gift and a wage so important to the gospel?
2. What does "It is finished" contribute to the doctrine of assurance?
3. Why is the seated Christ such a powerful image of sufficiency?
4. How can something biblically good become a distortion when moved into the wrong place in the order of salvation and discipleship?
5. How would you distinguish conviction, confession, and discipleship from conditions for receiving eternal life?
6. Why does performance-based assurance tend to create a moving finish line?
7. How should clear salvation passages guide our interpretation of more difficult texts?

8. Where are you most tempted to ask “Have I done enough?” rather than “Has Christ done enough?”

Teacher's Companion

Core Proposition

Salvation is God's gift, grounded entirely in the sufficient and finished work of Jesus Christ and received through faith in Him. Christian obedience matters, but it flows from salvation rather than completing the saving work.

Teaching Emphases

- Keep the object of faith central. The lesson is about the sufficiency of Christ, not the sufficiency of the believer's faith performance.
- Preserve the distinction between salvation and discipleship. Refusing to make obedience a meritorious condition for salvation does not make obedience optional in Christian life.
- Use the gift/wage distinction carefully. Romans 4 and Romans 6 provide a clear conceptual framework for grace versus earning.
- Use the seated-Christ image as the lesson's visual anchor. It communicates finality without requiring complicated terminology.
- Treat assurance pastorally. The aim is not to encourage spiritual indifference but to move confidence from self-measurement to Christ's finished work.
- When discussing disputed passages, model contextual interpretation rather than caricaturing Christians who understand those passages differently.

Conclusion

The gospel does not ask whether the sinner can add enough to Christ. It announces that Christ has done what the sinner could never do. He completed the work, offered the sufficient sacrifice, and sat down. Eternal life is God's gift to the one who believes. Good works, obedience, baptism, confession, surrender, and growth have their proper and beautiful place—but none can improve upon a finished work. The believer's assurance therefore rests where the gospel places it: in Jesus Christ.

For Further Study

Christ + 0: The Absolute Sufficiency of Jesus Christ for Salvation develops these themes in greater depth, including faith and works, assurance, repentance, confession, baptism, surrender, difficult salvation passages, and the interpretive framework the book calls the Rule of the 200 vs. the 2.

Optional Closing Prayer

Father, fix our confidence upon Your Son. Teach us to rest in what Christ has accomplished without confusing grace with indifference or discipleship with earning. Free us from the exhausting attempt to complete what Jesus declared finished, and form in us lives of grateful obedience that flow from Your gift. Amen.