

# Trading Places

By Andy Smith

**F**or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)

I am actually amused by the fire and brimstone street preachers who proclaim from soapboxes on street corners that we are all sinners condemned to hell. “*Turn or burn!*” they shout with a harsh voice, void of any compassion. Fingers are pointed and the megaphone’s blast can be heard blocks away. Are they really sharing the good news? Why does their message of *good news* begin with *bad news*?

What if the message of good news actually began with *good news*! In his letter to the Romans, Paul seems to shout from his own soapbox with his pen, “*Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads us toward repentance?*” (Romans 2:4). It was the kindness of a righteous God that would have his only son Jesus trade places with unrighteous people so that we might love God and enjoy him forever!

The Scriptures are clear in stating, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23) We are all born into the world with a flawed soul. There is nothing we can do under our own power to make things right with God. We all fall short of God’s desire for our lives. But that is only part of the story. Thank goodness the story doesn’t end there! I am so thankful the Jesus gives us the rest of the story.

Paul writes to his friends in Rome that God’s high standard for righteousness has now been made known in Jesus and that this same righteousness is now given freely to all who believe through faith in Christ. Because of the righteousness of Jesus, all who believe, “*are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*” (Romans 3:24) When God looks at our flaws, he sees only the flawless person of Jesus! Jesus has traded places with us so that we might appear flawless before God.

Come and join me for a stroll through Rothman’s Jewelry Store where only the most precious jewels can be found — and be sure to stop and notice the one empty display case. **Flawless** will challenge us to see our flaws as God sees them, through the eyes of his redeeming son.

Now that’s *good news*...worthy of a soapbox and a megaphone!

Questions for Thought:

1. How do Mr. Rothman and his son reflect what you know about God and his son, Jesus?

2. In consideration of flaws, what is the significance of the line “Whether one or one hundred thousand, none can enter the flawless case?”
3. How does Jesus all God the Father to view us as flawless?