

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

ALREADY ACCEPTED | PART 1
PASTOR ANDREW BURNS
SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2026

Overview

Series: Already Accepted – Session 1 – Crucified, Buried, and Raised with Christ

Pastor Andrew Burns

Key Scriptures: Galatians 2:20; Romans 3:20; Romans 6:10–11; Colossians 3:1–3; John 10:10

Before You Meet: Encourage group members to reflect on this question before gathering: In what areas of your life have you felt pressure to perform or strive in order to feel worthy – whether at work, in relationships, or even in your faith?

Main Takeaways

- 1. You Are Already Accepted:** Acceptance before God is not earned through striving or performance. It is received through what Jesus accomplished on the cross and freely gave to us.
- 2. The Holy Spirit Is Your Advocate:** The world teaches that you are your own best advocate. Scripture tells a different story. The Holy Spirit – the same power that raised Jesus from the dead – lives in you and advocates on your behalf, knowing your best interests better than you know them yourself.

3. **The Law Exposes, It Does Not Save:** The law of Moses was never designed to justify anyone. As Paul writes in Romans 3:20, no one will be justified before God by works of the law. The law reveals sin and points us to our need for a Savior. To place yourself under a performance-driven mindset is to place yourself under a curse.
4. **You Were Crucified with Christ:** Galatians 2:20 is the foundation of this message. You were not a spectator to the cross — you shared in the crucifixion of Jesus. Your old self, your sin, and your sin nature died with Him.
5. **You Were Also Buried and Raised with Him:** Romans 6 makes clear that union with Christ includes not only His death but His burial and resurrection. You are raised to walk in newness of life — dead to sin, alive to God, living in unbroken fellowship with Him.
6. **Your Life Is Hidden in Christ:** Colossians 3:3 describes the believer's true identity as hidden with Christ in God. You are not defined by your earthly struggles or your past relationship with sin. You are seated with Christ at the right hand of God.
7. **Grace Is Not a License to Sin — It Is Freedom from Sin:** The grace of God does not give permission to continue in sin. It breaks the power of sin. It is the very thing that frees you to live the abundant life Jesus described in John 10:10.

Discussion Questions

Opening

Q1: Growing up, what messages did you receive — from school, family, sports, or culture — about what you had to do to be worthy or successful? How did those messages shape the way you approached God?

Q2: Before hearing this message, how would you have described your standing before God on a typical day? Did it feel stable, or did it shift based on how well you were doing spiritually?

Going Deeper

Q3: Pastor Andrew described the performance-driven mindset as a “never-ending treadmill.” Have you ever experienced faith feeling that way? What did that season look like for you?

Q4: Romans 3:20 says that through the law comes knowledge of sin. The more you strive in self-effort, the more your failures are exposed rather than resolved. Does that match your experience? Why do you think striving tends to work that way?

Q5: Galatians 2:20 says we have been crucified with Christ. What does it mean to you personally that you were not a spectator to the cross but a participant in it? How does that change the way you think about your identity?

Q6: Romans 6:10–11 describes being dead to sin and alive to God in unbroken fellowship. Pastor Andrew said your relationship with sin is broken — not just managed. What is the difference between *managing* sin and being *dead* to it? Which one have you been living from?

Q7: Pastor Andrew addressed the license-to-sin question directly, saying grace does not give permission to sin but rather frees us from sin’s power. How would you explain that distinction to someone who misunderstands grace?

Q8: Colossians 3:1–3 calls believers to set their minds on things above because their real life is hidden with Christ in God. This does not happen automatically. What are the practical obstacles that pull your focus back down to the earthly and temporal?

Q9: Pastor Andrew’s sermon talked about religious pride — the mindset that says God accepts me because I am more obedient or more devoted than others. Have you ever caught that attitude in yourself? How does the truth of the gospel correct it?

Q10: Trying to straddle the line between the world’s values and the kingdom of God leads to confusion and compromise every time. Where do you find that tension most difficult in your own life right now?

Personal Reflection

1. On a typical day, is my sense of standing before God stable — or does it rise and fall with my performance? What would it take to live from a settled acceptance instead?
2. Am I doing good things as a response to what I have already received from Jesus, or to earn His acceptance? How can I tell the difference in my own motives?
3. Where am I currently placing myself under a performance standard with God — a law-mindset — that the gospel invites me to lay down?

Practical Application

This week, choose one or two to practice:

1. Receive, Do Not Strive.

Each morning this week, begin by saying out loud: “I am already accepted. My standing before God does not change based on my performance today.” Notice how it shifts your posture throughout the day.

2. Meditate on Galatians 2:20.

Read it slowly each day. Sit with the phrase “I have been crucified with Christ.” Ask the Holy Spirit to make this truth feel as real as any other fact you know about yourself.

3. Examine Your Motives.

Are you doing good things as a response to what you’ve already received from Jesus, or to earn His acceptance? Spend time this week honestly examining what drives your spiritual activity.

4. Identify the Law-Mindset in Your Life.

Where are you placing yourself under a performance standard with God? Write it down. Then bring it to Him and ask Him to replace that mindset with the reality of your righteousness in Christ.

5. Speak Your Identity Out Loud.

Based on Romans 6:11 and Colossians 3:3, practice declaring: "I am dead to sin. I am alive to God. My life is hidden with Christ in God." Repetition is not empty ritual — it is renewing the mind.

6. Share the Advocate Truth with Someone.

The world tells people they are their own best advocate. Think of one person carrying that burden, and find a natural way to share with them what the Holy Spirit actually does on their behalf.

Closing

Pastor Andrew closed in prayer with these words:

"Thank You, Lord, that we are already accepted — that You accept us completely and perfectly because of Jesus, because of His love, His perfect sacrifice, paying our debt, all of our debt, all of our sins: past, present, and future."

Take a moment as a group to sit quietly with that. Then close by having each person finish this sentence aloud, if they're willing:

"Because I am already accepted, I no longer have to ..."

News & Events

Scan QR code for Upcoming Events, News, Giving and more! <https://linktr.ee/cornerstonejc>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- August 2 – Student / Teacher Prayer
- August 5 – Communion
 - Back to School Bash (Grades K-12)

