

When we buy something new, we glory in the perfection of it. We try to protect it as best we can to keep it from becoming damaged. Even a tiny scratch on something can mar it so that it loses its value in our sight. For example, the finish on a new automobile is so sacred to us; we worry because we know that it won't be very long until it is marred in some way.

But even a car with a scratch is mostly still good. It will still run just as well, and it is still just as solid as ever. It loses something in our perception of it, though, and perhaps we shouldn't be that way. If we bought the car merely for transportation, its appearance won't be a problem. If we want it to be a showpiece, however, we are out of luck.

Most of us have probably tried to hide the fact that we scraped some of the paint off of a car that wasn't solely ours. We knew that there would be someone else who would not be happy with any kind of blemish. I know that I have bought touch-up paint before to 'cover my sins', but I don't think that it ever really kept me from being found out.

God is particular about some things as well. We know that He demanded a sacrifice offering from man that was 'without defect or blemish' (Leviticus 22:21). The quality of our sacrifice shows how much we care for Him, and so we are to give the best that we have. Of course, man did not make the sheep; he just cared for them. But he did have the power to make the choice from all of the sheep that he had available. It is a general principle that God wants us to give our best.

We must realize that there is a difference between the gift and the giver. Fortunately, God does not have quite the same standard for us. Well, He does, but there is another factor that is added in. God will not accept a blemished lamb as a gift, but he will accept a blemished person as the giver. The only way that He will do this is through Christ, who was the unblemished gift described in 1 Peter 1:19.

This reminds me in a way of when we as a parent get a gift for a child to give to the other parent. The child does not have the ability to get a suitable gift (money, transportation, etc), so we 'help' them. And we act as though the child actually gave the gift. There are other ways in which a gift is prepared and 'given' for us. We may realize what is going on, and if we do it is all right with us.

We are in a similar position: God provides the gift for us to give Himself so that we can be covered by the sacrifice. We are not the sacrifice itself, so we do not need to be absolutely perfect. But we are the ones who need the perfect gift to make us suitable for acceptance as perfect.

We remember that the priest, in the Old Testament law, couldn't have a blemish, either (Leviticus 21). We are now priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9) and though blemished, we are made acceptable through Christ and can now come to (or approach) God in spite of our sins. This is of course only true if we are really 'in Christ'. Some people cannot seem to truly immerse themselves in Christ; they are like the piece of wood that won't sink no matter how hard you try to put it under. But if we turn our soul completely over to God, He will enable us to let go of the world and let Christ fill our entire being.

We are reconciled by the sacrifice of Christ so that we may be presented 'without blemish' (Colossians 1:22), and so the church can in turn be presented 'without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish' (Ephesians 5:27). This is brought about because Satan (or 'Old Scratch', as he has been called), did not have the power to penetrate the power of God to mar the perfect beauty of Christ.