

It's one thing to need God's forgiveness because, or insofar as, one has failed to satisfy God's demand for righteousness and is, to that extent, unrighteous.

It is something else again to need God's forgiveness because one has sought to establish one's "own" righteousness instead of submitting to "God's" (Rom 10:3).

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It's one thing to need God's forgiveness because, or insofar as, one has not satisfied God's moral demand.

It's something else again to need God's forgiveness because one has sought to satisfy God's moral demand in order to establish one's "own" righteousness instead of submitting to "God's" (Rom 10:3).

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What is it that I need to hear about myself?

That I'm not really as good as I think I am? That I do not really love my neighbor as myself?

Or, rather, that, however good (or bad) I may be, I have the ultimately meaningful life in which I cannot but believe, not because of who *I* am or what *I* do, but solely because of who *God* is and what *God* does?

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Unless I am mistaken, a big difference between Niebuhr's position and my own, notwithstanding all the other points at which they clearly converge, is that he is on one side of these issues—or of this one issue, variously formulated—while I am on the other side.

But, then, like so many other Christians, including classical Protestants, Niebuhr's position is still predicated in principle on a covenant of works even if it is predicated in fact on a covenant of grace. (One respect in which this is emphatically *not* true of his position, however, is that, he nowhere asserts or implies, so far as I am aware, that the obedience of Jesus Christ is the *causa meritoria* of God's grace as distinct from being the preeminent "symbol," or culminating "disclosure," of it.)

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