

# JUSTIFICATION V. SANCTIFICATION

*Job 25:4*

*How then can man be justified with God?*



*Escaping Wretched Subjectivism by Looking at Christ and His  
Accomplishments*

**B r o o k y   R   S t o c k t o n**

# Justification v. Sanctification

Version 1.0



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# PREFACE

The doctrines of Justification and Sanctification may be the most important subjects a man can study.

The Christian community is dangerously confused about how to get right with God and how to live a holy life.

Wretched subjectivism is the problem: justification by faith is the answer.

May the Lord bless your meditation as you read this work.



# DEDICATION

I am forever grateful to Miles Stanford (Colorado Springs) who introduced me to the difference between justification by faith and sanctification by faithfulness.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Part 1

# THE BLESSING OF JUSTIFICATION

Source: Stockton, Five Pillars of the Gospel



# Questionnaire One

Q: How Would Martin Luther Answer the following:

1. On what basis does God accept a man?
  - A. A life of obedience to law
  - B. Faith in the heart
2. What is the first and primary essential requirement for salvation?
  - A. Works in conformity to law
  - B. Faith as a possession of man
3. What does man need?
  - A. Righteousness that comes by obedience to law
  - B. Faith in the heart.
4. What does the word "justify" mean?
  - A. To declare just
  - B. To make just?
5. What is the proper nature of justification?
  - A. Subjective: It changes the character of man.
  - B. Objective: It changes his standing in the mind of God.
6. What is the locus of justification?
  - A. Internal or within the heart.
  - B. External to the man
7. What is the impact of justification? <sup>1</sup>
  - A. It is efficient and creative?
  - B. It is declarative?

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<sup>1</sup> The Answer to Questions: Q = 1,2,3,4 = A; 5,6,7= B - (Source: Present Truth Magazine a.k.a. Verdict Magazine (published in the 70s) once asked, "How would Martin Luther answer the following questions?" (Brinsmead, 1972).<sup>1</sup>

# Questionnaire Two

## Are You Roman Catholic or Protestant?

Answer (a) or (b) whichever is correct? (Brinsmead, 1972 )

One:

(a) God gives a man right standing with Himself by mercifully accounting him innocent and virtuous

(b) God gives a man right standing with Himself by actually making him into an innocent and virtuous person.

Two:

(a) God gives a man right standing with Himself by placing Christ's goodness and virtue to his credit.

(b) God gives a man right standing with Himself by putting Christ's goodness and virtue into his heart.

Three:

(a) God accepts the believer because of the moral excellence found in Jesus Christ.

(b) God makes the believer acceptable by infusing Christ's moral excellence into his life.

Four:

(a) If a Christian becomes "born again" (regenerate and transformed in character); he will achieve a right standing with God.

(b) If a Christian has a right standing with God by faith, he will experience a transformation in character.

Five:

(a) We achieve a right standing with God by faith alone.

(b) We receive a right standing with God by faith which has become active by love.

Six:

(a) We achieve right standing with God by having Christ live out His life of obedience in us.

(b) We achieve a right standing with God by accepting the fact that He obeyed the law perfectly for us.

Seven:

(a) We achieve a right standing with God by following Christ's example by the help of His enabling grace.

(b) We follow Christ's example because His life has given us right standing with God.

Eight:

(a) God first pronounces that we are good in His sight, then gives us His Spirit to make us good.

(b) God sends His spirit to make us good, and then He will pronounce that we are good.

Nine:

(a) Christ's intercession at God's right hand gives us favor in the sight of God.

(b) It is the indwelling Christ that gives us favor in God's sight.

Ten:

(a) Only by faith in the doing and dying of Christ can we fully satisfy the claims of the Ten Commandments.

(b) We can satisfy the claims of the Ten Commandments by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Source: (Verdict Magazine - Questionnaire: Are you Catholic or Protestant?)

## Man's Judicial Problem

Justification is the answer to man's fundamental problem:

Job 9:2 . . .but how should man be just with God?

Deuteronomy 11:25 There shall no man be able to **stand before** you:  
*for* the LORD your **God** shall lay the fear of you and the dread of

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<sup>2</sup> All the answers are A. except questions 4, 6, 7.

you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Psalms 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the **womb**: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death;

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Revelation 20:11-14 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

# The Spiritual Problem

Since sin entered the world, men are in need of being reconciled to God. But, how can a sinner get right with a holy God?

Cain sought to obtain a relationship with the LORD by offering fruits from his gardens: Beans, broccoli, and beets – the currency of this world (Genesis 4).

Abel sought to establish a relationship with God based on the shed blood of a lamb – the currency of the spirit world. Abel succeeded where Cain failed. Angry and bitter over this new bloody religion, Cain murdered his brother.

This true story informs us there are only two religions in the world: (1) a religion of beans and (2) the religion of blood; a religion of works and a religion of faith in the blood; a religion of man and a religion of God.

In modern times the religion of human works is disguised behind sophisticated religious systems, existential experiences, Charismatic titillations, religious rituals, eastern psychological meditations and introspections, new age spirituality, faith in the heart, and wretched subjectivism.

Modern religions emphasize spiritual experiences, introspection, and the pursuit of spirituality (subjectivism) to reach God whereas the gospel takes men outside of self to Christ at Calvary. Many forms of modern Christianity are nothing more than hand-waiving, subjective attempts to touch the Creator and to experience some kind of euphoria that provides evidence they have encountered the Divine – pseudo spirituality that pacifies the soul.

People in modern religions appear to serve God out of necessity in order to obtain His approval – wretched subjectivism.

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is not without experiences but it first and foremost shows men the work of Another . . . outside of themselves . . . at the cross where our Lord redeemed sinners by offering Himself to pay man's debt to God. Christians serve the Father, not to merit salvation, but out of thankfulness for giving us His Son to pay for our sins.

Thus, this work on justification v. sanctification seeks clarify the work of Christ at Calvary and to provide an anchor for man's soul to rest.

# Catholicism and Justification



Without a doubt, the preaching of Martin Luther and the Reformers changed the face of Europe forever.

Unlike our age where the mind is centered around TV, computers and technology, the 16<sup>th</sup> century mind was wrapped up with the question, “How can a sinner be forgiven and accepted by a holy Creator?”

The theological issue revolved around the doctrine of justification: How can a man get right with God. The Reformed catholics answered by “faith” in the “doing and dying of Christ” at Calvary; the Roman Catholics emphasized faith working change in the human heart (a new birth “experience”); that is, by being born again; by experiencing the power of God in the human heart.

The Reformers would have nothing to with this touchy-feely, subjective super spiritual pursuit of change. They agreed men needed to be converted, but asked, “How much change is needed? Have I changed enough?” The Reformers wanted to be right with God. All agreed that a man’s faith in Christ’s work at Calvary saved the man by giving him a right standing with God – a standing of “righteous” before God. Yes, they believed in the new birth, but like Paul in Romans, did not make a “new birth” change the measuring stick of salvation.

To them, salvation was germane to the work of Christ at the cross.

Because the Roman Catholic mind was wrapped up with change in the heart, their followers became exceeding subjective and introspective to the point of being obsessed with trying to change enough to please God; even consumed with the roaring seas of carnal and spiritual emotions swirling around in the inner man.

The Reformers, however, found rest in their souls because they believed the work of Christ on Christ was sufficient to give them a right standing with God –a standing given to believers by the grace of God . . . and, not human achievement. Yes, the Reformers led holy lives but they did not succumb to pride because of spiritual victories, nor were they depressed because of their struggles with seeking holiness.

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The first open challenge in the Church to salvation by grace was by Pelagius (about A.D. 400)<sup>3</sup>, a British monk who denied original sin. He proposed that man was able to live a holy life by the natural powers given him of God, and thus obtain salvation.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) vigorously opposed Pelagianism and catechized the orthodox view of man's depravity and need of divine grace.

In a series of councils the Catholic Church united with Augustine. Augustine championed the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. Within the Church, others arose to oppose Augustinian theology by proposing views which became known as semi-Pelagianism—a belief that man is tainted with sin but not to the point he cannot work with God to accomplish his own salvation; that is, semi-Pelagianism taught partial depravity. The councils of the Church even condemned semi-Pelagianism. Catholic authors cite these facts of history in an effort to demonstrate how the Church has always stood by the New Testament teaching of salvation by grace.

“St. Paul tells us that we are ‘justified freely by his grace, and that we are ‘saved according to the election of grace, and if by grace it is not now by works: otherwise grace is no more grace’. To the Corinthians, he writes: ‘By the grace of God I am what I am’, and speaks to the Ephesians of ‘Christ, by whose grace you are saved . . . for by grace you are saved . . . and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God’. He reminds Timothy that ‘God has called me by his holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace’. And again: ‘To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ’. The same Apostle writes to Titus: ‘That being justified by his grace, we may be heirs according to the hope of life everlasting’. and again to the Ephesians that God has predestinated us unto the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he hath graced us in his beloved Son’.” (Daujat, 1959).

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), in reaction to the Protestant Reformation, declared:

“ . . . if they (men) were not born again in Christ, they would never be justified, since in that new birth there is bestowed upon them,

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<sup>3</sup> Pelagius was a monk who lived in the late 300s and early 400s A.D. Pelagius taught that human beings were born innocent, without the stain of original or inherited sin. He believed that God created every human soul directly and therefore every human soul was originally free from sin.



through the merit of His passion, the grace by which they are made just . . . “

The editors of the Roman Catholic Douay Version make these footnote comments on Romans 3 and 4:

“The justification of which St. Paul here speaks is the infusion of sanctifying grace which alone renders a person supernaturally pleasing in the sight of God.” “But justification, that is, an infusion of sanctifying grace, cannot be merited by us; it is an entirely gratuitous gift of God.”

In *The Life of Grace*, P. Gregory Stevens writes the following:

“What is the reality of the justification accorded by God when man cooperates in faith? Is it merely like a statement of God declaring the sinner just? Or is it a divine act by which the sinner is internally transformed and becomes a new reality before God? Catholic thought has always been that the justice bestowed on man is a gratuitous gift (Galatians 3.6ff), and a true justice which actually transforms man into a person pleasing to God.”

“Catholic doctrine on these questions, formulated in opposition to Lutheranism, was presented in full at the Council of Trent, as it had been previously by Pope Leo X in the Bull ‘Exsurge Domine’ of June 15, 1520. The teaching of Trent centers on two points of fundamental importance for the understanding of the Catholic doctrine on grace. First of all, justification is a real and profound transformation of man, a genuine gift of sanctification to him. It can in no way be reduced to something purely external.” (Stevens, 1963)

“In a clear, religiously profound statement the Council defines the inner nature and structure of justification. It does so in direct opposition to the extrinsicist position of Reformation theology. The heart of Catholic teaching is contained in this passage. First of all comes the assertion that “justification is not only the remission of sins, but sanctification and renovation of the interior man through the voluntary reception of grace and the gifts, whereby man becomes just instead of unjust, a friend instead of an enemy, that he may be an heir in the hope of life everlasting.” The Council then details the causes of this inner transformation: its goal and purpose is God’s glory; it is brought about by God through the merits of our Redeemer, and communicated to man in faith and baptism.”

Jesuit spirituality was a counter-reformation movement initiated by Ignatius Loyola who paid attention to divine voices inside him. He believed God is present within every man and man need only listen to him.

Richard McBrien has written in *Catholicism*:

To be "spiritual" means to know, and to live according to the knowledge, that there is more to life than meets the eye. To be "spiritual" means, beyond that, to know and to live according to the knowledge that God is present to us in grace as the principle of personal, interpersonal, social and even cosmic transformation. To be "open to the Spirit" is to accept explicitly who we are and who we are called always to become and to direct our lives accordingly.

Jesuit (or Ignatian) spirituality mirrors that of Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Society of Jesus. It is a way of encountering ourselves and the world that encourages us to find God in everyone and everything (Jesuit website, Albuquerque, NM retrieved December 2013).

The Jesuits lead their followers into retreats and meditation wherein the God-seeker waits and listens for a voice within; that is, he seeks a spiritual experience that defines who he is and how he stands with God. This experience is more authoritative, more powerful, and more influential than the Scriptures or the gospel. It is the worst kind of subjectivism because it does not need the Bible. Who needs the Bible when God speaks to you directly?

See Bernini's Portrayal of the Ecstasy of Saint Theresa. Notice the arrow piercing her heart. Theresa has had a dynamic, sensual experience with God that has overwhelmed her soul – an experience more authoritative than the resurrection of Christ or his written Word. This is Catholicism: deeply subjective, sensual, experiential, emotional, orgasmic, intuitive and introspective . . . and it leads to hell.

### **A Summary of the Catholic Position on Justification**

- Justification is the internal renovation and renewing of a man, i.e. wretched subjectivism confused as human sanctification.
- Justification comes by an infusion of God's grace. Man is justified on the basis of what the Holy Spirit has done in him.
- Justification means that man himself is made just, made pleasing to God in his own person by an infusion of righteousness into the heart.

In common street terms, Catholic justification may be expressed this way: When God's acts on a vile sinner, God pours his grace into the heart of man changing him in such a way that he can be just before God.

A sincere Catholic may say: "I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. I need Jesus to come into my heart to save me, change me, and help me to be good so I can be just in God's sight; that is, I need God's grace to make me 'born again' so I can change and please God." Jean Daujat (The Theology of Grace) said it this way:

“Sinful man cannot, of himself, be pleasing to God. For that, he must receive a gift from God which transforms him interiorly, cleanses him and sanctifies him by adorning him with qualities that render him pleasing to his Creator.” (Daujat, 1959)

If we cannot see what is wrong with the above brief on the Catholic doctrine of justification by faith, then it is because we have become good Catholics.

The Reformers saw justification as a declaring righteous but Catholics see justification as making righteous.

Consequently, we need to develop a Biblical understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith and contrast it with Catholicism. Catholicism is all about the religious experience of man to the neglect of the experience of Christ at Calvary and His work to save sinners. Catholicism is about the work “in me,” and evangelical Christianity is all about the work of God “outside of me” in history through Christ

## The Need for Justification



The universal problem that sinful man faces is a thrice holy God (Habakkuk 1:3; Isaiah 6:1-7; 64:6).

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).

Q: How can a sinner be right with God? This should be the question on every man’s mind.

Job 9:2 . . .but how should man be just with God?

Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

Popular Christianity is asking, “What can God do for me? How can I get Him to bless my plans and objectives in life? The true God-seeker asks, “How can I please God?” It appears that modern man is more interested in apologetics than the gospel. The creature is more interested in demanding that God be justified before man for the way He is running the universe than he is in how he can meet the demands of a holy God.

Modern man asks: “How can I make more money rather than how can I be rich before God?”

Modern man places God on trial before man's tribunal rather than seeing himself on trial before God's tribunal in the eschatological judgment. He sees himself born good, but corrupted by parents and those around him.

Justification does not make sense to modern man because he is not preoccupied with his sins, and how a sinner can find acceptance before God.

Modern man sees God as having more sugar than the fairy godmother -- One who forgives everybody.

If modern psychologized man has a problem, it is because he sees his plight as related to low self-esteem and a poor self-image, rather than the fact, his image is marred by sin. Who is saying, "Oh wretched man that I am. How can I, a sinner, be just before God?" Yet, this is what the sixteenth century man was asking. The sixteenth century man was aware that life was hard and short. He was much more preoccupied about how to stand before God's eschatological judgment than he was about his own self-image.

Contemporary men want to be "all they can be." But, the 16<sup>th</sup> century mind did not want to be "all you can be," because that meant giving full expression to your sinful nature. He wanted to please God . . . but, did not know how: Penance? Suffering? Contrition? Mortification? Indulgences?

### **The Context of Justification**

The context of justification is the eschatological judgment. "We know the judgment of God is according to truth" (Romans 2:3). "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Judgment has to do with the courts, and the courts have to do with law.

When a sinner realizes he has to face the bar of God's justice (Romans 2:1-16), the doctrine of justification suddenly becomes of interest. One cannot fully appreciate or proclaim the doctrine of justification unless one understands and proclaims the judgment of God. Paul pronounces all guilty, before he introduces the good news of justification in Romans (3:20).

Daniel 7:9-10 "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

### **The Meaning of the Term Justification**

The words justified and righteous are from the same Greek word (*dikaiosis*, a noun; *dikaiois*, an adjective). When used as a noun, *dikaiosis* can be translated justification or righteous or righteousness. When used as a verb, *dikaio* can be translated “to make righteous,” “declare righteous,” or “to justify.”

*Justification is a judicial, forensic term.* That is, it is a legal word associated with courts of law. In the Biblical sense, it is a word associated with one’s standing in God’s court. The gospel can come to us in the horticultural model (vine and branches), or the pastoral model (shepherd and sheep), or the human-relations model (forgiveness and reconciliation), or the biological model (the new birth), or the sanctuary model (propitiation), or the medical model (healing), but Paul uses the legal model (justification) to explain salvation in Romans.

*Justification is an eschatological word.* That is, it is associated with the judgment of God. Since it is appointed to man once to die and after this the judgment (Hebrews 10:27), and since God’s judgment is an event associated with the Eschaton (Revelation 20:10ff, justification is an eschatological concept.

*Justification is a biblical term* primarily discussed in the Book of Romans, Paul’s legal treatise on the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16).

*Justification is opposite that of condemnation* (Romans 5:15). It has to do with one’s standing in a court of law. Once the verdict is passed, one will either be condemned or justified. The judicial verdict (justified) remains distinct from inner healing (regeneration).

*Justification does not mean “just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned,” or “to be made into an innocent person.”* This would place a man on the ground of Adam making it possible to fall from grace. A state of innocence is not desirable because it is only a matter of time before the innocent sins again.

*Justification does not mean “to be forgiven” or “to be pardoned.”* Forgiveness is the cancellation of debts. While a sinner does need to have his debts pardoned, he needs much more. He needs righteousness deposited into his account.

*Justification does not mean “just-as-if-I-had-died.”* This cute aphorism implies freedom from punishment via substitution. Justification is less about substitution and more about imputation. It is not so much about punishment of sin as it about the gift of positive righteousness.

*Justification does not mean “to be put on probation.”* Violation of probation can cause one to be placed back under the penal system. What is needed for the sinner is not probation but justification.

*Justification does not mean “to be born again” or “to be regenerated.”* Regeneration is a creative act, while justification is a legal act—a verdict, a

decree, a judicial decision, a Court order. Regeneration and justification must be seen as two distinct effects of the gospel.

*Justification does not mean “to be made holy.”* Justification is **not** an ontological quality or a personal attribute; it is a forensic declaration.

We must make a distinction between the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Holy Spirit in us. To fail to preserve a distinction between justification by Christ’s substitutionary work for us and the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us confuses the gospel with law, and the righteous of the Creator with the righteousness of man.

*Justification or “righteousness” does not mean “godliness.”* Justification does not change the object to satisfy the Court, but it does change how the Court regards the object. What is changed is status, not being.

*Justification does not mean to make righteous.* Andreas Osiander, the German pastor who opposed Luther, contended that God must make a man righteous so he can declare a man righteous. He proposed that Christ indwells the believer with His divine righteousness then proceeds to make him righteous. If such be the case, the question is, “how good do I have to become in order to be justified?” Such a system is slavery, and it binds a man to sycophant service to God. Justification means that a person has a righteous standing in a court of law, not that he is made righteous in order to be declared righteous (Cited by Verdict, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 12).

*Justification is not the same as sanctification.* While sanctification follows justification, imputed righteousness is distinct from imparted righteousness. External justification must not be confounded with inner transformation.

### **The Meaning of the Word Righteousness**

*The word righteousness does not mean godliness.* Godliness has to do with being God-like. Godliness defines the character of the man. Righteousness is not a virtue like kindness, though righteousness springs from virtue. Righteousness is a relational word which measures the fulfillment of duties to contractual responsibilities.

The word righteous has an interesting context in Genesis 38. This is a messy chapter about a dysfunctional family, but it sheds light on the meaning of the term “righteous.” God judged Er and the semen-spilling of Onan. Judah’s solicitation of the services of a prostitute and the deceptive act of prostitution by Tamar resulted in an incestuous act between Judah, the father-in-law, and Tamar his daughter-in-law. In the middle of these tainted sexual encounters, Judah declared about Tamar, “She is more righteous than I.” What did he mean by “righteous?” Simply this: Tamar, though her means was wrong, was loyal to

the family of Judah. She waited faithfully for Judah to arrange a proper marriage between her and Shelah, Judah's youngest son, in fulfillment of kinsmen redeemer responsibilities. Though Tamar played the prostitute, she was declared "more righteous" than Judah.

From this turbid affair we learn that righteousness is a relational word that measures one's faithfulness to the responsibilities of a given relationship. In this case, Tamar was faithful to the family of Judah. Judah was not diligent in fulfilling his responsibility to arrange a marriage between Tamar and Shelah in order to raise up children for the family. Though her means was debauched, her ends were noble. Judah recognized the nobility of her loyalty to the family and announced, "She is more righteous than I." God also honored Tamar for her loyalty. She is one of the five women mentioned in our Lord's genealogy (Matthew 1).

Righteousness, therefore, means one has fulfilled his or her responsibility in a given relationship. Vertically, a person is righteous if he fulfills the responsibilities that God has given him. A righteous man is described in Psalm 15 as a man that has fulfilled his duty to God and men. But, who among us, save Christ, has been faithful to God? Thus, there must be another way to be just in heaven's court.

### The Effect of Righteousness

Men need to be justified because sin is deadly: "The soul that sinneth shall die" – Ezekiel 18:20.

Catholics distinguish between mortal (grave) sins and venial (pardonable) sins.

In Catholic sophia, a "mortal" sin is an act that seriously threatens one's relationship to God; whereas, a venial sin is something that is so commonly human it is more easily forgivable.

If there is an argument for distinguishing between mortal sins and venial sins, 1 Corinthians 6:9ff supports the Catholic argument.

In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, the apostle distinguishes between the deadly sin of fornication and other sins common to man:

**18 "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."**

Ellicott references the seriousness and solemnness of the sin of fornication in the litany, "From fornication, and all other deadly sin, good Lord, deliver us."

Let's take a serious look at this passage and see if we can understand the Apostle's argument on the deadly sin of fornication.

**9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,  
10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.  
11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

This text is a warning against deception; and, the wretched thing about deception is that the deceived does **not** know he is deceived.

Paul wanted the church to know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God; and then, he lists sins that characterize the unrighteous: fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate" et al.

By using the phrase, "such were some of you," Paul indicates that many in Corinth were marked by these sins before their conversion to Christ.

In making the statement, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified (separated), but ye are justified (declared righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (regeneration)," Paul informs us that God saved these sinners, delivered them from their addictions by justifying, sanctifying, and regenerating them. The agents of their salvation are the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.

### **Sin that Destroys**

**18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.**

There are few things more heretical than the fallacy that Christians are at liberty to choose their own law order.

Is there anything more clear than God's solemn command: "flee fornication?"

Immediate flight is the **ONLY** remedy for avoiding this deadly sin (See Joseph in Genesis 39).

What an egregious sin fornication must be!

"without the body" means some sins profane the outer court of the temple without touching the holy place within the heart. Fornication defiles the inner sanctuary; that is, fornication injures the core of one's soul . . . his naos . . . his holy of holies . . . the very covenant on which his relationship to God is supposed to be founded.



"sinneth against his own body:" The "body" in this passage is enlarged to include the whole man: spirit, soul, and body. Paul claims the body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit with a "naos" (inner sacred altar) that includes a meeting place where God meets with man! When one commits fornication, he commits a deadly sin that injures the whole man.

Other sins may only profane the outer courts of the temple; the sin of fornication defiles the very holy of holies within God's body-temple.

Thus, fornication is different from common sins in that it damages the whole man, poisons faith, and sullies the conscience.

Ellicott observed, fornication "hardens a' within, and petrifies the feelings."

It is the man that sins, not the flesh; fornication corrupts the whole man, not just the human body.

Matthew 15:15-20

But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?d 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Fornication is a mortal, deadly sin. No one can commit this sin without thunder erupting from Mount Sinai because of his trespass against the King's law-order.

Thus, we have the solemn order, "Flee fornication." This is not an option . . . or choice. It is command.

**19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?**

"Do you not know" is a rebuke of ignorance.

Our bodies do not belong to government, governors, legislators, to the whims of social engineers, or the desires of a seductress.

We are owned by Another; that is, Christ has all rights over our bodies.

While in a political sense, we are sovereigns over our body; in a spiritual and legal sense, our bodies are not our own; they belong to our Lord and Savior.

That is, we act as his stewards over our bodies. We care for our bodies as ones who must give account on how one pilots his own vessel.

Paul gives two reasons we do not have absolute rights over our own bodies: (1) our bodies are inhabited by the Holy Spirit; and (2) we have been bought and purchased by the blood of Christ.

**20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

Christians have been bought and are therefore owned by Another. Paul emphasizes you are not your own; i.e., you do not have absolute rights over your body! Your body is governed by God's rules!

The price of this purchase is the precious "blood of Christ," the currency of the spirit world (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Because we are not our own, we have a duty to glorify God in our whole being all the time.

Fornication, tattooing our body, and masking our face shames the Savior.

## Definition of Justification



Justification is a forensic term, i.e. a legal averment pertaining to the courts. It comes from the Latin word *forensia* and means "before the forum" or "before the bar."

Justification is a declaration by a court that an accused has a right standing in the sight of the law; i.e. he has "clean hands" and should be heard. It is a better verdict than "not guilty." It is a verdict of "righteous."

The word "justify" (*δικαιώσαι*, *dikaioo*) means "to show to be righteous," "or to put into a right relationship with God."

Justification is an action of the court (Deuteronomy 25:1). The positive side of justification is to "be declared righteous." The negative side of the judicial decision is un-imputed sin or to be declared condemned (Deuteronomy 32:1-2).

Theologically, justification means *to be declared righteous by a court of law*.

Furthermore, the believer needs to understand that just as our sins were imputed to Christ, His righteousness is imputed to us who believe.

***\*Justification, therefore, is the judicial act of God whereby He declares a man righteous and treats him as such.***

Biblically speaking, it is important to understand that the court's declaration of "justification" does not change the object to satisfy the demands of law, but it does change how the object is regarded in the eyes of the law.

While regeneration creates a change in character and is an act of a Father, justification changes one's status by an act of a Judge. *The renewal of regeneration, which follows justification, must not be confounded with justification.*

Luther reasoned:

A capuchin says: wear a gray coat and a hood, a rope round thy body, and sandals on thy feet. A cordelier says: put on a black hood; an ordinary papist says: do this or that work, hear mass, pray, fast, give alms, etc. But a true Christian says: I am justified and saved only by faith in Christ, without any works or merits of my own; compare these together, and judge which is the true righteousness (306). (Luther)

The Formula of Concord (1577) put it this way:

Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously, in accordance with the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession presented above, that poor sinful man is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins, and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and adopted into sonship and heirship of eternal life, without any merit or worth of our own, also without any preceding, present, or any subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness (Article III, no. 9).

*In summary, Justification is a judicial act of God whereby He declares a man righteous and treats him as such.*

# Four Kinds of Justification

| VERSE       | JUSTIFICATION | MEANING    | PERSONS      |
|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Romans 5:9  | By blood      | Basis      | God with God |
| Rom 3:24    | By grace      | Channel    | God with man |
| Romans 3:28 | By faith      | Reception  | Man to God   |
| James 2:24  | By works      | Expression | Man to man   |

# Agency and Justification

| VERSE              | PERSON        | TASK   |
|--------------------|---------------|--------|
| 1 Corinthians 6:11 | By the Spirit | Agency |
| Romans 3:26        | By God        | Agency |
| Galatians 2:16     | By Christ     | Agency |

# The Justification of Abraham



In Genesis 15 Abraham was scared spitless that the five marauding kings he defeated in his rescue of Lot would return and retaliate against his household.

Sodom followed Abraham and offered him a contract. Abraham, who lifted his hand to the Most High God, wanted nothing to do with Sodom. Surely, the King of Sodom took umbrage at Abraham's rejection.

Wanting assurance of God's favor, he prayed.

Here Abraham received an answer from the High Court of Heaven. God gave him a verdict. Abraham believed God and the Judge declared him judicially righteous in his sight. What a blessing! What a comfort! What revelation!

**Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**

The declaration was a comfort to Abraham, but it immediately raises the question: What if I blow it? What if I sin in the future? How will God treat me?

Justification encompasses more than being declared righteous; it also involves being treated as righteous by the Court.

In Genesis 20, we see how God treated Abraham when he deceived an eastern prince. When Abimelech, King of Gerar, eyed Sarah and sought to procure her for his harem, Abraham instructed Sarah to say, "I am the sister of Abraham." Such a strategy was designed to keep powerful kings from assassinating Abraham in order to take Sarah as a wife.

Governments often use intimidation and coercion to obtain what they want. Out of fear and weakness, Abraham lied to protect Sarah, and Abimelech, out of ignorance, took Sarah into his harem. A good man does **not** owe the truth to an abuser of truth. From the story we learn that Abraham deliberately, consciously misled the king. Abimelech believed Sarah and innocently took her into his harem. But . . .

- It was Abimelech who was judged, not Abraham.
- It was Abimelech who was rebuked, not Abraham.
- It was Abimelech who was in danger of capital punishment, not Abraham.
- It was Abimelech whose life was in danger, not Abraham.
- It was Abimelech's household that needed healing, and not Abraham's.
- It was Abimelech who needed prayer, not Abraham.

- It was Abraham who prayed for Abimelech's healing.

From this Biblical story we learn that when God declares a man righteous, he also treats him as such!! Selah!

## Justification and the Book of Romans

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

**The Book of Romans is a legal work.**



Consequently, justification is a forensic term based on God's indictment against the sinner (1-3:20).

- To be justified man must obey the law (Romans 2:1-12).
- But, no man has obeyed the law except Christ (Romans 3:10-20, 23).
- Therefore, man's greatest need is to possess a righteousness in conformity to law (Romans 3:21)
- The good news of the Book of Romans is that there is a righteousness available to the believer that qualifies him to enjoy the benefits of having a right standing before God (Romans 3:21-22; 6:23).
- This righteousness is a gift of God (Romans 3:22).
- This righteousness is none other than the righteousness of Christ (Romans 3:20-5:1)

It can be said that the book of Romans is about two great doctrines: justification and sanctification.

**Romans 1-5:11: This section is about justification.** Justification, or ηο δικαιοσ εκ πιστεος (righteousness by faith). In this section the terms "faith" and "believe" are used repeatedly. The word *pistis* occurs 29 times. The word "believe" occurs 8 times in chapters 1-4. In chapter 5-8, they occur only 2 times.

**Romans 5:12-8:34: This section is about sanctification.** The word *zoe* (zwh,) is used twelve times, but only twice in 1:18-4:25. This section is about the life that justification brings to a man who believes and identifies himself with the

history of Christ, a.k.a. “identification.” Identification with the history of Christ results in a righteous life, a life of the Spirit, a life of conformity to the image of Christ. The first section of Romans announces the death of man and how man can obtain new life by placing his faith in Christ; the second session announces victory over sin when one claims (“reckons”) the benefits of Christ’s history for himself.

## The Benefits of Justification



- Iniquity is not imputed (Psalm 32:2)
- A complete new standing before God (Romans 4:5)
- Peace with God (Romans 5:1). We recognize the war between us and God is over when we yield to the cross.
- Saved from wrath (Romans 5:9): We have the assurance we will be delivered from the wrath to come.
- Rest (Hebrews 4:1ff): We no longer feel the need to perform for acceptance. We cease trusting in ourselves, and trust totally in Him. We endure criticism because we know our performance is not the basis of our acceptance with God.
- Identification (Romans 6:3-6): We share in the benefits of Christ’s history.
- Freedom from law (Romans 7): Our identification with Christ frees us from bondage to legalistic righteousness. Man is never free, however, from duty to law as a Christian man. Love is a fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8).
- Glorification (Romans 8:18): We have the assurance we will share in the glory of the Eschaton by virtue of resurrection.
- Unreceived accusations (Romans 8:33): We have the assurance there are no accusations against us that will stand up in God’s Court.
- No condemnation (Romans 8:1): If God has forgiven, and we are “declared righteous,” there is no accusation to be sustained before the Court.
- Adoption and sonship (Romans 8:16): We inherit the full rights as Sons of God.
- Worship (Romans 12:1): We glorify God for what He has accomplished. We look away from self and look to Christ. Rejecting all form of self-justification, we adore Him who obeyed the law perfectly for us on our behalf.

- Service: We serve not to be accepted, but because we are accepted. Service spring from grace, not because we must serve to be accepted, but because we are grateful debtors to God's acceptance of us (Hebrews 12:28).
- Grace: Because God treats us as righteous; we treat other believers as righteous. Grace produces optimism, not about sinful man, but about justified children (Romans 15:1-7).

## Three Persons Justified



**The justification of the believer:** The believer is justified (Romans 2:24) when he accepts the substitutionary work of Christ as his basis for a right standing before the high court of heaven.

**The justification of Christ:** Christ was justified by the Spirit (2 Timothy 3:15, 16). When Christ died, he did not die because He was morally unfit to stand in the presence of God. Sin was imputed to him. Imputation changed his standing before the court, but it did not change his character. The resurrection was the Spirit's declaration that Christ was personally, morally, constitutionally without sin.

**The justification of God:** God was declared just (Romans 3:26ff): God is not only in the business of justifying people. He is in the business of justifying them justly. His divine law was maintained and honored in the whole process of justifying the sinner.

## Justification: Protestantism v. Catholicism

Differences between Catholicism and Protestantism on Justification by faith (Present Truth, October 1995, Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 40):



| PROTESTANT  | CATHOLIC  |
|---|---|
| To justify means “to account as righteous”                      | To justify means “to make righteous”                                |
| Justification comes by imputation                               | Justification comes by infusion                                     |
| Grace of God in Christ makes man acceptable                     | Sanctifying grace makes man acceptable                              |
| Man is justified by extrinsic righteousness                     | Man is justified by intrinsic righteous                             |
| God justifies the ungodly who believe                           | God justifies only those who are born again                         |
| Justification is God’s verdict upon man in Christ               | Justification is God’s regenerating act in man                      |
| The sinner is J by Christ’s imputed righteousness               | Sinner are justified because righteousness is poured into his heart |
| Justification enables God to treat the sinner as just           | Justification means that the sinner is really just                  |
| The sinner is pronounced righteous because Christ is righteous. | Pronounced righteous because God makes him righteous.               |
| Justification is by faith alone                                 | Justification comes by faith being active by charity                |

The Catholic does not teach salvation by works; Rather, Catholicism teaches that man cannot save himself; therefore, he needs the help of Christ to perfect his works. The Catholic believes a man must be born again by the Spirit so he can be just before God; that he needs Christ in his heart helping him to be righteous. In short, the Catholic teaches a person must invite Christ into his heart so he can be saved. Sacraments are needed to cleanse weekly failures. Catholicism is highly subjective, highly introspective, and highly performance orientated. Whereas the gospel takes man’s eyes off himself to see the works of Another.

## John Newman and Justification



The prevailing doctrine among Roman Catholics was that God justified the righteous (thesis); the belief among Lutherans was that God justified the wicked (Romans 4:5) (antithesis). John Newman, the great Catholic theologian took the conflicting propositions and created a Hegelian dialectic; that is, a synthesis (Newman, 1908 Ninth Impression, Lecture 3).

Thesis: God justified the godly (Catholic position).

Antithesis: God justifies the ungodly (Reformed position).

Synthesis: God makes a man righteous at the same time He declares him righteous (Newman).

Lecture 8. Righteousness views as a Gift and as a Quality.

On these grounds, as regards the three doctrines above drawn out,—of the righteousness of Christ imputed only, imparted only, and both imputed and imparted by His real indwelling,

I say, then, justification by obedience is anyhow true; it is sound doctrine, if we hold another doctrine too; it is incomplete, if we omit that other doctrine; it becomes erroneous, if we deny it.

When it is held exclusively among ourselves, it often takes the following shape: that God accepts our sincere obedience, as if it were perfect; or that God will save us if we do our part; or that God has done His part in Baptism, and now we must do ours. Such statements are most true and Scriptural, if they are not meant to deny (what may be called) our Sacramental life, the fount of grace which Holy Baptism has stored within us, and the awful realities of Holy Communion,

John Newman united justification and sanctification as a single concept. His argument was based on God's *creative Word*. Newman argued that God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The Word of God is the creative Word. God speaks, and it is done. When He declares a man right, He of necessity makes him into a righteous person. This is called "effective justification." To Newman justification was a both *a declaring righteous* and *a making righteous*. By synthesis, Newman tried to unite Protestantism and Catholicism.

What is at stake here? Everything! The purity of gospel and the remedy for sin!

"God is pleased to grant remission of all past sins, for the sake of His Blessed Son, on account of faith only; but He requires from those whom He thus graciously receives into His favor, an implicit obedience to His commands in future; if they disobey, their pardon is cancelled, the state of acceptance forfeited, and liability to punishment ensues."—p. 124 ... " (Newman, 1908 Ninth Impression, Notes in Lecture 8).

## **The Fallacy of Newman's Fundamental Premise**

Newman's *prima facie* argument makes sense. However, when God called light, and mountains, and trees, and animals, and men into existence, they were not yet created. A separate word was used to bring other creatures into existence. The same happens with justification. Justification and sanctification are two separate acts of God with two distinct meanings.

Geoffrey J. Paxton, an Anglican clergyman and principal of the Queensland Bible Institute, Brisbane, Australia, raises the question:

What does "to justify" mean in the New Testament? All agree that justification is of God, but not all agree on the precise significance of justification. The most straightforward way of expressing the problem is this: **Does "to justify" mean to declare just," or does it mean "to make just"**? Another way is to speak of "**objective justification**" and "**subjective justification.**" That is, does justification mean an event objective and external to the person justified — an "outside of me" justification — or does it mean that something takes place "within" the person justified — a "subjective" reality? "Declarative" or "efficient" and "declarative or creative" are other ways of expressing the two views of justification which have been represented in the history of theology.

Of course, to contend for an "either — or" in justification is not to suggest that nothing takes place within the justified, as we shall see later. All we are insisting upon here is that justification is either "the declaration of" or "the creating of"; **it is not both a declaration and a creation.**

In this lecture it is our business to contend for the position **that justification is God's declaring a person just, not God's making a person just.** "To justify" means the same as "to pronounce righteous" a person who, in himself, is anything but righteous. In fact, the person who is justified is, in himself, full of rottenness and repugnant to true holiness. Justification is thoroughly and completely objective. (Paxton)

Justification is not both *a declaration* and *a creation*; it is not both *objective* and *subjective*; it is not both *external* and *internal*. Justification means to declare just (objective righteousness). Sanctification means to make just (subjective righteousness). The righteousness of justification is external. It is declarative. It is not internal and creative.

Reasoning: When one glorifies God, he does not make God glorious. He declares him to be glorious. When one declares God just, he does not make Him just. He announces his Justice. When God justifies a man, it is not an act that produces righteousness; but an act that declares a man right in His sight.

# The Argument for Objective Justification



*Looking at the persons are who are justified in the New Testament*

(NT): There are two types of persons who are justified in the NT: either (a) the perfectly righteous individual, either the perfect God or perfect man, and (b) the ungodly man.

## Justification of the Perfect God

1 Corinthians 15:1 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, **justified God**, being baptized with the baptism of John.

This is the justification of a perfect God. The people did not *make* Him righteous, but they did *declare* Him to be righteous.

## Justification of the Perfect Man

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16 ).

Christ is declared to be righteous, not made righteous. See also (Acts 3:14; 22:14; 1 John 2:1).

## Justification of the Imperfect Man

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Justification happens to the ungodly, not the godly. It is a declarative work, not a creative work; it is *reckoning* not an *infusing* of righteousness to those who believe.

*Looking at the antithesis of justification:* The opposite of “to justify” is not “to deprave” but “to condemn.” If “to justify” meant “to make holy” the antithesis would infer that condemnation means “to make unholy.” Surely, this is not the case.

Through Adam’s disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:19). Adam was judicially condemned, and because of man’s connection with Adam, all men are condemned. This is true for salvation as well as the propagation of sin. Through the obedience of Christ, many were made righteous -- not by creation, but by declaration. Because of our connection with Christ, we are judicially declared righteous -- thus, we gain a legal standing with God through faith.

Just as condemnation does not mean “making wicked,” so justification does not mean “making good.” Justification means “to acquit” not “to make holy.”

### Looking at the equivalent expressions:

- In John 3:18, the reward for believing is not purification, but non-condemnation.
- In John 5:24, believing in Him is said to bring freedom, not from corruption, but freedom from condemnation.
- In 2 Corinthians 5:19-21, the work of reconciliation is explained appositionally, not as purifying men from sins, but as not counting men's sins against them. Justification is the non-imputation of sin. Sin was *imputed* to Christ forensically. It does not mean sin was *imparted* to Him, but *imputed* to Him. He was not made sinful! He was declared sinful.

How then are we made righteous before God? It is not by *impartation* of righteousness but by *imputation* of the righteousness of Christ to our account. And, the co-mingling of the two is the error of the Catholic Church. Paxton explains:

*The Council of Trent (1545) and some of her devotees after her have fallen into the terrible mistake of making one figure represent two inseparable but quite different things—pardon and renewal, deliverance from the penalty of sin and deliverance from the power of sin. The council declared that justification consists both of remission and internal renovation (Paxton).*

**Looking at definitions: To ascribe justification as an act of *making holy* is to give justification the same meaning as sanctification. In Catholicism justification and sanctification become synonymous. This merging of definition is incorrect.**

- Justification is objective; sanctification is subjective.
- Justification is forensic; sanctification is experiential.
- Justification means to declare holy; sanctification means to make holy.
- Justification is external (in God's mind); sanctification is internal (man's spirit).
- Justification is based on the work of Christ; sanctification the work of the Spirit.

While we make a distinction between justification and sanctification, we must also recognize they are linked. They are not synonymous, but they are related! When God declares a man righteous (justification), he proceeds to make him righteous (sanctification). When God justifies a man, he then proceeds to regenerate the man. But, justification is first, "being born again" is second . . . and the two concepts **must be kept separate** even though they happen simultaneously from man's perspective.

To speak of justification in the sense of "to make holy" is to give justification the same meaning as sanctification has in the greater portion of the Scriptures. Justification and sanctification become synonymous; both mean "to make holy." What in the Scriptures is meant to signify an outward deliverance from the penalty of sin (justification) is made to signify an inward deliverance from the power of sin (sanctification). This is the official position of the Church of Rome. What the Bible teaches as a judicial process Rome has made an infusion of a quality. However, the judicial process and the infusion of a quality are different things indeed! (Paxton)

The human heart seems to be either apathetic about God, restless about God, or at peace with God. If justification depends on becoming a righteous person, then our justification would be based on the quality of our spiritual development. We would be preaching personal works, not faith in the works of Christ. It would base salvation on a change of character inside us by God's Spirit rather than on God's work outside of us through Christ at Calvary.

While we make a distinction between justification and sanctification, and justification and regeneration, we also recognize they are hinged together. They are not synonymous, but they are related. We do not deny the necessity of the new birth (regeneration), but we are implying a logical necessity when we say that justification precedes a change in character. A change of character follows justification, but it is not the basis of justification. When God declares a man righteous (justification), he proceeds to make him into a righteous person (sanctification).

A man is first justified, then regenerated in nature; justified, then sanctified.

## Twelve Aspects of the Righteousness of God



**It is righteousness from God, not man.** This righteousness is from God and does not originate from man, is not produced by man, nor is it performed by man. It is God's righteousness. It comes from Him, and is performed by Him through Christ.

**It is righteousness apart from law, that is, apart from the principle of law. It does not come to man through a system of rewards and punishment.** It is not achieved by human effort as a reward for good deeds. While law can cleanse

society of evil doers and restrain sinful man from committing crimes, law cannot regenerate man or society. It is grace that saves the sinner.

**It is a righteousness that is now being made known.** Biblical prophets assured us that it would come to mankind. It was described by Moses in the law and hoped for by the prophets. At last it is now here! It arrived in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**This is righteousness by faith.** It does not originate within man, nor does it come to man because of religious devotion. The possession of righteousness is absolutely necessary to stand before God on the Day of Judgment. It is obtained by faith; that is, the individual's trust in the doing and dying of Christ on his behalf.

**This righteousness is universally available.** Regardless of sex, race, color, social status, economic acquirements, cultural distinctives, or intellectual progress, men can gain access to this marvelous standing by faith.

**The declaration of righteousness results in justification.** Justification is a judicial term. It is a declaration of the judge after reviewing a case. In the Bible, it is an end time event and the hope of all who appear before the Almighty on the Last Day. It means "to be declared righteous and treated as such; to be esteemed in the eyes of the thrice Holy God as in a right relationship to Him. Righteousness is credited to the account of all who believe now ahead of the final, ultimate, and climatic, holy judgment of God.

This righteousness is based on the person and work of Christ (3:24). This righteousness did not come out of "thin air." It is not without substance or historical authenticity. The righteousness accredited to the believing man is *the doing and obeying of Christ* as a Judahite under the law. "His righteousness produced by His obedience" is credited to the account of the believer.

The righteousness of God is that which is measured by the character of God Himself.

The righteousness of God is the demand of God.

The righteousness of God is that which God Himself provides.

**God's righteousness is vicarious righteousness,** that is, it is Christ's righteousness rendered to God in the sinner's place and on his behalf.

**God's righteousness is infinite righteousness** because it was the obedience of an infinite person, Jesus of Nazareth, who lived out the flesh and blood duty of obedience to God's law.

# The Legal Basis for Justification

*Romans 2:13 For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*



By the term “basis,” we mean the “foundation” or “chief pillar” holding up a structure. **The legal basis of salvation is not “faith,” but works!** But, this statement needs explanation.

The legal basis of justification is not *faith in the heart* (a virtue) that motivates God to declare a man righteous, but a confidence based on the work of Christ at Calvary on behalf of sinners.

Biblical faith does not look on the inside as a cause for legal action, but looks outside of man to the Christ’s accomplishments as a basis of legal action. “Faith in the heart” is attached to Roman Catholicism. Faith in the heart is no substitute for actual, substantial, historical righteousness. If righteousness could be obtained by humans who work, the incarnate Christ need not have lived and died.

**The basis of justification is a life of obedience to law** (Romans 2:1-12). Man needs real righteousness – a righteousness in conformity to law -- not good feeling in his heart. The righteousness that God accepts is the doing and dying of Christ. And, it is this righteousness that is God’s free gift to the believing man.

Justification, while it includes pardon, is not merely pardon. In order to be justified, a person must possess a Righteousness upon the ground of which the verdict must be pronounced. Justification as mere pardon and justification as the infusion of righteousness both fail to do justice to the immutable law of God's holiness and the deep-seated guilt of the rebel subject.

While the justification of the sinner is not by his works, if the justified sinner does not have good works, his justification is spurious. Good works are the "evidential cause" of justification, while God's glory is the final cause, the work of Christ is the meritorious cause, and faith is the instrumental cause. (Paxton)

**The only basis of justification before God is obedience to law.** Faith is not a substitute for righteousness according to law. To say that faith is the basis of approval with God is legalistic, because it offers to God something which is within man as the basis of acceptance with God. The reformers stood against faith as the basis of justification or as a substitute for real righteousness.



**Faith is not the basis of acceptance with God.** It is the doing and dying of Christ, which is the basis of acceptance. Faith is merely the means of accepting his accomplishments:

“for He has redeemed, justified, and saved us from our sins as God and man, through His complete obedience; that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and our adoption as God's children only **on account of the obedience of Christ**, which through faith alone, out of pure grace **is imputed for righteousness to all true believers**, and on account of it they are absolved from all their unrighteousness" (917, 4.) (Bente).

The Westminster Confession of 1646 says the following:

“Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: **not by infusing righteousness into them**, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; **not for any thing wrought in them**, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; **but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them**, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646, Chapter XI)

Therefore, the reformers concluded that man is saved by works – not his own works, but the works of Christ: that is, man is saved by our Lord’s obedience to law on behalf of the sinner; including, but not limited to his obedience unto death for sinners on Calvary.

Romans 5;19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"

This belief is confirmed by pastors of our time. The 1999 document entitled, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration* (signed by many leading Evangelicals including Hybels, Hayford, MacArthur, Robertson, McCartney, Swindoll, Lucado, Stott, Ankerberg, Neff, Stowell, Stanley, etc.) expressly states:

“God's justification of those who trust in him, according to the Gospel, is a decisive transition, here and now, from a state of condemnation and wrath because of their sins to one of acceptance and favor by virtue of Jesus' flawless obedience culminating in his voluntary sin-bearing death.

We affirm that Christ's saving work included both his life and his death on our behalf (Gal. 3:13). We declare that faith in the perfect obedience of Christ by which he fulfilled all the demands of the Law of God on our behalf is essential to the Gospel. We deny that our salvation was achieved merely or exclusively by the death of Christ without reference to his life of perfect righteousness,"

When a man believes he receives the righteousness of Christ which qualifies him for a right standing with God.

Romans 3:21-22 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Even the righteousness of God *which is by faith (ablative = the faithfulness) of Jesus Christ* unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

## Salvation by Obedience to Law



We are **not** saved by prayer, but by the doing and dying of Christ. If prayer could save the soul, there would have been no need for God to send his Son to die for our sins. A man is not saved by asking God to forgive him. If His forgiveness could be obtained by prayer, Jesus need not have suffered.

I would like to take this a step further, "Would a man be saved by faith, if there was no cross?" Let's put it another way, "If a man had faith, but did not know about the life and death of Christ, could he be saved?" "Is a man justified by faith or is man justified by works?" In other words, "*Is a man's faith the basis of God's saving action, or is basis of God's saving action the faithfulness of Christ to His law-word?*"

It is the contention of this student of Holy Scripture that the basis of salvation is not faith, but Christ's faithfulness; that fundamentally, works, not faith, is the basis of salvation. Believers are saved by the doing and dying of Another; i.e. we are not only saved by His death, but by His obedience to law. Salvation is not based on our faithfulness, but on the faithfulness of the Savior.

William R. Newell's objection to vicarious obedience of Christ as based on "blood" and that His "active obedience is not in any sense counted to us for righteousness" is more based on Keswick deeper life mysticism and a restrictive dispensational hermeneutic than a wholistic approach to theology (Newell, 1938 ). J.N. Darby and others would go to war on distinctions between

the “death of Christ” and “the blood of Christ.” And, I believe this is the case here. God did not pull “righteousness” out of thin air and exchange it for “faith in the blood of Christ.” **The righteousness God gives is based on the “faithfulness of Christ” unto all who believe** (Romans 3:21-22).

## What is the “Faith of Christ”?

Romans 3:22. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) unto all and upon all them that believe (τοὺς πιστεύοντας): for there is no difference.”  
What does the phrase “faith of Jesus Christ” mean?

### The Contextual Argument



Paul’s treatise on the Gospel in his letter to the Romans is explained in legal terms. It is a courtroom drama with Paul acting as both a prosecutor of mankind and a defense attorney for believers. Prior to this verse, Paul, acting as a prosecutor in the case *God v. Mankind* (Romans 1-3), pronounced all men guilty of breaking God’s law (3:10-20). But, in verse 21, Paul crossed the aisle and put on the wig of an English barrister in order to argue the case for the justification of the believer.

Paul’s forensic argument is as follows: To be justified in God’s Court, a man must possess righteousness (Romans 2:1-13). First, the bad news: all men are guilty of breaking God’s law (3:10ff). Second, the good news: There is a righteousness that comes from God that enables men to possess what the Court requires. But, what is this righteousness, and where does it come from?

### The Semantic Argument

**Semantically**, the phrase, “faith of Jesus Christ,” is usually interpreted as “faith in Jesus.” But, if this is so, why did Paul say “unto all that believe?” Why a reference to two responses of “faith” in the same verse (3:22). Could it be that the phrase “faith in Jesus” is a poor translation and should be translated “faithfulness of Jesus” instead of the “faith in Jesus?”

### The Theological Argument

**Theologically**, it is my contention that Paul is saying that sinners are declared “guilty” in His Court; that in order to stand before a holy God, a man needs real righteousness—substantive righteousness, not synthetic righteousness; that in the gospel, substantive righteousness is available to the believer, even the

righteousness of Christ; that faith is not a virtue required by God, nor is faith a substitute for substantive righteousness; that faith is the confidence that Christ lived a righteous life on behalf of His elect and that God gives the believer Christ's righteousness when he trusts Him. For example there is a big difference being paid a hundred dollars in gold bullion and being paid a hundred dollars in FRNs. When God justifies a man he gives him substance -- the silver and gold of Christ's righteousness, not synthetic paper notes.

### The Linguistic Argument

**Linguistically**, the phrase "faith of Christ" should be translated "faithfulness of Christ" for the following reasons:

**First**, the phrase "faith of Christ" (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is a subjective genitive (indicating origin or source) or ablative indicating separation from, not an objective genitive. The term "faith" (πίστεως) is a feminine noun, an ablative of agency. While it can be translated "faith," it can also be translated "faithfulness." Since "Jesus Christ" (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is in the genitive, this "faith" or "faithfulness" *must be coming from Christ*. Obviously, Paul is not talking about Christ's faith, but his acts of "faithfulness." Paul is not calling for an exercise of faith from the believer at this point in his argument as much as he is informing us that the "righteousness from God" that is available to the believer by faith is none other than the "faithfulness of Christ."

**Second**, Romans 1:17 states: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: "As it is written, the just shall live by faith." The phrase "faith to faith" (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστι) contains two prepositions and is difficult to translate. The first (ἐκ πίστεως) appears to be an ablative of source, or that which is produced by a person. Is this "faith" produced by us or does it refer to "faithfulness" produced by Christ? Surely, our faith is based on the obedience of Christ to God's law; i.e. the faithfulness of Christ."

The second prepositional phrase (εἰς πίστι) is either an accusative of purpose or accusative of result.

This phrase could be saying that "our faith produces faithfulness," or it could be saying that Christ's *faithfulness is the foundation of our faith*, or God's righteousness comes from Christ's faithfulness to produce man's faith.

**Third**, Romans 3:3 says, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" The phrase "faith of God" (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ) indicates that the "faith" comes from God. "From God" is a genitive indicating the source. Obviously, this does not refer to "faith" being produced by God but the "faithfulness of God." That is, man's unbelief does not nullify God's faithfulness.

Paul uses the term “ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ” in Romans 3:26: “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, faith of Jesus).” Again, is Paul calling for man to exercise faith or is he referring to the faithfulness of Christ? This could be saying that *God justifies the one who stands on the fidelity of Christ.*

**Fourth**, Romans 4:16 discusses the “faith of Abraham” (τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ). Does this refer to Abraham’s response of faith to God or does it refer to faithfulness resulting from his faith? Here it appears to refer to Abraham’s response of faith and not his faithfulness. Because Abraham trusted God’s faithfulness, God was faithful to justify him.

**Fifth**, the phrase “ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ” is used twice in Galatians 2:16: “know that a man is **not** justified by (his) observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ).” So, we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by the faithfulness Christ (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, faith of Christ) and not by (our) observing the law, because by (our) observing the law no one will be justified.” It appears best to render “ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ” here as the “faithfulness of Christ.” Paul taught we are not saved by our personal observance of the law. We are saved because of Christ’s personal observance of the law. We live because Christ was careful to do all that God requires so believing man can be justified in His sight.

**Sixth**, Galatians 2:20 also uses the phrase “faith of Christ” (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ), who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The title “Son of God” is in the genitive indicating that “the faith” comes from Christ (a subjective genitive, not an objective genitive). Paul is not saying that “I” continue to live my Christian life by faith, but that *I live before God because the Lord obeyed the law perfectly on my behalf.*

**Seventh**, Philippians 3:9 says, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ) the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Is Paul saying, “I want to stand before God being one who is justified by faith?” or, is Paul saying, “I want to stand before God, **not** having my own righteousness, but having the faithfulness of Christ credited to my account which comes by faith?” It appears this ablative of agency refers to the faithfulness of Christ.

### **The Legal Argument**

The word “justification” is a forensic term having to do with the courts. In God’s Court, only a man who keeps the law can be justified (Romans 2:13). Christ was “born under the law” (Galatians 4:4). He obeyed the law

(Philippians 2:9-12), and He was the end of the law (Romans 10:4). Consequently, He was “justified” (declared righteous) by the Spirit when He was raised from the dead (1 Timothy 3:15, 16).

Even in God’s Court, faith is **not** a substitute for righteousness. *A man must possess real, substantial righteousness if he is to stand before an all-holy God.* The good news of the gospel is that the righteousness of Christ is given to the one who believes.

### **An Argument from Substitution**

When we say, “Christ died for our sins,” we are saying He became our substitute. If Christ took our sins in an act of substitution, then we must take His righteousness. If sin was imputed to him, then his “faithfulness” is imputed to us. In other words, we are saved by works—HIS WORKS! We are saved, not only by his death, but also by His life of obedience to God’s law-word.

In Summary, while it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between “faith” and “faithfulness,” it is at times important to do so. It would be incorrect to always interpret *pistis* (faith) as objective—something being demanded of man. Sometimes, it is subjective and can refer to that which is produced by an agent—in this case something produced by Christ; i.e. His faithfulness.

It is important to understand the phrase “faith of Christ” (πίστεως Χριστου) as the “faithfulness of Christ:”

I once asked a Catholic neighbor (Mary) if she had any hope of eternal life. She said she did. So, I asked, “Mary, why do you think you will go to heaven?” Pounding on her heart, she said, “I have faith!” For 10 minutes she discussed her great faith and how much she believed in God. Mary did not believe her works could save her. Her hope rested in her faith. However, not once did she mention Christ, His life, His death, His atonement, His redemptive accomplishments or His resurrection. It was all about faith in her heart . . . and because she had subjective faith, God was somehow obligated to take her to heaven.

A few days later, it dawned on me what she was really saying. To her, “faith” was a virtue and she had this virtue that God honored dwelling in her heart. She expected to enter heaven because she had what God required, “faith.” But, I asked myself, “Where was Christ in her testimony?” And, if faith is all that is required to go to heaven, why did Christ have to live and die?

Peter Kreef, a Catholic apologist, has this to say:

“But many Catholics to this day have not learned the Catholic and biblical doctrine (of justification). They think we are saved by good intentions or being nice or sincere or trying a little harder or doing

a sufficient number of good deeds. Over the past twenty-five years I have asked hundreds of Catholic college students the question: If you should die tonight and God asks you why he should let you into heaven, what would you answer? The vast majority of them simply do not know the right answer to this, the most important of all questions, the very essence of Christianity. They usually do not even mention Jesus!" (Catholic Educator's Resource Center, Kreeft, 1988)

The answer lies in our ability to understand the phrase "faith of Christ" (πίστεως Χριστοῦ).

Our personal faith is not the basis of our salvation. *The faithfulness of Christ is the basis of our salvation.*

What men need in order to be saved is substantive righteousness, not virtuous faith with warm fuzzies.

The good news of the Bible is that this righteousness is given to those who believe as a free gift. This "righteousness" is none other than the faithfulness of Christ (πίστεως Χριστοῦ).

As a Judahite, Jesus was born under the law. His obedience was tested and the Spirit declared, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). *Because He obeyed perfectly, we can be justified perfectly.* We are saved by works—not ours, but His works. We are saved by obedience -- His obedience. When we believe, His "faithfulness" and His "works," His "obedience" is credited to us (believers) as a gift of God (Romans 5:15ff).

## Imputation v. Infusion



Roman Catholicism asserts that justification means *the infusion of righteousness into the heart of man*. In other words, the word "imputation" is defined as *infusion* in the Roman Catholic system.

To the Roman Catholic, justification is both a declaration and a creation; justification is contained in regeneration; that is, when a man is born again and God changes the man, He justifies the man.

The question immediately arise, "How much change must be produced to be declared righteous in God's sight? How virtuous does the heart have to become? What a quandary! What slavery! This system is nothing more than a

sophisticated works program – if you change enough, God may, perhaps, possibly, hopefully take you to heaven.

Who are justified through Christ?

“But, though He died for all, yet do not all receive the benefit of His death, but those only unto whom the merit of His passion is communicated. For as in truth men, if they were not born propagated of the seed of Adam, would not be born unjust, -seeing that, by that propagation, they contract through him, when they are conceived, injustice as their own, -so, if they were not born again in Christ, they never would be justified; seeing that, in that new birth, there is bestowed upon them, through the merit of His passion, the grace whereby they are made just” (Counsel of Trent (1547), Sixth Session, Chapter III).

In Romans 4, Paul seeks to demonstrate how the believer can stand righteous before God apart from human merit through a process called “imputation.” The biblical word, *logizomai*, is translated:

- think (9)
- impute (8)
- reckon (6)
- count (5)- account (4)
- suppose (2)
- reason (1)
- number (1)

The word “impute” means *to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over, to take into account, and to make an account of*. Metaphorically it means to transfer to one's account, to impute a thing to be something. It is used at least eleven (11) times in Romans chapter four where it is translated “think,” “impute,” “count,” and “reckon.” Thus, the word “impute” adds more proof that justification is a declaration of righteousness, not infusion of righteousness.

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

All Christians believe that Christ died for the ungodly, but many will not accept that God justifies the ungodly.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholics fought this truth with ruthless vigor. The doctrine of Christ's substitutionary work demands it. (He was treated as if He were a sinner.) The doctrine of imputed righteousness demands it. (The sinner



is treated as if he were the One who lived that sinless life and died on the cross.)

Calvin explains:

For if righteousness consists in the observance of the law, who will deny that Christ merited favor for us when, by taking that burden upon himself, he reconciled us to God as if all had kept the law. — (Calvin, 1536; 1936, Bk. 2, chap. 17, sec. 5.

We define justification as follows: the sinner received into communion with Christ, is reconciled to God by his grace. While cleansed by Christ's blood, he obtains forgiveness of sins, and clothed with Christ's righteousness as if it were his own he stands confident before the heavenly judgment seat. — (Calvin, 1536; 1936, Bk. 3, chap. 17, sec. 8.)

Thus, Roman Catholics subordinated justification to sanctification; i.e. making justification dependent on living out a life of holiness or “being born again” or being regenerated. When salvation is contingent on being “born again,” we place regeneration before justification. If justification is dependent on “change” and “sanctification,” the question becomes, “How sanctified do you have to become before you are accepted in God’s eyes?”

## **Legalism v. Imputation**



Legalism believes people need to pray that Jesus will come into their heart so that He can help them change enough to satisfy God.

Roman Catholicism holds to the following ideas of infusion:

- That God regenerates the man, then justifies the man.
- That God changes the man, then justifies the man.
- That God infuses righteousness into man, then justifies the one who believes God.
- That God places righteousness in the heart, then justifies the man.
- That God changes the heart (regenerates it) then justifies the man. The focus here is on inner healing, peace, and power.
- That God “makes a man born again” (have a change of heart) so He can justify man.
- That God regenerates the man by His Spirit then justifies the man.
- That God places faith in the heart and then justifies the man.

- That God looks for some ground, some reality, some virtue, some change, some substance, some goodness within the believer that provides a legal basis for justification.
- That God justifies a man on the final day of his life based on how he has responded to his probation period in Christ.
- That God places Christ within the heart of the sinner to empower the sinner to be holy so He can justify the sinner. Thus, the Roman Catholic believes you need Jesus in your heart; and, if Jesus is in your heart, you can now produce the good works necessary for God to justify you.
- That God makes a man good then pronounces him good.

But, Paul taught that “God justifies the wicked” (Romans 4:5); that is, God declares the sinner righteous by imputing Christ’s righteousness to His account (justification) by faith, then He changes the man (sanctification) by man’s obedience.

The most important principle in life is not the believer’s relationship to God, *but Christ’s relationship to God!* The believer is accepted because Christ was accepted. We are loved because He was the “Beloved.”

Furthermore, how could a righteous Christ die for sins unless sins were imputed to Him? Because sin was imputed to Him, His righteousness can be imputed to us. *He was treated as a sinner at the cross so we might be treated as righteous at the throne!*

Imputation changes one’s status; but it does not change one’s character. When sin was imputed to Christ, sin did not change his constitution, but it did change his status in eyes of the Judge; likewise, when the believer is imputed righteous, his status changes in the eyes of the Judge. But, this does not mean his constitution changed.

Justification changes a man’s standing in the court because of Christ’s imputation; Sanctification changes a man’s constitution because of the work of the Holy Spirit. We must keep the two separate. While there is a *union* between *justification* and *sanctification* there is *not a fusion* of the two.

## Sola Fide



Berkouwer identifies the error of Catholicism:

“it is wrong to charge Roman Catholics with teaching that a sinner can merit salvation by his own works. Responsible

Catholics affirm that salvation is due to the work of God's grace. On the other hand, Catholics do not gain anything when they distort the real Protestant position. As Berkouwer says, "The ancient feud of Rome with the sola fide doctrine, based as it is on the view that sola fide is subversive to sanctification, must be called Rome's most fundamental error." — Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, p. 14. (Pinpointing the Issues in the Conflict with Rome, 1975 )

Thus, what Catholics mean by faith and what the Reformers mean by faith are two different doctrines. Thus, the voice of the Reformers echo through the ages, "Sola Fide!"

- Sola Scriptura, Sola Gracia, and Sola Fide is the foundation of the Reformed faith. Here, we must try to understand the doctrine of faith. What is faith?
- Sola fide (Faith alone) is the confident assurance that God has done all that is necessary for man to be saved in and through the work of Christ on the cross. It is opposed to human effort, human works, and human merit.
- Sola Fide is a view, a look, an object of confidence. Sola Fide is like the snake-bitten Israelite who were instructed to take their eyes off the snakes, off their wounds, off their snake bite medicine and LOOK toward the bronze serpent in the middle of the camp. Those who obeyed were healed because of their focus on the locus of their hope which was not on self, but upon Another.
- Sola fide does not mean that faith is a substitute for righteousness; that faith is a virtue that God sees in the sinner; that faith is something within the heart of man that pleases God.
- Sola fide is a confession that the sinner's acceptance with God has been accomplished by God Himself in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ.
- Sola fide is a confession that Christ himself, in our name and our behalf, met all our obligations before the bar of eternal justice. All man's efforts, works, and accomplishments are as "filthy rags" and are barred as evidence in the case of Christ's death for mankind. Martin Luther and Calvin could say,
- Mine are Christ's living, doing, and speaking, his suffering and dying, mine as much as if I had lived, done, spoken, suffered, and died as he did (Luther, *Luther's Works*, American ed., 1955, p. 297)
- For if righteousness consists in the observance of the law, who will deny that Christ merited favor for us when, by taking that burden upon himself, he reconciled us to God as if all had kept the law (Calvin, 1536; 1936, Bk. 2, chap. 17, sec. 5).

- Sola fide is a confession that God's saving faith has been done completely outside the sinner's own experience. Faith looks outside of self to the cross where salvation was won by a mighty victory in which the sinner shares no accomplishment.
- Sola fide is a confession that Christ has done all that is necessary for the believer's justification. But, it does not mean that Christ has done it all for sanctification or that there is nothing else for man to do. Faith puts man to work, not for salvation, but because the powers of salvation energize the man to love and to serve (Ephesians 2:10).
- Sola fide is a confession that the righteousness that God provides (His righteousness) is unseen by human eye, but that it is seen by God Himself (Hebrews 11:1). Justification is grasped by faith. It is not seen nor felt. It is discerned with the eye of faith.
- Sola fide is a confession of who Christ is (Lord and Savior) and who man is (a sinner condemned).

Thus, salvation is based on Sola Fide which is focused on sola Christo which is grounded on Sola Scriptura for the purpose of sola Gloria.

## **The Reformation and the Council of Trent**

- Rome taught justification was based on regeneration. The Reformers taught that justification bears the fruit of a regenerated life (Present Truth, October, 1975).
- Rome condemned Reformation theology for its emphasis on external justification. The Reformers opposed the Council of Trent for reducing God's infinite justifying grace to a dimension of an intrahuman experience.
- Rome proposed justification as something that transforms the human heart -- sanctifying grace. Reformers place the emphasis on extrinsic grace and God's work outside of man at the cross.
- Rome emphasized Christ's work in us: the Reformers emphasized Christ's interceding work for us.
- Rome contended for God's work of grace in man; the Reformers stood for grace in Jesus Christ.
- Rome saw justification as the work of God's grace in us -- a regenerating, renewing act within man. The work of the Holy Spirit became the formal cause, or ground of acceptance with God. The Reformers saw the sole ground of acceptance with God as based on what Christ (not the Holy Spirit)

did for us (not in us) at Calvary (Present Truth Magazine, October, 1975, p. 42).

Charles Spurgeon (Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth):

“Let the knife penetrate between the joints of the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Justification, by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, is one blessing; sanctification, by which we ourselves are made personally righteous, is another blessing” (Pinpointing the Issues in the Conflict with Rome, 1975 ).

## A Contrast Between Justification and Sanctification

| SUBJECT    | JUSTIFICATION                                  | SANCTIFICATION                               |
|------------|--|--|
| Need       | A right standing with God as Judge (cleansing) | A walk of righteousness with God as a Father |
| Category   | A legal term                                   | A religious term                             |
| Time       | Eschatological (futuristic)                    | Temporal (This life)                         |
| Nature     | Judicial (legal rights)                        | Esthetic (beautifies us)                     |
| Meaning    | To declare righteous                           | To be made righteous                         |
| Necessity  | The Obedience of Christ                        | Man’s obedience                              |
| Agent      | Christ   | Spirit                                       |
| Basis      | Substitution                                   | Participation                                |
| Qualifies  | The believer for heaven                        | A believer for service                       |
| Guarantees | Eternal relationship                           | Present fellowship                           |
| Means      | By Faith                                       | By obedience                                 |
| Cleansing  | By blood                                       | By the Word of God                           |
| Result     | Peace with God                                 | Peace of God                                 |

# Justification and the Finished Work of Christ

The work of Christ is finished, completed, and fulfilled. It is an accomplished work in history.



Justification happens when men hear the gospel and believe (Acts 13:39; 15:7). The work of sanctification begins when one is born again but is always unfinished and incomplete in time. Justification contains sanctification as opposed to the Catholic doctrine that sanctification contains justification. Justification is objective; sanctification is subjective. It is faith in the finished work of Christ that justifies the man rather than the man's faithfulness in the struggle to be sanctified. God calls for faith, and faith sets its eyes upon God's work outside of man at the cross rather than setting his eyes upon the unfinished work of the Holy Spirit within the heart of man.

The word *believe* (*pisteuo*) is in the present tense. It should be read, "all that believe and keep on believing are justified from all things."

The word *believe* is also translated in the aorist tense indicating that justification is not piecemeal, but completed action. The believer must learn to accept justification at every moment of his Christian life – during bad days as well as good days.

Lutheran Confessions regard justification as a present continuous need of the believer, who always remains a sinner in his own eyes yet always grasping the justifying verdict of God by faith in Christ's righteousness (Protestants in Crisis over Justification by Faith).

In the Armenian doctrine, justification only deals with sins up until the time of conversion. In this framework it is almost impossible to keep justification in perspective since a past act does not remain the believer's greatest need. Justification becomes like a filling station that is passed but once. In this scheme, sanctification often appears like a higher stage in the soteriological process. Final justification on the Day of Judgment tends to rest on sanctification – how good have you really been? In the Armenian position, justification once again becomes subject to sanctification. In contrast to these two positions, the Lutheran Confessions regard justification as a present continuous need of the believer who is always a sinner in his own eyes yet always grasping the justifying verdict of God by faith in Christ's righteousness (Protestants in Crisis over Justification by Faith).

## Justification and Eschatology

Justification looks in two directions: back at the cross at the finished work of Christ and forward to the eschatological judgment. Justification is not a finished work. If it were, there would be no need of an eschatological judgment. The believer can rest assured of what the verdict will be because God's verdict towards believers is thrust into the present to be enjoyed now in advance of the Final Judgment. Keep in mind justification belongs to the Age to Come and that the Kingdom entered history in and through the ministry of Christ to bring the blessings of the Kingdom for man to enjoy in advance of the eschatological judgment at the consummation of history.

### Justification Diluted

- One weakens justification if one fails to keep justification at the center of his theology.
- One weakens justification if one totally disconnects justification from sanctification.
- One weakens justification if one fails to separate the work of Christ from the work of the Holy Spirit.
- One weakens justification if one easily retreats to *internal grace* as the basis of justification; i.e. making justification dependent on the degree of change in the human heart.
- One weakens justification if one pursues *present* experiences (second blessing) to confirm his acceptance; i.e. dynamic, sensual, spiritual experiences form the foundation of justification rather than the finished work of the cross.
- One weakens justification if one holds that *faith for a moment brings life for eternity*.
- One can confuse *forgiveness* with *justification* (Acts 13:38-39). Forgiveness is needed on a daily basis; justification is a constant state from which one operates and functions in his Christian life. We pray daily for forgiveness, but we rest daily in our justification -- that is, our legal standing and right to pray.
- One weakens justification when he mixes it with sanctification or makes justification dependent on the progress of sanctification.
- One weakens justification when human performance becomes more important than the performance of Christ on behalf of the sinner.

## Justification and Counseling

Depressed Christians flock to counselors because they feel bad about who they are and what they have done. These humanistic counselors mitigate these feelings by assuring the patient that his experience are no better or no worse than other people's experiences—but few take their client to the cross.

It is an error to make introspection of self the remedy to problems rather than inspection of the cross as the remedy for the snake-bitten sinner.

Common among psychologists is the view that the depressed must forgive himself. Sin is rebellion against God and only God can forgive sin. Nowhere in Scripture, to my knowledge, are Christians commanded to forgive themselves. This is pride . . . an act of a god.

One of the basic problems that plague the human heart is the tremendous sense of guilt one has from breaking God's law. Guilt is the *feeling* that one deserves to be punished, judged, and condemned; that they are less than what God intends man to be. But, guilt can be more than a feeling.

True guilt is the fact that a sinner has sinned and will be punished at the judgment. It is the counselor's job to deal with guilt biblically.

That is, the counselor must help the one plagued by guilt to understand his true condemnation in God's sight.

He must help the counselee understand that God has taken his sin to Calvary and credited his sin to Christ, and that God has taken the righteousness of Christ and credited it to his account.

How can one remain depressed when he understands his justification in Christ?

The key to guilt is (a) understanding the concept of justification, and (b) to help the individual draw sufficient comfort from the finished work of Christ on his behalf.

Digging around in the graveyard of subjective feeling is only a few feet away from emotional hell. To view man's bad feelings as the result of low self-esteem or the result of victimization is a gross, twisted product of the *psychologization* of our culture and should not be tolerated by men who understand the gospel.

## What Believing Souls Realize



- They know that God loves them not because of what they do, but because of who God is—a God of love. Likewise, He commands them to love, not because other people are lovely, but because of who they are and what they are becoming—people of love.
- They do not seek to be more worthy in order to be loved, but consent to being loved though they are unworthy.
- They have stopped trying to be good in order to be accepted because they know they are accepted because Christ was good.
- They have stopped trying to gain acceptance by their performance because they know they have acceptance because of the performance of Christ.
- They no longer blame themselves because Christ took all their blame upon Himself.
- They no longer determine their potential based on their past because they know their potential is based on their position in Christ in the present. They are not products of their past, but of their faith in what Christ has accomplished for them.
- They have no shame about their past, because they are too occupied with the glory of the present.
- They overcome defeat because they realize God will not withdraw His favor because of their failure. Victory is rarely final and failure is not fatal.
- They have a powerful prayer life for God because they understand they already have a right standing with God.
- They serve Christ, not to be blessed, but because they are already blessed.
- They do not strive to accomplish great things by being more devoted to Christ, but they accomplish great things because they are more believing in Christ. Discouragement comes, not because of a failure of devotion, but because of a failure to believe.
- They overcome discouragement, not by trying to be the best before men, but by rejoicing that Christ was the best among men before God.
- They do not dig around in the graveyard of their past to find reasons God should accept them; Rather, they dig into God's word to discover the wealth and riches of Christ's accomplishments on their behalf.
- They do not do archaeological journeys into their past to find blame points for present behavior; Rather, they understand that present failures are the result of doubt about the wonder of Christ's accomplishments at Calvary on their behalf; i.e. failure to see one's self in Christ and to claim the benefits of Christ's history is far more serious than moral defeats.

- They realize that faith is the key to enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel, that doubt is the mother of all evils.
- They realize that faith in the victory of Christ brings peace to the soul and joy to the heart; and, that a focus on one's personal success or lack thereof yields nothing but pride and, or depression.
- They realize that past failure is an opportunity to rejoice in the Victory of Christ because our hope is not in how much we change, but how much Christ obeyed God's law on our behalf.
- They realize that any counseling that takes a person in and in and in is a Hindu Pelagian model and must be rejected; that God's counselors take a man outside of himself, to Calvary, to show him the wonder of Another.

Part 2

# THE BLESSING OF SANCTIFICATION

Source: Stockton, Five Pillars of the Gospel



# A Contrast between Justification and Sanctification

| SUBJECT    | JUSTIFICATION                                  | SANCTIFICATION                    |
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| Need       | A right standing with God as Judge (cleansing) | A right walk with God as a Father |
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| Meaning    | To declare righteous                           | To be made righteous              |
| Necessity  | The Obedience of Christ                        | Man's obedience                   |
| Agent      | Christ   | Spirit                            |
| Basis      | Substitutionary                                | Participatory                     |
| Qualifies  | The believer for heaven                        | A believer for service            |
| Guarantees | Eternal relationship                           | Present fellowship                |
| Means      | By Faith                                       | By obedience                      |
| Cleansing  | By blood                                       | By the Word of God                |
| Result     | Peace with God                                 | Peace of God                      |

# The Definition of Sanctification



We must not merge the work of justification with sanctification.

Justification is a judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer to be righteous in His sight; sanctification involves the Spirit's work to make a Christian righteous in spirit, soul, and body; that is, the sanctification of one's whole being (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

The former is positional truth; the latter is conditional reality.

## Errors in Catholic Theology

The great error in Catholic Theology is to confuse justification with sanctification; that is, to merge the two doctrines leaving salvation dependent on the degree of holiness in the heart of the worshiper. If salvation is dependent upon regeneration and the amount of change one experiences in this life, then one becomes a slave to transformation. Thus, the conscience will never rest because the deeper one digs into the human condition, the more sin one finds growing in the man.

But, if salvation is dependent on the doing and dying of Christ, then the conscience can rest due to the accomplishments of Christ's work at the cross.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The verb sanctify (*hagiazō*) means "to make holy" or "to set apart." The noun *hagiasmos* (Grk) is the word sanctification. To be holy is to be separated and devoted to God (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

Holiness is renewing the whole man in the image of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:4ff For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication..

1 Thessalonians 4:7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Extentions of Sanctification

*Sanctification is a pre-conversion work of the Spirit* (1 Peter 1:2). Every person who believes in Christ comes to Him because the Spirit plowed the field of the heart making it ready to receive the seed of life.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

*Sanctification, in one sense, is a present completed state at which men enter through faith* (Acts 26:18). The term “sanctified” is a perfect, passive participle indicating that once a person places their faith in Christ, they are sanctified; i.e. sanctification is the immediate result of faith. It is a positional truth.

*Sanctification is also an unfinished work* because the believer is called to presently, continually separate himself from evil (1 Thessalonians 4:3). It is the present will of God for every believer. He is not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) nor to his former lusts (1 Peter 1:14). The Greek participle “συσχηματιζόμενοι” (conforming) is in the present tense indicating the immediate need to resist former lusts that pull and tug at the heart.

## The Meaning of the Word “Holy”

**Theisson (1992):**

God is absolutely separate from and exalted above all his creatures . . . separate from all moral evil . . . the perfection of God in all that he is . . . (p. 84).

**Hodge (1992):**

This is a general term for the moral excellence of God (I Samuel 2:2).

**New Bible Dictionary (1987):**

Holiness is not so much a relation of the creature to the Creator as of the Creator to the creature . . . it is the holiness of God that underlines that separation of life and distinctiveness of character that belong to God’s people . . . It is basically a term for the moral excellence of God and his freedom from all limitation in his moral perfection (p. 487).

**Unger’s Bible Dictionary (Unger, 1980 edition):**

By the holiness of God, it is not implied that he is subject to some law or standard of moral excellence external to himself, but that all

moral law and perfection have their external and unchangeable basis in his own nature (p. 494).

**Stockton:**

When the Scripture says God is holy, it seeks to communicate at least three facts about God: (a) that God is independent and absolute, not being subject to any law or principle outside Himself; that is, He is the standard of all that is good. His law defines what is good because His law is a reflection of His character; (b) that God is so transcendent in his position, so exalted in supremacy, so pure in His perfection, so luminous in His glory, so flawless in his character that He is in a state of such pure perfection the best of men are not able to approach Him. The strongest among us is completely disqualified from seeing the pure light of his presence. Coming in contact with such purity of holiness insures their destruction; and (c) that God is gloriously pure and perfect: that is, He is unsoiled, unspotted, unblemished, unadulterated, untainted, and uncontaminated by evil.

## Flesh and Spirit (Romans 8)



The term “flesh” refers to unregenerate men, **not** to carnally-minded Christians. The term “Spirit” refers to regenerated men delivered from the power of sin. It does **not** refer to “spirit filled” believers though all believers have the Holy Spirit.

This passage does **not** teach Christians have a “sin nature” they cannot conquer or that the Christians is a Dr. Jekel and Dr. Hyde with a split personality.



Figure 1: Courtesy of Unsplash

**Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

The “therefore” refers back to Paul’s treatise on the plight of unredeemed Jews in chapter 7 – that while Jews knew the law of God, they were carnal without power to keep the law.

This text is the heart of Paul’s gospel: now that Christ has come and offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, there is not now nor ever will be “condemnation” for those “in Christ Jesus.” “In Christ” stands in

juxtaposition to those who are “in Adam” (Romans 5:12ff) experiencing the tyranny of sin reigning over them.

“walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” is not found in early manuscripts. Apparently, some zealous scribe added the words in order to implore the existing church to be more spiritual.

The point of this passage is that since Christ was judged for the sins of the elect, there is not one drop of wrath left for the believer to endure. He is free of guilt and free from the power of sin.

## **2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**

The “law of the Spirit of life” defines a rule that life reigns in those who have been baptized into the history of Christ, the Second Adam (Romans 6:1-14); the “law of sin and death” identifies the effects on those who share the bonds of men living under the tyrannical history of the first Adam.

When a man believes, the Spirit takes the man out of Adam and places him into Christ so he may share in the marvelous benefits of His triumphal history. Paul is discussing a change in position or residence in relation to Adam.

Paul uses the word “baptism” (baptize) to describe the change of status for one who believes. The word “baptize” simply means “to be placed into.” It has nothing to do with water baptism and everything to do with a change in one’s spiritual position or citizenship. It has nothing to do with experience and everything to do with a change in standing.

By way of illustration, the believer is not in a some old downtown bus terminal traveling to some city ghetto, but in a modern airport flying a new jet out of bondage to freedom.

Because he is “in Christ,” He is alive to God and dead to sin (Romans 6:11). Sin cannot reign over him. Life reigns.

## **3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**

The Jews saw the law (Torah and the Talmud) as a mediator between God and man. The problem with this diegesis is that the law told a man what was right, but it did not empower the man to do what was right. The law is good, but it provided no power to do good.

But, in the economy of the gospel, the Spirit saves the man from the penalty of sin and then proceeds to empower the man to keep the law.

“weak through the flesh” exposes the inability of sinful man to keep the law.



Notice “those in the flesh” (sarx) are unsaved, unregenerated men still in Adam; “those in the Spirit” are redeemed men, Christian men. The “flesh” is not a reference to the sin nature any more than spirit is a reference to the spiritual nature.

Paul is addressing two categories of men: (1) those in Adam or “the flesh;” and, (2) those in Christ or “the Spirit.” He is not addressing the alleged hypothesis of “two natures within Christian men.” All Christians are “in the Spirit;” and, all non-Christians are “in the flesh” or “in Adam.” No man can be “in the Spirit” and “in the flesh” at the same time.

#### **4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

The purpose of salvation is to save men from the power of sin . . . from lawlessness.

Christ died for our sins and gave believing men His Spirit, not to free them from the law, but to empower them to keep his law. It is true, believers are not saved by law; but, they are saved in order to keep the law.

This text is a blow to antinomianism – the belief that the Christian man has no duty to God’s moral law expressed in the Ten Commandments and relevant case law. Few things are more derelict than the presumption that men are free to choose what law they will serve. Christian men are saved from the power of sin and given the power to honor, to keep, and to obey God’s law.

#### **5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**

The “they” refers to unsaved, un-regenerated men; i.e., unbelieving Jews in chapter 7.

“The flesh” refers to carnal, unsaved, un-regenerated men such as Jews. “The Spirit” refers to justified, born again, regenerated men.

The preposition “after” does not refer to actions of chasing “the flesh,” but to one’s being . . . or state of existence.

The New Living Translation translates the word “flesh” (sarx) as “sinful nature” in this section creating a false dichotomy that twists the gospel. Paul is not addressing the believer’s personal gestalt, but two classes of humanity – those in the flesh and those in the Spirit. Paul is not teaching that the individual Christian is a Dr. Jekyll and a Dr. Hyde . . . men with two natures, one good and the other evil . . . men having a black dog and a white dog living inside them. God forbid!

Christians are not bifurcated. They do not have two personalities, two natures, or a “double” mind.

If Christians have a conflict, it is not between two spiritual natures but the fact that the redeemed man still lives in an unredeemed body.

**6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

The word “minded” (phronema) refers to the anchor, core, or inner engines of one’s thoughts. The word “carnally” (sarx) refers to the orientation of unsaved, un-regenerate men in Adam (Romans 5:12ff).

Unsaved men love the world of death, think death, and do things that produce death. But, saved men are “spiritually minded” (genitive); i.e. their thinking is driven by, energized by, and directed by the Spirit which embodies “life and peace.”

**7 Because the carnal mind is enmity (echthra) against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**

The “carnal mind” refers to the driving force or thinking process of unsaved, un-regenerated, unredeemed men who are hostile (echthra) to God. It is not possible for natural, carnal men in Adam to subject themselves to the “law of God.” Nor is it possible for unsaved Jews trained in the law to do what the law requires – they are carnal sold under sin (Romans 7).

**8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**

“flesh” (sarx) is not describing a “carnal-minded Christian.” It is addressing the fact that the unredeemed man does not have the capacity to obey God’s law and to please Him. Every thought, word, and deed of Adam’s children leads to death of relationships.

**9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

“ye” refers to Roman Christians, saved Jews and Gentiles. Believers are not in Adam; they are not in the sarx (flesh) without a capacity to do what is right. Christians are part of a new creation in Christ (8); those in the sarx are a part of the old creation in Adam.

The conjunction “but” (alla) is a strong adversity. Christians are “in the Spirit.” Every believer, the mature and immature, are in the Spirit; i.e. “in Christ” sharing the power of His marvelous, victorious history (Romans 6:1-14).

**10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**

“you” is plural referring to the Roman Christians.

Paul now introduces a true dichotomy – the difference between the soul (spirit) and the body. The soul of the believer is saved; that is, it is energized by the “life” of the “Spirit.” Though his soul is saved, his body is “unredeemed”; that is, his spirit is governed by the life of the Spirit, but his body is not yet regenerated. Consequently, there is a real tension between the saved soul of a man and his unredeemed body (Romans 12:1).

God’s salvation plan involves not only the soul, but the whole man.

The redemption of the body (Romans 8:11ff) awaits the coming of Christ at the end of history.

**11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**

Verses 11- 28 transition from matters of the soul to matter of the body: Adoption, redemption, subjection to the spirit, the Spirit's help with physical infirmities, and the hope of a redeemed creation.

Until then, the Christian, gladly lives his life by the power of the Spirit bringing his body in subjection to the will of God. He believes in Providence knowing that out of struggles, good comes.

### **Illustrations of Holiness**

A high voltage wire: God is like a high voltage wire, that if a man (who is grounded) would seek to grasp with his bare hands, he would be burned to a crisp. Men unable to seize high voltage wires without being burnt to a crisp. God’s holiness is like this: to be in His presence for a single second would result in immediate destruction.

Light: Light, according to Einstein’s theory, is so constant in the universe, that any attempt to alter light would change the structure of every existing thing.

### **Holiness and Men**

Things and people can be made holy; that is, they can be set apart for a special use of God. What is given as an act of devotion must be clean and noble. For example, housewives often set apart beautiful plates for display on a living room wall. The plates are set apart from the use of a common everyday eating utensils. Things dedicated to God, whether people or things, must be separated from the common and the corrupt for a spiritual use.

Jonathan Edwards said: "I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness." (Quoted by E.M. Bounds, 1913).

# Factors in Holiness

## The Standard of Holiness



God Himself is the standard of holiness (Leviticus 11:44-45). The measuring stick of what is right or wrong is neither how we feel nor what other men may do or say. “Everybody is doing it” is not the standard for man’s behavior. Rather, God’s law is the objective standard of what is good, what is right, what is normal; and, Christ is the subjective standard of holiness.

Leviticus 20:26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy.

1 Peter 1:15-18 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

The verb “so be ye holy” is an aorist, passive, imperative. The passive informs us that we must cooperate with the Spirit who leads us to be holy. The aorist imperative demands that we initiate the process at once. The standard for all our actions and behavior is the character of God as revealed by His Commands. Note that holiness begins in the home (Leviticus 19:2-3). The command to “be holy” is followed by a series of commands in Leviticus; that is obedience to God’s law is the means to holiness. Sanctification is in obedience to law and the exercise of grace to our fellow man.

## Scope of Holiness

Holiness includes the setting apart of man’s spirit, soul, and body for God’s use. God is interested in the sanctity of our minds, emotions, thoughts, desires, intentions, hopes, dreams, actions, and including flesh and skin. Offering up of our body as an instrument of holiness has been the most difficult challenge for believers. We are physical beings in a material world. Christians have not always been comfortable pursuing holiness in body fully of fleshly desires. Christians have resorted to all kinds of deprivations in the pursuit of spirituality. But, these mortifications have never been effective or lasting. Neither a weak mind nor a weak body make a strong spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and (I pray God) your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Effects of Holiness

Holiness touches our habits, our character, our thoughts, our speech, and our relationships.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

### **Duration of Holiness**

Holiness is only relevant to this life.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

### **Value of Holiness**

Holiness cannot save us, but it can beautify us. Holiness is esthetic, not meritorious; i.e. it does not add to our salvation, but it does demonstrate and verify salvation. Holiness is not accomplished through psychological therapy, or rejecting the material world, or poverty, or employment of a set of spiritual gymnastics. Holiness is accomplished by fellowship with the Savior. Holiness is not achieved by looking inside to discover our imperfections, but by looking outside of ourselves to discover the perfections of Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

### **Necessity of Holiness**

Holiness is a benefit, an effect of our salvation.

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### **Agent of Holiness**

The fruit of holiness is produced by the Holy Spirit but it also takes the effort of Christians; that is, holiness involves the work of the Spirit as well as the cooperation of men (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

### **Human Factors in Holiness**

Unlike justification, holiness is not substitutionary. Man must participate in the process by obedience to God's laws. In salvation, God does it all. Men are brought into a right relationship with God, not by obedience to law, but by the obedience of faith—faith in Christ. In sanctification, however, believers are called to cooperate with God in the sanctification process. While it is true man can do nothing to earn salvation, there is much he can do to develop sanctification. Holiness is not achieved by surrender alone. We are not called "to let go and let God;" that is, "let go" and plunge in to wretched subjectivism. Rather, sanctification demands that believers "trust and obey."

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers (resident aliens) and pilgrims (temporary travelers), abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

### **Means of Holiness**

Holiness is accomplished by interacting with the truth. Man is not sanctified by archaeological journeys into one's past or by psychotherapy or just by "making the right choice." Sanctification comes when the believer seriously interacts with the Word of God, believes it, and obeys it. Obedience is the means; law is the objective. We live in a twisted, sinful world, sin within and sin without, and life involves choices between good and evil, between the good and the greater good, between a lesser evil and the greater evil. Only by a devotion to truth and the discovery of truth can any man hope to be holy.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; Thy Word is truth.

### **Fruits of Holiness**

Holiness produces good works in and through us. But, what is good? Only God has the authority to define "good." When man defines "good," man protects sins and redefines crime in relation to the State; e.g., terms like "therapeutic abortion" disguises the murder of innocent, unborn children. The subjunctive verb in the following verse holds out the possibility of being fully qualified to serve. The Word of God is totally sufficient to equip men to live holy lives. Christians do not need "self-help" books or psychotherapy. They need God's Word. It is good to love. Love is a fruit of holiness, but indiscriminating love is a product of the poisonous tree.

2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Psalms 119:6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

Psalms 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

### **Standard of Holiness**

Holiness is epitomized in one standard, one model, one paradigm: Christ. Our Sovereign is the subjective standard of holiness; i.e. the visible, tangible, historical example of what it means to be devoted to the Father. The law, on the other hand, is the objective practice of those devoted to God.

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Colossians 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

### **Foundation of Holiness**

Holiness can only be built upon justification. While justification contains holiness, holiness does not contain justification. Only just men can practice true holiness. Pure law points to sanctification, but does not supply the means of sanctification; but grace contains sanctification.

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . .

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof . . . .

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

### **Walking Toward Holiness**

Holiness is a life style and can be achieved in part by the following:

Know the facts of the gospel (Romans 6:1-9): Knowledge of what God has done for us in Christ is a prerequisite for maturity. There is a tendency today to deemphasize knowledge as something “heady” and unnecessary. Nothing can be further from the truth as the following verses attest

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

Philippians 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:

Colossians 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Reckon the facts as true because they are true (Romans 6:9). The term reckon is a mental term meaning “to count as true.” The first command in Romans is to act on the knowledge that one is justified and regenerated and alive to God.

Resist sin and yield your body to God (Romans 6:9-14). By standing on one’s position in Christ, the believer now has the power to resist sin. The second



duty next to reckoning is to put up a fight. Begin to resist sin's inroads, temptations, and charms.

Avoid legalism as the means to holiness (Romans 6:14). Legalism is not the same as obedience to God or perseverance in moral principle. Legalism is looking to daily works as meritorious, something to commend one to God. There is always a temptation to judge our relationship to God based on our performance in time rather than upon the accomplishments of Christ for eternity. Legalism is proud. Resting in God's justification produces humility.

Be filled with God's Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The command "be being filled" with the Spirit is the key to sanctification. Sanctification comes from a combination of the believer's submission to the Spirit as well as the Spirit's infused power. When a man believes, he is graciously given the Holy Spirit as a gift of grace. Thus, grace supplies the means and power for being holy. Man is not left alone to struggle in his own weak way to be holy. To be filled with the Spirit (subjectively) is to be filled with the Word objectively (Colossians 3:15-16).

Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:18ff). This verse means "to keep on keeping on keeping in step with the Spirit." Pictured here is the believer as a soldier marching in step with the commands of a drill sergeant; that is, the Holy Spirit will lead us to truth, to obedience to the law of God—the law as opposed to inward journeys, self-originating impulse, wretched subjectivism, and antinomianism.

Obey the Lord (Romans 6:16). Sanctification is not substitutionary. It demands positive obedience, an act of the will by the believer.

Preach against sin (Isaiah 58:1): Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

## The Root v. the Fruit

(ROMANS 1:17)



Two problems exist: (a) a failure to separate root and fruit; to separate justification and sanctification, and (b) a failure to link faith-righteousness with holiness.

Luther broke the synthesis by putting the righteousness of faith outside of men. He called it passive righteousness -- a heavenly reality. He

called earthly righteousness active righteousness. Rome included righteousness in holiness: the Reformers included holiness in righteousness. Rome included justification in sanctification; the reformers included sanctification in justification (Brinsmead).

**Justification is sola fide, but not so with sanctification.** The righteousness by faith is vicarious righteousness completely outside the believer. It is entirely outside the believer's experience. One ruins faith-righteousness by mingling it with the necessity of obedience for holiness. One cannot add to the finished work of Christ upon which justification rests, but one can add to unfinished work of the Spirit upon whom sanctification is dependent.

*Sanctification includes human responsibility; justification does not.*

Sanctification depends on the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the believer's cooperation with the Spirit; justification depends on the completed work of Christ in history at Calvary.

**The passive work of justification** is based on the active substitutionary work of Christ; active sanctification requires the believer's cooperative participation in the Spirit's objective to make the man holy (1 Peter 1:15-17).

**Sanctification involves man purifying himself** (1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1). God does not act upon man as if he were only a machine. He does not live in the believer in such a way that He does the obeying for him. Justification involves substitution. Sanctification is not substitutionary. To "let go and let God" is **not** Scriptural!

"To confuse (fuse) the action of God and the action of the believer is actually a form of pantheism" (Brimsmead)

**To inject sanctification into justification is pantheism.** When we say, "God is all that is" or that "Justification and sanctification are one in the same," we plunge into theological pantheism.

If sanctification is fused into justification, then we are partly saved by Christ and partly saved by the Holy Spirit; partly saved by Christ's obedience, and partly saved by our own obedience; partly saved by His works; partly saved by our works.

The problem with this view is that it truncates the gospel. It weakens the gospel by adding man's works to that of Calvary. It lacks power to save and to save completely.

Wiersbe says...

"Do not confuse justification and sanctification. Sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Christ. Sanctification may change from day to day. Justification

never changes. When the sinner trusts Christ, God declares him righteous, and that declaration will never be repealed.” (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor)

A healthy saint believes that he was so sick he could only be made whole in Christ. The best saint believes he is so sinful, that he can add nothing to the work of Christ; when saved, he believes the gospel is so powerful, that he can be delivered from the strength of sin (Romans 8:1-4).

The life of the Age to Come has broken into history in the person and work of Christ. The eschatological creation has been planted in the life of the believer. The blessings of the covenant have been secured. The life of the kingdom has been planted into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, not to justify us, but to beautify us; not to save us from the penalty of sin, but to sanctify us in relationship to the power of sin. All the blessings of the Age to Come was won for humanity in Christ and are available to be enjoyed now by the believer who walks by faith in obedience to God’s Law-word—the obedience of faith for justification, and obedience to the Holy Spirit for sanctification.

### **Nature of Holiness**

- Holiness does not secure salvation, but it does enhance our fellowship.
- Holiness is inherent to justification; but justification is not included in holiness.
- Holiness is a highway upon which only believers have a right to travel. A person who has not entered into the gate of justification has no power to walk on the highway of holiness.
- One is not saved by holiness, but they are saved to it. They are not saved by it, but they cannot be saved without it.
- Holiness is won by those with life; justification is a gift to those who are dead.
- Obedience to law is a product of sanctification; justification is a product of Christ’s obedience to law.

### **Facts on Holiness**

- Holiness is eschatological: Since justification is an eschatological gift of the Age to Come and holiness is contained in it, then sanctification is the beginning of glorification now.
- Holiness is a now/not-yet concept: Sanctification has begun now; it will be completed later -- the not/yet of glorification. It is the first fruits of glory.

Since the Holy Spirit is the gift of the eschatological age, and we have the Holy Spirit; then we participate in the work of the Age to Come now in advance of its cataclysmic entrance into history. Holiness is the fruit of the present work of the eschatological Spirit. Just as the Spirit will transform the dead in the Age to Come, He has begun transforming corruption into incorruption (spiritually) now in this present evil age. Since holiness is the beginning of eternal life, and eternal life is a gift of the Age to Come, then we enjoy the first fruits of the eschatological age now by participating in the call to be holy.

- Holiness is for beautification, not justification. It does not save the soul, but it does beautify the whole man.
- Holiness is wholistic: Just as salvation includes the whole of man; sanctification includes the whole man: spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). All work and labor, therefore, is to be considered a sacred matter.
- Holiness is practical conformity to law: While man's obedience to law does not contribute to justification, obedience to God's law contributes to the sanctification of the man.
- Holiness is temporal: It begins now, but will become completed at the resurrection from the dead.
- Holiness is communal: It not only involves the individual, but the whole community of God's people: "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26).
- Holiness is not racial: God wants all his children, rich and poor, black or white, European or Brazilian, male or female to be conformed to His image. God's law is not parochial, it transcends race, sex, age, status, and culture.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

### **Errors Surrounding Holiness**

Errors regarding holiness abound with just men plunging into impulsive, self-driven rituals and carnal men plunging into wretched subjectivism such as flaming tongues, holy laughter, and vigorous spiritual projections.

These errors include the following:

- Beliefs that applications of law expired with the Old Testament dispensation; and,

- Beliefs that God's law only applies to Christian men and not the State; and,
- Beliefs that grace is opposite of law; and,
- Beliefs that obedience to God's law is legalistic, formal, and unrelated to life under grace; and,
- Beliefs that restrict holiness to private piety to the exclusion of public duty; and,
- Beliefs in psychology, introspection, and archaeological journeys into one's past; and,
- Beliefs that sanctification is associated with emotional binges as in the Pentecostal Movement; and,
- Beliefs that sanctification involves wild, spiritual gymnastics that prove the existence of God; and,
- Beliefs that seek spiritual experiences apart from the guidelines of law; and,
- Beliefs that judging actions and behavior as sinful are opposed to true spirituality; and,
- Beliefs that result in irrational behavior motivated by a G-d experiences; and,
- Beliefs that non-discriminating love is acceptable spirituality; and,
- Beliefs in radical antinomianism; and,
- Beliefs in radical re-installment of Judaism and the practice of Jewish customs; and,
- Beliefs in man-made good works; .i.e. good as defined by modern, humanistic man; and,
- Beliefs that that redefine godliness to include same-sex marriages; and,
- Beliefs that create a dualism that rejects the world, the material, and the body in order to achieve a higher spirituality.

In Summary, holiness is a path of obedience to God's law. While obedience does not save the man, obedience does sanctify the man. Being holy is no easy task as there are many pseudo-religious paths to holiness including but not limited to antinomianism, wretched subjectivism, tongues, impulsive self-devised devotion, dualism that separates the physical from the spiritual, inward journeys by means of psychological models, hyper-sensationalism, ritual church practices, and self-imposes spiritual gymnastics. Holy people

obey, but are not self-righteous. Holy people love, but not indiscriminately. Holy people are good as God defines goodness.

## Living Clean

### The Meaning of “wash” in John 13



At the Last Supper (John 13), Jesus arose from the triclinium, and washed the feet of his disciples. His act was not only one of great humility, great hospitality, and great teaching. It not only instructed the twelve to love and to serve, but it taught a great lesson on sanctification.

The disciples were clean because of their faith in Christ, but they needed to perfect that cleansing in order to have continual fellowship with their Savior and Lord. The washing of the disciple's feet is a lesson on sanctification and the necessity of perfecting holiness.

**7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.**

These are the first words Jesus speaks in this chapter. Up until this time, we see our Lord serving and not talking. Servants act. They do not speak.

The washing is symbolic -- a lesson the Lord promised to share with them after he completed the task of washing the disciples feet.

Jesus is cleansing the feet of the disciples represents the ordination of a new priesthood -- preparing them for their future ministry.

Exodus 30:19-20 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD:

| Greek                 | LOUO                           | NIPTO   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Verse                 | verse 10                       | verse 8                                       |
| English               | bathe or washed                | wash or washed                                |
| Contextual Meaning    | A complete Mikvah (bath)       | Feet washing only                             |
| Theological Meaning   | Justification                  | Sanctification                                |
| Practical Application | Trust Christ for relationship. | Confess and judge sin to maintain fellowship. |

**8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**

What Peter had difficulty submitting to was that Christ, the Son of God, should be His servant. Knowing His love and receiving his love are different matters.

Before us is the master lesson of footwashing -- the value of cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin . . . of cleansing from defilement caused by being in this world surrounded by sinners.

Peter does not wait for the after knowledge Jesus promised in verse 7. The emphasis in Peter's statement is not upon "Thou" or "my" but upon "never," "He sees no ground on which our Lord's act can possibly be one which he can permit. (Ellicott).

The emphasis in this text is not on "Jesus" or "I", but the "not."

Peter learned that it was *not* his place to command the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter learned that unless he accepts the love of Christ he can have no part with Him. The word "no part" means "no fellowship with;" no relationship with; no contact with; no means of serving Christ.

"If I wash thee not . . ." is a 3rd class conditional with the subjective -- a true condition. "thou hast no part with me" is an indicative, the mood of reality.

All those who are spiritually washed from the world's defilement by Christ, have a part in Christ.

"Unless Christ should purify Peter, he could have no evidence that he was his disciple . . . 'Unless by my doctrine and spirit I shall purify you, and remove your pride Matthew 26:33, your lack of constant watchfulness Matthew 26:40, your anger Matthew 26:51,

your timidity and fear Matthew 26:70, Matthew 26:74, you can have no part in me'(Grotius)" (Barnes).

Thus, water is a symbol of practical cleansing of the soul through confession and practically forsaking sin.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13)

- Peter learned that unless he accepts the humility of Christ, he can have no part with Him.
- Peter learned that unless he is cleansed of daily defilement, he can have no part with Him.
- Peter learned that unless he sacrifices himself for his brethren, he cannot have a part with Him.
- Peter learned that unless he surrenders to the Lordship of Christ as his authority, he can have not have a part with Him.
- Peter learned "from yesterday's pardon, we should be strengthened against this day's temptation" (Matthew Henry).

If Peter could not permit our Lord to wash his feet, how could he permit Christ to serve him as Savior at the cross?

"Superficially these words might mean that unless Peter allowed Jesus to wash him, he could not sit at table with Him." (EGT).

"Christ tells him, that except he washed him, he had no part with him; that is, he should never be saved" (Matthew Poole).

The lesson here is one of sanctification. Holiness is necessary to have fellowship with Christ and to be His servant: "For them *I sanctify myself*, that they too may be truly sanctified" (John 17:10). Sanctification involves learning His law, confession, and repentance.

That Peter was struggling to understand the significance of the act is self-evident by his quick response in verse 9.

**9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.**

Peter did not fully grasp the meaning of Jesus washing his feet, but he was true to his impulsive character.

Peter reasoned, if foot washing is important, then why not give me a full bath that I can have full fellowship with Thee. Moreover, it appears that Peter considered Himself totally unclean which was not true.



**10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.**

In saying this, Jesus acknowledge that Peter was clean . . . saved . . . and a true child of God . . . but, as a future minister he would have to undergo many washings, many periods of purification in order to be a vessel through whom Christ could work.

## Cleansing the Conscience

### *One: interaction with the Word of God*

"You are clean through the word I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3-5).

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

**Two: Confession** -- When a man trusts the Son, he is washed clean by the blood; that is, he is totally bathed (1 John 1:5-7); but, as he conducts his affairs among men in the course of life, his feet are defiled.

When defiled, the man must acknowledge that defilement and confess his sins.

In confession, the Scripture testifies that "He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Those who experience moral purification to begin their walk with God must undergo many cleansings in order to maintain that walk with Him. In interfacing with the world, godly men pick up "dirt," and must separate from sin again and again and again.

"The true believer is thus washed when he receives Christ for his salvation" (Matthew Henry); and, he is cleansed from defilement when He confesses his sins (1 John 1:9).

## Qualifying a New Priesthood



Another way to look at this foot washing ceremony is that Jesus was qualifying his disciples for their *new role as priests of Almighty God*.

Consider the following as evidence that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples in order to qualify them for their new

ministry in the new, holy priesthood -- a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) in a new and holy nation a.k.a. the New Israel, or the True Israel of God (1 Peter 2:9-10; Romans 9:6; Galatians 6:16).

(1) Peter refers to the church as a "holy priesthood" and as a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5-9) -- far superior to the Levitical priesthood. The church does not have a priesthood; the church is a priesthood. All believers are priests, though not all have qualified themselves to serve in this holy ministry.

(2) Jesus is the church's High Priest, the archetype of the Aaronic Priesthood (Hebrews 5). He established a new priesthood to service the grand and glorious holy temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 9:13; Ephesians 2:21).

(3) The priests in the Old Testament, Aaron and his sons, were qualified to be priests through the following sacred protocols:

- Washed with water (Leviticus 8:6)
- Clothed them with priestly vestments (8:7)
- Anointed with oil -- a symbol of the Holy Spirit (8:10)
- Identified with the bull of the sin offering (8:14)
- Identified with the ram of the burnt offering (8:19)
- Sprinkled with blood of the ordination ram -- a peace offering (8:22-23)
- blood on the right ear so they could hear the Word of God
- blood on the right thumb so they could serve the will of God
- blood on the right toe so they could walk in the house of God
- Consecrated the hands with the bread offering placed on top of the oil, fat, and blood of the ordination ram with, and then offering it to the LORD as a wave offering (cake, meal, or grain offering) -- a type of the character of Christ (8:26-29).
- Sprinkled their priestly garments with oil and blood in order to consecrate them to this ministry -- even their garments had to be clean (8:30)
- Enjoyed a fellowship consecration meal in the Tabernacle (8:31)
- Seven day period of consecration in the Tabernacle (8:32)

(4) Once ordained, Aaron and his sons, washed their hands and feet in the brazen laver every time they entered the Tent of Meeting to perform their daily duties . . . *lest they die*; that is, they not only had to be washed and cleansed when they were ordained, THEY HAD TO BE WASHED on a daily basis, week after week, month after month, and year after year, as a holy discipline *to*

*maintain their qualifications to perform their priestly duties* (Exodus 30:19-20).

19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:

20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD:

This daily, discipline of washing with water is a giant symbolic device to educate us that (A) sin is very defiling and infectious, (B) that we live in a dirty, filthy, morally contaminated society, (C) that coming into contact with other people and modern modes of communications, we are easily defiled by the sins of others (and our own sin) (James 4:1-7); (D) that we (Christians) must be cleansed with the Washing of the Water of the Word and Confession of Sins on a daily basis in order that our prayers and service may be acceptable to Christ (Ephesians 5:26; 1 John 1:9; James 4:8).

(5) As the priestly family had to be washed, clothed, and anointed with oil, the new priesthood has to be washed, clothed, and anointed with the Spirit.

- The disciples were baptized as a figure of separation from sin, identification with Christ (the sacrifice for sins, Savior, and High Priest) and dedication to God (John 3:23; (John 4:1; Acts 2:41)
- The disciples were cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7)
- The disciples were clothed in robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- The disciples were anointed with the oil of the Spirit (John 7:39; 1 John 2:27)
- The disciples had to personally, individually wash themselves and renew their devotion to holiness on a daily basis (1 John 1:7- 9)

In reference to the clothing consider the following: All priests clothed themselves in sacred garments when ministering before God and serving the duties of reconciliation. According to instruction in the Book of Exodus these garments include *"a breast piece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash."* (28:4). When people believe in Christ, they are clothed in the holy garments of salvation. As priests in the New Holy Temple (the church), Christians receive a breast piece of truth, an ephod of salvation, a robe of righteousness, a woven tunic of peace, a turban of redemption, and a sash of faith (Ephesians 6:14-17). Christians are required to be washed with the Water of the Word and to wear priestly vestments while offering "up spiritual

sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" and proclaiming His praises to those still trapped in darkness (1 Peter 1:5-9). Believers are required to wear these vestments (righteousness and holiness) whenever they proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the sons of darkness.

[Note: The above vestments are spiritual. However, Paul required women to wear a physical, material veil on her head as a visible symbol of authority in temple services -- which is an icon of God's law-order. Paul advances three symbols in 1 Corinthians 11: the veil (or scarf), the bread, and the wine.]

(6) Jesus washes his disciples' feet to purify and cleanse them for their priestly service to God.

"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (the true temple of God ) (John 13:8).

The washing of the disciples feet can be compared to Exodus 30:20 wherein our Lord taught his disciples to cleanse themselves regularly from defilement in order to preserve their qualification to serve in the new priesthood.

(7) Through this simple act of foot washing, Jesus demonstrates to His disciples His eternal role as God's High Priest and Mediator and their part in the new priesthood. This act assured them, even though he would be subjected to the cross, that God would hear his prayers and the prayers of the new priests:

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:7-10).

In John 13, our Lord performed His duty as High Priest to qualify his disciples as priests in the new priesthood, through the icon of foot washing -- an instructive tool to educate these men on the necessity of continual sanctification and the need to be cleansed from defilement.

As God's High Priest, our Lord ordained His disciples to be priests unto him. The church does not have a priesthood. It is a priesthood. Now sitting at the right hand of the Father, our Lord continues to pray on their behalf, "*he always lives to intercede for them*" (Hebrews 7:25), and will empower them through the Holy Spirit to perform their priestly duties to the glory of God. Moreover, His resurrected life stands between the disciples and death.

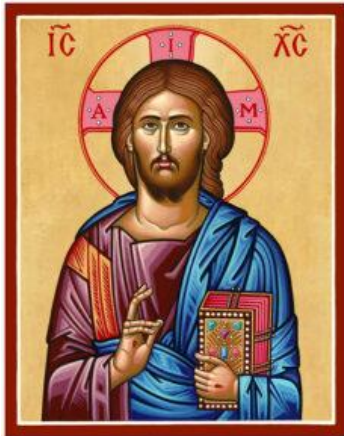
People sometimes ask me, "What do you do?" In my more zealous moments I say, "I am a priest of Almighty God! What do you do?"

Though this is true, I am reminded from John 13 how I must continually live a separated life and submit to the daily discipline of "self-cleansing" from defilements of the world picked up in the course of daily life.

Holiness is not an option. It is a requirement for priestly duty (1 Peter 1:15ff).

## There is Power in the Blood

Have a troubled conscience? This verse is for you.



**7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,**

This wonderful text has three important clauses.

The contingency word "if" introduces a 3rd class conditional clause with the subjunctive -- maybe you do, but maybe you don't, but if you do, you will walk in the light.

**we have fellowship one with another,**

John did not say, "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with God;" but, "fellowship one with another."

Walking with God's people is primary evidence one is walking in the light. Instead of calling the pretenders "liars," John flips the coin on its edge to expose the false claims; that is, those claiming to walk with God must also walk happily with the flawed, fractured people of God. God's heart is with His people, and if professing Christians do not love God's people, they don't know God. If one claiming to know the Shepherd does not hang around the sheep, he is probably a wolf in sheep's clothing.

**and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

The verb "cleanseth" (*katarizo*) introduces the subject of sanctification, and not justification.

We get the word "catharsis" from this Greek stem. "Catharsis" is "**a metaphor used by Aristotle in the Poetics to describe the effects of true tragedy on the spectator.**" The use is derived from the medical term *katharsis* (Greek: "purgation" or "purification"). Aristotle states that the purpose of tragedy is to arouse "terror and pity" and thereby effect the catharsis of these emotions" (Britannica).

The spirit uses the term "catharsis" to define the healing of lepers in Matthew 11:5.

The concern in 1 John is not being saved from the penalty of sin, but the power of sin and its haunting influence on the conscience. He is not discussing being "redeemed" by blood, but being "cleansed" and "healed" by blood. Even the best of saints sin and "feel" the ring, pop, and thump of guilt pounding away like kettledrums in the conscience. This text ministers to the conscience informing believing men that conscientiousness of the blood cleanses and qualifies them for moment by moment fellowship with the Father and the Son. Faith in the blood, therefore, silences the percussions of a troubled conscience (Hebrews 10:17).

Rest, soul, rest in the sufficiency and efficiency of the blood of Christ which is working now, this moment, to cleanse your conscience.

- Believing men are propitiated through His blood - Romans 3:25
- Believing men are justified by His blood - Romans 5:9
- Believing men are redeemed by His blood - Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 5:9
- Believing men are made near to God and His promises by His blood - Ephesians 2:13
- Believing men secure peace with God through His blood - Colossians 1:20
- Believing men obtain a clean conscience through His blood - Hebrews 9:12-14
- Believing men attain boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus - Hebrews 10:19
- Believing men are sanctified by His blood - Hebrews 13:12, 1 Peter 1:2
- Believing men are repaired and equipped to serve God by His blood - Hebrews 13:20-21
- Believing men are cleansed by His blood - 1 John 1:7
- Believing men are washed from their sins by the Blood of Christ - Revelation 1:5
- Believing men are made white in the blood of the Lamb - Revelation 7:14
- Believing men gain victory over Satan, the accuser of the brethren, by His blood - Revelation 12:11

In 1 John 1:7, the apostle is not occupied with the cross, but with the throne; not with the blood that purchases sinners, but the life-giving blood of Christ which purifies and sanctifies the saint. Blood in this text has "the cleansing power of life" similar to Paul's statement in Romans 8:2 'the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ makes me free from the law of sin and death.'

We are not only saved by his death from the penalty of sin, we are saved by his life from the power of sin (Romans 5:10).

When Zachariah gained insight into the Christ child he saw the hope that "we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear" (Luke 1:74). How can we serve Him without fear? The answer is in 1 John 1:7 and Hebrews 13:20-21).

In Hebrews we read, "*through the blood* of the everlasting covenant, *make you perfect* (katartizo) *in every good work* to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight" (Hebrews 13:20-21). The word "*perfect*" (*katartizo - tisai*) (aorist optative - a wish) means "*to equip thoroughly*" and "*to repair.*" It is translated "*perfectly joined together*" in 1 Corinthians 1:10; "*fully furnished*" or "*equipped*" in 2 Timothy 3:17; "*to mend*" *nets* in Matthew 4:21; "*to restore*" in Galatians 6:1; and "*to frame*" in Hebrews 11:3. In using the optative the apostle is expressing a wish that a believer's consideration of the blood will fully equip him to serve God.

Christ not only saves us through the power of His death unto justification; He saves us through the Power of His Risen Life unto sanctification. The One saving us through His death from the penalty of sin is the One now saving us through His life from the power of sin. He saves men from the condemnation of sin through faith in His death, and saves men from the domination of sin through faith in His Highly Exalted Life (Colossians 3:2).

A growing cleansing from the dominion and the power of sin is granted to us, if the life of Jesus Christ is breathing in our lives as we depend on His heart-beat operating within us by His Spirit.

The sacrifice on the Cross is the basis of everything, but that sacrifice does not exhaust what Christ does for us. He died for our sins, and lives for our sanctifying. He died for us, He lives in us. Because He died, we are forgiven; because He lives, we are made pure (MacLaren).

That only way we can become free from the tyranny that dominates us, is having the life of Christ as the animating principle of our lives. When we depend on His life as the animating principle of our lives, the spirit of Jesus emancipates us from the power of sin and death (MacLaren).

The blood of Christ at the cross redeems us from the penalty of sin unto justification (being declared righteous), but the quickening blood of Christ in His intercessory work at the right hand of God cleanses us from the power of sin unto sanctification (being made righteous).

The verb "cleanseth" is a present active indicative meaning His blood cleanses and keeps on purifying the saint. Believing men are not only redeemed by His blood, but cleansed day by day, moment by moment by His blood in order that

men might be sanctified and qualified to walk in the light. Like silver is refined by heat, the heart is refined by continual reliance on the life of Christ as the animating power of one's life.

If the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from ALL sin, what does that leave for baptism . . . or prayer . . . or penance . . . or saying the Rosary to cleanse?

## Confession As a Means of Cleansing

Truth be known, many Christians are tied up in knots over their failures -- failures that prevent them from enjoying the Lord and His accomplishments for them at the cross and the throne.

**1 John 1:9 is the remedy for the misery of those suffering from the megaphone of guilt.**

**9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Private confession by a broken Christian is a cleansing act. God does not withhold His forgiveness on those who admit their guilt.

The word "confess" (homologeō) means *to agree with* -- part of the 3rd class conditional clause involving a subjunctive: *If we confess our sins," and few do, but if we do . . .*

The word "just" in this context means "faithful to His promises;" that is, God is a promise-keeper.

"Walking in the light" involves naming and confessing one's sins as the Spirit identifies them to him. Formal admission of sins to God is evidence the believer is walking in the light with God. Silence, denial, and concealment belong to the darkness.

Confession by itself does not sanitize the soul. Cleansing is ONLY accomplished by His sacrifice at the cross. There is no cleansing from sin apart from our Lord. All the prayer in the world cannot cleanse the soul unless one has appropriated the cleansing power of His blood -- the currency of the spirit-world.

But, cleansing from defilement for the Christian is achieved by confession. Christ need not die again! Confession brings the stained believer in contact with the cleansing power of the blood.

Light cleanses because the Truth reaches the man. As light dispels darkness, confession exposes sin so that the light of Christ's accomplishments can heal the man. Mothers used to say, "Play in the sunshine" because of the therapeutic



nature of sunlight. As sunlight disinfects and heals wounds, walking in the light with an honest and open heart heals the sinner; that is confession enables the man to come into the sunlight where the blood of Christ can be applied to the soul (1:7).

Know that confession by itself does not cleanse the soul. There is no forgiveness apart from the doing and dying of Christ. Confession is the catalyst that enables the blood to be applied to our sins so we can maintain our walk with the Father and the Son moment by moment.

Know that confession to a priest does not cleanse the soul. The "blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin." Confession of sins to God (and forsaking them) enables the Spirit to apply the cleansing power of the blood to the conscience (Proverbs 28:13).

God is faithful to purify the believer because of the doing and dying of Christ. Confession connects the Christian with the cure (blood) to effectively maintain the man in his walk "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Because Christ is the believer's Representative at the throne of God, he can afford to admit guilt before God. Walking in the light means the man can be humble and acknowledge the worst about himself knowing that he will *not* be rejected. The one honestly confessing known sins in their full extent has the full assurance of free and full forgiveness necessary to walk in the light "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Those walking in the light are given a promise. Confession, as opposed to suppression, enables the believer to claim God's forgiveness and enjoy the cleansing of the conscience from ALL unrighteousness. This confidence is not based on one's "victory" over sin or the strength of one's resistance to sin, *but upon God's character*: i.e. when we come into the light and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us because His Son shed his blood as a payment for our sins. Being so cleansed equips us to pray and serve Him.

1 John 2:20 For if our heart condemn us, *God is greater than our heart*, and knoweth all things.

Luke 1:74- 75 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies *might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness BEFORE him*, all the days of our life.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but *perfect love casteth out fear*: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Confession of sin is more like a "foot washing" than a total bath (See John 13) -- a necessary process to wash away the defilement that comes from rubbing shoulders with other sinners on this earth.

Confession must be accompanied by faith. Faith has to be aggressive after the conscience has knowledge of failure. For this reason the psalmist (Psalm 32) exhorts confessors *to triple down* on laying hold of the benefits of confession by denying one's feelings and believing the promises until one's feelings match the truth of God's promises. Joy over forgiveness is evidence of faith. These acts of obedience make the heart glad. Believe it, then achieve it.

King David, in his great confession said,

Psalm 32:11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

## **Saved by his Present, Risen Life**

**Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**

Tired of defeat . . . of living a compromised life?

Christianity is more than a dream, an ethic, or religious-ritual. It involves an intimate relationship with the living God through His Son, risen from the dead, sitting at the right hand of the Father.

He is the content of the Christian life; the Water of Life; the Fuel in the tank; the Life-force working within the Christian heart through His Spirit. The One who calls us to holiness is the One Who supplies the power to be holy . . . to love . . . to suffer . . . and to serve.

There is hope for a powerful, victorious life because our Lord sits at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God . . . Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know (Jeremiahs 33:3).

We do not serve a dead Savior, but an alive, all-powerful, victorious Savior exalted to the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 7:55-56).

"It is promised that the people who were long in sorrow, shall again be filled with joy. Where the Lord gives righteousness and peace, he will give all needful supplies for temporal wants; and all we have will be comforts, as sanctified by the word and by prayer." (Henry)

What God promised to the people through the prophet, Jeremiah experienced in his own life (17:14ff).

Jesus lived in total dependence on the Father.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

We must not only respond to the call to be saved from sin, but to walk b faith in dependence upon Him; to walk in the Spirit; and to walk in holiness and love. He does not save us, then abandon us to serve Him in our own little, weak way. The One who saves us by the death of His Son at Calvary also supplies to power to overcome sin now in this life by Christ "Who is our life" (Colossians 3:4).

God works in the man to accomplish His will.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (sanctification).

Like the Savior, "we can do nothing!" And, like the Son we are to live in total dependence on God to sanctify us.

The "it" in verse 24 refers back to God's call to be holy in verse 23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

## **God's Power is Available to us NOW.**

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

We are not abandoned to our own grit and power to do God's will. It is God who works in us to accomplish His good pleasure (obedience to His law - Romans 8:4).

His "good pleasure" refers to working out life's problems (salvation / sanctification) by the power of God as one seeks to obey His Word.

Christ saves us now by his life.

Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Romans 8:2 'the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ makes me free from the law of sin and death.'

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The blood of Christ at the cross redeems us from the penalty of sin unto justification, but the quickening blood of Christ in His intercessory work at the right hand of God cleanses us from the power of sin unto sanctification.

## The Cleansing of the Leper

### Leviticus 14:1-7



Before are two illustrations of cleansing: the Cleansing of the Leper (Leviticus 14:1-7); and, the Cleansing of the Leper's House (Leviticus 14:33-57)

When Jewish people celebrate the Passover, they like to be inside *with the doors shut*. The idea behind the "door shutting" is that death always stalked the nation. When Jacob left Palestine to go to Egypt, he did so because famine knocked on his door. On the night of the Passover when the angel of death stalked the first born, the door was shut. Death was not welcome in the Hebrew home.

John Donee wrote these lines:

"No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe . . .no mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee." (MEDITATION XVII., Devotions upon Emergent Occasions by John Donne)

A funeral is always a sad occasion for someone. The 'Corpse Way' story gives one a good vision on how a corpse in 1827 was carried a distance of three miles or so to be buried in Wakefield. The undertaker walked in front of the procession like a solemn crow. His first act on arrival at the deceased's home was to go inside and invite the mourners to have a last look at the corpse before the coffin lid was nailed down. Each nail was driven in with an almost slow-motion action, very quietly. There was just a faint thud on each nail except for the last one. The last nail was driven in with such great force, the coffin shuddered with the vibration. It was then carried to the hearse and placed in a specially designed cradle. Wreaths and sprays of flowers were then laid on the coffin and surrounding it. As the mourners left for the cemetery, the bells in the church would ring out. After they entered the cemetery, the bells would stop. And, the bell would be struck again, each ring represented one year of the deceased's life.

What a solemn sound the church bells made. No one has felt the haunting sound of the tolling of the death bells like the Hebrews, and probably no one felt more like death was stalking him than a Jewish leper.

## **The Plague of Leprosy**

Leprosy is a horrible bacterial disease that destroys nerves and tissues. Because a leper can feel no pain, sores are unattended. Scabs form, but never really heal. The oozing invites more infection and weakness. It is not uncommon in India for a leper to wake up and find his toes were eaten in the middle of the night by rats. Lepers die a slow agonizing death, and he is constantly aware that death is stalking him. And, what leprosy is to mankind, sin is to God.

## **The Place of the Leper**

It is difficult to describe the miserable life of a leper. The place of the leper was "outside the camp" (14:3). He lived alone separated from God and His beautiful people. His dreary existence was lived in silence. Every conscious thought was haunted by his wretched condition. Every step and every movement of the hand was an instant reminder of his leprosy. Everything he touched was unclean. No man could help him. No doctor could cure him. No pill could alleviate the pain.

He could not help himself. He could not cure himself. He could not cleanse himself. He could not make his way to God. Everything had to be done for him.

## **The Priest and the Leper**

It is clear that the leper was a debtor to grace. The text says, "The priest shall go outside the camp." It does not say, "The leper shall go to the priest." There was no use talking to the leper about "Four Steps to God" because he could do nothing to improve his position or condition. He was defiled and helpless. He might desire cleansing and fellowship with God and to enter into the camp, but his desires were impotent.

However, God loves lepers and the Bible anticipated that many would be healed and restored.

*Before the healed leper could be pronounced "clean" a work had to be done for him.*

The priest left the camp to inspect his person. The priest offered a sacrifice. The priest sprinkled him with blood. The priest did it all. The leper did nothing. The Bible is not about what man must do to reach God, but about what God has done to reach mankind.

The Bible says, "That God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son . . . ." It does not say, "Man so loved God, that he built churches to worship him." The Bible is not about how wonderful man is or his potential or his great achievements. It does not announce the giving of Oscars to the most noble or brilliant among us. Rather, it announces our wretched condition.

Like lepers, sinners are separated from a holy God. Listen to the nightly news and we hear of murder, terrorism, rape, incest, theft, drunk drivers, homosexual perversion, and fraud. The newscasts are daily reminders that man is a moral leper in need of cleansing.

I am constantly amazed at how radio talk show hosts address people's problems as if it was all a matter of choice. "All you have to do is make the right choice," they say. Telling a sinner to choose not to sin is like telling a duck to stay of the water. Like the leper who can't cleanse himself, sinners cannot change themselves. Government can't help us. Universities and colleges and schools cannot help us. We cannot help ourselves. We need a priest, a Savior.

## **The Two Pigeons and the Leper**

**“Then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in the earthenware vessel over running water” (Leviticus 14:4, 5).**

### **The Pigeon Marked for Death.**

Like the leper who needed cleansing, the sinner needs cleansing. As the priest left the camp, the Lord Jesus left His Father’s side to go outside the camp to seek and save sinners. He did not come part way. He did not send an angel. He did not come in spirit. He was born of flesh and blood that he might be the pigeon whose neck was wrung and whose blood was captured in the clay pot. In the tough job of saving sinners, God sent His Son.

Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

1 John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

*The priest did not merely inspect the leper.* If mere inspection could qualify the healed leper to enter God’s camp, God would have done it. But more than an inspection of lepers was needed. Blood needed to be shed: “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrew 9:22). Likewise, inspecting a sinner and telling him about his faults or even his good points is not what a sinner needs. He needs a Savior.

The bird had to be killed in a clay pot over running water. We have here a type of Christ “who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14).

The bird was a type of God’s Heavenly Gift and the water was a type of the eternal Spirit that empowered the Savior to leave heaven and to fulfill His commission on earth--His death on the cross.

How terrible sin must be that God had to send His Son to die a cruel, painful death at Calvary. And, what a type of sin we have in leprosy. Who would imagine that that first red spot would have disqualified him from being in the camp and eventually would have covered his whole body?

### **The Living Pigeon**

**“And he shall dip the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over running water” (14:6).**

The priest gave orders to kill the one bird, and now the priest was ordered to dip the living bird in the bowl of blood and to set him free.

Here we have one of the most beautiful types of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The two birds are a single shadow of two aspects of our one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ-- His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave.

*First*, the living bird was not set free until the first bird was killed. Likewise, the Lord Jesus could not leave this earth until His blood was shed for our sins. Once His work on the cross was finished and death substantiated by His burial in the tomb, then He could rise from the grave.

*Second*, the bird could not be set free until his wings were dipped in blood. A thousand birds could be set free and not one of them would qualify the leper to enter God's camp. Only the living bird with blood on its wings could satisfy the claims of a holy God. We have here a beautiful picture of Christ ascending into the heavenly tabernacle. The blood on the wings of the dove is a symbol of His glorious achievements at the cross. It was at the cross the Savior faced all the forces of evil, all the infantry of Satan's vast armies, and all the filth of man's sins. The bird's flight into heaven is a symbol that our justification was complete and that Jesus was set free from His sacred trust.

Romans 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

It should be noted that three ingredients were placed into this bowl of blood: scarlet, cedar, and hyssop. The Bible speaks of cedar and hyssop.

1 Kings 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the *cedar tree* that is in Lebanon even unto the *hyssop that springeth out of the wall*: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

In the minds of the Hebrews, cedar was the largest living tree and hyssop was one of the smaller plants known to man. They represent two extremes of nature.

Cedar represents the glory of man, the pride of man, or the grand sins of man (Jeremiah 22:15). The Bible says that even our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Hyssop represents that which is tiny and small and sometimes hidden from the view of man. Big sins or little sins, all disqualify a man from entering heaven. All sins, small and large, must be cleansed by blood. The scarlet thread represents the brilliance of sins in the eyes of God; that is, sin is something that stands out in the eyes of God like the red vest of a highway flagman. You can't miss it.



Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:  
though *your sins be as scarlet*, they shall be as white as snow;  
though they be *red like crimson*, they shall be as wool.

We have here a beautiful picture of man being delivered not only from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but from the nature of sin; that is, from sin's power. When the Bible says that "He came to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), it means that Christ not only saves a man from the penalty of sin, but the power of sin. ***Both are contained in the accomplishments of Christ.***

The setting free of the living bird is a glorious picture of the risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ passing into the heavens to present to the Father the accomplishments of redemption. Here the Father smiled and said, "Well, done!" The angels burst into a song exulting in His glorious achievements. Our sin cleansed and righteousness bestowed, heaven's gates are open wide for thousands upon thousands of sinners.

### **A Picture of Resurrection**

The living bird is one of the OT resurrection shadows that finds its antitype in the first Easter morning. The living bird declares a fundamental truth that Christ is alive; that death is defeated. Since religion is about man's fundamental problem (death), the living bird announces the victorious triumph of Christ over the grave. He literally, physically rose from the grave. In this, religions are not the same. Only one has given forensic proof that death can be defeated.

Second, releasing the living bird with blood on its wings announces to us that the Father accepts the death of Christ on our behalf as our substitute; that all our sins, the good, bad, and ugly were taken to the cross and cleansed by the blood of Christ. It announces that not only were our sins imputed to Christ, but that righteousness is imputed to us.

The resurrection is the heart and soul of the gospel. Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a woman who committed a crime and sentenced to life in prison. She was terribly angry and swore she would not die in jail. After being in the penitentiary, she noticed that every time a prisoner died, the chapel bell would ring. In the prison, there was an old man who was responsible for burying the dead. He would place the body in the coffin, nail it shut, and take it outside of the prison, and bury in the graveyard. The woman noticed this procedure and over time persuaded the old man to help her escape via the coffin. They agreed that at the next ringing of the chapel bell, she would slip into the coffin next to the corpse, and after the coffin was buried, the old man would come back and dig her up. The night came, and sure enough the bell was tolled. She managed to slip into the chapel and crawl inside the coffin. Later, the coffin was nailed

shut, put on a wagon, and taken to the gravesite and buried. Inside the coffin filled with the stench of a decaying body, the woman waited, and waited, and waited. Way past the time, the old man was to come back and dig her out, she decided to light a match. When she did, she looked at the corpse---and, behold, it was the old man.

*For whom do the bells toll? It tolls for thee.*

The point of Swindoll's story is that if you want to escape the coffin of death, make sure you trust someone who is alive. All the great religious leaders of history have all died, but only One has escaped the grave. What the two birds typified has its historical corollary in death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

## Cleansing of the Leprous House

### Leviticus 14:33-57



The cleansing of the house tainted by leprosy contains many valuable lessons for the engaged Christian man that begs to be studied.

A brief summary is provided here.

The God of the Bible loves clean.

When Isaiah received his vision, the angels proclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy" is the LORD God Almighty. The holiness of God, not the love of God, was announced.

The instruction in Leviticus 14 is about the necessity of clean bodies, clean clothes, and clean houses. It anticipates a time when Israelites will enjoy the light of victory and inhabit Canaan. Canaan was not a perfect land. It also anticipated a day when Israelites would despair in the gloom of darkness because of a plague of leprosy (mildew) sent by God to humble his people—a plague -- a discipline ordered by God upon his disobedient children with a deeper purpose of showing them how to deal with their sins.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect (2 Timothy 3:16); and, Leviticus 14 is no exception.

Which of us has not felt despair due to our own sin? The sinning heart has no happiness. The conscience screams with pain because sin has pierced its peace. The mind rages with doubts about God's love; emotions turn dark and ugly;

like a wounded warrior in a Roman coliseum, the body is drained of strength. The sleep of death appears to be a friend.

But, God does not permit despair to rule his own. There is hope even for the most leprous heart. Before us is a home ravaged by a deadly mildew which the King James version labels “leprosy.”

The Lord used leprosy as an illustration to us on how contagious sin can be, and how the home infected by the deadly mold can be cleansed and free—a home where the sounds of joy and happiness can be heard again.

Let us read verse Leviticus 14:33-57. This section takes us to the ceremony of the sacrifice of the two turtle doves, a wonderful and beautiful type the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*We will look at the steps involved in cleansing a house of leprosy / mildew and how it applies to the Christian.* The lesson on cleansing a house of leprosy /mildew is a vivid illustration on how Christians need to clean up their lives which is so often infected by sin.

### **Step One**

*The owner had to recognize the mold of fungus growing in his home.*

*Leprosy whether it literally be a mold or fungus is a picture of sin that can infect our habits, our house, and those that live with us. Mold grows in the darkness, while sunshine is the best disinfectant. The problem in our lives is not primarily economic, but fundamentally spiritual—the spread of sin (leprosy) in our home. Sin is contagious. It contaminates the man and it impacts members of his household. Unless identified, marked, and removed, it can destroy entire families.*

*God loves clean. We need to be clean. Our house needs to be clean. When sin breaks out, we need to remove tainted stones lest sin increase and contaminate entire communities.*

*Though the Israelite was out of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, leprosy could still affect his life. Likewise, though a person has been redeemed by Christ, he can still sin. Sin can impact him and others; and if not guarded, can lead to his house being condemned.*

So the first step involved in a problem is to identify sin in one’s life or home.

### **Step Two**

*God required the owner to call a priest for help.*

The homeowner was not competent to address his mildew problem. He had to call a priest. He needed an objective, third party expert to inspect the house and determine the breadth and depth of the problem.

The lesson informs us about human nature. If the homeowner had been permitted to resolve his mildew problem, he more than likely would choose the quickest, cheapest, most superficial remedy possible. And, the plague would keep coming back and coming back and coming back.

Likewise with Christians! When Christians sin and there is a habit of sin in a family, they need the help of an objective, experienced, qualified pastor / priest. Like the Israelite homeowner, modern people will choose the quickest, cheapest, least burdensome way to deal with deep sins in their lives. "I am sorry," comes to mind.

When it comes to sin, sinners are not competent in identifying sin, defining the particulars, and proscribing a remedy. Further, Christians seem to know little about deep repentance, and the spiritual reconstruction needed to rebuild one's house after sin has been identified. "I'm sorry" will not do!!

During the Baltimore riots in 2015, Fox News asked Dr. Keth Ablow, psychologist, what he thought the problem was in the black community. He said the reason the black youths burned buildings and looted stores was because of a lacked self-esteem. Such wrong diagnoses are common among secular humanists.

*When sin breaks out in our lives, we need a priest.* The Lord Jesus is our priest (Hebrews 2:17; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1-4; 9:7, 11, 25), but our Lord often uses his ministers on earth to assist in this process. When sin impacts relationships, asking for the help of a qualified man of God is something many Christians have a hard time doing, but it is necessary when sin prevails in the home.

### **Step Three**

*God ordered the priest to inspect the house and mark off the infected areas.*

God ordered all the furnishing in the house to be removed so a thorough inspection could occur. Just as the priest had to identify the contamination, its depth and breath, sin within Christians must be identified, evaluated, and marked. A wrong diagnosis could be fatal and expensive. It is not sufficient to call sin a mistake or error. Areas of sins must be identified whether they be sins of the spirit, sins of the emotions, or sins of the body (Galatians 5:19-24). Specific sins and violations of the Ten Commandments should be marked. Once catalogued, they can be properly repented of and judged.

If the infected area is not marked and eliminated, the poisonous mildew could spread to the rest of the house.

By way of illustration, take a look at Judges 1:24-26. The Canaanites were under condemnation. Israelites were commanded to kill all of them because the society had degenerated to a point that rehabilitation was impossible. When they came to the city of Luz, they let an informant escape. Notice that they let the one man go. What does he do? He goes out and builds another city just like the old one. Thus, when they let one man go, he rebuilt an immoral, godless Canaanite city just like the one Israel destroyed. The lesson is clear: let one sin go, and it multiplies.

#### **Step Four**

*The house was quarantined for seven days.*

Once the mildew was identified and marked with chalk, the house was quarantined. After a week, the priest would return to see if the spores had spread. There was no need to dismantle the entire house, only the infected parts. In other words, the priest needed to know what kind of leprosy / blight was growing in the home in order to make sure that during the deconstruction stage, all infected stones could be removed.

Likewise, those involved in the care of souls need to know the complexities that active sin is causing in the heart, mind, and soul of people; how it is being transmitted and spread; and, how it affects others. Psychological analysis will not do!

#### **Step Five**

*The priest re-inspected the house to see if the mold / leprosy had spread.*

Likewise, the shepherd of souls must be vigilant to inspect those under his care in order to determine if sin is at work among the flock.

#### **Step Six**

*After the second inspection, the priest ordered the infected stones to be removed and the house scraped, scrubbed, and cleansed.*

We can only imagine the amount of intense labor, time, and money it took to wheelbarrow contaminated stones out of the city, and to scrape the debris out of the home. We are talking about long hours of tedious, backbreaking work.

The lesson for us is that deep sin must be repented of deeply. God not only calls the sinner to confess his sins, but to “forsake his way” (Isaiah 55:7). Just as the Israelite priest ordered the removal of every infected stone from the house, sinful habits must be removed stone by stone in the sanctification process lest its leaven take possession of the whole man and his house.

The deconstruction of the house educates us about true repentance, deep repentance, and thorough repentance.

By way of illustration: a woman person came into a pastor's office one day to tell him she wanted to get right with God. After an intense discussion, the woman confessed to having lived a very immoral life. Thirteen lovers were involved. The pastor called in his secretary as a witness and spent the rest of the day calling these lovers, confessing sin, and assisting her in breaking off relationships. She wrote letters to three or four that could not be contacted. The pastor's secretary stamped and mailed them. The next day, the pastor called in his secretary again to witness the woman spend two hours in prayer confessing all related sins. Afterward, the pastor spent time discussing God's Word, the cross, and forgiveness. Having removed the infected stones in her life, the pastor pronounced her clean. He then called an older sister in the Lord, and introduced her to the young woman. The two agreed to meet together for a period of time to work on her Christian walk.

This is repentance; this is dealing with sin deeply and thoroughly.

### **Step Seven**

The home owner had to repair the damaged areas, bring in new stones, and re-plaster the remodeled areas.

The lesson here is that not only must a sinner repent and forsake his sins, he must rebuild his house on different principles – principles based on the Word of God. God's thoughts must replace man's thoughts; new paths of obedience must replace the habits of sins.

### **Step Eight**

*After the house was repaired, the home remained under surveillance.* After a period of time, the priest returned to inspect the house.

If the mildew fungus / leprosy returned, the priest condemned the entire house, and ordered it to be deconstructed, and all the stones carried outside the city (Lev. 14:45). This was necessary to protect the rest of the city. It can be compared to the NT instruction on excommunicating believers who continue to practice leprous sins (1 Corinthians 5:1ff).

This ought to scare the *heave jeeves* out of every responsible Christian man. There is sin that leads to death (1 John 5:16).

If the leprosy / mold did not return, the LORD God instructed the priest to accept the renovation, and then perform the Ceremony of the Two Turtle

Doves—a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though practically cleansed, the cleansing was not complete without the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.

### Step Nine

*The priest performed the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.*

Two turtle doves were selected. One was killed, and its blood collected in a clay pot of water containing cedar wood, scarlet thread, and hyssop. The live bird was dipped in the water, and then released. He then sprinkled the house seven times. Afterward, he publically pronounced the house clean.

We have here a wonderful type of our Lord Jesus Christ who died for our sins. He was the bird that shed his blood to cleanse the believer of all sin (1 John 1:5-7); likewise, He is the bird with blood on his wing sent to the heavenly Father to intercede for sinners in His present, risen life.

The dove killed is a picture of Christ dying on the cross to save us from the penalty of sin; the dove set free with blood on his wing is a reminder of Christ's ascension into heaven and his intercession at the right hand of the father which saves us from the power of sin.

Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

We have here a lesson on justification and sanctification. When one first believes in Christ, he is pronounced clean. This cleansing is based on the substitutionary work of Christ. It is called justification by faith. The believer's conscience is cleansed from sin by virtue of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Leviticus 14:53; Hebrews 10:1-17). His death at Calvary secures the believer's standing before God.

But, after one becomes a believer, he then begins his struggle to overcome the power of sin.

How is a Christian delivered from the power of sin? How can he be clean if the power of sin overcomes him, and its leprous spores taint the stones of his house? The answer is in Leviticus 14:33-57; Romans 3:21-8:34.

In justification, the *ordu salutis* (order of salvation) is believe and be saved (judicially).

In sanctification, the *ordu liberatio* (order of freedom) is do and be delivered (practically).

The priest is a picture of the High Priestly ministry of Christ at work on behalf of the believer to deliver him from the Power of sin! We are not only saved

from the penalty of sin by the death of Christ, but we are saved from the power of sin by his intercession for us at the right hand of God.

The cedar is a picture of the big, black, ugly sins; the scarlet, a picture of outstanding sins; and, the hyssop is a picture of those small, irritating, defiling sins.

The water sprinkled on the house is a picture of the Word of God; and, the reflection of believer upon the work of Christ at the cross that relieves him from the penalty of sin, and reflection upon the intercessory work of Christ that cleanses him from the power of sin.

The Ceremony of the Turtle Doves occurs *after* the house has been cleansed and renovated and inspected. It was *not performed before* the house was renovated. Notice that the priest gives the order to cleanse the house practically and pragmatically before the religious ceremony of the two turtle doves. Why?

The *Ceremony of the Two Turtle Doves* was performed after the house was pronounced clean; that is, the home owner was *called to acknowledge the agent of cleansing and the power of cleaning*; that is, to know and understand that it was the blood of the turtle dove and not the homeowner's work that satisfied the claims of holiness. Selah.

*Cleansing is only possible because of the shed blood of Christ, the currency of the spirit world.*

It is blood that satisfies the claims of divine holiness as seen in the death of the turtle dove (Leviticus 14:49-51). His blood can take away the big, black ugly sins (cedar), the outstanding scarlet like sins (Is. 1:18) and the tinier, small sins (hyssop) that defile our house (Leviticus 14:51). A man is not saved by trying to remove all the sins in his life, salvation is possible because Christ died for all his sins; that Christ is both the sacrifice and the priest.

After one becomes a Christian he may discover leprosy / sin in his house. He will struggle with thoughts and habits of sin. As he grows, the believer learns that Christ has paid for the Penalty of sin at Calvary (justification), but that he still struggles with the Power of sin at work in his members (sanctification). The water informs us of the necessity of being renewed and cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word. Christ need not die again! But, the believer needs to pray to the risen Christ interceding for him with blood on his wing, and to be renewed and cleansed by reflecting on what Christ has and is doing for him.

## Step Ten



After the house has been cleansed, the stones removed, new stones positioned, and the house inspected, the house was pronounced clean (practically), and then pronounced clean (ritually) after the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.

Notice the work involved in cleansing the house: inspection, marking, removing stones, scraping the floors and walls, repairing the walls and plaster, more inspection, and a final summary judgment by ANOTHER!

So much for easy confessions and quickie pleas for forgiveness! Repentance is hard! Sin has to be identified, forsaken, and purged! Real repentance is a lot of work, and no forgiveness can be claimed until the specific outbreak of sin is identified, quarantined, eliminated and forsaken. Then, and only then, can one go to the cross and claim his blood and water rights.

But, once sin has been deeply repented of while relying upon the intercessory work of Christ, the believer can be pronounced clean; and, "it will be clean" (Leviticus 14:43).

*Finally, notice that the inspection of the house containing leprosy found its fulfillment in the ministry of Christ.*

Sin was in the House of Israel. Jesus inspected the House of God in John 2:14ff, and removed the contaminated stones. He sought to remove the infected stones and reconstruct the House of Israel through his ministry of teaching, healing, forgiving, casting out demons, and marking the infected areas of the nation. He returned 3 ½ year later to re-inspect the House of God. Leprosy had returned, and he ordered the House to be destroyed (Matthew 24:2). In 70 AD, the temple was destroyed by Titus. The old house of Israel was destroyed; and, a new house called the church is being built by the proclamation of the gospel.

## The Perfect Conscience

### Hebrews 10:1-19



**Q:** How can a sensitive believer who is conscience of his sins find relief from the squawking accusations about his transgressions bellowing within his conscience – transgressions that separate him from fellowship with the Father?

The answer is in Hebrew ten.

Hebrews ten is squeezed in between chapter nine and chapter eleven.

Chapter nine announces eternal redemption and remission of sins due to the shed blood of the Savior. This chapter is about how Christ satisfied the claims of perfect justice. Our debt to God was paid by the Son – by blood – the currency of the spirit world. If our debt has been paid to the satisfaction of Divine knowledge, then that payment of debt ought to discharge our concerns of any debt owed.

Chapter ten announces the perfect effect the blood has upon the believer's conscience. The blood effects our eternal redemption in heaven ought to have a perfect effect on our conscience. Thus, a perfect conscience is based on a perfect sacrifice.

Chapter eleven informs us of the importance of combining faith with the blood in order to enjoy eternal redemption.

**Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.**

A shadow is an incomplete reflection of a thing. In this case, the law is a shadow of Christ and His righteousness. Likewise, the O.T. sacrifices are a shadow-type of the offering of Christ at Calvary.

Like shadows cannot be heard, touched, tasted or smelled, the law and the sacrifices offered could not silence the blaring sirens coming from a guilty conscience. What these shadows could not satisfy, the Lord Jesus and his sacrifice for sin not only sprinkled the golden altar in the heavenly sanctuary to quiet the wrath of God, but touched the guilty conscience with sin-cleansing, stain-removing power.

The law and sacrifices were only a shadow of the cross that could not remove the dark stains of sin corrupting the heart; but, Christ and His work at the cross "perfects" the cleansing of the conscience. The precious blood of Christ scrubs a man clean from all the grub and grime caused eating fruit at the Poisonous Tree.

The word "conscience" means "with knowledge."

It is that part of the soul which senses danger. The conscience acts like a fire alarm notifying the man that he is in eternal jeopardy. When a man sins the buzzer goes off and sometimes stays on keeping the sensitive soul awake. The shadows have no power to silence the alarm, but the doing and dying of Christ can bring rest to the soul. One only needs to investigate Calvary and claim its benefits by faith.

The word “perfect” describes the purifying effect of the blood upon on the conscience when perceived by faith – His blood cleanses us from ALL sin (1 John 1:7).

## **2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.**

Annual ceremonies were a testimony to the imperfections of the O.T. sacrifices. If the temple sacrifices could remove sin from the worshippers’ consciences, they would not have been offered year after year. Because Hebrews had no sense of real pardon, they continually offered up these sacrifices to the LORD.

## **3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.**

Instead of relieving the roaring of a guilty conscience, these sacrifices only caused the priests and the people to experience hyperthymesia<sup>4</sup> – the ability to remember sins with unflinching accuracy.

## **4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**

Not only were the sacrifices ineffective at cleansing the conscience, it was impossible for these Levitical offering to purify the sinner. At best, the sacrifices shadowed the reality of the cross.

## **5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:**

Wherefore – on account of the powerlessness of these offerings . . .

“Sacrifice and offerings” represent two divisions of offerings.

The verb “wouldest not” refers to the will and pleasures of the LORD God. The Father took no joy in those sacrifices except for the fact the bull and lamb offerings reflected in shadow form the willingness of Christ to do the will of God in His body – the instrument for doing the Father’s will.

Compare with Psalm 40:6-8 and Hebrews 9:25-28; 10:7.

## **6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.**

In looking at the two offerings, (1) OT burnt offerings and (2) the living, obedient Christ, there is no comparison – the obedience of the Son unto death brought satisfied the judicial claims of a holy God.

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<sup>4</sup> Hyper = extreme longing or desire; and, entymesis means “to ponder, consider, take to heart, or to weigh on one’s mind.”

**7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.**

The “I” is direct reference to the Messiah-Son. Every promise, prophecy, and command of law was fulfilled in Christ to the delight of the Father.

**8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.**

The purpose of OT sacrifices was never intended as permanent ceremonies. They were merely a shadow of the Son – a paving of the way for the Savior – an announcement of the Lamb’s work at the cross. These shadows, to the shock of the Jews were removed, so men could study and grasp the efficacy of His blood shed at Calvary.

**10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

The word “sanctified” (hagiozo” means “holy.” It is a perfect indicative announcing that His substitutionary, propitiatory work redeemed believers from sin and made them “holy” in His sight.

Want to be “holy” in God’ sight? Embrace the Son by faith and claim the marvelous, day-to-day benefits of His sacrifice for your sins – a perfect offering that cleanses every stain and silences every alarm when grasped by faith.

**11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:**

Priests never sat down in the temple. They stood -- a statement that redemption required continuous effort to satisfy the claims of Divine law and the claims of the conscience educated by His law.

The contrast between the Old Testament Levitical sacrifices and the one-time offering of Christ continues. The Spirit wants us to know it is an undisputable fact those animal sacrifices could never take away sins . . . but the sacrifice of our Lord takes away all sins, big and small, near or far, forever.

**12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;**

How do we know this? What is the proof? Fantastic claims demand proof with strict proof of claim.

Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God in history (Acts 1) is proof of claim that God accepted Christ's redemptive work at Calvary to satisfy man's debt.

### **13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.**

Not only did Christ defeat the main enemies of man, Satan, sin, and death at Calvary, His resurrection is proof that all enemies of righteousness will be put under His feet.

### **14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**

"For" introduces the main truth of this chapter. His redemption not only satisfies the claims of perfect justice, they also perfect the conscience.

"one offerings" is set in contrast to the "oftentimes" offerings in verse 11.

The Savior died for the sins of all men born and to be born; past sins and future sins. His work at Calvary perfects all who come to Him for salvation. He cleanses all men: big sinners and small sinners. His blood washes away sins of men and sins of women; ugly sins and comely sins; mammoth sins and peccadillos; scarlet sins and grey ones.

The verb "perfected" is in the perfect tense indicating a past action with present results. Perfection (justification) is a fact to be enjoyed. The verb "sanctified" is a present tense indicating that practical holiness (sanctification) is still in the process of being accomplished in our lives.

### **15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;**

Christ not only cleanses sinners; he perfects believers by empowering them to do good and to serve Him with a clear conscience.

This blessing is not for all men, but it is available to those under the new covenant.

When a man believes he is saved from the penalty of sin and the power of sin.

He is not saved "from law" but from the penalty of breaking the law -- not saved from law but to law -- not saved by law, but saved in order to keep the law.

Saying, "I will put my laws into their hearts . . . and minds" is the writer's way of discussing the effects of the new birth. His position is one as "justified; but his condition is one of being born again with holy desires. When the Spirit

regenerated the man, he not only receives power to keep the law, he receives a desire to keep the law; that is, though the believer may fail many times, he wants to do what is right and will constantly make decisions to live consistent with the will of God.

“Putting law into their hearts” means the law of God is engraved into the man so that doing righteousness becomes part of his character.

### **17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

So perfect is Christ’s work at cross, it removes our sins from the mind of God.

I can remember my sins, but God can’t; and, since God forgets my sins, I must leave the corpse buried.

In offering the OT sacrifices there is a remembrances of sins every year. When God looks at the blood of Christ, there is non-remembrance of our sins.

### **18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.**

The word “remission” refers to being released from the debt of sin. Since the debt has been discharged, there are no more payments to make. If I sin, Christ need not come again and die again.

### **19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus**

“therefore,” touches the application of eternal redemption.

This kindness is **not** a license to sin more, but a solemn reminder that though we are not debtors to justice, we are debtors to grace.

Out of debt, we have boldness to accept the invitation to come into His presence . . . a boldness not based on pride, but one based on assurance “His blood cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9).

There are only two religions in the world; the religion of Cain and the religion of Abel; the religion of beans, broccoli, and beats; and, the religion of blood. Christianity is a very bloody religion. Hebrews announces the cleansing power of blood that satisfies the Divine claims of holiness and that perfects the conscience.

Salvation is meant to be enjoyed. Moaning and groaning over personal failures is not what pleases the Lord. Let us enjoy the cleansing power of the blood by faith.

# The Mystery of Change



## Man's Problem

Ecclesiastes 9:3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

**Q: How do you change a sinner?**

**Negative Answer: He is not changed by making better choices.**

As soon as we enter school our teachers challenge us to change the world.

Soon after college we learn that not only can we not change the world, we can't change our spouse, children, friends or church. We can't even change ourselves.

Today, there are thousands of books telling us how to change. There are even 12 step programs on how to change.

Politicians tell us to change the world we must get out and vote.

Candidates promise change if we give them money.

Professors hold out change to "A" students.

Behavioral scientist promise change if we develop a better understanding of internal obstacles; by "allowing yourself to change" by practicing "positive affirmation;" by eating right and getting enough sleep."

Psychologists tell us to think positive; to put positive words in our mouth. "If you can think it, you can do it," they say. Cultural warriors tell women you can do anything that men can do; that 110 pound woman can out fight, out box, and out jujutsu five 200 pound body builders; that if they think like men, act like men, they can outperform them. All of this is a lie.

In Christian circles, Armenian, behavior scientists abound. Look inside and make better choices. Pray, speak in tongues, receive the Holy Spirit and jibber-jabber, lay hands on people, "let go and let God," and you can be a change agent. You can be anything you want to be.

All of this is sheer nonsense.

Anyone offering programs for change are pathological liars, con artists, and money-huggers.

See "How to Change" by Katy Milkman (Amazon).

For the Christian, *there is only one way to be better, to be holy, and to be sanctified.*

*The Following Text Tells Us How We Change*

**2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

We are not changed by making better choices.

We are not changed by looking inside to shuffle through all the junk created by our conflicted emotions.

We are not changed by going to a screwed-up Christian counselor trained in eastern mysticism asking us “how do you feel about . . . “

We are not changed by spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting, and ritual mortification.

We are not changed by hanging around good people though this is always a good idea.

We are not changed by building better habits though those that change do develop good new habits.

**We are changed are changed by “beholding the glory of the Lord;” that is, by looking at One greater than ourselves; by reading the Scripture to behold the character of Christ; the beauty of Christ; the holiness and devotion of Christ.**

**See Him; perceive Him; know Him; study Him; and touch Him by faith . . . and the Spirit of the Lord will do the changing.**

This change is not active or a matter of the human will. A passive change that occurs when we escape the gravitational pull of self and orbit around the Savior.

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Know that you cannot change the world any more than you can change tiger stripes. The world can change you for the worse, but you cannot change the world for the better. Holiness is not infectious; but, sin is like a tar baby that contaminates all who touch it.

If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?” And the priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” – Haggai 2:12.



# Stages of Growth in the Christian Life

## Matthew 5



The Christian life is not one of trying to be saved, but of being saved and then growing into Christ likeness.

When a man seeks Christ as his life, where will he be? If you truly adore Christ, where will you end up? What is the final stage of development?

The Christian life is not static. It is progressive. If you love Him, the Father will not permit you to wander through life. He has a direction for your life: "He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25)

Matthew 5:1-13 introduces us to Beatitudes which present, I believe, stages of growth in the Christian life. They are as follows:

**Poor in Spirit:** Most men are rich in spirit. They have high self-esteem and do not feel the need for Christ. The day that one realizes he is poor in spirit, bankrupt in righteousness, and separated from Christ is the beginning of a blessing. Men must see they are sinners and cut off from God before they can even appropriate the blessings of the gospel.

**Mourning:** The world teaches "blessed are the happy" and "blessed are the party goers." But, Jesus saw a blessing in mourning. Mourning is that spiritual state where one is sad, grieved, and stricken in spirit because of his wretched condition. It is a blessing to grieve over one's spiritual poverty for it is evidence of the deep convicting work of the Spirit in the heart of the man.

**Meekness:** Man teaches, "Blessed are the strong and assertive." But, Jesus taught blessed are the meek. In Roman days, a soothing ointment was called

“meek.” Sailors used the term to describe a gentle breeze. A broken and trained horse was called “meek.” It is related to humility.

Meekness is not weakness. It is the condition of mind which does not resist the convicting work of the Spirit; that is, it is the attitude that accepts the Spirit's accusations regarding our sinfulness. The day a man says, “God you are right,” and “I am wrong,” is a day of blessing—progress in one's spiritual development. Admitting one is a sinner is something the high minded cannot and will not do.

**Hunger for righteousness:** The world lusts for pleasures, for fame, and for power. The number one concern in America is the economy. Men love to talk about how to make more money. There is “Money Magazine” and daily talk shows on money. But, Jesus said it was a blessing when a man hungers for righteousness; that is, a desire to be right with God. The desire of the soul to have a right relationship with Him results in justification of the sinner. Hunger for righteousness is the beginning of justification and regeneration, the day of salvation. What a blessing!

The next blessings are evidence that one has become a Christian.

**Merciful:** The world loves stories about retribution on enemies and the ability of men to inflict justice on their adversaries. The theme of many movies is about sweet revenge. But, after a man tastes the grace of God and his forgiveness. His soul is afire with thankfulness and gratitude. The saved soul cannot help but show kindness to others because he is the recipient of God's love and forgiveness. There is a stage in Christian progress wherein the believer is transformed from a bitter being into a kind and tender lover of souls.

**Purification:** The man of the world wants to experience everything. He wants it all. The man of God restricts his pleasures. This stage is very difficult. It is the stage in Christian development wherein the believer feels like he is in the furnace of affliction, on the anvil being pounded out into something he is not sure he wants to become. This is the stage of the hard trials of life that refine the soul, unshackle the believer from habits of sin, and progressively work into the heart of the believer the very character of Christ. He has learned to trust Christ, but now he is being made trustworthy. This is the cleansing stage; the flowering of holiness. But, he must not resist the heat. He must learn to profit from his afflictions.

**Peacemakers:** Modern man is at war with God's Law and with each other. The world, the church, and the family are crawling with angry, divided people. God's answer to hostilities is to offer men terms of peace based on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the gospel men can find peace with God. He does this through peacemakers.

His peacemakers are gospel-men—men who have grown in Christ-like character and been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, He sends his trained into the arena of conflict to offer peace to warring souls. The peace offered is between God and men through the gospel and sometimes these peacemakers can bring peace warring men.

**Persecuted:** Men believe there is blessing when everyone admires and honors them. Jesus taught the opposite. Blessed are those who are the target of hostility. The word "persecuted" means "to make run." This is a stage of life where the mature believer experiences opposition to His ministry. He is opposed, **not because he preaches the gospel**, but because he seeks to apply the ethical principles of the law to rotting segments of society.

The blessing is not "persecution" but the maturity of soul that expresses faith and courage amid conflict. It is the ability to stand when others are calling for retreat. It is the ability to "fight" when your feelings are shouting for "flight." Though not specifically stated, the persecutors are often government agents. All the apostles died at the hands of the State officials.

**Slandered:** The world believes that fame and honor among men is an award to be achieved. No one likes to be ill spoken of especially when the accusations are false. Men are students of "How to Win Friends and Influence People." Schools for prophets don't exist. Slander is the well-worn tool of politicians. Slander is effective in shaping public opinion. It need not be true . . . but if repeated enough negative images of opponents are etched on the soul. The gullible public will believe just about anything which the media spits out. However, Jesus informed His disciples that there is a special blessing when men/officials/officers defame your name. This is the ultimate stage of maturity.

It is the character of soul that is secure, persistent, and confident in the face of hostilities. The blessing is not in being insulted, but the confident spirit that endures contumely.

Passing this course enables a man to stand with joy for a righteous cause while he is being slandered and maligned and misunderstood. Not an easy place to be!! If you mature in Bible knowledge, you will be standing confidently amid God's enemies for righteous causes while being maligned by men—disapprove by men but approved by God.

- The first stage is poor in spirit; the final stage is to be rich in spirit.
- In the first stage one is useless to God; in the final stage one is being used by Christ.
- In the first stage one is insecure in faith; in the final stage one is secure in his faith.
- The first stage begins with sadness of heart; the final stage produces joy in the heart.
- The first stage is one where a person is shaken, but the final stage the believer is unshaken.

The first stage is a revelation about one's deficiencies of character; the final stage is about the flowering of Christ-like character in the midst of conflict.

In the first stage a man is a boneless, but in the final stage he is a brawny soldier for Christ. God is not seeking to create sugar and spice and everything nice, but salty men who sting and cleanse the sores of a decadent society.

What is the final stage for the cross-carrying Christian? If you have taken up the cross, God will work into your heart deep convictions about truth and righteousness. As you seek to apply the Word of Truth to a corrupt society and broken relationships, you will experience fierce opposition. It is not encouraging to be opposed, but it is a blessing to have convictions in the faith, to be courageous in the faith, and to be constant in the application of the faith when surrounded by adversaries. When you mature and have the privilege of standing on the frontlines where Satan is attacking the truth, you are blessed. You will be in good company. Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, and Paul went from being poor in spirit to being rich in spirit. All faced imprisonment. All were targets of hostile, tyrannical states. All lost the favor of men because they were seeking the praise of God.

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