

# Doctrine of Sanctification

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Date: 02 March 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] We've covered many important topics in our nearly two year study of salvation in God's way.

! Two that stand out for me was our detailed look of justification by faith alone. embark on tonight. Those are the two. And tonight we're going to be talking about, and for the next few weeks, a detailed look at the doctrine of sanctification. This is not a simple study. I was surprised there's not that much written about sanctification as far as published books, and a lot of them are by the old Puritans who are quite a challenge to read. But the doctrine of sanctification is vitally important to us. There is something exquisitely beautiful, both in Old and New Testaments. The word in Hebrew, and that's of course the language of the Old Testament, for sanctify and make holy is the same word in Hebrew. In the Greek language, the language of the New Testament, the word for sanctify and make holy is the same Greek word. So we can see from this fact how closely related these terms are to sanctify or make holy. They're joined at the hip. And we're going to be visiting on that fact further, but in a future lesson. I won't probably mention it again tonight.

During our study of the various truths of the order of salvation, we spent a great many weeks on the great doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. And just as a reminder, justification is a legal declaration whereby God, the judge of the universe, treats us as righteous by imputing to us the righteousness of his Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is actually a double imputation, not amputation, double imputation, because imputed to Christ at the same time are all of our sins. All of them, past, present, and future. And I've had got to say, hey, I can buy into past, I can buy into present, I can't buy into future. When Christ was on the cross, all our sins were future. Every one of them. Every one of them. But this imputation occurred at the cross for all the elect of God. And because it is a legal declaration, it is referred to often by theologians both today and in another era as forensic justification. That merely means it will stand up in court. It's a legal declaration. The process from regeneration to faith and repentance and then to union with Christ and then justification and then adoption, which we finished last time, occurs very rapidly. This is not a long run out. This is mere seconds. We don't know that it's happening. We don't realize it at the time. It took me 40 years really to come to grips with some of this. But we do know this. Whatever happened, we are the beneficiaries of it. And not only now, but eternity. Now, I thought long and hard, how in the world am I going to begin such a study as sanctification? I settled on a way that I hope is helpful. It may not be, but I hope it is.

When we examined the doctrine of justification, I pointed out that it was a one-time event whereby God issues a legal declaration that a sinner now saved is imbued with the righteousness of Christ and being a one-time event, it need not be repeated, nor can it. It can't be repeated. And if somebody wants to know, I know you can lose your, I just believe you can lose your salvation, then you got to figure out a way to get justified again. And that only occurs one time. One time.

[ 5 : 20 ] For our purposes here tonight, I want us to think of justification as a gate. This is consistent with Scripture. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7.

This is the Lord Jesus talking. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction.

And those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

Now, a gate is a type of door. I've got gates up at my farm, many of them. A gate is a type of door. And that is also an important biblical concept.

Listen to how Jesus describes Himself in John's Gospel, chapter 10. He says, I am the door. Calls Himself a door.

[ 6 : 36 ] If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. And he's getting ready to teach a lesson here on the shepherd and the flock so they understood this concept of find pasture.

And many of them are probably shepherds in that audience. I believe the narrow gate and the door describe justification by faith.

I believe that. Compared to all of humanity, only a few enter this way. I mean, let's face it, we've had over 50 billion people live.

Only a few enter the narrow way and the narrow gate. Most people prefer the ease of the broad gate and the broad way which the Scriptures talk about.

But that leads to eternal destruction. We've got to come in through the narrow gate. I read a deal one time that said in the language of the New Testament, the Greek language, that gate is really small to go through it.

[ 7 : 56 ] You've got to get on your knees and crawl through. And also, you can't have any baggage. You can't be bringing anything with you.

and you can't bring anyone with you. You can't drag your wife through there. You can't drag your children or your grandchildren. You go alone. Everyone goes alone.

Pretty graphic description. So we who have entered through the narrow gate are justified and declared righteous by the Father.

When we pass through the narrow gate, and by the way, that is by the way of the cross, it's the only way, cross of Christ, we find ourselves on a narrow road.

We need to go up to my farm. I've got deer trails. We can get on those roads and little trails. And there are other people on the narrow road, but given the magnitude of all humans who ever lived, as I said earlier, there are but a few.

[ 9 : 06 ] Does this narrow road have a name? Well, I think it does, or at least I named it. I believe it's called the narrow road of sanctification. sanctification.

I thought about sanctification boulevard, sanctification lane, I'm going to call it the narrow road of sanctification. And that's where we're going to be for the next few weeks. Now, we have been examining the great theme of soteriology, that's the study of salvation.

We've been in this study since September of 2018. Been about a year and a half, a little over. In this study, we have considered the great and wonderful benefits purchased by the work of Christ at the moment we are born again, or better, still born from above, a spiritual birth that comes down and settles on those chosen by the Lord.

At regeneration, the sinner is awakened. At regeneration, the sinner is made alive.

Just mere seconds earlier, he was dead in trespasses and sins. He was bound for hell. And God stepped in.

[ 10 : 30 ] It's amazing. At regeneration, we are granted the gift of repentance and faith. At regeneration, we are united to Christ.

At regeneration, we are declared justified and imbued with the righteousness of Christ. At regeneration, we are adopted by the Father into His family.

Staggering thought. As sons, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus. And this is all part and parcel of the redemption process.

And thankfully, it doesn't end there. It doesn't end there. In the next phase of our Christian life, we have the application of redemption.

redemption. All that other was redemption. Now, we're going to apply it. It's better known as redemption applied to the life of the new believer.

[ 11 : 37 ] This application is known as sanctification. Now, please note this because you're going to hear it several times. The process of sanctification works in us throughout the rest of our life beginning at salvation.

Once truly saved, we are on the narrow road of sanctification. We never leave that road until death or rapture.

The rapture of the church. As you well know being in here, there were men who held to perfectionism. No, you can be perfect in this life.

I've actually sat down with a few guys and they've told me that and by the time I was sued they were so mad at me they thought they'd lost their salvation and need to repent all over again.

Wesley believed it.

John Wesley, not Charles. I don't know about Charles. Wesley believed it but on his deathbed he said, I didn't attain it. I couldn't attain it. And even now there's many.

[12:48] Charles Finney comes to mind. I'm not sure he was a believer but he believed in perfectionism. All genuine believers are separated unto Christ regardless of who or where they are.

Now the Apostle Paul comments on this in the first letter to the church at Corinth. in chapter 1 verse 2 to the church of God that is in Corinth to those sanctified there's that word to those sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ both their Lord and ours.

ours. Now do not be surprised when the scriptures speak of sanctification in the past tense. Many times in the Bible we're going to see the word sanctified ending in E.D. It is an ongoing process and we will not arrive in this life but in God's mind it has already occurred.

It has already happened. The process of sanctification and I'm going to define that before the night's over is intended to make the believer increasingly holy progressively transforming him into the image of Christ.

[14:29] That's what's happening to us in here tonight. Slowly maybe an atom or a molecule at a time were being recreated into the image of Christ.

Very very important. Paul commented on this great truth both in Romans and in 2nd Corinthians in Romans 8 29 very familiar verse for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the first born among many brothers.

There's the explanation for the church. Why is there a church? Why are people being called out from the world and granted eternal life? Because God the Father is going to have people worshiping his son for eternity in heaven.

That's what we're going to be doing. And that's why Sunday morning worship and Sunday night and Wednesday but really Sunday morning that's a small taste of heaven. We do there what we're going to be doing in eternity for eternity.

Worshipping the Lamb of God. Read Revelation. Read the prayers in chapter 4 chapter 5 chapter 6 in 2nd Corinthians 318 and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another for this comes from the Lord who is in who is the Spirit.

[16:12] Christ there referred to as the Spirit of Christ. How is the believer progressively transformed into the image of Christ?

Christ. Well, by the indwelling Spirit of God. And you can say Spirit of Christ, Spirit of God, same Spirit. Subduing the power and presence of sin in the believer's life, enabling him to bear the fruit of obedience.

Now, let me tell you, that presence is going to stick around with us. We live in fallen flesh, unredeemed flesh. We battle the sin nature, but we're not what we used to be.

We may not be what we're going to be, but we're not what we used to be. And this fits perfectly with the definition of sanctification offered by Dr.

Burkhoff in his classic work on systematic theology. I would loan it to you all, but I'm stealing from him and others. This is Dr.

[17:24] Burkhoff. Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which he delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.

sanctification. That's Dr. Burkhoff's definition of sanctification. That's a good one. And the scriptures not only use the past tense of sanctified, but they also use the present and future tenses as well of being sanctified or will be sanctified.

Here's a comment from the inspired writer of the book of Hebrews, for by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. So you can see how this all fits throughout the scriptures.

Now the Puritans were keen on explaining the sanctification process correctly. That was really something they wanted to do for their flocks.

They all taught that sanctification began at regeneration. They spoke of the present tense aspect of sanctification as progressive sanctification.

[18:48] They spoke of the past tense aspect referred to as initial or positional or definitive sanctification.

That was big in the reformer's life. And the regeneration process is not only the impartation of spiritual life, but it was also a definitive cleansing from sin which began there. it begins there and it goes on. And of course we know from reading the New Testament that there will be many cleansings in our life as we apply 1 John 1.9.

Well, if you don't know that scripture, you got to memorize it. That's on the final exam anyway. 1 John 1 line. Live by this in your Christian walk.

If we confess our sins, that word confess is homo geo. It means name it. Tell God what you've done. He knows anyway. If we confess our sins, he, the Lord, the triune God, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[ 20 : 08 ] He will forgive the sin you're confessing. What about the sins you've committed? You don't even remember committing them. Cleanses you of all unrighteousness. We should go to 1 John 1 9 every day.

End your night. And if you have no consciousness of sin, say, Lord, whatever I've done today that was sin, you know what it is? I confess it. 1 John 1 9.

I've told you before, Robbie Zachariah gets up and reads that verse every morning at 7 o'clock on his knees and then spends an hour on his knees. Listen to the words of John as the Lord Jesus speaks of the new birth as being born of water and the spirit.

Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Well, it's pretty important to know what the water and the spirit are. Unless we're reborn by them, we can't enter into the kingdom of God. And there has been a lengthy and ongoing debate among theologians as to what the reference to water means here.

[ 21 : 19 ] But it seems to parallel with the words of Ezekiel in chapter 36 of that great Old Testament book. the Lord speaks, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

That sounds right out of the teachings of Jesus or the writings of Paul. It's amazing. This great passage from the Old Testament also mirrors the very familiar words of Paul in the book of Titus. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared he saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but I'm glad for that but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

That's Titus 3 verses 4 to 5 and I love that it's not by works it's according to his own mercy. I told a good friend of mine that's in the Armenian cap believe you can lose your salvation 12 times a day yada yada yada let me tell you the way you lose the only way you can lose your salvation Christ has to wake up someone say today I'm going to be unmerciful and two reasons that's not going to happen he's never going to be unmerciful and two he doesn't wake up he never sleeps or slumbers he's always awake.

Now we should not confuse these references to water with water baptism that is not in view here some denominations are very confused on that issue claiming that one is saved in the baptistry you're saved when you go into the water I told a friend of mine that held it I said if you're not saved you go into the water you're not going to be saved when you come out it's just city water polluted you know I grew up in a denomination that believed that and there are some in this town I visited those churches you know when I was police chief because of an event or whatever they try to drag people down to the baptistry right then the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification is both multifaceted and mysterious we do know that the spirit imparts spiritual life into the soul of a sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins and what does dead mean dead or death means the inability to do anything you can't do anything you can't breathe you can't talk you can't think you're dead you're just dead and I've heard people say you know that well death is like you know you're asleep and there is that reference but you know it's like if you put a band-aid on you'll be okay no you're dead you're dead we do know that the spirit opens dead eyes we do know that the spirit of god can open dead ears to this spiritually dead person exposing him to both the dreadfulness of his sins and the beauty and glory of christ jesus that happens when you are born from above you may not fully appreciate it you may not fully understand it but it will come in due time it will come in due time in second corinthians chapter 4 i read this in their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers

that's satan of course to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of christ who is the image of god the writer of hebrew said he's the exact representation of god on earth but he is the exact image of god for what we proclaim is not ourselves but jesus christ as lord with ourselves as your servants for jesus sake for god who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of god in the face of jesus christ now as we see from this passage in paul's second letter to the church at corinth the light that shines in our hearts revealing the glory of god and the very face of jesus christ originates from god himself in triunity all three persons of the godhead are involved in every aspect of our salvation including sanctification they didn't cut us loose after justification said well now you're on your own get yourself sanctified no it's a continuing work of god and we'll say this later lessons but he is the ultimate author of our sanctification the beauty of sanctification as compared to those other things in the salvation process we get to participate in this one we didn't participate in the others i mean you

[ 27 : 13 ] didn't help yourself get born again any more than you help your parents get you born the first time i don't even remember that thank goodness um i don't remember it um i always remember the little boy talking to the little boy he said has your dad told you about life and he said yeah yeah he said yeah mine too what did you do he said you mean after i threw up that's what he said at the advent you can take that out uh dan at the advent of our salvation there is transformation from spiritual death to spiritual life so much so that we are called a new creation wow roll that word around tonight when you lay down and you're looking at a dark ceiling and you can't sleep and your wife says what's wrong with you well tom said new creation i can't get it out of my head second corinthians chapter five therefore if anyone is in christ he is a new creation the old has passed away behold the new has come all this is from god who through christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation now there is a sense in which the believers progressive sanctification begins at regeneration probably the most graphic expression of this fact is found in the corinthian church we're going to be hanging out in the first and second corinthians you know there was actually four corinthians two didn't make it in to the inspired scriptures for whatever reason god they've never been found but there's actually four corinthians paul talks about now i want to be really kind today okay i want to be careful and i want to be kind the church at corinth was a mess they were messed up wow so that begs a question how can paul and especially the spirit of god who is whispering in paul's ears to write these words down how can he refer to them as that sanctified church and that's what he does with all of their mess they had to contend with and it was oh one guy with his mother-in-law you get the meaning right they had to give him the right buddha fellowship and get him out of there i mean they were a mess they were suing each other in secular court going to find going before an unbelieving judge it was a mess so how can paul in the spirit of god refer to them as a sanctified church that is a great place for us to begin next time

Thank you.