

*Essentials of Christianity (pt 25)*  
*8/29/2010*

*Introduction* \_\_\_\_\_

Good morning to everyone! Today we are going to continue our journey through the essentials of the Christian faith.

This study has actually turned into a slightly in depth overview of the essentials. When we began this, I really didn't know how long it would take.

But as I started digging more into the material, I began to realize that this is not a subject that you can blaze through very quickly.

Believe it or not, our coverage of this has been very much abridged in comparison to how deep a person can go when looking into any one of the topics we've covered.

*Soteriology: Doctrine of Salvation*

We are currently looking at the subject known as **Soteriology: Doctrine of salvation**. Last week we looked at **regeneration**.

Then we began looking at **one** of the **two** components of **righteousness: JUSTIFICATION**. Justification and sanctification are two facets of righteousness.

As I said last week: mankind cannot escape the need to be righteous in order to please God.

*<sup>NAU</sup> Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor...*

Consequently, something has to be done in order to give man the righteousness he needs to be accepted by God.

Justification and sanctification are the processes that make us pleasing in God's sight. They make us **righteous** in two ways.

For the most part we have covered the subject of **justification**. I just need to recap some things and tie up some loose ends. Largely what we'll be discussing today about justification will be how it compares to **sanctification**.

A recap on what Justification is.

Justification refers to a legal declaration by God that our sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven through Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed (credited) to us. It is a once-for-all decision to declare (not make) us righteous in his sight so that there remains no longer any legal recourse or accusation against us. This is the meaning Paul intends when he asks in Romans 8:33-34: "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies."

Since justification involves forgiveness of sin and dealing with actual condemnation, it ultimately settles the question of our guilt; we are no longer in a state of guilt. The doctrine of justification does not deal directly with practice, but standing before God's holy law. Our standing has been forever changed and we are no longer guilty; the law no longer has recourse against us.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bible.org

The last thing we need to cover about justification is the “**method of justification,**” how it is that a person *becomes* justified.

On the surface this may sound overly simplistic; a no-brainer, a big DUH! But when we consider that this is the pillar which holds up the Christian view of salvation, versus all non-Christian views of salvation; then thank God *it is* so simplistic.

This is one of those things that separates the Christian from JW’s, Mormons, Muslims, Roman Catholic’s, 7th Day Adventists and the like.

We saw this in passing last week, but made no specific mention of it.

### **Let’s turn to Romans 5:1: read**

*NAU Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

#### **Method of Justification.**

Faith in Christ is the only thing that is required for being justified.

### **Turn to Romans 3:21-26: read**

*NAU Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

<sup>22</sup> *even the **righteousness of God** through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

<sup>24</sup> *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*

<sup>25</sup> *whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*

<sup>26</sup> *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

God justifies us through our faith in Christ. Scripture never says that we are justified because of the inherent goodness of our faith, as if our faith has merit before God. It never allows us to think that our faith in itself earns favor with God. Rather, Scripture says that we are justified "by means of" our faith, understanding faith to be the instrument through which justification is given to us, but not at all an activity that earns us merit or favor with God. Rather, we are justified solely because of the merits of Christ's work (Rom 5:17-19).

But we may ask why God chose faith to be the attitude of heart by which we would obtain justification. Why could God not have decided to give justification to all those who sincerely show love? Or who show joy? Or contentment? Or humility? Or wisdom? Why did God choose faith as the means by which we receive justification?

It is apparently because faith is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say, "I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God."

In this way, faith is the exact opposite of trusting in ourselves, and therefore it is the attitude that perfectly fits salvation that depends not at all on our own merit but entirely on God's free gift of grace.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>NAU</sup> Acts 15:11 *"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."*

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Ware

## *Sanctification*

Let's talk about **Sanctification. Turn to Romans 8.** Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.

It's part of what God ordained for us before time began.

*<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*

Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.

Sanctification has a definite beginning at regeneration. A definite moral change occurs in our lives at the point of regeneration. Once we have been born again we cannot continue to sin as a habit or a pattern of life (1 John 3:9), because the power of new spiritual life within us keeps us from yielding to a life of sin. This initial moral change is the first stage in sanctification. In this sense, there is some overlap between regeneration and sanctification, for this moral change is actually a part of regeneration.<sup>4</sup>

The scriptures reveal to us that there are two aspects of sanctification, but both have the same fundamental notion that sanctification is the setting apart of a person to righteousness. In justification we are declared righteous before God, but in sanctification we are *made righteous*.

Sanctification is the work of God to make us progressively righteous. We actually have, in sanctification, an imparted righteousness, not merely the imputed righteousness of justification. Justification declares

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

us, imputes to us, righteousness, but sanctification is making us or imparting to us righteousness.<sup>5</sup>

**(notes)**

How does this happen? It really involves **two kinds of sanctification that take place**, both of which are crucial for understanding the nature of the Christian life.

### **Positional Sanctification.**

This refers to our status of being separated from sin and Satan and the world unto God in Christ. Colossians 1:13 tells us we have been delivered from and transferred from the dominion of Satan into the kingdom of his beloved Son. This is positional sanctification. We have been separated this way unto this new reality. We are in the kingdom of Christ, not in the dominion of Satan. We no longer are in bondage to sin. We no longer are under the dominion of Satan. We no longer belong to this world. Positional sanctification happens for all believers the instant that they believe.

It is on the basis of positional sanctification that we can make progress in the Christian faith. Many passages in Romans 6 really bring this out.

### **Turn to Romans 6:5-11: read.**

*<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 6:5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

*<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

*<sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.*

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<sup>5</sup> Ware

<sup>8</sup> *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,*

<sup>9</sup> *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.*

<sup>10</sup> *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

<sup>11</sup> *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Romans 6 is one of the most helpful chapters in the Bible for living the Christian life because, in Romans 6, it is very clear that Paul establishes two points. **One is, we have died and been raised with Christ; this is a fact; it is an accomplished reality.**

**The second thing that he establishes is that,** because this is true, because you have died, because you have been raised with Christ... **Turn to Romans 6:12-14: read.**

<sup>NAU</sup> *Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,*

<sup>13</sup> *and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

<sup>14</sup> *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

In other words, work out in reality the truthfulness of your present separation from sin and separation unto Christ; make this a progressive reality *in the present*.

*And this brings us to the second aspect of sanctification.*

### ***Progressive Sanctification.***

*Progressive sanctification is the Spirit's work in our hearts and lives to strengthen our newly imparted disposition toward holiness, freeing us increasingly from the ongoing power of sin and renewing us increasingly into the image of Christ. In short, progressive sanctification is growth in holiness. It is making us more like Christ, where we are transformed in mind, in affections, in will, in all of who we are, increasingly, to be like Christ.* <sup>6</sup>

Let's look at some verses that clearly show that God has in mind that we move forward from past positional sanctification, to ongoing progressive sanctification.

### **Turn to 1Thessalonians 4:1-5;**

<sup>NAU</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:1 *Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.*

<sup>2</sup> *For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.*

<sup>3</sup> *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;*

<sup>4</sup> *that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,*

<sup>5</sup> *not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 12:1 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

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<sup>6</sup> Ware

*<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Cleansing of ourselves, subjecting our minds to thinking God's thoughts from his Word, subjecting our wills to choose to do the will of God, subjecting our affections so that we love the truth and hate unrighteousness increasingly, will bring about increasing transformation in us so that we become increasingly like Christ.

Consider the passages in **Ephesian 4:17-24--turn to: read.**

*<sup>NAU</sup> Ephesians 4:17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,*

*<sup>18</sup> being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;*

*<sup>19</sup> and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*

*<sup>20</sup> But you did not learn Christ in this way,*

*<sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,*

*<sup>22</sup> that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,*

*<sup>23</sup> and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

*<sup>24</sup> and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

Here we're told to **put off** in order to **put on**.

Therefore, the purpose for which the Spirit is aiming in our lives is Christlikeness and the degree to which we are conformed to him is the degree to which we are sanctified. The root of this transformation lies in our co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ, and the process is never completed in this life (Phil 3:12-13).

Nonetheless, we shoot for perfection (1 Peter 1:15-16), knowing that such will not be the case until the Savior comes from heaven to transform our lowly bodies (Phil 3:20). Until then, the process is colored by struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We must remember in our struggle against sin (and, for righteousness), however, that we live in relationship with God on the solid foundation of justification. Though we strive to please him, it is not so that he will become our Father and take us in, rather it is because he has already declared his Fatherhood over us and because he is the One who works in us to this end. Again, our responsibility can be summed up in the word: "cooperation." God is the one who works in us both "the willing and the doing" (Phil 2:12-13).<sup>7</sup>

One last thing on sanctification. A quote from Wayne Grudem:

It would not be right to end our discussion without noting that sanctification brings great joy to us. The more we grow in likeness to Christ, the more we will personally experience the "joy" and "peace" that are part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the more we will draw near to the kind of life that we will have in heaven. Paul says that as we become more and more obedient to God, "the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom 6:22). He realizes that this is the source of our true joy. "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). As we grow in holiness we grow in conformity to the image of Christ, and more and more of the beauty of his character is seen in our own lives. This is the goal of perfect sanctification which we hope and

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<sup>7</sup> Bible.org

long for, and which will be ours when Christ returns. "And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).<sup>8</sup>

To contrast:

**Justification**

Legal standing  
Once for all time  
Entirely God's work  
Perfect in this life  
The same in all Christians

**Sanctification**

Internal condition  
Continuous throughout life  
We cooperate  
Not perfect in this life  
Greater in some than in others

Now, let me explain where Christianity parts ways with RC-ism on these two aspects of salvation. Justification in the RC system says that rather than Christ's righteous being "imputed" to a believer; they claim that the righteousness of Christ is "infused" into the believer.

So essentially what you have is the believing person is sanctified in their hearts "enough" to satisfy the righteous requirements of God. They are made internally righteous enough to be justified by God.

The problem with this (besides being unbiblical), is what happens when they sin. This breaks justifying process. And in order for them to maintain their justification, they must do penance. This causes them to live in a state of uncertainty concerning their standing with God--unless they don't commit a sin.

I'm giving you an ultra-simplistic explanation of their beliefs but it's an accurate one.

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<sup>8</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

One source says,

Since the Roman Catholic Church views justification as including something that God does within us, it follows that people can experience varying degrees of justification. They say, "The degree of justifying grace is not identical in all the just" and "grace can be increased by good works."

The Council of Trent declared that the measure of the grace of justification received varies in the individual person who is justified, according to the measure of God's free distribution and to the disposition and the co-operation of the recipient himself.

Finally, the logical consequence of this view of justification is that our eternal life with God is not based on God's grace alone, but partially on our merit as well. <sup>9</sup>

What they do is confound justification and sanctification.

Even some well meaning Christians do this when they try to mix law and grace. That's a whole other discussion for another time.

Listen to the series we have on Galatians on MP 3 CD.

Lord willing, next week we'll cover

Adoption  
Propitiation  
Forgiveness  
Repentance  
The Believers Security

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<sup>9</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974).

## Glorification

### End...<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The larger concern of James in this section also fits this understanding. James is concerned to show that mere intellectual agreement with the gospel is a "faith" that is really no faith at all. He is concerned to argue against those who say they have faith but show no change in their lives. He says, "Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith" (James 2:18). "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). James is simply saying here that "faith" that has no results or "works" is not real faith at all; it is "dead" faith. He is not denying Paul's clear teaching that justification (in the sense of a declaration of right legal standing before God) is by faith alone apart from works of the law; he is simply affirming a different truth, namely, that "justification" in the sense of an outward showing that one is righteous only occurs as we see evidence in a person's life. To paraphrase, James is saying that a person is "shown to be righteous by his works, and not by his faith alone." This is something with which Paul also would certainly agree (2 Cor 13:5; Gal 5:19-24). The practical implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone are very significant. First, this doctrine enables us to offer genuine hope to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God: if salvation is a free gift to be received through faith alone then anyone who hears the gospel may hope that eternal life is freely offered and may be obtained.

