

# Sanctification pt1

REVIEW: We are still in our series that we began in March - taking a long look at salvation. Last week we left off talking about how God justifies us, meaning declares us innocent - not because of how awesome we are, but because of how awesome Christ is and His sufficient sacrifice. Right along with justification, we looked at how God adopts us into His family. This is the part we tend to accept more slowly than other aspects of our salvation. It means that God loves us, yes, but He also likes us.

- I. We are part of God's family
  - A. That is no small statement, because not just anyone is God's child
    1. Only those that believe are God's children
    2. All others are created by God, and loved by God
    3. But it is only faith in Christ that gives us entrance to His family
- II. It means that we are accepted by God as we are - not some future better version that we have to live up to
  - A. Too often we think God will only accept me when I am like this
  - B. We get to "this" and find there is another line we think we have to get to
  - C. God accepts us as we are - always pushing us closer and into a more intimate relationship with Him
- III. It also means that God's Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are His children
  - A. We said that happens in two main ways: the first being the Lordship of Christ
    1. Christ is Lord of ALL
    2. Our money, our choices, our schedules, everything is submitted to Him
    3. If Christ is some sort of add on to your life, you are either in need
      - a) Of repenting and a reset of those items in life
      - b) Or some deep soul searching to check if you really are a child of God
  - B. The second way He testifies to our spirit is by a willingness to obey
    1. If you don't like the fact that I am calling you out about
      - a) Your money habits
      - b) Your choices in life
      - c) Your schedule, and you hold tight fisted to what you think is yours, not submitting it to Him - you are proving my point
    2. If Christ is Lord of All, there will be a willingness to obey
      - a) We may not obey perfectly
      - b) But when we screw up, we are willing to seek forgiveness and make things right - repenting and obeying
  - C. This is where we left off last week, and I told you that we would have a few more things to pick up on regarding adoption - so here we go

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- IV. These last two items that we mentioned, the Lordship of Christ, and a willingness to obey overlap and point at another idea: namely, pursuit
  - A. If you are a believer in Christ, pursuit of Christ is something that should be a mark of your life
  - B. If we are honest, we are all at different stages of pursuit
    - 1. Some are crawling
    - 2. Some are walking
    - 3. Some of you have a cramp in your leg, you're busted up somehow
    - 4. Some of you may be running full tilt
  - C. If we are not seeing a pursuit of God, the Spirit is not testifying with your spirit
    - 1. If that makes you nervous - not a bad thing
    - 2. As long as it is not false confidence in you and how awesome you are
      - a) I do this, and I do that, and I read my bible 26 hours a day, I help old folks at the home, and I read stories to sick kids in the hospital
      - b) Those are all great things - but are you doing it to pursue Christ, or to prove you are a Christian?
    - 3. If that nervous feeling leads you to be confident in Christ, confident in being justified, and confident in being adopted into God's family, that is the perfect place to be
      - a) Confident in your Savior, Jesus Christ
- V. One last thing we need to cover about adoption: the benefits
  - A. Finishing up where we left off last week: Romans 8:16-17
  - B. Our first benefit of sonship is that God will remake the earth
    - 1. We talked about this a few months ago - God will not be nuking the earth and destroying it
    - 2. He will instead refine the earth with fire
      - a) Its a purging away of the sin, and and the lifting of the curse that the universe has been longing for since Adam and Eve messed it all up
  - C. The second benefit is that we are heirs
    - 1. "Yeah, buddy! Now we're talking!"
    - 2. We are heirs with Christ
      - a) Specifically what the text says is that we will share in His glory! Amen?
      - b) We will partake of the glory of the One who has provided all of this for us - and He keeps on giving - even of His glory
  - D. Third benefit of adoption is we get resurrected bodies
    - 1. Something that Christ has, and something we share with Him

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2. Its also something that we covered a couple of months ago, so I'll just point you back to the sermon series "We Will All Be Changed" if you want the full story
- E. The final benefit - and the most important benefit of sonship, we get God!
1. No more praying to the air and wondering if He is there and hear you - He does because we get Him
  2. No more veil, no more broken world, or separation due to sin - we get God
  3. Remember those verses that says "if a man inherits the whole world but loses his soul, what profit does he have?"
    - a) If you inherit the world and don't have God - you were robbed
    - b) You made a serious misjudgment about what is best
  4. But keep this in mind - too many people do not desire God
    - a) They do not fall in love with God
    - b) They want God's stuff
    - c) My prayer is that when I said you get God - your heart skipped a beat
      - (1) You were overjoyed
      - (2) You were thrilled at the prospect at be with your Savior with no restrictions
- F. That is what adoption is all about, and that is what it leads to
- VI. Holiness
- A. The act of justification and adoption mean that we are positionally holy
1. It means we have been declared holy because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ
  2. In God's eyes, we are holy because we have the righteousness of Christ
  3. And we have already said that sometimes that is hard to believe because we still don't act holy
    - a) We still lash out in anger when that guy cuts us off, or we hit one of the infamous potholes and spill coffee all over ourselves, or when we come home to a mad house with the kids
    - b) We think wrong thoughts of others, we say foolish things, be it gossip, slander, or swearing
    - c) We know that we do not live holy
- B. The good news is that God is not content with our positional holiness, He wants to transform our lives, and make this holiness that is true of us because we have the righteousness of Christ manifest in the world
1. Which means effectively, we are seeking to align ourselves more and more with the way God has designed life to work
  2. This process is called sanctification
- VII. Sanctification

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- A. Sanctification is different from justification and adoption in a very significant way
  - 1. We were justified and adopted in one moment - one declarative act
  - 2. Sanctification takes place from the moment we receive Christ until the moment we breathe our last breath
    - a) Which means that every day of our lives we are in the process of change
    - b) Which makes me smile at the people in the church that do not like change - because if you are a genuine follower of Christ, we are always changing - we should be the people most comfortable with change on the planet
- B. Let me give you a second way that sanctification differs from justification and adoption
  - 1. Justification and adoption are acts of God - you had no part in them other than receiving God's mercy
  - 2. Sanctification on the other hand requires effort
    - a) Led by the HS, we cooperate with Him as He leads us to being more like Christ
    - b) It is effort on our part, driven by grace
    - c) But how do we do this?
- C. Turn to Colossians 3
  - 1. Starting with verse 1, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ..."
    - a) Stop right there because we have two issues to deal with
    - b) First is the translation:
      - (1) The way this reads now is as if this is a declarative fact about you - you have been raised with Christ
      - (2) The problem is the word in Greek is not "since", its "if"
        - (a) The word in Greek is "ei" and it is a conditional word
        - (b) Which makes this a conditional statement
    - c) Second, because this is a conditional statement, it does not apply to everyone
      - (1) Sanctification is not for everyone
      - (2) It is only for sons and daughters of the King
      - (3) If you are not a believer, you are not being sanctified
      - (4) A better version of you, is not sanctification
      - (5) Sanctification is begun by God's calling, justifying, and adopting us into His family
  - 2. Let's keep going - verse 1-3
    - a) Did you see how Paul just wrapped all of what we have been talking about for the last couple of weeks in those verses

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- (1) We died, and our lives are hidden with Christ in God
  - (a) That is justification folks!
  - (b) When God looks at us He sees Christ
  - (c) When He looks at you, He sees the righteousness of Christ
3. Verse 4 is actually about glorification - the fact that we will be glorified with Christ when He comes back to set the record straight
- D. Notice in verse 5, the direction of the passage changes - v. 5-10
  1. This whole passage, from verse 1-10 is a blueprint for how we are sanctified
    - a) Not positional holiness - that is already ours
    - b) Practical holiness - holiness that manifests itself in this world
  2. It all starts with another fancy theological term called “vivification”
    - a) To vivify means to make alive, or animate, quicken or enliven
    - b) When applied to our passage here, we see it in the first few verses
      - (1) “Set your hearts on things above”
      - (2) “Set you minds on things above, not on earthly things”
    - c) So the first step to practical holiness in vivification is to set your minds on things above. But how?
      - (1) Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
      - (2) So we stop conforming our minds to the pattern of the world - BY transforming our minds
        - (a) Transformation of the mind can involve memorizing God’s word, but we know it has to be more
          - i) Jesus rebuked men in the NT that knew the Scriptures (the OT) backwards and forwards but missed the point of the Scriptures
          - ii) It is an active thought process of changing our thinking
            - (1) If you ever had to change your routine for some reason
              - (a) You moved
              - (b) You have a new job
              - (c) There is construction and you had to go a different way
            - (2) I’ll bet there is at least one person here that almost pulled in their old driveway, or got half way to their old job and realized they don’t work there anymore

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- (3) There is that active period of time where you transform your mind about where you live or work, or the construction that will befall you if you go that way
  - (4) That is an example of renewing our minds
    - (a) We actively think, that is the way I used to do things, but now I do things like this
    - (b) That is how I used to think about this, but now I change how I think on this
  - (b) Transformation of the mind obviously involves the Bible
    - i) It is our guide as to how to think about things
    - ii) That is why it is SO important that we are in God's Word so it can help transform our minds
    - iii) And when we use our imagination to put ourselves in the passage we read, so much the better
      - (1) We can feel the pain of the woman caught in adultery
      - (2) We can have our guts wrenched when we read about the crucifixion
  - (c) Another great way to encourage the transforming of your mind is by the Life Groups
    - i) In a group setting, where you can be known, and cared for, people can help you see areas that you mind be blind to
    - ii) This is why we encourage you to get into a life group
  - d) This is vivification - enlivening, making alive our minds and our hearts to God
3. Next comes the term that many preachers dwell on more than the positive end of vivification - it's mortification
- a) To mortify means to subdue, or discipline one's self, or desires
  - b) Vivification and mortification take place at the same time
    - (1) You don't renew your mind and when you have that down, discipline yourself and your desires for sin
    - (2) Both happen at the same time
  - c) If you remember back, we talked about the fact that we do not tame our sin
    - (1) We CAN'T
    - (2) We put sin to death
    - (3) Another great purpose of the Life groups - helping us to put sin to death
      - (a) Because when sin is brought out into the open, it can be killed
      - (b) Its when it hides in your life then you will struggle

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- d) So this passage is very clear that while we set our minds on things above
    - (1) While we learn about God
    - (2) While we grow deeper into Him
    - (3) There are still things in life that need to be put to death
  - e) The passage gives us a clear list
    - (1) Sexual immorality, impurity, lust
    - (2) Evil desires, greed, idolatry (remember the modern form too - not just little carved images)
    - (3) But the list goes further than just outward actions, and looks at inward motivations
      - (a) Anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language
        - i) Which allow me to stop and tell you that I looked up what the Greek was for “filthy language”
        - ii) It means abusive, dirty, low or obscene speech
        - iii) I have heard arguments that the Bible never says do not swear, and while that is technically true, it clearly prohibits that kind of speech
      - (b) Do not lie to to each other
- E. So let's go back to that illustration about your change of job or house and drive home, but now you have to drive a different way
- 1. Sanctification is the process of driving a different way
    - a) When you reach that common intersection, instead of turning left to go the way you always used to go, you now turn right
    - b) So instead of lusting after the pretty saleswoman at the store, you turn the other direction and realize that you are a child of God and she is a creation of God, and you are being conformed to the image of His Son
    - c) Instead of getting angry and yelling at your kids when they do something foolish at home, you turn the other way, and while punishment may be called for, you handle that punishment in a better, more Christ-like fashion
    - d) Instead of gossiping or talking behind someone's back, you realize that you turn away from that conversation, even walking away from conversations that head that direction, because you are God's child being made into His image
  - 2. And here is the thing with this, especially when you first start out, you have to put LOTS of effort into consciously thinking about turning the other way

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- a) So a man that is breaking out of the trap of pornography has to be VERY mindful of where his mind is
    - (1) To the point that he may need some other good men to help check him on that
  - b) When you are used to yelling at your kids indiscriminately, you have to be very mindful when you go to submit that sin to Christ
  - c) When you are overcoming gossip, it takes a very concerted effort to re-train your mind to recognize what is coming, and walk away
  - d) Over time those things will become easier
    - (1) Over time, you will not have to put as much effort into turning right instead of left, because it becomes habit
    - (2) Over time, you train yourself to respond differently, and in ways that are pleasing to God
- F. Here is the big thing that I notice about most of us when it comes to choosing to change the direction we turn - the process of sanctification
- 1. James 4:7 “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
  - 2. Most of us, and I am guilty of the as well, never get to the resisting part!
  - 3. Somehow we think that the submitting to God part is all we need and that sanctification does not take effort, or discipline
    - a) It’s like we think God will do it all for us
    - b) We know that is not true
      - (1) James 1:2-3 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”
      - (2) I don’t know what that says to you, but that says to me that we will face trials of many kinds that will test us - and we will need discipline
      - (3) 1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”
      - (4) This verse is clear that part of temptation is to help us become stronger - but that requires discipline
  - 4. So let’s not forget the resistance
    - a) We were called to it
    - b) It is part of our process of sanctification - to build and grow our character

CONCLUSION: We will pick up next week with more on this process of sanctification.