

Sanctification in Real Life

REVIEW: We have been working our way through this series on salvation since March. It really has been a long look at salvation. We started the series looking at who God is, moved to an honest look at man, sin, and hell, then turned our attention to God's response to our sinful behavior, ending at our response to God's offer of grace. Then we walked through salvation by its doctrines: justification, adoption, and then sanctification.

We are still on sanctification, because this is the doctrine we live in - the process of becoming like who God declared us to be. It is a messy part of salvation as we see more and more of who we really are, in comparison to who God is, and what He would like us to be.

INTRO: Today we are going to look at the doctrines that we have been studying and how they apply and operate in real life. Justification, adoption, and sanctification - how do those play themselves out in real life? What do they look like? To do this, we are going to look at some specific areas of life, and see how these great ideas, these doctrines apply where we actually live. Also to do this, we have to begin with God's original design for man. This helps us see what Jesus work on the cross is to be accomplishing for God's glory and on our behalf.

Genesis 2:18-25

- I. God's original design for mankind was innocence
 - A. They were both naked and not ashamed
 1. Don't anyone get any weird ideas - keep your clothes on - that is not what the text or Pastor Keith is trying to say
 - B. When we talk about this nakedness, what we are saying is that man was created in a special innocence, and with a speciality that no other creatures had - we were made in the image of God
 1. That means that no matter how special Fluffy is to you, you are not of the same value
 2. It means that humans and whales, or elephants, or tigers or whatever is en vogue to save that year is not on par with humanity
 - a) Which brings up an interesting side note: Is it right to save the animals? Yes! Absolutely! We were charged by God to be caretakers of creation.
 - b) What I find interesting is that the cry of the day is evolution and natural selection
 - (1) Which means we are just the smartest animal on the planet, but have no rights higher than any animal
 - (a) Some people do believe this and fight hard for it

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- (b) Most, when you put humanity up against the animal kingdom, they know intrinsically that humanity is of a higher order
 - (2) The reason they know this: Ecc. 3:11 “God has set eternity in man’s heart” - we know this, that humanity is more valuable because God has set that in our heart
 - (3) Which again explains why when threatened with extinction by a higher order of being from outer space, we put on our, “Oh no you don’t...not on my planet” attitudes on and kick the alien’s butts
 - C. God’s design is for us to have lives that are marked by innocence, but we all know how the story in Genesis goes
 - 1. Go to Genesis 3:7-9
 - 2. We just watched it happen - innocence gave way to guilt, and the honor we were created in gave way to shame
 - a) So innocence and honor are no longer the norm, the way God designed it
 - b) Guilt and shame are the norm
 - D. I want to clear a confusion about guilt and shame, because they are often used interchangeably, but are definitely not
 - 1. Both guilt and shame involve falling short of a standard
 - 2. But guilt is falling short of a legal standard (like God’s law)
 - a) It’s a clear moral code and we did not make it
 - 3. Shame on the other hand has more to do with how we see ourselves when we fall short or think we have fallen short, or how we think others see us when we think they perceive us to have fallen short
 - a) So how this works is you see yourself in some manner as a hard worker and very disciplined, but the reality is you are lazy and undisciplined, you will feel some shame over that
 - b) If you see yourself as one that loves the Lord with all your heart, yet at work your faith goes on the shelf and you engage in course joking, or swearing, or false business practices, you will feel shame for that because you are not walking like you view yourself
 - 4. Now, watching guilt and shame interact is very interesting
- ## II. Guilt and shame
- A. And before you lift me up on your shoulders and carry me out of here, heralding me as a hero because of what I am about to say, please understand that this comes from the reading I do, and from other sources like David Keyes
 - B. The healthiest way for guilt and shame to interact is that they work together

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1. When you violate one of God's laws, you feel guilt because you knew it was wrong, and you should not have done that - be it lying, cheating, lust, bitterness, whatever
 2. Shame kicks in because you know you are better than that
 - a) You don't need to lie to get people's approval, you know you don't need to hold onto the grudge and always thought you were a forgiving person before this
 - b) This is how the two work together for our good
 3. They work together to reveal not only the sin itself, but the issue going on in your heart that caused that sin to start with
 - a) This is God's way of giving us a spiritual check-up
 - b) It is His way of declaring that He has something better for you than just this
- C. Now, guilt and shame can act independently of each other as well
1. The first way would be doing something you know is morally wrong, and feeling no shame about it at all
 - a) And if this is not a definition of society today, I don't know what is - breaking the moral code, the laws of the land and then feeling no shame
 - b) Go to Romans 1:28-32
 - (1) Now, this list is not just about "them out there", any murderers here, probably not - how about gossips? Nobody gets away clean here
 - (2) The part that gets me on this list is, "We know we are breaking God's law, but I don't care, and I even applaud those that do."
 - (a) We know we deserve judgment, we know this is wrong but we don't care!
 - (b) That is a terrifying place to be folks
 2. The second way they work independent of each other is the exact opposite - I feel all kinds of shame, but never actually did anything wrong
 - a) Some examples: people feel shame because they are poor; or because they don't live in the fancy part of town; or because the car they drive is less than perfect; or because their body doesn't match the superficial image society projects
 - b) Do any of the things I just mentioned have anything to do with morality? Not really. They are morally neutral.
 - (1) This goes back to a self ideal of yourself that is outside the bounds of what God desires for you

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- (2) None of these things are shameful, yet we feel unloveable, or unworthy - but that is not guilt, it's shame
- 3. The third way guilt and shame work is actually to work against each other
 - a) Here is what I mean: we can feel shame for doing the right thing, or glory in doing the wrong thing
 - b) Paul on several occasions encouraged those he was writing to, to not be ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16, 2 Tim.)
 - (1) There is nothing more morally right than loving God
 - (2) Yet sometimes we feel shame over it
 - (3) Or in current times, Christians have to hold the line about social issues of the day - abortion, homosexuality, etc
 - (a) There are many that want to shame Christians into submission - including other Christians that are already ashamed of the position we hold
 - (b) But when God defines right and wrong for us, we should not be ashamed of following what His Word says
 - c) Then there is glorying in doing the wrong thing
 - (1) I have never been much of a partier, but I know there are many that think the amount of beer they can put away in a given time period is something to be excited about
 - (a) You hear them brag - "I got so wasted last night!" or "I don't even remember what happened."
 - (b) Seriously! This is something to be gloried in?
 - (c) Do you remember Solomon's words, "There is nothing new under the sun"
 - i) Isaiah 5:22 "Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks,"
 - (2) In working with youth for 22 years, and not having kids of my own, I get rather protective about my kids, and especially the girls
 - (a) There are guys out there that brag about what they do with girls
 - (b) I told others this before, if ever I am disqualified from ministry, it would be because I can't hold back on some smug little snot that is asking to get it
 - (c) That's when I want the ministry of Nehemiah - in chapter 13 it says: "I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair."

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4. The crosshairs of guilt and shame in a negative way come when you let the Bible be your moral code, and your self-ideal is built around the world
 - a) What happens then is you feel guilt when you walk into church and the pastor is going OT wrath of God on you
 - b) And when your self-ideal is built around the world, and you feel shame because you are the “goody-goody”
 - c) That is a recipe for disaster, and what we commonly refer to as “walking the fence”
 - d) So if you have the Bible as your guide, and Hollywood as your hero, you are setting yourself up to be miserable

III. Guilt and shame's affects in life

- A. When you live in a cycle of guilt and shame, one of the by-products is anger (not always true, but certainly true enough)
- B. It usually will begin with a form of self-hatred
 1. When self hatred begins, you often will begin to abuse yourself first
 - a) That could be by cutting yourself, or doing other things that you know bring harm to yourself - but often it is just giving yourself further over to your guilt and shame
 2. This then devolves into seeing yourself as increasingly worthless, and allowing others to abuse you because you feel there is nothing intrinsically valuable in you
- C. Other times, the self hate is directed toward others, and this is where we get abuse from
 1. Sometimes the abuse is control and manipulation
 2. Other times it comes out as verbal abuse
 3. The people that often suffer the worst for someone suffering from self hate is their family
 - a) Why? Because they know them so well it takes only a word or two to tear down who that person is
 - b) And a person suffering from self hate often times wants people to suffer with them - so they tear down those around them, but only those close to them
 4. When this self hate and abuse is bad enough, it can even rear it's ugly head to others outside the family
 - a) Ever met some people that if they walk into the room, and people do not immediately greet them they get angry and pout
 - b) And of course it is always other people's fault
 - (1) “You didn't greet me”
 - (2) Or you never threw me a party for my 33rd birthday

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- D. The self hate can even enter the areas of physical or sexual abuse
 - 1. So guilt and shame turn to anger, which becomes self hate, and then gets dumped out, in this case violently on others
 - E. The horrible part is that this becomes a self-feeding animal
 - 1. So if you are struggling with anger, that comes from your guilt and shame, you are going to hate yourself
 - a) So then you do more of what causes your guilt and shame
 - (1) Drink more
 - (2) Eat more, view pornography more
 - (3) You think that is taking away the pain, and in the end, it just heaps on more guilt and shame - further fueling the anger and self hate
 - 2. If you are an abuser, then when you abuse, you will think, "I can't believe I did that!"
 - (1) And that leads to more guilt and shame
 - (2) Which leads to more anger, and more abuse
 - (3) Guilt and shame fuel anger which fuels abuse
- IV. The application of the great doctrines of salvation
- A. How do justification, adoption and sanctification apply to this self fueled animal in real life
 - B. So how is the guilt in your life handled?
 - 1. This is what we talked about with justification
 - a) The just Judge of the universe declares you not guilty because of the blood of Christ - so we are not guilty but innocent (like God always intended)
 - b) Col. 2:13-14 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."
 - c) It does not get clearer than that - your sins are covered - past, present, and future - they were nailed to the cross with Jesus
 - 2. So please hear this - the guilt is gone - it was cancelled by the blood of Jesus for all those that follow Him
 - C. But what about shame? Shame is not always attached to a moral code, the feeling of being dirty when you are not necessarily dirty.
 - 1. Shame is dealt with by being pushed out of the heart by being known, and still loved and delighted in
 - a) You remember the phrase, "confession is good for the soul?"
 - b) That is true, when grace is applied and you are loved, cared for and delighted in

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2. When we remain quiet about who we really are, the struggles we have with our self ideal, the sins we battle with, where our minds gravitate toward - that is all fertile ground for shame to come in and take root
 - a) Then you start the cycle
 - b) Shame, anger, self hate, and acting out (abuse in its many forms)
3. If we think, well no one knows but me, that fruit of shame gets heavy - it is a heavy burden to carry
 - a) And besides - Someone knows
 - b) God knows
 - c) If you want to get rid of the shame - dare to be fully known, and delighted in
 - (1) Which is one of the reasons I bring it back to you over and over about Life Groups
 - (2) Life Groups are designed to be a to be fully known, and have people love you
4. Let me show you this in action, give you a couple of real life examples and then we will be done
 - a) Luke 15 - tell the background of the story
 - b) Luke 15:20-24
 - (1) What was the father filled with? Compassion!
 - (2) If this is a story displaying God's character, why don't we believe that word - that the Father is filled with compassion?
 - c) The father basically says, I know where you have been, I know what you did. And he hugs and kisses his kid - gives him all the best he has
 - d) Imagine for a minute how this must have felt for the son
 - (1) I mean how awkward can you get
 - (2) You know that you have done bad things, your dad knows you did bad things, but he delights in you anyway
 - (3) I imagine that the son had a hard time looking his dad in the eyes
5. One of the practices that we have on mission trips with the kids is called the bead ceremony.
 - a) It has become a well loved time at the end of each day
 - b) What we do is have a bag filled with four different colored beads - each representing some part of our leadership and character
 - (1) Each student is allowed to give out one bead to anyone in the group for actions they saw in them that day
 - (2) At the end of the week we ramp that up a notch

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- (3) But the catch is, when the person giving the bead is speaking, they are not allowed to speak ABOUT the other person - they have to speak TO the other person
- c) Now, what I have noticed in doing this with the group for the last four years is most people that are being talked about, bragged on, delighted in - can't look the person in the eye
 - (1) We crave being delighted in
 - (2) Yet it is something we so struggle with
- d) And how much more when we think of God the Father delighting in us
- 6. As spring and summer came in this year, my guys Bible study knew that all of us would be getting busier
 - a) So one of the choices we made was, rather than leave someone behind in the study, we would not push ahead unless we could all attend
 - b) Now, we also did not want to give up meeting together, so we chose that if we could all be together, we would do the Bible study, if only a few of us could show up, we would visit and talk
 - (1) But in that time of fellowship, we also said we wanted to have a time of saying, "How are you doing?"
 - (2) And when we got the inevitable "Fine" we all respond, "How are you really doing?"
 - c) We made the choice to really start creating a safe environment to talk more about who we are
 - (1) And as time passes my prayer is that the relationships deepen and we can talk even more in depth
 - (2) And share all the deeper
 - (3) And seek Christ and the purity that is only found in Him
- 7. Turn to one final verse: Hebrews 2:11
 - a) Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers (and sisters)
 - b) Want to shame to go away - embrace the fact that you are fully known, and delighted in by God
 - (1) And seek some brothers and sister in Christ that can know you fully, and delight in you fully as well