

Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

Class 28: The Doctrine of Salvation, part 8

Sanctification

"... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

John 17. 3

I. A Brief Recap



II. Defining "Sanctification"

For this is the will of God, your sanctification ... 1 Thes. 4.3

Sanctification = The work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole person after the image of God, and are enabled more & more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (WSC, 34)

Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God has, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole being after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life. WLC, 75

III. Two "Perspectives" on Sanctification

A. Progressive

- Our pursuit of holiness; that is, sanctification is something we participate in & must do.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2. 12-13

B. Definitive, Positional

- Our status in Christ; that is, sanctification is who we are & what we have in Christ by virtue of His work.

*... because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God,
righteousness & **sanctification** & redemption,*

1 Corinthians 1.30

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, 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 ...*

1 Corinthians 1.2

*And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ... For by a single
offering **he has perfected** for all time those who **are being sanctified**.*

Hebrews 10. 10, 14

*... do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually
immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards,
nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, **you were
sanctified**, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

1 Corinthians 6. 9-11

In New Testament usage, sanctification terminology overwhelmingly has to do with a status we enjoy in Christ. Any effort, therefore, on our part must always be driven first by who we are & not what we must do. In other words, be who you are in Christ. "Holiness" and "sanctification" are what we *have* and *are* in Christ.

*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness
to completion in the fear of God.*

2 Corinthians 7.1

*At the very least we must keep in mind that all New Testament exhortations to personal godliness rest on a "definitive"
work God has done for us and in us, in Christ. God has made us his, consecrated us in Christ to himself; he has broken
sin's former dominion, rendering us free to live unto him. And so we now obey God because we can. As many like to
say, the imperative (what ought to be) rests on the indicative (what is); we are called to be what we are.*

Sinclair Ferguson, Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification

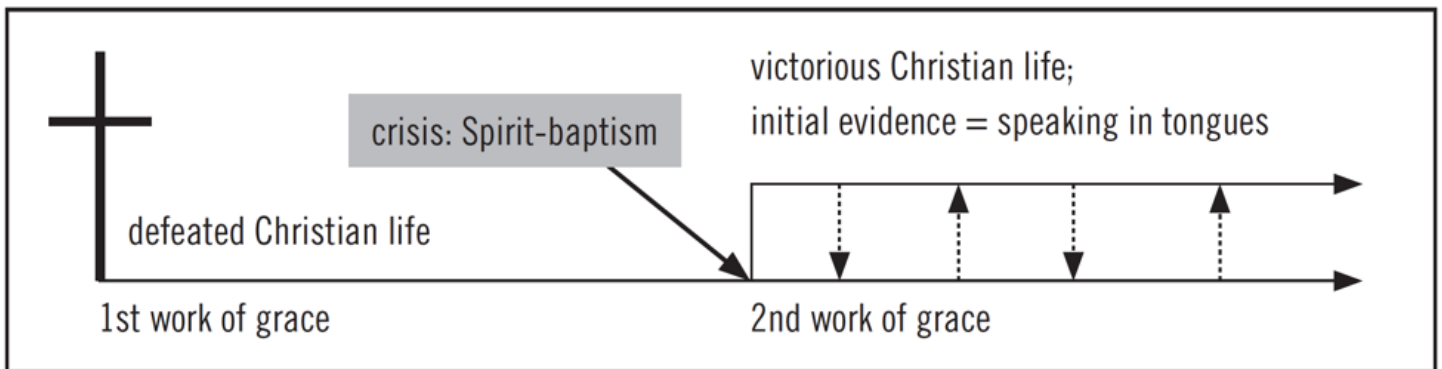
III. "Stages" of Sanctification

1. **Past.** Definitive or positional sanctification occurs when God sets people apart for himself at the moment they become Christians (e.g., Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom 1:7; 6; 1Cor 1:2; 6:11; Eph 1:1; 5:3; Col 1:2, 12; 3:12; 2Thes 1:10; Heb 10:10, 14; Jude 3; Rev 13:7).

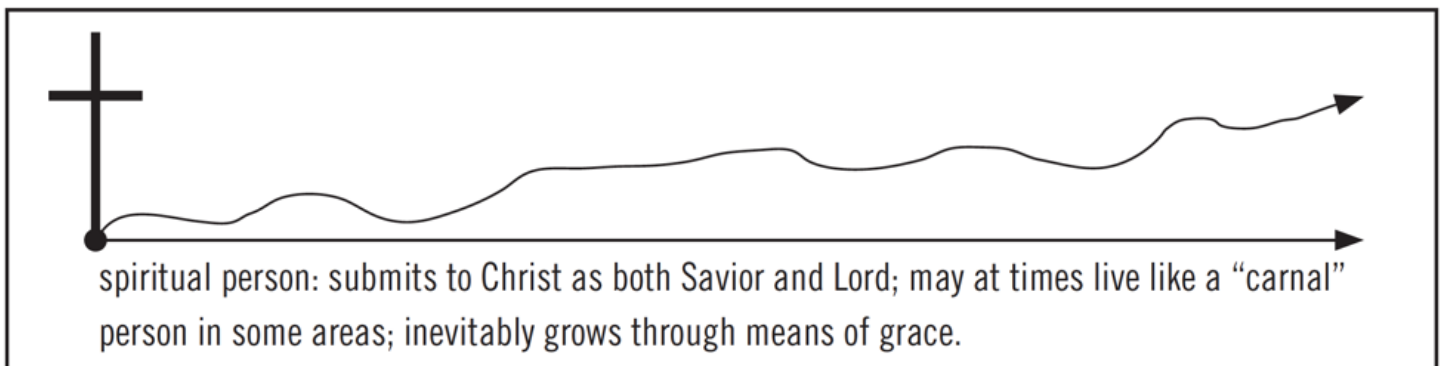
2. **Present.** Progressive sanctification is the ongoing, incomplete, lifelong maturing process in which a Christian gradually becomes more holy (e.g., John 17:17; 2Cor 3:18; 7:1; Phil 1:6; 1Thes 4:3–4, 7; Heb 12:14; 2Pet 3:11).
3. **Future.** Ultimate sanctification corresponds to glorification (e.g., Phil 3:21; 1Thes 3:13; 5:23; Jude 24). This happens after death when God sets his people apart from sin's presence and possibility.

IV. Two Views of Sanctification

Pentecostal:



Reformed:



Q2. How many things are necessary for you to know, that in this comfort you may live and die blessedly?

A2. Three things: the first, how great my sin and misery is; the second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.

Q86. Since then we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why should we do good works?

A86. Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and also that He be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1, 32