

# Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

## Class 29: The Doctrine of Salvation, part 9

### *Sanctification, pt. 2*

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

**John 17. 3**

## **I. 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)

## **II. The Ground (or Foundation) of Sanctification**

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh & for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

**Romans 8. 1-4**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

**Romans 12. 1**

*One day as I was passing into the field, this sentence fell upon my soul: 'Thy righteousness is in heaven.' And with the eyes of my soul I saw Jesus at the Father's right hand. 'There,' I said, 'is my righteousness!' So that wherever I was or whatever I was doing, God could not say to me, 'Where is your righteousness?' For it is always right before him.*

*I saw that it is not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness IS Christ. Now my chains fell off indeed. My temptations fled away, and I lived sweetly at peace with God. Now I could look from myself to him and could reckon that all my character was like the coins a rich man carries in his pocket when all his gold is safe in a trunk at home. Oh I saw that my gold was indeed in a trunk at home, in Christ my Lord. Now Christ was all: my righteousness, sanctification, and my redemption.*

**John Bunyan, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners**

**Q 64.** But does not this doctrine make men careless & profane?

**A 64.** No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 24

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

**Matthew 7. 15-20**

*I am the true vine, & my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, & every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **Already you are clean** because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, & I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; **you are the branches**. Whoever abides in me & I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

**John 15. 1-5**

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

#### **Article 24: The Sanctification of Sinners**

We believe that this true faith, produced in us by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerates us & makes us new creatures, causing us to live a new life & freeing us from the slavery of sin. Therefore, far from making people cold toward living in a pious and holy way, this justifying faith, quite to the contrary, so works within them that apart from it they will never do a thing out of love for God but only out of love for themselves & the fear of being condemned.

So then, it is impossible for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being, seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls "*faith working through love*," which moves people to do by themselves the works that God has commanded in the Word.

**Belgic Confession**

### **III. The Means of Sanctification**

1. The Law of God
2. Prayer

#### **The Law of God**

<sup>105</sup> *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

<sup>106</sup> *I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules.*

<sup>107</sup> *I am severely afflicted; give me life, O LORD, according to your word!*

<sup>108</sup> *Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O LORD, and teach me your rules.*

<sup>109</sup> *I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.*

<sup>110</sup> *The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts.*

<sup>111</sup> *Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.*

<sup>112</sup> *I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.*

**Psalm 119. 105-112**

**Q97: What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?**

*A97: Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.*

Westminster Larger Catechism

*What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*

*For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

**Romans 6. 15-22**

**Prayer****Q115. Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?**

*A115. First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ; secondly, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the goal of perfection after this life.*

**Q116. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?**

*A116. Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us; and because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who earnestly and without ceasing beg them of Him, and render thanks unto Him for them.*

**Heidelberg Catechism**

Only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives. Many have so light an apprehension of God's holiness and of the extent and guilt of their sin that consciously they see little need for justification, although below the surface of their lives they are deeply guilt-ridden and insecure. Many others have a theological commitment to [the doctrine of justification], but in their day-to-day existence they rely on their sanctification for justification... drawing their assurance of acceptance with God from their sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance, or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience. Few know how to start each day with a thoroughgoing stand upon Luther's platform: *you are accepted*, looking outward in faith and claiming the wholly alien righteousness of Christ as the only ground for acceptance, relaxing in that quality of trust which will produce increasing sanctification as faith is active in love and gratitude.

Richard Lovelace, The Dynamics of the Spiritual Life