

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
SOTERIOLOGY
THE STUDY OF SALVATION
PART 4

This morning, as we continue our series Foundation of Faith we are looking at Soteriology or the study of Salvation. And we have looked at the fall of man and how the sin of Adam has been passed on to us as well as our own sin and thus, it is this sin that separates us from God. That is the problem and it is a big problem because man cannot do anything to rectify that on his own. He can't be good enough, do enough good works to negate the wrong that he has done. He broke the Law and the penalty for that is eternal separation from God!

We then looked at the salvation of man and we saw that it is God who reached down to sinful man and pulled him out of the mire of sin that he was drowning in. It was a rescue mission and to do this God became flesh, dwelt among us so that He could die for our sins, the perfect sacrifice. He is truly the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world for all who receive Him, receive Jesus.

And think about this for a minute. The thief on the cross had nails through both his hands so that he could not work. He also had a nail through each foot so that he could not run errands for the Lord, do good works for Him. This man could not lift a hand or a foot towards his salvation and yet, Jesus offered him Paradise, this free gift and he received it! Just as this thief on the cross could do no good works to be saved, neither can we because Christ has done it all for us. We are dead in sin and dead men are dead, they can't do anything at all, not even save themselves! May we never forget that!

In our last study we looked at the fact that we are freed from the past penalty of sin, that we are justified before God. In other words, there is no record of our sin any longer because Christ paid in full the penalty for our sins. They have been cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! That truly is what justification is all about!

This morning we are going to be looking at the fact that we are freed from the present power of sin and I am speaking of the sanctification process. In a positional sense, we are perfect, cleansed as white as snow, but in a practical sense, in our daily lives we still fall far short and we do sin. And God is working in us, molding and shaping our lives to be like His, we are being transformed by the renewing of our minds and not conformed to this world!

Now before we get to our topic this morning, let me share with you this illustration that will set the stage for what we will be talking about. We are told,

When a person becomes a Christian, he usually undergoes some radical life changes, especially if he has had an immoral background. Through the first steps of spiritual growth and self-denial, he gets rid of the large, obvious sins. But sad to say, many believers stop there. They don't go on to eliminate the little sins that clutter the landscape of their lives.

Gordon MacDonald, in his book *Ordering Your Private World*, told of an experience in his own life that illustrates this truth. “Some years ago, when Gail and I bought the old abandoned New Hampshire farm we now call Peace Ledge, we found the site where we wished to build our country home strewn with rocks and boulders. It was going to take a lot of hard work to clear it all out. . . . The first phase of the clearing process was easy. The big boulders went fast. And when they were gone, we began to see that there were a lot of smaller rocks that had to go too. But when we had cleared the site of the boulders and the rocks, we noticed all of the stones and pebbles we had not seen before. This was much harder, more tedious work. But we stuck to it, and there came the day when the soil was ready for planting grass.”

- Our Daily Bread

That truly is the reality of what God is doing in our own lives. The big rocks are easy to see and get rid of but I think the major work in our lives is those little stones, those pebbles of sin we have in our lives that God wants removed. And as you will see, the work that God has started in us He will complete. I am so thankful for that. I am so thankful that He does not give up on me but will finish the work that He has begun in me! With that said, let's look at this issue of being ***FREED FROM THE PRESENT POWER OF SIN*** or the ***SANCTIFICATION PROCESS!***

2. FREED FROM THE PRESENT POWER OF SIN – SANCTIFICATION

The idea of sanctification is found in various words in the New Testament and it is seen some 283 times, and thus, it must be important for us to understand if God speaks of it so much. The word “sanctification” means to set apart and it comes from the same root words for “saint” and “holy.” For us as Christians this word means a separation to God. And thus, it is a process of God’s grace by which the believer is separated from sin and becomes dedicated to God’s righteousness. This is accomplished by the Word of God as Jesus said in John 17:17, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”** And the result of this is holiness or purification from the guilt and the power of sin in our lives is as Paul tells us in Romans 8:3-4, **“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**

Now let’s think this through, what we have seen so far. Justification is not the same as sanctification. You see, justification is the act by which God gets us out of sin, in a legal sense, while sanctification is the process by which God gets sin out of us, in a concrete sense; it is a process as we will see. It is the process by which God purifies the believer and it is a work of our Triune God!

Let me show you what I mean. First of all we see God the Father is involved in our sanctification process in I Corinthians 1:30-31 as Paul tells us, “**But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’**” Also, in Jude 1:1 we are told, “**Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.**” Notice that it is God the Father who sanctifies the believer by reckoning the holiness of Christ into our lives. So God the Father is involved in our sanctification process!

Next we see that God the Son, Jesus is involved in our sanctification process. We are told in Hebrews 2:10-11, “**For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.**” And in Hebrews 13:12 we are told, “**Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.**” What Paul is telling us is that Jesus has sanctified us by laying down His life for us. So Jesus is actively involved in our sanctification!

And lastly, we see that the Holy Spirit is involved in our sanctification process. We are told in II Thessalonians 2:13-14, **“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** And in I Peter 1:2 we are told, **“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”** And we have now seen that the Holy Spirit is actively involved in our sanctification.

What does this all mean? It tells me that God loves us, our Triune God loves us so much that He not only saved us but He is sanctifying us, making us more like Jesus every day and one day He will finish the work that He has begun in us. And to me, that is the key. It is not a work that I have started or I will complete, it is a work that God has started and it is a work that He will complete in my life!

Now in saying that, please don't come to the conclusion that you can just blame God for not finishing the work or for not working fast enough in you. God will work in us, and our responsibility is that we need to surrender to Him. That truly is the work we need to do and it is the hardest thing for us to do- ***SURRENDER!***

Before we move on I think I need to touch on this subject of our will and that we need to surrender it to the Lord or we will be in opposition to Him and His will for our lives. Look at what Paul tells us in Galatians 5:16-18, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”**

Paul is admonishing us to walk in the Spirit, continually walk in the Spirit, not just when you feel like it or because you are around other Christians. In fact, Paul uses the Greek word PERIPATEO (per-ee-pat-eh'-o) and it is in the present tense, which speaks of a continuous action, a habitual way of life. It should be very natural for Christians to walk in the Spirit; it should not be foreign to them.

Think about it, do you think about breathing 24 hours a day? Of course you don't, you just do it naturally, you don't even think about it. The same should be true with our walk in this life, it should be lead by the Spirit and it should come naturally as we read God's Word, as God uses others to speak to us about situations, as the Holy Spirit speaks to our heart and we are sensitive to His leading. The result of what God is doing in us by His Spirit is that we are becoming more like Jesus, it is the sanctification process. Now if we refuse to walk in the Spirit, then we will not be like Jesus but the flesh nature and the works of the flesh will be manifested in our lives, and that is just plain ugly!

But why do we struggle so much in this life? Why do we have such a hard time walking in the Spirit? Why do we have these battles on a daily basis? Why do we struggle in our marriage relationship? Why do we struggle with people? Why do we struggle at work? Why do we struggle with our children? The answer may shock you; it truly shocked me when I sat down to think about it and yet, it does make sense. You see, what it all comes down to, what caused Lucifer to fall, is one simple and yet very destructive word that leads to very ugly actions on our part, ***PRIDE!***

Pride, like it or not, agree with me or not, is at the heart of all of our problems. It may be that we violate someone else because of our pride or they violate us, but in either case, pride is the issue. And pride is an ugly monster that can be covered by us as we use Christian jargon; Christian words to justify our behavior, to cover up the heart of the issue. And pride is just an ugly monster that the more you feed it the more it grows and the more it grows the more it wants to be fed! Thus, God is trying to break us of pride and that only happens as we surrender ourselves to Him, humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. You see, if pride is the root of all of our problems, which I believe it is, then humility is the source of all our blessings.

What does that have to do with our sanctification? Everything, you see, who are you going to surrender to? It is, in a sense, a battle of the wills, the will of God for our lives and the will of man, what we desire to do! It is as Oswald Chambers tells us, "Surrender is not the surrender of the external life, but of the will; when that is done, all is done. There are very few crises in life; the great crisis is the surrender of the will."

In the Old Testament, the word “to will” is ABHAH and it means “to breath after” or “to long for.” That is the issue, what are we longing for? What are we running after that just takes our breath away?

Nancy Leigh DeMoss put it this way in her book Surrender. She said:

You don’t want to surrender to God’s control? You won’t bow to His will in relation to your marriage, your morals, your attitudes, your tongue, your eating habits, your spending habits, or the way you spend your time? Then count on it – the very points on which you refuse to surrender will become “enemies” that rule over you – lust, greed, possessions, food, sloth, immorality, anger, etc.

- Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Surrender, p. 43

And so as God is molding and shaping our lives, as He is chipping away at some of those areas that need to be removed, we don’t like it and many times we refuse to surrender to Him. But when you think about it, how foolish that is for us to behave that way and yet, pride is that barrier because we think we know what is better for us than God does!

Let's put this into a picture and I think you will see what I mean. The Bible tells us that God is the Master Potter and we are the clay and He is molding and shaping our lives to make us into a masterpiece, to sanctify us! Now I am sure we have all seen a potter working with his potter's wheel and he puts a slab of clay on it, uses some water to mold the clay. He will remove imperfections that will ruin his work. And as that wheel is turning, as the clay is being molded and shaped, have you ever seen the clay rise up and say, "Hey, wait a minute. Don't take that away, I like that!" Now if you have, see me afterwards, we need to talk.

Of course we would never see that and yet, as Christians, the clay does that with God, we do that. We need to be able to surrender to His will and allow the water of the Spirit of God to fill our lives and make us more pliable you might say. Why fight against the Master Potter, He knows what He is doing and thus, surrender to Him and see the work He will do in you and through you for His glory!

Folks, it all comes down to perspective and a willingness to surrender our lives, wholly and totally to God. A. W. Tozer put it this way and I think we can relate to where he is coming from. He tells us in this prayer:

Father, I want to know thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name, Amen.

- A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

May we be able to take a blank sheet of paper, sign it and give it to the Lord and be able to say to Him, "Lord, you fill it in, you know what is best for my life, I will follow wherever you lead! Lord, I trust in you, I believe in you, I lay my life down before you as your servant that you may use me for your glory and mold and shape my life to be like Jesus!" That is not an easy thing to do but as you know the Lord you will be able to trust the Lord that He has what is best for your life and you will be able to surrender all to Him!

I hope you understand that. Our responsibility is to surrender our lives to Him and it is a difficult one to do, but it is one we must do. Now as we study this subject of sanctification we are going to look at three aspects of this work. We will first look at the positional aspect of sanctification. Then we will look at the present experience or the progressive work of sanctification. And lastly, we will look at the ultimate work of sanctification or what you might call the finished product!

A. THE POSITIONAL ASPECT OF SANCTIFICATION

The first thing we are going to look at is the positional aspect of sanctification and it is very simple and yet very important. Once you are saved, once you have asked Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, at that very moment, in a positional sense, you are sanctified completely! Now some take this to the wrong conclusion and feel that you will never sin anymore because you are sanctified! That is wrong but because of the finished work of Christ, the work that He did for us, we are sanctified or that process will be completed, we will not come up short. And thus, as the Father looks at us He sees the finished product!

Let me show you what I mean, what God has to say regarding this positional sanctification. In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul wrote to this carnal church, **“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”**

As you read this verse it almost seems like these Corinthian believers were some kind of super saint but we know as you have read this letter that this was far from the truth. They are saints, HAGIOS in the Greek or set apart not because they were so special but because of being in Christ, being a believer! Not only does Paul call them saints but he also says that they are sanctified; HAGIAZOE in the Greek and the idea here is that they were set apart from sin, separated unto God.

In other words, they were saints because they have been sanctified and that is all based in Christ. They were holy in God's eyes because of the work of Christ regardless of their sinful living, their carnal lifestyles! This is our position in Christ, and it doesn't matter if you are faithful or unfaithful, it doesn't matter if you are famous or not famous, all it means is that in Christ you are set apart, a holy person, you are a *SAINTE!*

We will look at the present experience or the progressive work of sanctification and at the ultimate work of sanctification or what you might call the finished product in a few minutes! But here it is all based in the finished work of Christ and God sees us as sanctified already, He sees the finished product you might say!

Let me show you what I mean by looking at the Corinthian believers and what Paul wrote of them. In I Corinthians 6:9-11 we are told, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”** Did you see that? They **“were sanctified”** in Christ. Yes, their past was not good, it was very bad in fact and yet because of Christ all that is gone, there is no record of their past sins, they have been justified and now they are also sanctified!

Now as you read that you might get the idea that they were strong Christians for Paul to say that they were sanctified, but that is not the case. In I Corinthians 3:1-4 we are told, **“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?”**

Talk about your carnal Christians, they are fighting over who is the greatest; Paul or Apollos and Paul is basically telling them they are fools fighting over that which is nothing! Ironside put it this way: “Imagine a household divided over servants!” Silly yes, and that is what they were doing and yet, in a positional sense, God saw them as sanctified, as hard as that is to believe but He does the same with us!

Remember what Paul said in Hebrews 10:10, **“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“And in accordance with this will [of God], we have been made holy (consecrated and sanctified) through the offering made once for all of the body of Jesus Christ (the Anointed One).”**

Thus, as God became flesh and dwelt among us, as He fulfilled the Father’s will, as He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins, the Old Covenant was replaced by the New Covenant and in that our sins are paid in full, paid completely as He has sanctified us or set us apart by the shedding of His blood!

Now that word “**sanctified**” or “**made holy**” is the Greek word, HEGIASMENOI and it speaks of an accomplished fact, not a progressive sanctification in a practical sense where God is still working in us. But in a positional sense that as God looks at us He sees us as perfect, He sees the finished product! That is what Paul is saying here. Positionally in Christ we are seen as perfect now!

And make no mistake about what Paul has said here, it is truly powerful. The Greek verb form in this verse, Hebrews 10:10, “**we have been sanctified**” is a perfect participle with a finite verb. What that means is this. It is shown in the strongest way that the believer’s salvation is continuous and it is permanent!

Now let me say this and I did touch on this but it is important for you to understand or you will believe that it doesn’t matter what you do, you are sanctified no matter what. As true as that is, salvation is a matter of the heart and if you can sin without any conviction in your life, I would doubt if you are saved and thus, you are not sanctified! You see, it is important for every Christian to keep in mind the great difference between his position and his practice, his standing and his state. God sees us as righteous, because He sees us through His righteous Son, who has taken our place, and because He has planted in us a righteous new nature.

Think about it like this. Presidents do not always act presidentially, diplomats do not always act diplomatically, kings do not always act kingly - but they are still presidents, diplomats, and kings. Christians do not always act like Christians, but they are still Christians.

John MacArthur gives us this illustration regarding where we stand in Christ in spite of our failures. He wrote,

Some years ago a young boy, whose father was a pastor, was put in jail for stealing some merchandise from a department store. His father happened to be playing golf with some of the church leaders at the time and received a call while on the golf course to come down to the jail to get his son. Thinking it was a mistake, the pastor took the other men with him to the police station, where embarrassment abounded. The deepest impression of the incident left on the boy's mind was made by the repeated reminders he received from those men, and from many others afterward, about who his father was. "Having a father like yours," they would ask, "how could you have done what you did?" Yet as humiliating and painful as the experience was, the boy knew he was still his father's son. He had not acted like a son of his father should have acted, but he was still a son.

As Christians one of the strongest rebukes we can have when we sin is to be reminded of who our Father is. And reminding ourselves of whose we are should be one of our strongest deterrents to sin. Remembering our position can compel us to improve our practice.

- John MacArthur, Hebrews 10:10

Look at who your heavenly Father is, look at all He has done for you, and as you do you should have that desire to do those things that please Him. Not for salvation but for identification, to show that you are His child.

So positionally speaking, the weakest saint is sanctified just as much as the strongest saint because positional sanctification is not based upon us but upon the finished work of Christ and all we have done is received that into our lives by faith! And so the positional aspect of sanctification is that once you are saved, you are sanctified! But what about all the times I fall and stumble and sin? We will look at that next; it is more of a practical application of sanctification as we will see!

B. THE PRESENT EXPERIENCE OR THE PROGRESSIVE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION

Now we are going to look at the present experience or the progressive work of sanctification, this might be called the practical application. Paul, in II Corinthians 3:18 tells us, **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

How do we see Christ today? We see Him through the Word of God. And yes, we can't see Him clearly as face-to-face, but as we study, meditate, apply God's Word to our lives the Holy Spirit is *transforming* us into the image of God step-by-step. It is a life-long process as John tells us, **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”** I John 3:2.

And notice that Paul doesn't say, "From backsliding to glory" but "**from glory to glory.**" That is how it should be! David said in Psalm 17:15, "**As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.**" May that be our hearts desire, to be satisfied as we are transformed into the likeness of God and that happens as we gaze upon Him and allow the Spirit of God to transform us! And folks, He will complete the work in us, so don't give up because He doesn't!

And that is truly the nature of what God is doing in us right now; it is a transformation process as we are progressively being conformed into His image! That is what Paul said in Romans 8:29, "**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren.**"

Now here in II Corinthians 3:18 Paul speaks of "**being transformed**" and here it refers to believers' progressive sanctification. The Christian life is a continual process of growing into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, ascending from one level of glory to another. Now don't let that puff you up because if you do, guess what, you have pride in your life and you need to let that go and thank God that He saved you, a wretched sinner! Don't lose sight of who you are and who He is!

Let me show you how this works in our life. Paul tells us in Colossians 3:8-11, **“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”**

What is the key point here? Paul says to **“put off all these.”** That truly is the key or part of the key. The way you do that is by surrendering to the will of God in your life. It is not a program, a book, a technique, or anything but Jesus and our surrender to His will! Paul is speaking of removing all the traces of worldliness that is in us as he tells us to **“put off”** these things, which comes from the Greek word APOTITHEMI (ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee) and it is a word that speaks of removing clothes and in this case, removing the dirty clothes and putting on Christ!

Notice Paul's focus here, they deal primarily with the sinful things we say, what comes out of our mouth! James put it this way, **“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.”** James 1:26. Sometimes it is hard for us to say nothing, but sometimes that is what we are to do, and the reality is, the Lord is the only one who can tame our tongue and that is done as we surrender to Him, make our will His will!

But we are not only to “**put off**” all these things but he goes on to say in Colossians 3:12-17, “**Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**”

In other words, “**put off**” those things that are wicked and “**put on**” the things of God, fill your life with the things of God! This is what should flow from the lives of Christians, the person who has taken off the old garments, the filthy garments and has put on Christ! These qualities that Paul speaks of here are to cover the new man. But this will never happen unless you surrender your will so that you may receive His!

Let me share with you a few more Scriptures to show you that God is transforming our lives, working in us down here so that we will fit in up there and it is a lifelong process! In Romans 12:2 Paul said, “**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**”

In Galatians 4:19 Paul told them, **“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“My little children, for whom I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you.”** Paul is speaking of the Galatians becoming like Christ in character and that truly is what God is doing in each of us. In Colossians 2:6-7 Paul tells us, **“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”** In Romans 13:14 we are told, **“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”** And in Romans 8:29 Paul says, **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”**

In Romans 6:11-14 Paul tells us, **“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”**

The word “**reckon**” is an accounting term, we have to put this into our account by faith that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ! Why is that? Because we still have these bodies of flesh and the flesh nature does try to resurrect itself and control our lives from time-to-time. Thus, by faith I believe the old life was put to death and we wait for the redemption of our bodies when this flesh nature will be done away with, when this corruptible body has put on incorruption and this mortal body has put on immortality.

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:18-23, “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.**” We wait for that day but until then, we are being sanctified in a practical sense!

Paul also tells us not to let sin reign in your body as it did before you were saved. How often we forget that because we try to accomplish the work in our flesh, or we just don't believe it, or we just don't care or don't know the truth. D. L. Moody used this true story to illustrate this point. He spoke of a black woman from the south following the Civil War who was set free from slavery but was confused about her condition and she asked: "Now is I free, or been I not? When I go to my old master he says I ain't free, and when I go to my own people they say I is, and I don't know whether I'm free or not. Some people told me that Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation, but master says he didn't; he didn't have any right to." Don't listen to what the Devil is saying to you, what the world is saying to you, what sin is saying to you, listen to Jesus who said, "**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**" John 8:36. Praise the Lord for that, we are free!

How is that done? How do we walk in that freedom? How do we live like that? Paul tells us that the key to walking in freedom is don't present the various parts of your body to the service of sin. I think the New Living Translation puts this idea across for us very nicely as it says, "**Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.**" Romans 6:12-13.

Tools or weapons can be used for good or for evil, thus, use them for good or you will incur a self-inflicted wound if you use these weapons, your body for evil! What do I mean by parts of our body being used for evil? Don't let your eyes see things that are evil, don't let your ears hear things that are evil, don't let your mind wander to evil thoughts, don't use your hands for evil, don't run to evil and-so-on. It is as Psalm 1:1-3 says, **“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.”**

And Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

The second key to walking in freedom and not remaining a slave to sin is to present yourself to God, let Him use your life instead of having your body be used as a weapon of evil, let God use it for good! Do you see the two step approach here: Crucify the old man, cut off any connection with the flesh life, do away with it. Now there is a void and that void is replaced with being used by God as His instrument to make beautiful music by so that the world might hear and be drawn to God.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:22-24, **“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”** Who are our serving, who are you a slave to? You see, whoever it is will be manifested in your life. May it be Jesus!

If you do these things then sin will not have control of your life, it will not be lord over you. That doesn't mean you won't struggle, what it means is that which once controlled your life is no longer in control of your life, God is! You see, true freedom is not to live after the flesh, but after God! It is a life that is surrendered unto Him!

And will God complete this project, this work in us? As I have said several times already, ***ABSOLUTELY!*** Paul, in Philippians 1:6 tells us, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** The Amplified Bible puts it like this, **“And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”**

You see, not only does God save us but He also sanctifies us or the moment we get saved God is molding and shaping us to be the men and women He wants us to be. He wants us to be holy as He is holy. It is a lifelong process but He does not give up, He will complete the work He is doing in us. It is as Oswald Chambers tells us in regards to the sanctification process. He said:

Sanctification means intense concentration on God's point of view. It means every power of body, soul, and spirit is chained and kept for God's purpose only. It will cause an intense narrowing of all our interests on earth, and an immense broadening of all our interests in God. Are we prepared for God to do all in us that He separated us for? The reason some of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized its meaning from God's standpoint. Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the disposition that ruled Him will rule us. Jesus has prayed that we might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. The one and only characteristic of the Holy Spirit in a person is a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ and freedom from everything that is unlike Him.

- Oswald Chambers

Now just because this process is not completed until we go to be with the Lord, does that mean we shouldn't try to live holy lives, lives separated unto God? Absolutely not! Peter said in I Peter 1:15-16, "**but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'**"

Also, some other verses that show us that God will complete the work He has begun in us are found in I Thessalonians 5:22-24 where Paul tells us, "**Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**"

As we close this section on practical sanctification or the progressive work of God in our lives, let me share this story with you. We are told,

The story is told of a young girl who accepted Christ as her Savior and applied for membership in a local church. “Were you a sinner before you received the Lord Jesus into your Life?” inquired an old deacon. “Yes, sir,” she replied. “Well, are you still a sinner?” “To tell you the truth, I feel I’m a greater sinner than ever.” “Then what real change have you experienced?” “I don’t quite know how to explain it,” she said, “except I used to be a sinner running after sin, but now that I am saved, I’m a sinner running from sin!” she was received into the fellowship of the church, and she proved by her consistent life that she was truly converted.

- Our Daily Bread

That is the reality; our lives are being transformed to the image of Christ. John Newtown put it into perspective for us as he wrote, “I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’” That is practical sanctification or the present experience, the progressive work of God in our lives that takes place the moment we get saved and continues on until we go to be with the Lord, He will finish the work!

C. THE ULTIMATE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION – THE FINISHED PRODUCT

Now we have talked about this last work of sanctification, the ultimate work or the finished product some in our last section. The bottom line is this, God will complete the work and we will be taken up to glory. And we will cover this next time, that we are freed from the presence of sin and that speaks of our glorification, when we go to be with the Lord!

But let me just give you a few verses to show you that this work will be complete, not because we have finished it but because He has! In Jude 24-25 we are told, **“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.”**

What a glorious promise, that Jesus is able to keep us from stumbling, we will make it into heaven, not because of our ability or strength, but because of His and His promise to us! You see, even in the midst of these apostates trying to lure us into their lies, God is able to keep us from falling prey to them. Think about it, He who was able to save us in the first place is more than able to keep us from stumbling down this path. You see, our victory over the Devil, over the flesh, over apostates and their teaching is found in Jesus. If we would only look to Him! It is as John said, **“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”** I John 5:4-5.

In Philippians 3:20-21 we are told, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

God is going to transform our lowly body; it will be conformed to His glorious body. In other words, the work that He began in us, salvation, He will complete, the sanctification process and we will be taken to glory, not maybe, we will!

Let me close with this story. C. S. Lewis tells us,

When I was a child, I often had a toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother, she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother - at least not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this: I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist the next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from my pain; but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right.

And I knew those dentists; I knew they would start fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. Our Lord is like the dentists. Dozens of people go to him to be cured of some particular sin. Well, he will cure it all right, but he will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if you once call him in, he will give you the full treatment.

- C. S. Lewis

Make no mistake about it, God loves us too much to leave us in the condition we are in and thus, He is transforming our lowly body and conforming it into the image of Jesus, it is the sanctification process that begins the moment we get saved and continues on until we go to be with the Lord! And thus, we are freed from the present power of sin in our lives, the sanctification process. All we need to do is walk in the Spirit and we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh and that is speaking of surrendering our will to His!

Remember, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** Philippians 1:6.