



SANCTIFICATION: SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

“1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

- Romans 6:1-14

Sanctification: Spiritual Transformation

The sixth and the seventh chapters of Romans are critical chapters in understanding the believer's life with regard to sin and righteousness. And there are no better chapters to go to to get a full understanding of the meaning of the great subject of sanctification.

Chapter 6, verse 1, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we, too, might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, know this, that our old self was crucified with Him that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting your members – the members of your body – to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

The first statement in verse 14 sort of sums up the essence of sanctification, "For sin shall not be master over you." As we talk about sanctification, we're talking about the work of God that separates the believer from sin, from the power of sin, from the dominance of sin, from the tyranny of sin, from the dominion of sin, from the mastery of sin. It's very important, because this is where we, as believers, live our lives. And to be able to understand the great truths of sanctification will not only help us to live righteously and obediently before God,

but it will bring to us great comfort, consolation, encouragement, and strength as we understand that we no longer have to sin. The power of sin has been broken, and increasingly we are being conformed by the Lord Himself into a righteousness in behavior that increases toward being like the very Lord Himself.

Now, let me approach this text by having you think with me about ways in which sanctification is very often treated. It used to be very popular to speak of certain truth in the Bible as positional truth. And by that, people mean to say it has to do with your state before God; it has to do with your standing before God. Positional truth was a phrase to identify your standing before God, your position before Him. And it is a valid phrase, because in salvation, our standing before God, our state before God, our position before God has changed.

In justification, God credits the perfect righteousness of Christ to us. The Bible says he imputes the righteousness of Christ to us by faith. This is a declaration by God. This is a declaration by God who is the Judge.

Jesus Christ, having paid in full the penalty for our sins, our sins having been imputed to Him on the cross, His righteousness is then imputed to us who believe. We then stand in a new position before God, and that is a position of no condemnation, no judgment at all. Our sins having been completely judged in Christ; they will never be judged in us.

So, our position before God has changed. We have moved from being under wrath to being under grace, from being under condemnation to being under reward, if you will. That is to say that what awaits us in the future is not condemnation but eternal blessing.

Justified believers all stand before God as righteous, in a state of righteousness, in a position of righteousness, because the very righteousness of Christ has been credited to them. They are covered, literally, in his righteousness, and therefore they are called by Peter a holy nation.

Speaking further of this positional kind of righteousness, all believers are said to be seated with Christ in heavenly places, in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 6. In other words, it is as if we are already in heaven. Our position has so changed that we are fixed in the eternal hope of

heaven to such an absolute degree that we can be spoken of as having already been seated in the heavenlies. Our lives are hidden securely with Christ in God, and nothing can change that position. Why? Because our sins were imputed to Christ who paid for them in full and His righteousness is imputed to us; that is unchangeable.

Colossians 3:3, “You have died; your life is hidden with Christ in God.” We are forever secure in this position. This is true of all Christians, whether they’re mature or immature, whether they are at any moment obedient or disobedient, whether they are functioning as spiritually minded or fleshly minded. This is true of all Christians regardless of one’s spiritual maturity. This is an unassailable, unalterable, and unshakeable reality. This is positional truth. This standing in Christ before God is the most precious of all gospel truths. It is wonderful to know that our position is forever settled.

But as wonderful as positional truth is, many people have misunderstood this and have decided that since our position can’t be altered – and it can’t – since what we do cannot affect that, Christians therefore need not be concerned about sinning. If our position is permanent, if it is unalterable, if it is forever fixed, if there is nothing we can do to change that, then why would we worry about sinning?

Unless you think that’s a rather isolated and obscure idea, it is not. This kind of teaching has been widespread for many, many years, sometimes coming under the title antinomianism – that is lawlessness. This has been a part of evangelical thinking for a long, long time, for centuries and is even a part of evangelical thinking today.

And through the years of my life, I have been engaged in a battle, on this particular front, for many years I trying to deal with what is called “no lordship” teaching. This is the pervasive idea that really had a dominant influence in America in the last century, and certainly continues even now – the idea that when you’re saved – here’s the simplest form of it and the most popular form of it – when you’re saved, you receive Jesus Christ as Savior, and therein is your justification. Receiving Christ as Savior is this one event in which you are declared righteous before God and placed in this position which can never be altered. Acknowledging Him, on the other hand, as Lord is a subsequent and optional event. Often we hear this first experience, acknowledging Jesus as Savior, called “conversion,” and the second one, acknowledging Him as Lord, called “consecration.” Those are pretty familiar terms. I grew

up in that environment. I grew up where that environment dominated. I can't tell you how many times I was told, as a young person, that even if I had received Jesus as Savior, I needed to make Him Lord of my life - have you heard that phrase? Very common phrase - as if this is some subsequent option.

I was doing a Bible conference at the Moody Bible Institute one year. In the old days, at the Moody Founder's Week Conference, there were usually three speakers, and we all spoke six days in a row. We each had a session during the day, and we spoke all week long, and then we sort of tag-teamed in the evening sessions.

And one week, when I was there the whole week, I was talking about how important it was to recognize that when you came to Christ you receive Him as Savior and Lord. And the speaker after me was doing just the opposite. He was telling them that all they needed was to acknowledge Him as Savior, "And sometime down the road," he said – and even made a statement to this effect – "you can worry about that second step maybe in your 30s."

This idea that you take Jesus as Savior, that's mandatory, but receiving Him as Lord is optional, the idea that these are subsequent to one another is unbiblical. Nowhere in Scripture do we ever find that positional forensic righteousness imputed to us is detached from practical behavioral righteousness. That is to say nowhere does the Word of God ever separate justification from sanctification. This is not a two-step process. There is no such thing as achieving the deeper life. There is no such thing as a second blessing that is subsequent to the first, that catapults you into another level of Christian experience. There is no such thing as a second work of grace as it's often called, the first one being your salvation, the second one being your surrender; the first one being your conversion, the second one being your consecration. But this has been the dominating, popular two-stage approach: you get converted, then you get consecrated; you get saved, then you get surrendered.

All who are truly justified, all who are truly converted are committed unequivocally, as we saw this morning, in principle to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and it shows up in their practice. If you just take the plain statements of Scripture, you can see that there never is any distance between conversion and consecration, between justification and sanctification, between Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord.

For example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 1, “Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth.” How do you define the church? He says, “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, along with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.” You could take that one verse and end that movement. The church is those who have been sanctified. It is those who are saints, holy ones by calling – that is to say by the effectual call of God which saved them, they became holy ones set apart from sin, and this is true of all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. There is no less than a full understanding of the lordship of Jesus Christ and calling upon His name as Lord that brings about salvation. Salvation brings about sanctification. Sanctification brings about a setting apart from sin by which we can be designated as saints or holy ones. This is true of all who are in the church - even the Corinthians, who were no models, by the way, of virtue.

In chapter 1 again – that’s the beginning of the chapter, or near the beginning, verse 2, the second verse in – the next to the last verse, verse 30, “By His doing” – that is by the sovereign power of God – “you are in Christ Jesus” – by His sovereign power and grace, you are in Christ Jesus, a favorite phrase of Paul’s, meaning, of course, that you are a true believer, a true Christian regenerated, justified, and converted – “who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” – it’s a package. You are in Christ, and in Christ you have divine wisdom, divine righteousness, divine sanctification, and divine redemption granted to you. These things cannot be separated.

Go to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Second Thessalonians chapter 2 - and I’ll give you one other in a minute. This is what Paul says regarding the Thessalonians, “We always give thanks to God for you.” Verse 13 – 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – “We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, for God has chosen you for salvation; He chose you from the beginning” – that is before the foundation of the world when He made His eternal decree- “for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” It’s again a package thing. Divine election in eternity past produces a salvation and a sanctification by the power of the Spirit and faith in the revealed truth.

“This is” – verse 14 says – “This is essentially what it means to be called through our gospel so that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The salvation in verse 13 he’s

talking about is not just the first phase of salvation, which is justification or conversion; it's the full salvation all the way at the end. God chose you to the full salvation, that is to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ through faith in the truth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the process of sanctification.

One other statement that I would add to those two is in 2 Peter, and verse 1 tells us that Peter's "a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Then he gives them a greeting in verse 2, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord." So, he's talking about people who have been given a faith, who have been granted righteousness, and in that righteousness has come grace and peace multiplied because they have come to know God and Jesus. And in that, verse 3 says, "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." When you came to Christ, when you put your trust in Him, when you receive the righteousness of God imputed to you, when you receive grace and peace in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, along with that, by His divine power came everything that pertains to life and godliness through the true, the genuine knowledge of the one who called you into His own glory and excellence. When you came to salvation, when you were effectually called to Christ, you received at that point all things that pertain to life and godliness.

This two-stage kind of idea in salvation seemed to be a comfortable way to explain people who made some kind of outward commitment but doesn't have any change in their life. This became a very popular part of Christianity. The Christian church ostensibly was filled with all kinds of saved people who had never made Jesus Lord. And it was convenient for parents to say things like, "Well, my child prayed a prayer and asked Jesus to be his Savior, and he just never has asked Him to be his Lord." people would say about one another, even as adults, "Well, you know, that person needs to be consecrated; that person needs to be surrendered." And there were preachers who were preaching that. That was kind of the nature - a sort of revivalist kind of preaching for years. But it never was really what the church, what the great faithful preachers and teachers of the church through the years ever taught.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "You cannot receive Christ as your justification only and then later decide to refuse or accept Him as your sanctification."

J. C. Ryle, well over a hundred years ago, said – 1879 – “Sudden, instantaneous leaps from conversion to consecration I fail to see anywhere in the Bible. More consecrated he doubtless can be and will be as God’s grace increases, but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again, I do not know what conversion means.” End quote.

Well, let’s go back to what we said last time, what does conversion mean? As we learned in our last study, conversion is a term that describes the actual spiritual transformation. And that’s why I’ve titled this little section “Spiritual Transformation.” The first element in spiritual transformation is conversion. And the second one, then, is sanctification. Conversion describes the actual spiritual transformation wrought by God in the very life of the believer by the gospel. Once God regenerates, and then the Spirit of God elicits from the heart faith in the truth and repentance from sin, a real miracle takes place called conversion. And someone is turned around and sent in the other direction.

Second Corinthians 5:17, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things pass away, new things come.” There is real transformation. Sanctification then begins with conversion, which is simultaneous with justification, simultaneous with regeneration. And while, as I said last time, we can kind of separate these out a little bit, in our logic we can’t separate them in our chronology. It is a monumental, and it is a terrible and injurious error to say a person can be justified, converted, and not sanctified. It fails to understand – listen – that God does not declare anyone righteous that He does not also make righteous. It fails to understand the nature of conversion, which is a real transformation, as well as failing to understand sanctification. And, at the heart of it, it fails to understand that Jesus is not just Savior ever to anyone; He is Savior and Lord. Those who are justified are also sanctified; there can be no distinction.

Well, that gets us back to our text, Romans 6, and to an initial question before we look at it. And I’m not intending, necessarily, to tell you how far I’m going to get through this section. I want to see what comes into my mind as we look at it. But I want to look at the doctrine of sanctification. Now that we’ve said it’s essential, it’s a reality, it’s inseparable, what are we talking about? Let me give you a simple definition: sanctification is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in a believer, making him holy. Making him holy. It’s that simple. It is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in a believer that makes him or her holy.

Now, one other thing to add to that: it is a process. It is a process. Justification – an event. Justification – a declaration. Sanctification – a process. Sanctification – a promise. Justification – an event and a declaration; sanctification – a process and a promise. Justification frees the believer from the guilt and the penalty of sin. Sanctification frees the believer from the pollution and the power of sin. Justification takes place at one point; sanctification is progressive through our whole Christian life.

But at justification – mark this now in your mind – at justification, we surrender the principle of sin. We surrender that. That's what repentance is. We come and say, "I want to be delivered from my sin; I want to be rescued from my sin; I want to be forgiven for my sin; I want to be set free from my sin." Jesus came to save His people from their sin. That's what you say when you ask God to save you, to justify you, "I surrender the principle of sin. I yield up my life; I want to be delivered from sin." And in that, of course, is the deliverance from self-rule. The ultimate of all sins is pride and self-rule. True repentance couldn't say, "I want you to take away all my sin except the one that dominates me, which is I want to maintain control of my life. I want you as Savior, not as Lord." That's ludicrous. You would be asking the Lord to accept a repentance that was partial and stopped short of that for which we must of all things repent, and that is self-rule. The essence of our sin is our pride.

At justification, then, we, in true repentance, embracing Christ, surrender the principle of sin totality. We yield it up, "I want to be delivered from sin." And that's why we said, as we were looking at the words of Jesus today, "I want You literally to subordinate all my relationships, all my self-interest, even my own physical life and everything I possess. That's what Jesus asks of one who follows Him. We are yielding up the principle of sinful self-rule in justification. Where there is no justification, there is no conversion.

Now in sanctification, we surrender the practice of sin day by day as we mature in grace. At salvation, you surrender the principle; progressively through life, you surrender the practice as you mature. At salvation, we confess Jesus as Lord; we surrender to the holy lordship of Christ in principle. After that, our hearts desire to surrender our sins in practice. And we do that again and again and again. Once at salvation, over and over in sanctification.

So, at justification and conversion you confess Jesus as Lord. And the working out of that in principle comes in your practice as you yield to His will and His word and therefore His lordship in a pattern of increasing holiness, increasing righteousness, and decreasing sinfulness.

Now, let's look at Romans 6. There is an immediate aspect of sanctification. There is a starting point simultaneous with justification. Look at verse 11 – Romans 6:11, “Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” That's very strong language. Very strong. “Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” If you're a believer, if you have been justified and converted, you have a relationship that is very different than what it was prior to that. You used to be dead to God and alive to sin.

Now, this is completely reversed. You are alive to God and dead to sin. This is a once-for-all aspect of separating us from sin unto holiness. That's why as I read you in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul says, “Those who have been sanctified.” And he's talking there about the initial point of that, the inaugural point.

There is a sense in which you have been sanctified, you have been set apart from sin, you are now dead to sin, and you are alive to God. But sanctification, unlike justification, is not forensic; it is connected directly to conversion, regeneration, and new birth. It is a real separation, not just a declared one. In justification, God declares that you are delivered from sin. But in sanctification, which encompasses conversion, God actually begins to separate you from sin and continues to do so by the Holy Spirit in increasing degrees of practical holiness in your lives as you grow – to a greater or lesser degree in each individual, depending upon how we apply the means of grace.

But it is not a second experience, sanctification. It is not an option. It is a reality, and it will take place. That's why he says in verse 11, “Consider yourselves to be dead to sin.” Why? Because that's what you are. Consider yourself to be alive to God, because that's what you are, and that is a total reversal of what you used to be. That is to say – another way of saying it – sin is no longer your master. It is no longer your master.

So, he says in verse 12, “Don’t let it reign in your mortal body.” And in verse 13, “Don’t go on presenting the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.” It’s not necessary. Verse 9, “Even death no longer is master over you because it no longer is master over Christ.” Christ conquered death: He conquered sin. And so, sin has no tyranny over you. This is so very foundational.

When you became a believer, there was a real transformation, and we’re going to see that unfold in chapter 6 and 7. We’re going to come to grips to what really has happened to you and what really is going on inside of you. It is a real separation from sin that began at your true salvation, your true conversion. And it continues in increasing degrees of practical holiness, different for every believer, depending upon how you hear the Word, apply the Word, and use the means of grace. But again, I say, it is not a later experience, and it is not optional. From the start God broke the power of sin and its absolute tyranny over every believer. And God began, from the start, having separated you from sin, to continue the distance between you and sin.

Donald Gray Barnhouse, the great Philadelphia preacher and Bible expositor, in his commentary on Romans, said, “Justification intended to produce sanctification. Justification and sanctification are as inseparable as a torso and a head. God does not give gratuitous righteousness apart from newness of life. Holiness starts where justification finishes. And if holiness doesn’t start, we have the right to suspect that justification never started either.”

Now, I want you to know, some of you may be saying, “Well, that’s what I believe.”

But you have to understand that I grew up in a whole world of people who never understood this. And they’re still out there all over the place. Understanding that a justified life is a sanctified life is critical. Understanding that practical holiness is as mechanism God’s work as justification, as regeneration, as redemption, as conversion is critical. Because if you don’t understand that, then you’re going to live with some illusion that a person who prays a prayer and asks God to be their Savior but will not live under His lordship is somehow still a Christian who just hasn’t come to the second level. There are no such people. There are no such people.

Somebody said, many years ago, “If He’s not Lord of all, He’s not Lord at all.”

B. B. Warfield, a great, great Presbyterian theologian, one who had an impact on me in my seminary days, as I read what he wrote. It says this about Romans 6. He says, “Romans 6 was written for no other purpose than to demonstrate that justification and sanctification are indissolubly bound together, that we cannot have one without the other, that dying with Christ and living with Christ are integral elements of one indis-“ - how did he say it? – “indisintegratable salvation.” He made up that word. Indisintegratable salvation.” Indivisible.

Now, this is why Paul writes this section. Sanctification is so much an essential part of salvation that you can actually use sanctification as a synonym. Can I help you with that? Turn to Acts 20, because I want this to be something you understand so that you cannot only know it, but that you can tell others. It’s so important. You can actually use the word “sanctified” to refer to salvation. I can say to you, “I thank God that I’m sanctified.”

Now, some of you are going to say, “Oh, that’s a pretty bold statement to make.”

I mean I don’t know; I think we kind of would be a little hesitant to say that, wouldn’t we? You don’t introduce yourself to someone – you might say, “You know, it’s nice to meet you; I’m a Christian.” You might say, “Well, I’ve been born again,” or, “I’ve been redeemed.” It’d be a little – you’d feel a little awkward saying, “You know, I’m happy to meet you; I’m sanctified.”

Because we have this idea of sanctification as sort of a state of near perfection, but it really is a – it’s a term broad enough – as I’ve told you before; I’ve said it before – all the terms of salvation, while they have a narrow technical definition can also be used to speak of the whole of salvation. You can say you’re redeemed. Redemption is one component of salvation that can be very clearly defined, but it can also be used to speak of the total reality. You can say you’re justified. You can say you’re converted, and you can use it in that general way. The same is true with the word “sanctification.” It is so much an integral part of the work of salvation that it can stand for the whole as well.

Look at verse 32 of Acts 20, “I commend you,” says Paul to these Ephesian elders, “I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” He is referring to believers as those

who are sanctified. The Word of God does its work; it builds; it edifies; it gives hope of the coming inheritance to all the sanctified. We can call ourselves the sanctified; we are the sanctified. We are the ones who God, in His grace, has set apart from sin to righteousness. This is not just a forensic thing; it is a real transformation.

Look at Acts 26 and verse 18. Acts 26 and verse 18. Paul here is giving his testimony, and the Lord speaks to him back in verse 15. “He says, ‘Who are You, Lord?’” This is a rehearsal of his Damascus Road experience.

“And Jesus says, ‘I’m Jesus whom you’re persecuting. Arise, stand on your feet’” – verse 16 – ““for this purpose I’ve appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness”” – and so forth. And down in verse 18, He says this is what I’m going to use you to do, “I’m going to send you to open their eyes” – that is the Gentiles – “so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”” How do you get sanctified? By faith. How do you get saved? By faith. Sanctification here is a substitute word for salvation. We are the sanctified. We have been sanctified. The word means to separate. We have been separated from sin. We have been separated, it says here, from darkness to light. We have been separated from the dominion of Satan to God. We have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness, which certainly is a picture of sin; taken out of the dominion of Satan, certainly the dominion of evil. We have been delivered to the light and delivered to God. And we, then, “have been” – past tense – “sanctified by faith in Me.” “Me” – Jesus speaking. You put your faith in Him - you’re redeemed; you’re regenerated; you’re justified; you’re converted; you’re adopted; you’re sanctified.

So, there is a sense in which sanctification must be understood as a synonym for salvation. And that is exactly how it was used in 1 Corinthians chapter 1; I take you back to that, to the church of God at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. Again, verse 30, “Christ Jesus, who became to us righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” First Corinthians chapter 6, verse 11 – this is such an important text. He says in verse 9, “Unrighteous people don’t inherit the kingdom of God.” That’s pretty important to know, isn’t it? “Unrighteous people don’t inherit the kingdom of God. Don’t be deceived; fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers – none of them are going to inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some

of you; but you were” – what? – “washed, you were sanctified, you were justified” – past tense – “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” And it all happened simultaneously.

In Hebrews chapter 2, verse 11 – well, verse 10 we would start there, talking about Christ, who tasted death for everyone, in verse 9, and then in verse 10, “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He’s not ashamed to call them brethren.” What a great statement.

Jesus dies in order to perfect Himself as the author of our salvation so that He could sanctify us. And all of us who are sanctified are all from one Father and all called brethren. Anyone who has come to God as Father and come to Jesus as brother in salvation is said to be sanctified.

Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14 – and here in this particular chapter, we are looking at the wonderful sacrifice of Christ in all its power compared to the impotent sacrifices of the Old Testament, “impossible for them to take away sins” – verse 4 says.

But in chapter 10, verse 14, speaking of Christ, “For by one offering He has perfected” – perfect here is really a synonym for salvation – “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” And here again, sanctified is an apt way to describe salvation. We are the sanctified.

First Peter 1:2, “- according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit” – that’s how we were brought into the blessing of salvation. How can we miss this when it is so clear? There’s no such thing – listen to me – as an unsanctified Christian. That is to say we’ve all been transformed; we’ve all been separated from sin. That’s why John, in 1 John, says, “Whoever is born of God does not continue in a pattern of sin.” He cannot. He cannot. There’s no such thing as being justified and not being sanctified. Don’t think for a minute that because you prayed a prayer somewhere or somebody you know and love prayed a prayer somewhere and acknowledged Jesus as Savior, that they can live their life any way they want, and that how they live their life doesn’t matter. If that prayer meant

anything, and if there was a real salvation, then it's going to show up in the fact that they're going to be set apart from sin – not in terms of perfection, but in terms of direction.

Now, this is what is really behind Romans 6. Look back at Romans 6, and let me just – I'm just going to make a comment on the first verse – but look at the question that comes up in verse 1.

Now, you have to get a little bit of a background. I got to give you a bit of a running start. Chapter 3 and 4 – justification. Chapter 3 and 4, the believer is made fully righteous because the righteousness of God is credited to that believer through faith.

Now, chapter 5 then raises the question - simple question, okay? – you say then that the sinner becomes righteous by what another has done? That's right. The righteousness of Christ is credited to the sinner. The question then comes up at the end of chapter 4, how can what one person does affect me? Now the Jews couldn't swallow that. They believed that they were in charge of their own eternal destiny and that it was all up to them, and it depended on their morality and their law-keeping and their ritual and their ceremony and their observance and their obedience. And the concept that what somebody else did could be credited to their account, or that somehow somebody else could be punished for their sin was absolutely beyond imagination. They didn't get the idea that their sins could be imputed to someone, and someone's righteousness could be credited to them.

So, chapter 5 then deals with that, how guilt by one man can be imputed to others.

Illustration: Adam. As in one man, Adam, all died. What Adam did catapult the whole human race into sin and guilt. How could righteousness by one man affect others? Christ. Adam's sin affected everybody. Christ's sacrifice affects all who believe.

So, chapters 3 and 4 talks about justification. Chapter 5 answers the question of imputation, how guilt or righteousness can be imputed to someone because of the sin or the obedience of another, Adam and Christ being the illustration. That settles the issue of justification. Chapter 5 ends, "The Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That's the sum-up of the glory of justification.

And that poses the question, chapter 6, “What shall we say then? Are we to sin – continue in sin that grace might increase?” It’s almost a scornful question that Paul poses here. The text prior to this has said the righteousness of Christ is credited to your account just as the sin of Adam was credited to your account as well.

He finishes up by praising the grace of God that imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner. And he even goes so far as to say wherever there was sin on the increase – verse 20 – grace abounds. And he knows how people are going to think. The critic is going to say, “That’s a great theory. That’s really great. The more sin, the more grace. I get it; then we should continue in sin that grace might increase.”

Before we can even stop to be thankful for justification, Paul jumps in and say, “If justification imputes the righteousness of Christ to us, if justification changes our position before God, if justification fixes our standing before God perfectly, then – and if justification allows God to put His grace on display in the face of our sin, then what difference does it make if we sin? If sin puts God’s grace on display, then let’s sin all the more.”

Now, this would have come from the Jewish mind, the Jewish thinking. He probably encountered this a lot of times when he was in the synagogues, preaching to the Jews. They believed salvation was their work and their work alone, and every individual’s work and his work alone. And the idea of grace abounding from someone else’s righteousness to you, the idea of grace at all covering sin and increased sin meant increased grace smacked of antinomianism to them; it smacked of lawlessness. It would have been an outrage.

So, they would have posed this ridiculous question, “Well, why not just sin more?”

Paul has to answer that, and his answer is basically this: it’s a moot question because if you’ve been justified, you won’t sin more; you will sin less because no one is justified who is not also sanctified. True holiness – he points out in the verses I read – comes from God with the grace of conversion. There is no antinomianism here. There is no lawlessness here. The idea that we continue in sin that grace may abound is an absurdity. And so he says in verse 2, “No, no, no, no” – *mē genoito* – the strongest negative possible – “No way, not at all, impossible! Can’t happen.” It’s an outraged indignation. I suppose my grandmother would

say, “Oh, perish the thought!” Ever heard that one? Perish the thought. It’s a denial with an abhorrence. No means it can’t happen.

It reminds us of Hebrews 12:14, “Holiness without which no man will see the Lord.” There is no such thing as seeing the Lord apart from sanctification. There is no salvation apart from sanctification. A Christian cannot willfully remain in, abide in, live in, carry the same desire for sin. It is not only not permissible, it is not possible. And so, that’s how he begins. Now, what he’s going to do in the chapter - you’re going to have to wait for this – is tell us all the reasons why this is such a ridiculous question.

First of all, he says, “You died to sin.” This is a severe alteration in your relationship. You died to it. That is to say you moved out of that realm. Later on he will say, “You are now walking” – verse 4 – “in newness of life.” Then he will say, “You once were a slave to sin. You no longer are a slave a sin; you are freed from sin.” You are dead to sin. Sin is no longer your master; its power having been broken.