

Unpacking the Gospel

Class 7: The Blessings of Salvation

August 16th, 2023



Introduction

Redemption is the work of Christ in which He made expiation for our sins and delivered us from the curse of the law by giving his life as a ransom for his people, thus reconciling sinners to God.

"⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7)

1. Justification: declared right before God

What is justification? It is a legal declaration issued by God in which our sins are forgiven, and that we have a clean slate before God.

Our justification has two aspects: First, we are declared not guilty (sins forgiven), and second, Christ's righteousness is imputed on our behalf.

Other passages:

Declared righteous before God: Rom 2:12-13; Rom 3:26-28; Rom 5:1-11; Gal 2:16.

God imputes or imparts his righteousness to us: Rom 4:4-5; Ps 32:1-2; 2 Cor 5:21; Phi 3:8-9.

2. Adoption: membership in God's family

As children of God, we are brought into fellowship with him and with others who, like us, became children by God's own call and adoption.

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (Jo 1:12)

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal 4:4-6)

Even though adoption is given to us at the time we become Christians, adoption is not the same as justification and regeneration.

Regeneration has to do with spiritual life within, while justification has to do with our legal status before God.

Other passages: Rom 2:28-29; Rom 8:14-17; Rom 9:6-8; Gal 3:23-26; Gal 4:4-7.

3. Sanctification: Spirit-empowered growth in Christlikeness

Definition: *“Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.”*

Sanctification is a synergetic work where the Spirit enables the believer to kill sin progressively.

“No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.” (1 Jo 3:9)

Regarding sanctification, the role we play is both a passive and active one.

Passive, because we depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a holy life, and active as we make every effort to live a consecrated life.

Other passages: 1 The 5:23; 1 Cor 6:11; Acts 20:32; Rom 6:12-14.

4. Glorification: a glorious future

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” (Ro 8:16-17)

Our glorification will be completed when believers receive a resurrected body, a glorified one.

“And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Ro 8:30)

The glorification of believers is grounded in the glorification of Jesus after his accomplishment of the work of redemption.

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” (1 Jo 3:2)

Questions for personal application:

1. Have you ever wondered if you are truly saved in view of your sinful nature? If so, how does the doctrine of justification help you deal with those feelings?
2. Sometimes, people who have had an unloving or cruel earthly father have found that their background creates difficulty in relating to God as a heavenly father. How can Galatians 4:4-6, Hebrews 12:10, Matthew 7:11, and Matthew 10:29-31 help us see God as a loving and caring father?
3. As you look back over the last few years of your Christian life, can you see a pattern of growth in sanctification? If so, what are the things that you used to delight in which no longer interest you? What are some of the things that you used to have no interest in that now hold great interest for you?
4. If you do not see the pattern of growth in sanctification in your life, why has this not been so? Do you think that it would be helpful if you had a greater consciousness of the sin that remains in your life? What difference would it make?