

SALVATION – CONTINUATION

“work out your salvation”

Key question

How does a Christian come to live a holy life of obedience to Christ?

Key text

Philippians 2:12-13

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

Key Definition

Salvation

Salvation is the application of the work of Christ to a fallen world, restoring life through faith.

A Fundamental of the Faith

Christian Salvation

Christian Salvation is the reconciliation of the world to its Creator through the grace of God in Christ by personal faith in Jesus with the result that the life of Jesus is lived out through the believer in history.

Introduction.

1. Christian Salvation is a past - present - future phenomenon.
2. Sanctification is a word that is related to the terms “saint” and “holy.” Each of these terms mean the same thing in the Greek language - “set apart.” The word is used in a static sense in some parts of the New Testament to describe all believers no matter how obedient but it is also used in a dynamic sense (this is the way theologians use it) to describe the process of growth in practical obedience.

The Application of Salvation in Time

Aspect	Description	Scripture
The effectual call of God	God's special calling of the elect into fellowship with Jesus Christ	Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:9
Regeneration by the Holy Spirit	The cleansing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit imparting new life to man and enabling him to believe	Jn. 3:5-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5
Conversion - faith in Christ and repentance of sins	The unbelievers' turning away from sin and turning toward Christ	Luke 24:46-47; Jn. 3:16; Acts 2:38
Justification by faith	The action of pronouncing sinners righteous	Rom. 3:21; 4:5; 8:33-34
Adoption as children of the heavenly Father	The transfer of the believer from alienation from God to sonship	Jn. 1:12; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:5
Sanctification for the purpose of doing good works	The continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him holy	Titus 2:14; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10
Perseverance in the Word of Christ	The impossibility of the true believer's totally and finally falling away from grace, and his continuance in faith until death	Jn. 6:39; 10:27-30; Heb. 4:14; 1 Pet. 1:3-5
Glorification with Christ at his return	The complete and final redemption of the whole person conformed to the image of Christ	Jn. 14:16-17; Rom. 8:29-30; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 1:3

NOTE: Much of the above chart is modified from Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine by H. Wayne House, Zondervan

Key definition

Sanctification

Sanctification is the dynamic transformation of the believer by the Holy Spirit from the "natural man" walking in darkness to the "spiritual man" walking in the light.

A. **Four kinds of righteousness**

1. The **ABSOLUTE** righteousness of GOD

It is perfect.

2. The **SUPERFICIAL** righteousness of MAN.

It looks good but is fatally flawed if it does not come from the power of God's Spirit.

3. The **IMPUTED** righteousness of JESUS.

It is perfect but not experienced.

4. The **IMPARTED** righteousness of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is genuine but relative. This is what theologians refer to as “sanctification.”

B. Two spheres of sanctification

1. A **CEREMONIAL** setting apart - Dedication, Consecration
2. A **CHARACTER** quality - Deportment, Conduct

C. Three aspects of sanctification

1. **Positional** - (Justification)
 - a. “Christ FOR us.”
 - b. “We IN Christ.”
 - c. Passive righteousness
 - d. Imputed righteousness through faith.
 - e. **I Cor.1:2** “to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours;”
 - f. **I Cor. 6:11** “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 Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”
 - g. **Heb.2:11** “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father;”
2. **Progressive** - (Consecration, “Sanctification”),
 - a. “Christ THROUGH us.”
 - b. “Christ IN us.”
 - c. Active righteousness
 - d. Imparted righteousness through faithfulness.
 - e. **I Thess.4:3-5** “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;”
3. **Perfect** - (Glorification)
 - a. “We WITH Christ.”
 - b. “We AS Christ.”
 - c. Perfected righteousness
4. A comparison of three types of sanctification.

Positional	Progressive	Perfect
Child of God	Disciple of Christ	Saints in glory
We “in Christ”	Christ “in us”	We “with and as Christ”
The grace of God for us	The grace of God through us	The glory of God in us
Imputed righteousness	Imparted righteousness	Perfected righteousness
Passive righteousness	Active righteousness	Shared righteousness

D. The relationship between justification and sanctification

1. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that justification and sanctification are basically the same.
 - a. God’s grace makes the believer righteous through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The “new birth” (a clean heart) produces fruit (a good life) that justifies a person before God.
 - c. There is no absolute assurance of salvation until the judgment although we are to derive assurance from Christ as we follow Him.

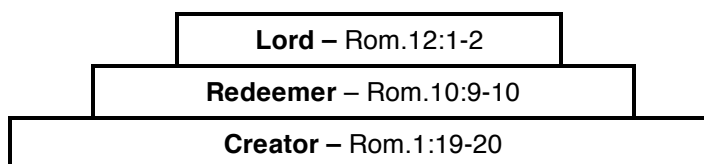
2. The protestant reformation was based upon an understanding of justification as “a declaration of righteousness” not “a making righteous in character.”
 - a. “Justify” (Greek - DIKAIOW) and “condemn” are contrasted in **Rom.8:33-34** “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.” Note also **Prov.17:15** “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.”
 - b. The verbal ending (in Greek) -OW, as in DIKAIOW, does not carry the meaning “to make something a particular way.” That, rather, is the signification of -AZW, as in AGIAZW (“to make holy”). The ending -OW, by contrast, signifies “to declare something to be a particular way,” as in AXIOW (“to deem worthy”).
 - c. **Rom.4:5** “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:”
 - d. **Eph.2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast ---”
 - e. **Rom.6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - f. **Gal.3:6** “Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”
 - g. **Titus 2:11-12** “for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desire and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,”

3. Completed Justification is the foundation for dynamic Sanctification. (Westminster Conf. XI-XIII, PP. 207-9)

Justification	Sanctification
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God’s work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others
The work of the Son	The work of the Spirit

A work FOR the sinner	A work IN the faithful
A righteousness not our own	A freely willed righteousness

4. Calvin argued that justification and sanctification should not be separated although they may be distinguished. Luther tended to separate the two while emphasizing the fact that both are an essential part of the “normal Christian life.”
5. We might also look at our relationship with God as a matter of knowing Christ as Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.



- a. It is quite clear in Scripture that there is a distinction between those who recognize the existence of God as Creator and those who enter into a faith covenant with Christ.
- b. It is also clear that there is a level of knowing or submitting to Christ that is offered as a challenge to believers indicating that it is possible to be a part of the family of faith and yet not know Christ as one could and should.
- c. This knowledge is often viewed more as a process by Anglicans and Lutherans while viewed more as a series of critical decisions by Baptists and Pentecostals.
- d. Some Christians believe that knowing Christ as Lord is inseparable from knowing him as Redeemer. See notes on “Lordship Salvation” (34f).

E. **Three models of progressive sanctification**

1. **Crisis - process view**

- a. This view tends to emphasize the dramatic change that takes place at conversion. It is assumed that once a person genuinely trusts Christ they will live out their life at a level that is dramatically different than a nonbeliever.
- b. This view is often identified with “Lordship salvation” - the belief that unless Jesus is Lord of one’s life (controlling the believer’s behavior) He cannot be Savior.
- c. Examples:
 1. **Roman Catholicism** - Justification and Sanctification are merged together. We are justified only to the extent that we live out a holy life consistent with the will of God.
 2. **Reformed Theology** - True believers are justified by faith and live out the Christian life by faith. Both are a part of what it means to be united with Christ and they are inseparable from each other.
- d. Texts
 - **II Cor.5:17** “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”
 - **Rom.6:4** “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.”

2. **Process - crisis - process view**

- a. This view emphasizes an experience (subsequent to regeneration or conversion) that elevates a person to a significantly higher level of victory over sin.
- b. Three forms:
 1. The **“baptism with the Holy Spirit”** elevates the believer to a high level of power over sin. This is the Pentecostal (Assemblies of God) view.
 - a. “Entire sanctification” or “total victory” is ultimately achieved when we are united with Christ but in this life it is achieved when we live up to the light we have.
 - b. No believer is absolutely perfect in this life although (through the power of the Baptism of the Spirit) we can resist all known sin.
 - c. We are able not to sin, even though we never come to the place where we are not able to sin.
 2. The **“deeper life”** experience of total commitment constitutes a break-through of faith leading to practical holiness. This is the **Keswick view**. (Keswick is a retreat center in England where spiritual revival took place in the late 1800s with an emphasis on “total victory over known sin.”)
 - a. The Keswick movement strove to balance the work of God in sanctifying the believer with the responsibility of the believer to **offer himself** as a living sacrifice (Rom.12:1-2). Keswick conferences typically follow a five-day topical study - Enslavement to sin, Provision for victory in Christ, Personal commitment, The normal Christian life, Missionary service.
 - b. **Rom.6** provides the formula for sanctification in its emphasis on our identification with the death and resurrection of Christ through “knowing . . . reckoning . . . presenting”
 3. The consecration of ones life wholly to God frees one to live on a level motivated continually by **“perfect love”**. This is the Wesleyan view.
 - a. In John Wesley’s *Plain Account* we read:
 - Q. What is Christian Perfection?
 - A. Loving God with our heart, mind, soul, and strength . . .
 - Q. Can any mistake flow from pure love?
 - A. I answer 1) Many mistakes may consist with pure love. 2) Some may accidentally flow from it; I mean love itself may incline us to mistake . . .
 - Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?
 - A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this . . . love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions . . . (Christian) perfection . . . is purity of intention, dedicating all desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God.
 - b. According to Wesley, Christian perfection is not “sinless perfection” but rather the commitment of the heart to obey the call of love and to avoid all “conscious” sin.
- c. Texts
 - **Matt.5:48** “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
 - **Col.1:28** “And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”

- **I Thess.5:23** “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- See also - Deut.30:6; Ps.130:8; Ezek.36:25, 29; Matt.6:13; 22:37; Jn.3:8; 17:20-21, 23; Rom.8:3-4; II Cor.7:1; Eph.3:14-19; 5:25, 27.

3. Process view

- a. This view sees the Christian life as a continuous struggle with both victory and defeat in this life. Progress is made but we continue to “groan within ourselves” waiting for the full redemption of our bodies.
- b. Lutherans and Dispensationalists hold this view where the emphasis is upon the distinction between justification by faith and sanctification.
 1. While it is normally expected that a true believer will grow in practical holiness, it is realized that this is not always the case. Persons who have not grown in sanctification may still be true believers.
 2. Sanctification is getting used to justification and living it out.
 3. All true believers will bear spiritual fruit in their lives but it may not always be outward or seen by others.
- c. Texts
 - **Gal.5:17** “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”
 - **Rom.7:18-19** “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.”
 - **I Cor.3:1-3** “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”
 - **I Jn.1:8-10** “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

F. Key passages

1. **Rom.12:1-2** “DEATH TO SELF”
 - a. Wholeness in Christ - a new sinless nature. **I Jn.3:1-10**
 - b. Carnality - a real option. **I Cor.2:14-3:3**
 - c. Inner conflict - “flesh vs. spirit” **Gal.5:16-25**
 - d. A renewed mind - “old and new man” **Eph.4:17-24**
2. **Rom.6:1-8:17**
 - a. The PROVISION in Christ for victory over sin. - Rom.6, **Phil.3:10-16**
 - b. The PERSISTENCE of the flesh. - Rom.7
 - c. The POWER of the Spirit. - Rom.8

G. **Is uniform sustained absolute victory over sin possible in this body?**

1. Can Matt.22:37-39 be satisfied? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The governing word here is "all."
2. If I limit the issue of holiness to freedom from "known sin", don't I excuse all sociopathic tendencies in the flesh? I Cor.4:4 "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."
3. How can one discern all motives when our hearts are deceitful?
4. Does Scripture recognize two distinct classes of believers - victorious and defeated?
5. The Greek work τελειοι TELEIOI translated "perfect" in Matt.5:48 ("Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.") does not mean "flawless" but "complete."
6. Galatians 5:17, "The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." The presence of sin in our flesh prevents us from ceasing totally from sin (cf. Rom.7:14-25). As we read in 1 Kings 8:46 and 2 Chronicles 6:36 regarding the faithful people of God, "There is no man who does not sin." And as John wrote in exhortation of the Christian's life of continuing repentance, "If we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).
7. In Romans 6:6, Paul mentions the old man again. In this context, it might appear that the old man died once and for all at our baptisms. A closer inspection of the passage, however, indicates to us that Paul fluctuates between present and future tenses as he speaks of the benefits of our union with Christ. We often refer to this as the tension between the "already" and the "not yet." These terms refer to the fact that the kingdom of God has begun, but has not yet come in full. As a result, we have been initiated into the blessings of the kingdom, but we have not received them in full. One easy place to see this in action is in Paul's contrasts between the present "first fruits" of the blessings and the future full harvest (Rom.8:23; 1 Cor.15:20,23). Another is his reference to the Holy Spirit as a "downpayment" or "pledge" of future blessings (Eph.1:13-14). With regard to nearly every blessing of which we partake in Christ, we now experience only a fraction of the blessing, and we await the full blessing at Christ's second coming. In Romans 6:6, Paul is teaching that the old man has been dethroned, but that he has not yet been destroyed. Therefore, it still takes effort to resist him (e.g. Rom.6:12-13).

H. **What is the Christian's role in the sanctification process?**

1. God's role
 - a. **I Thess.5:23** "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly"
 - b. **Phil.2:13** "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure"
 - c. **Heb.13:20-21** "Now may the God of peace . . . equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever"
 - d. **Heb.12:5-11** Divine discipline is for our sanctification.
 - e. **I Cor.1:30** Christ is "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption"

- f. **Heb.12:2** We run the race of life “looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”
 - g. **I Pet.2:21** Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps”
 - h. **I Jn.2:6** “He who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked”
 - i. **Titus 2:11-14** “¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”
 - j. The Holy Spirit plays a central role
 - 1. I Pet.1:2 “sanctification of the Spirit”
 - 2. II Thess.2:13 “sanctification by the Spirit”
 - 3. Gal.5:22-23 “fruit of the Spirit”
 - 4. Gal.5:16-18 “led by the Spirit” (Rom.8:14)
2. Our role
- a. Our passive role – trusting God
 - 1. **Rom.6:13** “yield yourselves to God”
 - 2. **Rom.12:1** “present your bodies as a living sacrifice”
 - b. Our active role – working hard
 - 1. **Rom.8:13** “If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.”
 - 2. **Phil.2:12-13** “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”
 - 3. **Heb.12:14** “We are to “strive . . . for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord”
 - 4. **I Thess.4:3** “abstain from immorality”
 - 5. **I Jn.3:3** “And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure”
 - 6. **I Cor.6:18** “shun immorality”
 - 7. **II Cor.7:1** “Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God”
 - 8. **II Pet.1:5** “make every effort” to grow in character.
 - c. The corporate responsibility.
 - 1. **Heb.10:24-25** “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”
 - 2. **I Pet.2:5** “built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood”
 - 3. **I Thess.5:11** “encourage one another and build one another up”

4. **Eph.4:1-3** “to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

3. Closing observations

- a. The analogy in I Cor.3:6-9 is helpful where the believer’s life is pictured as a field where we can plant and water (encourage fruitfulness) but ultimately we must trust God to do a work in us. We are limited in what we can do to sanctify ourselves. What we can do is practice spiritual disciplines (prayer, attend to teaching from Scripture, cultivate proper friendships, devote ourselves to managing those parts of life that we can control).
- b. It is obvious that the apostles expect believers to take responsibility for their behavior by responding to exhortations to faithfulness and love in relationships.
- c. It is important to recognize that the motive for faithfulness and love is not so much fear of what God might do to us but gratitude for what God has done for us and our new identity in Christ. I Cor.6:15-20
- d. Appeals to the law and to fear will not sanctify, they will only condemn. Rom.6-8
It is important to use the warning passages in the NT (Heb.12:14, I Pet.1:16) in the context of the New Covenant lest we find ourselves “under the law” and trapped in “a body of death”. If we are to be holy as God is holy in order to see Christ, we are all lost for at best our sanctification in this life is superficial and partial.
- e. Sanctification is to affect the whole person. It involves the integration of head, heart, and hand being perfectly coordinated in reflecting Jesus in the believer’s life. We are to grow up “in all aspects” in Him. Eph.4:15

Questions that you should be able to answer.

1. Specific facts you should know.

- a. What is the difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic views of sanctification?
- b. In what sense can we say that salvation has a past, present, and future meaning?
- c. How do ceremonial and experiential sanctification relate?
- d. How are the following terms related - holy, sanctified, saint?

2. Issues that you should be able to discuss.

- a. Which of the different models of sanctification most closely fits your experience?
- b. How would you illustrate each of the three models of sanctification from Scripture?

3. Questions you should wrestle with.

- a. Is absolute victory over sin possible in this body?
- b. What should the believer expect in his or her growth in holiness in this life?