

### Salvation – Part 3

Remember salvation in a general sense means saved or rescued. We then looked at salvation in a global sense into its various categories. That is justification, sanctification (which is broken into positional and progressive), and then glorification. We looked at how those relate to time—that is to say justification is a past event that occurred at the moment you were saved. Glorification is something that will occur in the future—that is to say at the Rapture. Under sanctification, positional sanctification occurred at the same moment you were justified—that is at the same moment you were born again. At that moment you were saved from Hell and saved to the purposes of God. So sanctified (meaning set aside for God's purposes) you are positionally sanctified at the moment you are justified which is the moment you are saved. Progressive sanctification is that process that covers everything else in the life of the Christian from the moment of salvation until either physical death or the Rapture, whichever occurs first. So everything that we say, if we go forward for the next year talking about the Kingdom of God, every single aspect of it is going to relate to progressive salvation. So positional sanctification, therefore, is the beginning of lifelong progressive sanctification.

Then I put up this poster. And this is taking body, soul, and spirit and regarding man (at least a Christian on planet Earth) after salvation as being thought of as three parts, not two—that is to say body, soul, spirit. And this diagram is meant to capture a lot of different truths which we'll review. Some of this we spoke of last time. I'll say enough so that we overlap so that those who were not with us will be in the ballgame. Notice on this diagram that before we are saved, we are spirit—that is to say we are eternal creatures. Our spirit in the unsaved condition is represented as small and dark. It's dark because it's separated from God and God is light. God is not only light; He is life. So darkness (symbolically presented) represents deception and death. The unsaved spirit is dead, meaning separated from God. If separated from God, then it is separated from life and truth. Truth, remember, is how God views reality. So the spirit separated from God, in large part, cannot know how God views reality; because the rational natural mind of man cannot figure out how God views reality. So he cannot know truth. God is the source of life. He is life. So the spirit separated from God is darkness. That is to say, it is dead and it's focusing or living or basing its life on deception. So it is entirely appropriate that that spirit, in the unsaved condition, the natural condition of man be graphically represented as dark.

It's also appropriate to recognize it as small. That's because when the spirit is dead, separated from God, then the soul (the mind, emotion and will) of man is the dominant influence. A spirit that is dead to God cannot control the self determination of man. Man is functioning entirely in his mind as a self determined creature going all the way back, remember, to Adam and Eve. So the will of man constantly chooses that which fulfills the lusts of the flesh as the source of its pleasures. At that time, unsaved, natural condition, separated from God, with dead spirits, we are truly dead in sin. We're truly children of wrath and we, through any action on our part, cannot bring our dead spirits to life. But even in our unsaved condition, remember that we're created in the image of God, eternal spirit creatures. That includes a capacity, unfulfilled, unutilized to seek

God, know God, commune with God, even progressively become one in God. But in our deadness, the capacity is unused. That's similar, remember, to how a person with a great capacity to learn may remain ignorant. Recall that in our deadness, apart from God, God has insured that every man has enough of a revelation of Him to be accountable to Him. And that's Romans 1:18-21 – His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen because God made it evident to them. But it tells us they suppressed this truth in unrighteousness. So every man is accountable before God because every man has sufficient revelation that there is a God; that any thought to the contrary, belief system to the contrary, is not ignorance; it is active suppression of the truth. Suppressing that truth leaves man in charge. So man is inherently a prideful condition who believes that he, using his natural mind can declare there is no God. Well, once you acknowledge the truth that even creation testifies of the handiwork of God, that leaves God in charge with man accountable to God. That's the same behavior; remember that began with Adam and Eve. So even people who interpret Adam and Eve as a myth to make a point, still miss the point of what the myth is telling them if that's their belief system. She yielded to the temptation to become like God apart from God; which is to say to function as her own god accountable to no one. So I happen to believe in the Genesis account, literally in that sense. But even someone who says it is a myth usually is calling it a myth so they can dismiss the point of what Adam and Eve actually did before their Holy God. That is to choose to function in self determination as their own god.

Then we fulfill Romans 1:25 – we exchanged the truth of God for a lie; because any thought, word, or deed of man that is not based on how God views reality, which is what truth is, is based on a lie. Remember, we talked about the divine exchange when Jesus takes our sin, gives us His righteousness. Well, here we have the dark exchange where we take the truth of God, our creator God telling us how He views reality and we suppress it so we can live the lie, so that we can become our own gods. So our spirits being dead, they cannot bring themselves to life. Well, how does that occur? Remember, our God is one God, but He exists and functions in three persons. John 6:44 – No man can come to Me except the Father draw him. John 6:63 – the Spirit gives life. How? John 15:26 – The Holy Spirit will bear witness of Me, the Son. And John 6:37 – he who comes to Me, the Son, I will in no wise cast out. So even in our salvation, the Trinity of God is functional in different ways. Romans 4:16-17 tells us some things about how this occurs. It's by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ that God gives spirit life to those who are spirit dead. The word that we use when passing from spirit deadness to spirit life is regeneration. A common phrase that captures that same point is born again.

So where does the faith come from? Well, Ephesians 2: 8-10 is careful to tell us—from God. By grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift from God so that no man can boast. Romans 9:15-16 tells us who it's given to – I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. It doesn't depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God Who has mercy. So it's an act of mercy by a sovereign God. Now that's why we can rejoice always. So we rejoice, that as an act of mercy by His grace He has drawn us, born witness of Jesus to us, and granted us the gift of saving faith sufficient for us to choose Jesus as Savior; and thus receive eternal life; none of which we could have accomplished on our own. So we are willing; but God has insured that we are willing.

Now I once heard a fellow tell the story that you can be put in a room full of bees. Now it's your choice as to what you do next; but you can be made willing to go out of that room and flee the bees. So when we get into the will of man versus the sovereign action of God; I don't get hung up on that particular dilemma to some people. I just know that insofar as it depends on me, I will choose Jesus Christ. And everything that doesn't depend on me, of course, is up to God. Isaiah 48:11 tells us why God does it this way – I will share My glory with no one. If man could do it; if man could save himself, he would boast of himself.

Well, what happens to bring a dead spirit to life? Well, the dead spirit is entered by the Holy Spirit. Now what's the Holy Spirit? God Himself; remember, God is life; He is the source of all life; and bringing your dead spirit to life is not difficult for a sovereign God. Now on our diagram (drop down to line 2, to the saved line, the middle line) and note four things that have been graphically represented as occurring at the moment we are saved, when we pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. The spirit is now in communion with God rather than separate from God. And that's represented by the opening between the Holy Spirit and our spirits. The spirit is now represented by light rather than dark. The light represents the truth of God that we can now freely access. We are not omniscient, but we have access to omniscience—that is to say we have the mind of Christ. That's the meaning, I think, of Scripture such as that. The light also represents life since the spirit is now joined to God, Who is life. The Father has life in Himself; I have life in Myself; and the Spirit is life and will bring you life. So the Trinity of God is life; but the Spirit is the one Who functions to impart life to us. The Holy Spirit now enters us and that's represented by the arrow now flowing through the opening where the spirit is now connected to God—the Holy Spirit. The spirit is still represented by a small circle, since its influence on the soul (the mind, emotion, and will) of man is still weak because its influence has just begun. Matthew 26:41 tells us – the spirit is willing; but the flesh is weak. The mind, emotion, and will of man is still not ready to do the will of God, even after we're born again. Remember, at that point, we have simply made a U-turn on the highway of life. We're now going in a totally opposite direction; but we're in the same place we were at the moment we got saved. We still have all the same thoughts, all the same memories, all the same emotional hot buttons, all the same frustrations that were in there at the moment we got saved. That's why it's represented as small because we were still at that time, what's called a carnal Christian or a soulish Christian; one still functioning by the unrenewed mind albeit, born again. But at that moment the good news; at that moment we are born again; at that moment we're regenerated; at that moment we are born of the Spirit of God; at that moment we're indwelt by the Spirit of God; at that moment we are redeemed; at that moment we're saved; at that moment we're justified; at that moment we're positionally sanctified; and at that moment we are a new creation. At that moment our names are in the Lamb's Book of Life; and from that moment on, to die is gain. At that moment we are Heaven bound. That's a lot of action that takes place in that moment when you cross the line of faith and are regenerated, born again by the Spirit of God. So that is, in fact, why the gospel is good news.

But there's more to the story. Now it may not be true for you; but the Christians that I have known (including this one), have mostly fulfilled from that moment forward

Galatians 3:3 – by trying to complete in the flesh that which was begun by the Spirit. There is an initial stage of new believer euphoria; but it's often followed by a crash in a period of despondency as we note that we still sin flagrantly. The thing that made us mad last week still makes us mad this week. We want to have the life of Heaven right now of love, joy, and peace. But God has prepared a journey for us. So there was a journey to the cross; there was a journey through the cross; and now there's a journey (as Christians) after the cross. Now this journey is not for us to immediately go to Heaven; but for Heaven to come in us and then to come to Earth through us. That's the process of progressive sanctification. Conflicting notions immediately become apparent in the Christian. Using the natural example: If we plan a trip, we like to leave on time in emotional control; we like to have a beautiful sunny day to drive with occasional white puffy clouds; temperature 70 degrees, a gentle breeze so we can have the car windows down and so on, and enjoy life, no rain, no snow storms, no ice, no heavy traffic, and no one cut us off along the way. So we want a smooth journey from the moment of salvation on. But that's not what God wants. God wants a better driver and no driver has ever improved his skills on a smooth flat highway with no wind, no rain, no ice, no traffic, and no problems. We want deliverance from our circumstances; but God wants to change the condition of our heart toward our circumstances. That's why I coined that little phrase; He wants not to change the circumstance, but to change our stance in our circum—that is to change our position of how we're looking at all the things that are surrounding us. We want peace on Earth. God wants peace in our hearts regardless of what happens on Earth. We want the battle to be over; but God wants us to see the battle as a lifestyle, not an event. We want to be good; but God first wants us to see how bad we are even when we try to be good after salvation. And we only know how bad we are in our unrenewed minds by trying to be good and failing miserably. After all, we should know that, because if we could have perfected ourselves, independent of God, we wouldn't have needed a Savior to begin with.

Now all of that is painful. So how do we deal with it? Well Scripture tells us there's only one way to please God. Hebrews 11:6 – Without faith, it is impossible to please God. So faith in what? Well that's why we're going through salvation. What is it? It sounds elementary, but if we don't grasp and live in the light of what salvation is, we will not know where to place our faith in order to face the initial frustration of walking out the Christian life. At least three components: Three components of faith in God all of which relate to our initial salvation and our understanding of it. After all, how can we work out our salvation if we don't know what salvation is and walk in the light of that, and walk by faith in it? First of all, faith in self to accomplish your salvation, I hope you relinquished. So now faith in yourself to work it out after salvation should be relinquished. Matthew 26:35 remember Peter, when threatened with being an associate of Jesus – he says I will never deny you. Well we know what happened next. He walked with the Messiah for three years, but immediately he denied Him three times. Why? Because look at the statement. I will never deny you. Peter's faith was in himself and in his own strength and his ability to face whatever came, including whatever danger, including the threat of death, I will never deny you. Not faith in Who Jesus is, Who is life, Who resurrected Lazarus from the dead, not demonstrating faith in the Son of God; but demonstrating faith in his ability to not deny the Son of God. And that mentality is what needs to die in

us. So first, by faith, in what has already occurred in the spirit realm. Romans 5:1 – Having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, from the moment of salvation, we are not at war with God. The war is over; but we function sometimes as Christians as if there is still an ongoing war between God and ourselves. But we are at war with everything which is anti-God including our unrenewed minds. Now we rest by faith in the assurance of what has happened at the moment of our salvation. And that assurance is based on Who Jesus is and what He did in the past; and not based on how good or how bad we are in the present after being born again. If you can't live in the light of faith and what happened at the moment of your salvation, you will not access joy to work out your salvation in the future.

Secondly, by faith, and recalling what is. Well, what is? It's recalling Who is in us from the moment of salvation. Not a thought, not a feeling, not a philosophy, not a doctrine, not a preference, not a suggestion, not an angel; God, God Himself is in us. So when you receive the revelation going back to God and His Holiness, His total other thanness, wholly other than anything else, nothing to be compared with that sovereign God, that God Himself, is in us. That same God that spoke and the universe came into being. That God is in us to reveal truth to us, to empower us, to comfort us, to help us. Philippians 2:12-13 – Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God Who is in you and at work in you. It is God Who is in you. Doesn't that statement from Scripture just make you rise up almost onto your tiptoes? You're not left alone to fight this battle. It is God Who is in you; and not just a little drop of God, not just a little part of God, but God is in you. What a statement!

Thirdly, by faith—recall what will be in the future. Remember, without a vision the people perish. Scripture tells us that God calls the things which are not as though they were. So as Christians we can call the things which are not as though they were. And that's nothing more than saying faith in the sovereignty of God. Because to add words into the sentence to give the completeness of what's conveyed in that sentence, we call the things which are not yet; but which assuredly will be. Because they're based on the sovereignty and faithfulness of God as though they already were. That's the fullness of the statement of what's being conveyed there. So those things are done deals in regard to their certainty. They simply have not yet been fully manifest in our Christian walk. We will be in Heaven, then on the new Earth, in the presence of God, with glorified bodies, in fullness of joy for all of eternity. That's our vision and that's our sustaining view of the future that allows us to function in the precious present today. That's the vision that without we will perish. Oh, so when we're faced with walking out this Christian life on Earth, we must walk by faith in what happened at the moment of our salvation. We walk by faith; it's God in us working it out; and we walk by faith in the light of the vision of our eternal future with that God.

So we walk out the journey of progressive salvation by what I call aggressively resting. Well resting in what? What has been, what is, it's God in me; and what will be in the future. You see, most Christians like to take sides on that...those who focus on aggression are out working themselves to death, producing dead works, thinking that their dead works are somehow going to make them holy. And those who focus on the

resting tend to become passive because oh, I don't need to do anything; all I need to do is rest in God. That's why I coined the term aggressively resting. That's how we walk out this Christian journey. Now we want to walk by works and performance so we get the glory. We're slow to let go of that urge to claim the glory of God. But our flesh is still too strong for us to accomplish that. That's why Matthew 26:41 said the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. The flesh is not weak in doing the things that are anti-God. The meaning of that Scripture is the flesh is weak in doing the things of God because it is hostile to God. You say, well that sounds frustrating. Well, I would say relax. God must know this; He wrote it. He also wrote John 15:5 – Apart from Me you can do nothing. So when you try to do something apart from Him, He knows you can do nothing. It's not like you're demonstrating it so He learns that. He must know we can do nothing apart from Him, including work out our salvation by trying to improve the flesh, since He wrote that. So He did come as our Savior; but He didn't stop there. He also came as our power in the person of the Holy Spirit. So here's the paradox, the apparent contradiction. It is that we can only walk by resting. We can only walk well when we rest in full faith. The faith is in the God and all that that God has given us and promised us in Jesus Christ.

So our confidence is in God and that that God in Whom we have confidence is in us and that His promises are certain to occur. Here's a natural example to make the point. A baseball pitcher can throw best with speed and control only when he is relaxed. If he tries to do what he cannot do, namely throw harder than he can throw, then he loses speed and loses control. But he's still required to throw. He can't just rest in the dugout and be a good pitcher. So he aggressively focuses his attention and concentration to pitch, but he has to maintain relaxation in order to pitch well. And that analogy is what we're to do as Christians. We're not just spectators in this event. God has a role for us to play and we fight it aggressively; so when someone slaps the one cheek, oh, I can aggressively lavish my love upon you to show you the character of God, to show you the forgiveness of God, to show you the slowness to anger of God; I can aggressively manifest all that to you. Do I do that in my flesh? No, I do it by knowing how God views reality; and the Spirit's in me telling me how God views reality. This guy who just slapped you in his unsaved condition needs to see the character of God revealed to him, you see. So it's not your own effort; you are resting in Who God is and what His character is and what He has done in you, and Who is in you, and what He wants to display to this person who just slapped you on the cheek. That's what I mean by aggressively resting. So we have to be more aggressive with the love of God that He has revealed to us rather than passive. But it's not something that we try to work up love, or conjure love; we know the love that God has for us, you see. And that's the love that we relinquish onto the person who is in conflict with us.

So as Christians, we can only perform well when we are relieved of performance anxiety. We do that by resting in Jesus Christ, not by trusting our own efforts. But we give our full effort; we give all of ourselves in the effort; but we place no faith in our effort. Our faith is always in the One that we're giving full effort in the name of. And it's always displaying His character, releasing the mind of Christ, releasing the love of Christ, not improving your flesh to maintain self control because somebody slapped you on the cheek. Well, I won't lose my temper this time. No, you're releasing something; you're

not just holding something, you see. You can try to suppress the flesh, but it will erupt with volcanic force somewhere along the way; but if you're releasing the love of God, that never fails, you see. So when we rest in God, what happens? Well one spiritual truth that comes into play is we become what we behold. Before functioning this way, we constantly beheld ourselves and our own performance in doing the things of God. But when you behold your own sin, you're just conscious of your sin and conscious of self. That's what's meant in II Corinthians 3:6 – the letter of the law kills including your own self expectation. But the Spirit gives life. So now we're free when relieved of performance anxiety in order to behold the God Who did save us rather than beholding our own efforts to save ourselves and perfect ourselves. So behold means to continuously focus your attention on. I Peter 1:13 – Fix your hope completely on the grace brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. So our hope is what we're counting on in order to have an optimistic expectation of the future. But our hope is never in our own performance of being Christians. Our hope is in the grace brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Our participation is to use our wills to focus our attention on our hope—namely Jesus Christ Who in Colossians 1:27 is called the hope of glory. Well, where does that revelation come from? From the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth Who's bearing witness of Jesus. Now grace is unmerited favor; that's the broad definition. But that includes the empowering presence of God within us, that enables us to be what He calls us to be; and empowers us to do what He calls us to do. So that kind of revelation is not just knowledge; it's empowered knowledge. Because with the revelation comes the power of God to back up the revelation, you see.

So we're to become like Christ; but we do that by seeing Christ evermore clearly, beholding what He is, beholding what He has done, beholding what He is doing, and beholding what He will do. He has died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. He has purchased the Holy Spirit to indwell us, to give us access to the omniscience of God, and the power of God, and the love of God; and He will come again for us, and we will spend eternity with Him. Then we progressively become like Him. How? Because we see Him as He is. That's what I John tells us. It tells us that the moment we see Christ face to face we will be like Him. Why? Because we will see Him as He is. So the way to become like Him is not based on your confidence in your own ability to become like Him, the way to become like Him is to see Him as He is. And when you see Him as the Omnipotent God Who created the Heavens and the Earth, and you see Him as the God Who humbled Himself and gave up the glory of Heaven and came to Earth so He could pay the price for your sins so you could spend eternity with Him. And when you see that He purchased the power of God to indwell you in the Holy Spirit, when you see Him as He is progressively, you will become like Him; because you can't see Who that God is and that God in you, Who He is, without becoming like Him. Change is absolutely guaranteed when you see God as He is. It's only when we don't see Him as He is do we focus on our efforts to become like Him, you see. So the one is God focused; the other is self focused. And when you're in self focused, based on your performance and evaluating your performance, you will never become like Him; because that's what you were trying to do before salvation. So we've got to let that go; that's part of denying self and following Christ, do you see, by seeing Who He is. And that's how we work out our salvation.

Next poster. Just another way of saying a similar thing—you see the Father works through the Son Who works through the Spirit, Who indwells us. Now all I've depicted on this diagram is the following. When we start out, we're totally lost, totally dark, no light, no life, no truth, no access to God, and so on. But God...we are now saved. Our spirit is pure; it's as pure as it will ever get. As He is, so are we in this world. We're indwelled by the Spirit of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit, in perfection, perfect righteousness, the mind of Christ all right here. But then the influence on the soul is still just a little light in that unrenewed mind and the rest of the time we work out our salvation and what happens is, the amount of our unrenewed mind diminishes and the amount of the renewed mind increases. But the spirit cannot be improved because the spirit that's indwelled by the Holy Spirit of God cannot be made better, you see. But your unrenewed mind can be made better by becoming progressively renewed. Now, here's Ted Haggard. He had functioned, I'm sure, to a great degree; but he still had this residual darkness in himself, still had the lusts of the flesh, not perfectly cleansed, and for whatever reason, it erupted. Because even in the best of saints, the ones in the public eye and so on, there's always going to be this little part of their unrenewed mind there which hasn't been dealt with yet. Now the body, in truth is corrupted, that's why it dies. So the body really is always dark until we get the glorified body. But I've shown the increasing light here in the body; because the body is the harp of the soul. So as the spirit progressively controls the soul by renewing the mind, the soul progressively then controls the body to make it turn right and not go left, you see. So the soul plays its music upon the body; but the soul is progressively driven by living out of the spirit, and not just your spirit, your spirit indwelled by the Holy Spirit. And that it is not just a name, Holy Spirit, focus on the Holy. This is the other than God. That's why we talked about holiness first. How are you going to relate to who the Holy Spirit is if you don't know what holy is, you see. But once you know that this Holy, other than God is in you; then you quit focusing on performance anxiety and you start focusing on the Holy God Who is indwelling you to turn you into His very likeness. That's what your faith is in, not faith in your efforts to do that on your own.

So my time, I'm sure, is more than up, but thank you for yours.