

Message: **Being Made Free From Sin**
Text: **Romans 6:12-23**

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Jon Cardwell
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
5440 Alabama Highway 202
Anniston, Alabama 36201

<http://sgbcanniston.wordpress.com>
<http://www.sermonaudio.com/vayahiy>
<http://justificationbygrace.com>

INTRODUCTION: Last week our text (**Romans 6:1-11**) allowed us to look at the NEWNESS OF LIFE that a Christian possesses through IDENTIFICATION with Christ, specifically identifying with His death, burial and resurrection as the certain reality of the miracle that made possible a believer's REGENERATION and REPENTANCE through faith. Another way we might define this is by calling it POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION: that moment, when justified by grace through faith, when we are made new creatures in Christ.

This week we begin approaching portions of Scripture that to the continued reality of sanctification. We might define our portion today by calling it PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION. An outline for these following portions may be:

Romans 6:12-23 Surrender as a Bondslave
Romans 7:1-25 Struggle of the Bondslave
Romans 8:1-39 Spiritual Victory for the Bondslave

Just as last week we defined certain terms and concepts, we will define them again today for, I pray, a better understanding, not merely of the text before us, but of the truth that the text proclaims unto the reality of a true and blessed spiritual salvation for God's greatest glory. As this section deals with PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION, let's be reminded of our definition of sanctification once again:

1. SANCTIFICATION— means to be made holy. It is initially immediate by the declaration of God’s justification and the miracle of regeneration. The soul that has faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ is made new by regeneration. They are born-again. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17)*. That person is holy by virtue of being miraculously changed into a new creation in Christ.

There is also an ongoing work of sanctification that grows as a person matures in Christ. *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18)*. It is this 2nd aspect of sanctification that we are dealing with from this point on.

Now, for the following definitions, I’m giving as plainly as I can, terms that define in my understanding the doctrine of REGENERATION. To me, these definitions make sense of what is truly going on in the process of our sanctification as we are being made holy by God; and therefore, help us to understand the struggles that we have with sin and the flesh; and in understanding this struggle, we can have victory through the truth by the power of the Spirit of Christ.

2. SOUL— the soul is who we are. A human being is what I am, but my soul is who I am. Like the late Dr. E.W. Johnson, I like to say that man is essentially singular. There is a controversy among scholars whether man is soul and spirit (dichotomy, two parts) or whether man is body, soul, and spirit (tri-chotomy, three parts). Though I’d love to get into it, I believe that it seems to be in keeping with the truths of the Bible as a whole to call the essence of man a mono-chotomy or uni-chotomy (one part), and that is defined as the soul. It was the breath of life that made Adam *Adam* when he was formed from the dust of the ground: *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7)*. As Dr. Johnson put it: “If I were asked, ‘Do you believe that man has a soul?’ I would reply, No I don’t believe man has a soul. I believe man has a body and he has a nature, but man is a living soul.”

3. BODY— this one is fairly simple. Just as in **Gen 2:7**, man was formed from the dust of the ground and so he has a body. The body that we have now is not eternal; therefore, I would say that it does not define who I am, who you are. A body is what I possess; what I have.

4. NATURE—a nature is also what I possess, what I have. I always had trouble with what my previous Bible teachers taught me concerning two natures of man. It didn't make sense because they expressed it in such a way as it was the same thing as the soul; that's because they believed that man has a soul rather than believing that man is a soul! Therefore, though I believe my previous teachers were wrong concerning the two natures of man in their confusing the nature and soul as either synonymous or as parts of a whole, I believe that they were correct in asserting that man has two natures. I believe that man, who has been regenerated through the saving miracle by God's grace, is a new creature because his soul is now alive, when once it was dead in trespasses and sins.

A man is a soul who possesses a nature makes so much more sense. We have a nature; we possess natural traits, attributes, and characteristics that have been passed down from generation to generation, beginning with Adam and Eve. When Adam fell in disobedience, his living soul immediately died, was separated from the Spirit of God, and his nature became radically corrupt so that death reigned in his mortal soul (**Romans 5:12-14**). Every area of that nature is stained with sin. Remember, the doctrine of total depravity does not say that man is as bad as he can be; it says that there is nothing truly and purely good that can come from man in his natural state. Why? Because it is bereft of the Holy Spirit. Adam passed that sinful nature down to every one of his decedents; that's you, me, us.

When a soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is justified by God's grace through faith, the soul is quickened, made alive: "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (**1 Cor 15:22**; see also **Eph 2:5**). He is made alive to God to love God and not hate Him; to trust God and not shun Him; to desire the truth of God rather than the deceit of the world.

Yet, there has been no physical change in the man's body. Remember, even of all those that Jesus healed, and believed on Him in faith, died. Their natural bodies had still possessed the laws and principals that governed that natural body, a body that came as a result of the curse of sin entering into the world. If we have been saved by grace, we still have the same body until the Lord return. We have the same memories and capacity for thought. We have a nature that, though redeemed from the bondage of sin, still abides by the laws and principals that surround us in a universe that has been turned upside down by Adam's original sin. So what has happened that makes me a living soul and a new creation in Christ?

The Holy Spirit of God is what happens. He is imparted. This is a simultaneous happening with faith, justification, repentance, regeneration, and initial sanctification. Why does it happen simultaneously? It is an eternal event; it is a heavenly occurrence that takes place supernaturally in the eternal plane. Remember, eternity is not a long time; it is completely outside the space-time domain. Yet, for our understanding, it is given to us in this blessed divine order by way of this Gospel According to Paul through the letter to the Christians at Rome.

When we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are made partakers of God's nature. We have available to us the very nature of Jesus Christ. **2 Peter 1:3-4**, *"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. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, **in order that by them you might become partakers of [the] divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust"* (NASB).

"Lust" = *sinful desire* (ESV)

"[the] divine nature" = "the" is added by nearly all the English translators because it speaks of the very indwelling Spirit of God Himself; however, by being written in Greek without the definite article, it says that we partake, we actually share, have as our

possession and portion the very nature of God. (AND PLEASE NOTE: this doesn't make us God or deity in any way, shape or form. Man's possessing two natures is different from the two natures of Christ. He was completely human, yet, without sin; and at the same time, was completely Divine, and co-equal and co-eternal with God in every respect.) Nevertheless, that as we have been given a second nature, this reveals to us the promise of God's indwelling presence, as Jesus told the disciples the night He was betrayed, *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"* (**Jn 14:16-17**).

So, though we continue to have this original nature, that is dying according to the laws and principles that are inherent to it, we should reckon it, consider it dead in our estimation because we have been saved by grace, justified by faith, and identified with Christ as we saw last week **Romans 6:11**. *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

How can we reckon that nature dead? By the power of the new nature that we know have as an eternal possession; that is, the very power of the living God that raised Jesus from the dead, **Phil 3:10**, *"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;"*

Though this portion in Philippians means much more than what I'm about to say concerning it, I would like to point out that **Phil 3:10** actually provides a kind of outline for **Romans 6-8**.

[**Phil 3:10a**] *"That I may know Him..."* IDENTIFICATION with the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ (**Rom 6:1-5**).

[**Phil 3:10b**] *"...and the power of His resurrection..."* REGENERATION and NEWNESS OF LIFE (**Rom 6:6-11**).

[**Phil 3:10c**] *"...and the fellowship of His sufferings..."* Living this SANCTIFIED LIFE in the midst of a world that is still turned upside down by original sin (**Rom 6:12-**

7:25).

[**Phil 3:10d**] “...being made conformable to His death...” Walking in the Blessed Victory of a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

Please open to **Rom 6:12-14**. I realize that we don't have time to do a proper exegesis of this text, however, I would like us to touch just one other truth now that we have a sufficient background of regeneration from our introduction today.

Rom 6:12, *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*

This verse is really the entrance into the PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION in the Christian life. Though we are not under the law, we are certainly under grace (**v14**), and because *“old things are passed away [and] all things are become new”* (**2 Cor 5:17**), we are given a commandment to not let sin rule over us; and the only way to be obedient to this commandment is through the power of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us with the truth (as He is the Spirit of truth), through the partaking of the new nature that is now in us. That new nature is only effectual in the soul of man through obedience to the will and good pleasure of God. Think about it; if Adam, who was made perfect, whose free will was unstable enough to forsake obedience to God's will and move according to his own will and desire, how much more would we, who have inherited a corrupt nature need to rely on the new nature given us by God? How much more must we have reliance on and dependence upon the indwelling Holy Spirit?

Believer, over the next few weeks, we will look upon the truth that makes us free from sin. We will recognize the struggle because of what we understand today, and that truth will equip us to yield to God in obedience and bring Him glory by an exercise of faith. Surrender to the Spirit now, and continue to do so. Though we have not covered every detail yet, the Spirit calls you to yield, obey, and enjoy His presence.