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Sanctification Part 1 - Clearing Your Conscience
Romans 5:1 & Hebrews 9:14

Series Introduction

THIS MORNING I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF STARTING A SERIES ON THE TOPIC OF SANCTIFICATION...A SERIES THAT WILL LAST US THE NEXT 5 SUNDAYS INCLUDING TODAY.

THE REASON I CHOSE THIS SUBJECT IS FIRST AND FOREMOST THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING IT AND LIVING OUT THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF SANCTIFICATION AS LAID OUT IN THE BIBLE.

BUT NOT ONLY IS THE SUBJECT IMPORTANT... ONE COULD ARGUE THAT NEXT TO THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION (HOW A PERSON GETS RIGHT WITH GOD)...THERE IS AS MUCH CONFUSION ABOUT SANCTIFICATION AS ANYTHING ELSE.

WHICH MAKES SENSE...IF THE ADVERSARY CAN'T KEEP US FROM BEING SAVED...HE CERTAINLY WANTS TO DO ALL HE CAN TO TRIP UP OUR EFFORTS TO BE HOLY BY CONFUSING MATTERS ON THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION.

AND JUST TO BE CLEAR (AND NOT TO ASSUME ANYTHING) WHEN I TALK ABOUT BEING SANCTIFIED (OR THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION), I'M TALKING ABOUT THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE CONCERNING CHRISTIANS...AND **THE PROCESS IN THEIR LIFE OF BECOMING MORE CONFORMED TO CHRIST IN THEIR PRACTICAL HOLINESS...OR THEIR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVING** (MOST PARTICULARLY TO THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST).

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SANCTIFICATION IS A BIBLICAL WORD....WITH PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS INSTANCE OF IT OCCURRING IN I THESSALONIANS 4:1-3 WHERE THE APOSTLE PAUL WOULD SAY:

1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

SANCTIFICATION IS THE GREEK WORD *hagiasmos* {hag-ee-as-mos'}, WHICH MEANS 1) consecration, purification 2) the effect of consecration 2a) sanctification of heart and life (Strong's). SOMETIMES THIS WORD IS SIMPLY TRANSLATED **HOLINESS** IN REGARDS TO THE BELIEVER'S CONDUCT (ALL AND ALL THIS WORD [AND ITS DERIVATIVES] ARE USED AT LEAST 10 TIMES IN REFERENCE TO THE BELIEVER'S PERSONAL HOLINESS.

BUT THE NEW TESTAMENT IS SHOT THROUGH WITH THIS CONCEPT (NOT JUST WHERE THIS WORD SANCTIFICATION OR ITS OTHER FORMS ARE USED)...BUT ANY TIME THE NEW TESTAMENT SPEAKS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO OBEY CHRIST, OR OUR ABILITY TO OBEY CHRIST, OR GIVES SPECIFIC COMMANDS THAT WE ARE TO FOLLOW FROM CHRIST (PUT OFF OLD BEHAVIOR AND PUT ON NEW)...OR TO BEAR UP UNDER TRIALS...TO KEEP GOING...KEEP BELIEVING...THOSE ALL HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS FOR OUR LIFE EVEN IN THIS LIFE AFTER CONVERSION (OUR SANCTIFICATION...BECOMING MORE CHRIST LIKE).

BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE ADVERSARY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CREATED CONFUSION IN THE CHURCH WHEN IT COMES TO SANCTIFICATION. IN TERMS OF:

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1) THE NECESSITY FOR SANCTIFICATION (SOME SAYING IT IS OPTIONAL)

2) OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE SANCTIFICATION (SOME DENYING CERTAIN OR ANY SINS CAN ACTUALLY BE DEFEATED...WHILE OTHERS SAY CHRISTIANS CAN OBTAIN PERFECTION).

3) THE HOW OF SANCTIFICATION (SOME SAYING LET GO AND LET GOD [THAT YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO CONCERN YOURSELF WITH SPECIFIC COMMANDS...JUST LIVE IN THE SPIRIT...WHILE OTHERS SAYING YOU HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELF ON THE PATH BY A SET OF STRICT RULES AND PRACTICES).

IT REALLY IS A MESS OUT THERE...THE CHURCH IS IN GREAT NEED OF BEING STRAITENING OUT WHEN IT COMES TO THIS VITAL TEACHING...IT WOULD TAKE A YEAR LONG SERIES TO ATTACK EVERY BAD TEACHING AND SET THINGS STRAIGHT.

BUT IN THE 5 WEEKS I HAVE MY PLAN IS TO SET FORTH SOME OF THE MOST VITAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING SANCTIFICATION...USING A DIFFERENT KEY TEXT EVERY WEEK THAT I FEEL REPRESENTS THEM....DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE SUBJECT OF SANCTIFICATION THAT I LIKEN TO DIFFERENT **BIBLICAL LEVERS** WHICH GOD HAS DESIGNED AND INSTALLED IN ORDER TO BE PULLED IN FOR THE PURPOSE OF CAUSING SANCTIFICATION IN OUR LIFE (REGARDING DUTY, ABILITY AND THE MEANS).

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AND DEPENDING ON WHERE WE ARE AT IN OUR WALK WITH THE LORD IN A STAGE OF OUR LIFE...OR MAYBE EVEN ON A GIVEN DAY IN A BATTLE WITH A PARTICULAR SIN...WE MAY NEED TO PULL ONE OF THESE DIFFERENT LEVERS THAT GOD HAS FOR US (MAYBE LEANING ON ONE MORE THAN OTHERS...BUT NEVER NEGLECTING ANY OF THEM).

FOR WHAT CAN HAPPEN AT TIMES (WHICH IS WHAT I THINK CAUSES SOME OF THE BAD TEACHING ON SANCTIFICATION THAT I MENTIONED ABOVE) IS UTTERLY IGNORING ONE OF THE LEVERS THAT GOD HAS CREATED (SO IN ESSENCES ONLY FIRING ON 2 OR 3 CYLINDERS) CAUSING PEOPLE TO JUST PUTZ ALONG IN THEIR PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION.

OR WHAT CAN TAKE PLACE IS ONE OF THESE LEVERS IS EMPHASIZED TO SUCH AN EXTREME CAUSING OVEREMPHASIZING ONE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT IT BURNS OUT...AND A COMPLETE STALL TAKES PLACE IN ONES PURSUIT OF SANCTIFICATION.

SO I WANT TO COVER WHAT I WOULD CALL 5 OF THE MAJOR LEVERS SET BEFORE US IN SCRIPTURE THAT ARE DESIGNED TO PRODUCE SANCTIFICATION IN OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS.

Message Introduction

AND THE FIRST LEVER (SO TO SPEAK) - THE FIRST ASPECT OF SANCTIFICATION - THAT I AM GOING TO BE FOCUSING ON IT IS SO FOUNDATIONAL THAT I WOULD ARGUE THAT THIS LEVER NEEDS TO BE

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PULLED EVERY MORNING TO START OUR DAY...AND ONE THAT WE NEED TO PULL EACH TIME THAT WE FAIL TO SUCCEED IN OUR BATTLE WITH SIN.

IT IS ONE THAT IF WE DON'T GET THIS RIGHT...WE PROBABLY ARE NOT GOING TO SUCCEED IN SANCTIFICATION NO MATTER HOW HARD AND HOW OFTEN WE PULL ALL THE OTHER LEVERS.

IT IS A TRUTH THAT IS SO OBVIOUS AND SIMPLE I THINK WE JUST OVERLOOK IT...(AND ONE I THINK THE ADVERSARY LOVES TO GET IN AND MUCK UP THE WORKS CONCERNING).

AND THE TRUTH I AM SPEAKING OF IS THE TRUTH THAT YOU AND I (IF WE ARE TRULY IN CHRIST...IF WE HAVE TURNED FROM OUR SINS IN REPENTANCE AND BY FAITH TRUSTED IN HIM, AND HIM ALONE FOR OUR SALVATION)...AND ARE CONTINUING TO CONFESS OUR SIN AND REST IN CHRIST...THAT AND THAT ALONE SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO CLEAR OUR CONSCIENCE BEFORE A HOLY GOD....AND GIVE US CONFIDENCE THAT WE ARE IN GOOD STANDING WITH HIM ALREADY...WHICH IN TURN SHOULD FREE US UP TO LIVE LIVES OF HOLINESS (WHICH IS COUNTER-INTUITIVE TO THE WAY WE ARE TEMPTED TO THINK).

FOR IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR US TO REALIZE THAT THE GOOD WORKS WE DO...AND ON THE CONTRARY THE TIMES WHEN WE FAIL AND SIN...**CONTRIBUTE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO OUR BEING IN OR OUT OF FAVOR WITH GOD (OUR JUSTIFICATION). [REPEAT]**

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OUR GOOD WORKS DO NOT GAIN US EXTRA MERIT OR FAVOR WITH GOD...AND LIKEWISE OUR FAILINGS DO NOT KNOCK US DOWN A RUNG (YES..I REALIZE THERE IS CHASTENING BY THE LORD FOR A CHRISTIAN WHO CONTINUES IN WILLFUL SIN...HEBREWS 12:7..AND SO THAT CLOSENESS AND INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP CAN BE INTERRUPTED BY WILLFUL SIN)...BUT EVEN THAT PERSON IF THEY RESPOND AND REPENT THEY ARE IMMEDIATELY RESTORED (THERE IS NO PENANCE AND NO PROCESS).

AND I REALIZE THAT ONE OF THE MARKS OF A TRUE BELIEVER IS THAT THERE MUST BE SOME CHANGE IN TRAJECTORY IN TERMS OF HOW THEY LIVE (**I JOHN 2:4-5**)..AND THIS IS WHAT GIVES THE STRONGEST AND MOST LASTING ASSURANCE. (I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT THAT IN A FEW WEEKS).

BUT THERE IS A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOMEONE WHO IS WILLFULLY SINNING, AND ONE WHO IS STRIVING TO CONQUER SIN AND STILL FAILS.

AND THE POINT IS (WHEN IT COMES TO SANCTIFICATION)..**YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH LASTING VICTORY OVER SIN AND CONSISTENT HOLINESS AS A CHRISTIAN IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN WHERE YOU STAND WITH GOD AND LACK THE CONFIDENCE REGARDING HOW HE SEES YOU** (I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF).

AND I'M TALKING ABOUT CHRISTIANS HERE....FOR THIS IS A FAIRLY COMMON ISSUE WHERE CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE SAVED BY

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GRACE THROUGH FAITH (IT IS ALL GRACE TO GET IN)...BUT THEN IT IS WORKS THAT KEEPS YOU (NO NECESSARILY SAVED...BUT IN A GOOD PRACTICAL STATUS WITH GOD).

IN FACT AN ENTIRE BOOK WAS WRITTEN TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS (WHICH I READ THIS PAST SUMMER) TITLED ***TRANSFORMING GRACE: LIVING CONFIDENTLY IN GOD'S UNFAILING LOVE BY JERRY BRIDGES*** (WE HAVE IT IN OUR BOOKSTORE). I HIGHLY COMMEND IT TO YOU AS I WILL ONLY BEGIN TO SCRATCH THE SURFACE THIS MORNING CONCERNING THIS ISSUE.

BUT BRIDGES TALKS ABOUT THIS "***PERFORMANCE TREADMILL***" THAT BELIEVERS CAN GET ON..BUT HE SEEKS TO REMIND US THAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT VIEW THE WORKS THEY DO AS SOMETHING THAT EARNS GOD'S FAVOR:

"Just as salvation is given freely to all who trust in Christ, so all blessings are given freely to us, also through faith in Christ. Just as you cannot earn your salvation but must receive it as a gift, so you cannot earn the blessing of God but must receive them also as gifts given through Christ." (54)

AND THIS PROBLEM IS NOT NEW...I BELIEVE ITS AS OLD AS ADAM AND EVE IN THAT EVER SINCE THE FALL WE JUST HAVE TROUBLE ACCEPTING THINGS FREELY AND WANT TO EARN IT.

BUT FOR SURE I KNOW IT IS AT LEAST GOES BACK TO THE PURITANS WHEN ANOTHER BOOK WAS WRITTEN 300 YEARS AGO BY AN OLD PURITAN NAMED ***WALTER MARSHALL*** (BOOK TITLED ***THE GOSPEL MYSTERY OF SANCTIFICATION***)...WHICH IS CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE

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THE BOOK ON SANCTIFICATION (UNFORTUNATELY THIS ONE IS OUT OF PRINT).

BUT IN THIS BOOK...THE FIRST THINGS MARSHAL SAYS A CHRISTIAN MUST GET RIGHT IF THEY ARE TO ACTUALLY LIVE OUT SANCTIFICATION TO ITS FULLEST EXTENT IS BE REMINDED OF THEIR SURE FOOTING IN CHRIST:

"...neither can true practice of holiness be secure, except the persuasion of our justification, and reconciliation with God, be first obtained without works of the law, that we may be enabled thereby to do them..." (15).

AND AGAIN...HE IS TALKING ABOUT OUR DAILY WALK AS CHRISTIANS...AND HE SPENDS PAGES TALKING ABOUT THAT ISSUES.

IS THAT YOU TODAY? DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH THAT? SOME OF YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE A CLUE WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. BUT MY SENSE (FROM WHAT MANY OF YOU HAVE TOLD ME AND THESE TWO GREAT CHRISTIANS WRITERS HAVE SAID) IS THAT IS A MAJOR ISSUE FOR SOME.

SO TO SET A GOOD FOUNDATION ON THIS ISSUE OF SANCTIFICATION, I WANT TO TURN THIS MORNING FIRST TO ROMANS CHAPTER 5...WHERE I SEEK TO REMIND THAT IT IS INHERENT IN THE GOSPEL ITSELF...THAT IF A PERSON BELIEVES IN CHRIST...THEY HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO HAVE IMMEDIATE ASSURANCE THROUGH FAITH....BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT OUR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD IS BASED ON WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE (BY THE WAY....THIS BY FAR WILL BE MY LONGEST INTRODUCTION OF THE SERIES).

I - The Basis of a Clear Conscience: Faith in Christ (Romans 5:1)

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Romans 5:1-12 - "Therefore, having been justified by faith, [a]we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

SO IN ROMANS CHAPTER 5 WE HAVE A VERY FAMILIAR SECTION IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT ROME.BUT IT ALSO IS A VERY IMPORTANT SECTION.

FOR WHAT WE HAVE IN ROMANS 5:1 IS A TRANSITION...AS PAUL IS LEAVING THE MAIN ARGUMENT THAT HE HAS BEEN BUILDING THE PREVIOUS FOUR CHAPTERS...AND IS SEEKING TO SPRINGBOARD INTO THE SECTION THAT COVERS THE NEXT 4 CHAPTERS.

AND AS MOST OF YOU KNOW...THE MAIN ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST 4 CHAPTERS IS THAT IF A PERSON IS GOING TO BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD (SAVED FROM THEIR SINS AND JUSTIFIED BEFORE HIM), IT WILL BE BY FAITH ALONE IN THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST.

IT DOES NOT MATTER IF YOU ARE JEW OR A GENTILE....IF YOU ARE MORAL, RELIGIOUS AND READ YOUR BIBLE EVERY DAY, OR IF YOU ARE A PAGAN IDOL WORSHIPER WHO GLUTS YOURSELF WITH IMMORALITY...EVERY PERSON IS ON A ONE WAY ROAD TO HELL...THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON WHO ESCAPES THE WRATH OF GOD IN THEIR NATURAL CONDITION:

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Romans 1:18 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 3:10-12 - As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

SO THERE IS THIS DILEMMA WE ARE IN AS SINFUL HUMANS...WE ARE UNDER THE WRATH OF GOD...AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

BUT GOD DID DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS, RIGHT, THE GOSPEL. GOD SENT HIS SON THE LORD JESUS TO LIVE THE LIFE WE COULD NOT LIVE (PERFECTLY)...AND ALSO DIED THE DEATH THAT WE DESERVE...SECURING ETERNAL LIFE FOR THOSE THAT WOULD BELIEVE.

Romans 3:21-26 - "21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

SO PAUL HAS BEEN CHRYSTAL CLEAR IN ROMANS 1-4...NO ONE CAN STAND BEFORE A HOLY GOD ON THEIR OWN, AND IT IS THEN ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS WILL BE JUSTIFIED...MADE RIGHT WITH GOD...FORGIVEN AND RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE.

SO BECAUSE OF THAT...IN **ROMANS 5:1** HE CAN WRAP EVERYTHING UP THAT HE HAS SAID SO FAR IN ROMANS IN ONE SENTENCE, "THEREFORE, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE".

PAUL IS SLAMMING THE DOOR CLOSED ON THAT SECTION...HE HAS SAID EVERYTHING HE CAN THINK OF TO TRY TO CONVINCING HIS READERS

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(AND POTENTIAL OPPONENTS) THAT FAITH IS THE ONLY SUFFICIENT THING THAT CAN SAVE (EVEN MENTIONING ABRAHAM).

BUT NOT ONLY IS ROMANS 5:1 A SUMMARY STATEMENT (TO SAY THAT JUSTIFICATION COMES FROM FAITH ALONE)...IT IS ALSO CONCLUDING THOUGHT...AND MORE IMPORTANTLY A TRANSITIONAL THOUGHT)...FOR PAUL INJECTS THE "THEREFORE" WHERE HE CAN NOW MAKE A CASE FOR SOMETHING BASED ON THIS NEW STANDING...THAT THIS NEW STANDING PRODUCES SOMETHING....A STATE....A FACT. WHICH IS **PEACE WITH GOD.**

SO FROM ROMANS 5:1 PAUL THEN LAUNCHES INTO HIS NEXT MAIN ARGUMENT WHICH IS THAT BASED ON THIS POSITION OF HAVING PEACE WITH GOD, WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO HOPE IN FUTURE GLORIFICATION...AND EVEN EXULT AND GLORY IN OUR PEACE WITH GOD NOW (WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR IT OR WORK FOR IT)

YOU SEE THESE BROTHERS AND SISTERS WERE STRUGGLING...THERE WERE TRIALS, PERSECUTION...AND EVEN REMAINING SIN.

AND THE QUESTION ON THEIR MINDS (WHICH PAUL ADDRESSES IN THE NEXT 4 CHAPTERS) IS DOES GOD STILL LOVE US (IS HE STILL FOR US)...LOOK AT ALL THAT IS HAPPENING.

AND PAUL ANSWERS WITH A RESOUNDING YES...BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE ALREADY IN CHRIST...AND GOD HAS ALREADY DONE THE MOST REMARKABLE/DIFFICULT THING IN BRINGING YOU FROM

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BEING IN SIN TO BEING IN CHRIST (THROUGH THE SENDING OF HIS SON)...YOU THINK HE IS GOING TO STOP NOW?

IN FACT...ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENING ARE ACTUALLY THE SIGN OF HIS CARING LOVE...THE SAME LOVE THAT SENT CHRIST TO DIE FOR YOU...IS THE SAME LOVE THAT IS ORDERING ALL THE EVENTS OF YOUR LIFE FOR HIS GLORY...AND IN THE MIDST OF IT HE WILL SEND THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO REMIND YOU OF THE LOVE HE HAS FOR YOU?

WHY? BASED ON WHAT WE DO? NO, TO REMIND US OF WHAT HE DID AND MAKING US HIS CHILDREN (verses 5-9)

Romans 5:5-9 ...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Romans 8:31-33 - "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 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."

SEE HOW THESE TWO BOOKENDS OF CHAPTERS 5 AND 8 ARE DESIGNED TO GET OUR EYES OFF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES...AND EVEN OUR EYES OFF OF OURSELVES IN ORDER TO REMIND US OF WHO WE ARE?

OUR EYES ARE TO BE ON WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN CHRIST...AND THE FACT THAT OUR BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN THAT WHICH IS TO BE THE FOUNDATION AND THE BEDROCK OF EVERYTHING (A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS YOURS TO HAVE IF YOU HAVE BELIEVED IN JESUS).

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PAUL DOES NOT SEND THEM INWARD FOR SELF EXAMINATION (NOT YET)..FIRST IT IS LOOK TO THE CROSS (AND ALL THAT I HAVE OPENED UP FOR 4 CHAPTERS) AND EXPERIENCE PEACE WITH GOD (FOR BELIEVERS).

IN THE PAST YEAR OR SO I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF READING ANDREW BONAR'S LITTLE BIOGRAPHY ON **ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE**...WHO WAS A SCOTTISH PREACHER IN THE EARLY 1800s. AND M'CHEYNE WAS KNOWN FOR TWO THINGS...1) HIS POWER PREACHING 2) HIS PERSONAL HOLINESS. SO WELL KNOWN WAS HIS PERSONAL HOLINESS THAT AFTER HIS DEATH NOT ONLY THOSE WHO KNEW HIM PERSONALLY SPOKE OF THE AMAZING EXAMPLE HE WAS...BUT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

BUT IT IS INTERESTING...IN BONAR'S BIOGRAPHY HE QUOTES VERBATIM SOME OF M'CHEYNE'S WRITINGS ON ASSURANCE...AND HOW DID HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT WITH GOD:

"A sense of forgiveness does not process from marks seen in yourself, but from a discovery of the beauty, worth, and freeness of Christ. We look out for peace not in." (Andrew Bonar, Robert Murray M'Cheyne (Banner of Truth) pg. 92).

"...for one look at yourself...take ten looks to Christ" (Andrew, Memoir and Remains of R.M. M'Cheyne - pg. 279).

SOME OF YOU LOOK INWARD WAY TOO MUCH (ON THE OTHER HAND SOME OF YOU NEED TO LOOK HARDER...FOR IF YOU DID YOU WOULD SEE YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO ANY ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF HOW YOU LIVE).

BUT OTHERS OF US ARE LOOKING TO THE WRONG PLACE TO START OUR DAY...TO THE WRONG PLACE WHEN WE SIN...TO THE WRONG PLACE

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TO MOTIVATE US AND GIVE THE ASSURANCE WE NEED TO START WITH...AND PERHAPS YOU ARE IN AN ENDLESS SPIRAL OF DEFEAT AND DESPAIR BECAUSE YOU SIN AND YOU THINK YOU HAVE TO THEN TO DEFEAT OR OFFSET THAT SIN TO GET BACK IN GOD'S GRACES...AND YOU KEEP SPIRALING DOWN).

YOU KNOW WHAT THE REMIDY FOR THAT IS? CONFESS YOUR SIN AND ASK FOR FORGIVENESS.

I John 1:8-9 - "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I John 2:8-10 - "..And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

NOW THE VERY NEXT VERSE JOHN SAYS THAT BY THIS WE KNOW WE HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

AND .M'CHEYENE WOULD GO ONTO SAY THAT "**AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS ALSO AN ASSURANCE RISING FROM WHAT WE SEE IN OURSELVES**"...THERE HAS TO BE OBJECTIVE ASSURANCE AS WELL AS THE SUBJECTIVE.

AND THOSE TWO THINGS WILL BE A ONE-TWO PUNCH THAT WILL GIVE ULTIMATE ASSURANCE THAT WILL PRODUCE HOLINESS AND THEN MORE ASSURANCE AND MORE HOLINESS (THEY FEED OFF EACH OTHER).

BUT HAVING THE IMMEDIATE, SUBJECTIVE ASSURANCE FROM BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL IS NO ONLY OURS TO HAVE...BUT IT IS HOW GOD HAS DESIGNED FOR US TO BE FREED UP TO SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR...KNOWING WE CAN APPROACH HIM BECAUSE OF CHRIST.

II - The Function of a Clear Conscience: Freeing Us to Serve (Hebrews 9:14)

(TURN QUICKLY WITH ME TO HEBREWS 9)...HOPEFULLY YOU HAVE BEEN CONVINCED THAT PAUL BELIEVED THAT PEACE WITH GOD WAS ABLE TO BE ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST...NOW WE WILL SEE THAT IN THE NEW COVENANT (AFTER CHRIST HAS COME AND LIVED AND DIED AND IS RAISED) BELIEVERS NOW CAN SERVE GOD FROM THIS CLEAR CONSCIENCE IN A WAY NOT SEEN BEFORE (RAY READ THIS EARLIER).

Hebrews 9:12-14 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

SEE HOW DIFFERENT IT IS NOW...IN TERMS OF WHAT BELIEVERS CAN EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW COVENANT:

FIRST, IN TERMS OF THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT (STAY AWAY, I'M HOLY, YOU ARE NOT...NO ONE CAN APPROACH ME).

SECOND IN TERMS OF THE SACRIFICES MADE AND THE WHOLE SYSTEM SURROUNDING THE PRIESTHOOD...THEY WERE INFERIOR...THERE WAS NEVER A SENSE THAT THEY MADE YOU RIGHT WITH GOD SO IN VERSE 9) "gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience"

BUT SO POWERFUL IS THIS NEW WORK OF CHRIST...THAT NOT ONLY DOES A PERSON EXPERIENCE A REAL SENSE OF FORGIVENESS THROUGH THAT ATONEMENT...THEY ACTUALLY HAVE THE CONFIDENCE

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(BOLDNESS) TO APPROACH GOD AND SERVE HIM BASED ON THAT
STANDING...FROM THE CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Conclusion

WELL, I HOPE FOR YOU WHO STRUGGLE WITH THIS AND NEEDED
THIS THAT IT WAS AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU.

BUT IN REALITY ALL OF US NEED TO BE REMINDED OF THIS....IN
OUR DAILY WALK WITH GOD.

AND NEXT WEEK WE WILL PICK UP IN ROMANS 6 AND LOOK AT THE
ABILITY TO BE SANCTIFIED THAT CHRIST HAS PURCHASED FOR US ON THE
CROSS - TO BE FREE (NOT JUST LEGALLY)..BUT TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO
SERVE.

BUT THIS WEEK I WANT US ALL TO DO JUST ONE THING (AND WE
WILL ADD NEW THINGS EVERY WEEK).

PULL THIS LEVER OF TRUTH...START YOUR DAY BY PREACHING THE
GOSPEL TO YOURSELF....AND WHEN YOU FAIL...PRAY IN SUCH A WAY AS
TO CLEAR YOUR CONSCIENCE.

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IF YOU CAN'T GET A CLEAR CONSCIENCE THAT IS A PROBLEM
BECAUSE YOU ARE EITHER STILL WILLFULLY HOLDING ONTO THAT
SIN...OR YOU JUST DON'T KNOW CHRIST.

BUT PRAY THIS WAY...

[CLOSE IN PRAYER]