

## Lesson 11

# Grace's Double Cure

## Deliverance from Guilt and Power

### Introduction

**Rock of Ages**  
TOPLADY

AGUSTUS M. TOPLADY, 1740-1778  
THOMAS HASTINGS, 1784-1872

1. Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my-self in Thee;  
2. Could my tears for - ev - er flow, Could my zeal no lan-guor know,  
3. While I draw this fleet-ing breath, When my eyes shall close in death,

Let the wa - ter and the blood, From Thy wound-ed side which flowed,  
These for sin could not a - tone - Thou must save, and Thou a - lone:  
When I rise to worlds un-known And be-hold Thee on Thy throne,

Be of sin the dou-ble cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.  
In my hand no price I bring, Sim - ply to Thy cross I cling.  
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my-self in Thee.

It is said that Augustus M. Toplady wrote *Rock of Ages* during a storm while he lived in England. Traveling along the gorge in Burrington Combe, he was caught in a fierce storm and took shelter in a gap in the gorge, where he wrote the original lyrics. Today, the rock is marked with a plaque commemorating the place where Toplady wrote the hymn in 1762. The first four lines were published in *The Gospel Magazine* in October 1775, and the complete version was printed in March 1776. In July 1776, Toplady published the hymn in his hymnal, *Praise and Hymns for Public and Private Worship*. You are most likely familiar with the lyrics.

In the first verse, Toplady identifies water and blood as the double cure for our sins. What is meant by *the double cure*?

Sin creates two kinds of problems that need to be solved by God: debt and death. When God saves us by grace, He delivers us from sin's guilt and power. In this way, grace is a double cure in saving us from sin. The *debt* we're considering here could be pictured as a colossal debt from being careless in a bad accident or having a severe and prolonged illness. Such staggering debt can be terrible, crushing the soul until it loses hope. Of course, the other most awful human tragedy is *death*. This is the physical death that sin brought into the world, affecting every person in some way. Death is not just a problem because of what it is, which is bad enough, but also because of the many complex and sad situations that come from it. Debt and death in this world are bad enough, but the two related spiritual issues that sin causes for every person are much worse.

### The First Curse of Sin: Guilt

Everyone who commits sin practices lawlessness and sin is lawlessness, 1 John 3.4.

*Sin is lawlessness*, meaning sin is rejecting or resisting the law. The one who breaks the law becomes guilty, i.e., he is now liable to the penalty of the law. God's law declares that the penalty or the wages of sin is death, Romans 6.23, eternal death in everlasting fire, Revelation 21.8.

James wrote:

For whoever keeps the entire law, and yet stumbles at one point, is guilty of breaking it all, James 2.10.

Let's focus on the word *guilty* James uses here. It refers to someone who has done something wrong and must face the judge for it. This is where the idea of debt comes in. Being in debt means owing someone something. It comes from a legal word meaning "held against one, *liable, answerable, guilty*."<sup>63</sup> In Romans 3.19, Paul writes that all humans are "subject to God's judgment." In the original language, the word is defined as "being liable to judgment/punishment, *answerable, accountable*."<sup>64</sup> In other places, the New Testament uses forms of the word *debt* to talk about the results of sin. For example, Jesus teaches us to pray for God to "forgive us our debts" Matthew 6.12, not our "trespasses." Luke 13.4 identifies those guilty of sin and deserving of punishment as "debtors."<sup>65</sup> We also see the same in the story of the unmerciful servant, Matthew 18.23–35, which uses the picture of a prison for debtors to show that sin makes us owe God something. What do we owe Him? The debt of eternal punishment in hell.

The guilt that sin puts on us is different from *feeling guilty*. Some sinners feel guilty; some do not. We are talking about a *state of guilt*; every sinner is guilty before God whether he admits it or not and whether he "feels guilty" or not. This state of guilt is the worst problem for the sinner; it is the heavier part of the double curse. If someone dies in a state of guilt, he is gone forever, period. Everyone under the law system is still under this curse of guilt. Without grace, we as creatures can either pay God the debt of perfect obedience that we owe Him, or we can pay Him the debt of punishment in hell for not obeying perfectly, James 2.10; Galatians 3.10. Since all have sinned, the only debt we can settle by ourselves is the second one. Sinners who die under the law, still owing God the debt of sin, will keep paying that debt forever, Revelation 20.10. This is the most urgent problem we face and must be solved.

In previous lessons, we have discussed the concept of justification and how it addresses the objective legal problem we face before God. This is the gift of justification, which Paul addresses in Romans 1-5. He says that we are *justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*, Romans 3.24. We are *justified by faith apart from works of law*, Romans 3.28. We have already discussed other terms associated with justification: *forgiveness* (or remission) of sins and *pardon* or *acquittal*. Justification is a legal idea because guilt is a legal problem. When God gives us the gift of justification, He acts as a Judge, declaring that the legal punishment for our sins is gone.

We must remember that when we receive the gift of justification as grace, it costs God everything. God cannot ignore the requirements of His holiness, which say that sin must be punished. The only way God can free us from the duty to pay our debt of eternal punishment is for Jesus Christ to settle it for us, Romans 3.25-26.

When Jesus died on the cross, He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross, Colossians 2.14. The blood of Christ has paid off our debt of eternal punishment. When we die under grace, we die with no debt!

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8.1.

"No condemnation" means no punishment. There is no hell for those who are in Christ Jesus!

## The Second Curse of Sin: A Sick, Diseased Sinful Nature

This is where some caution needs to be exercised. When we speak of sinful human nature, we **are not** referring to the idea of *total depravity* as championed by Calvinists. We must not assume that any view of spiritual corruption is the same as *total* corruption. However, the Bible unmistakably speaks of our sinful nature. When we are born, we are pure, whole, and safe in the sight of God. But when we reach the age of accountability and choose to sin, we become spiritually depraved. According to Genesis 1.31, humanity was created good, and everyone is born good. But, when we yield to temptation and commit sinful deeds, we become evil. This produces a vicious cycle in us, as our sinful nature then gives rise to more and more sinful acts.<sup>66</sup>

The following passages identify the problem:

- **Isaiah 1.5-6:** The whole head is hurt, and the whole heart is sick. From the sole of the foot even to the head, no spot is uninjured—wounds, welts, and festering sores not cleansed, bandaged, or soothed with oil.
- **Jeremiah 17.9:** The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?
- **Romans 3.13-18:** Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues. Vipers' venom is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and wretchedness are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
- **Ephesians 2.1-5:** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We, too, all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

A sinner is not just guilty concerning God's law; he or she is sinful in his or her very nature or being. It is, as Cottrell writes, "the soul's fatal disease. ...It affects our spirits (like a) physical disease affects our bodies."<sup>67</sup>

Jesus and the Apostles described the evil nature of sinners:

- **Matthew 7.17:** Jesus speaks not only of bad *fruit* but also of a bad *tree*, which refers to a person himself. He describes the tree as *rotten*, which means it is unfit for use.
- **Matthew 12.33-35:** Jesus speaks of evil men with evil hearts. On other occasions, he uses the same word to describe individuals, i.e., Matthew 5.39; 45; 7.11.
- **2 Thessalonians 3.2:** Paul describes some as evil and perverse men. See also 2 Timothy 3.13; Acts 17.5; 1 Corinthians 5.13.

When we think of the double curse of sin, this second curse is our sinful, fleshly nature that makes it extremely difficult to resist the desire to sin and live by God's will. Paul summarizes the gravity of the situation in Romans 8.7-8:

The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

A sinner can respond to the gospel, but obeying God's law is a real challenge.<sup>68</sup> Paul teaches that sin embeds itself deeply within our flesh, as Romans 7.17-20 notes, effectively transforming our bodies into operational bases for its influence. When controlled by sin's potent grip, our flesh is known as the "body of sin," as described in Romans 6.6. This term signifies a body overwhelmed and maneuvered by sin, serving as a launching pad for various temptations and unbridled desires. Under such influence, an individual finds themselves steered by carnality, allowing these base instincts to override moral discernment and to be pursued without restraint. Therefore, the term "the body of death" in Romans 7.24 refers to the physical body not merely in terms of mortal death but as an entity trapped in spiritual demise.

## Regeneration

So, when we speak of the second part of the double cure of grace, we relate to God as a judge and *the Great Physician*. Also, in saving us by grace, God acts as a doctor, providing a cure when He changes our hearts by touching our souls through **regeneration**, which gives spiritual life to those spiritually dead through their trespasses and sins. This occurs in baptism, Titus 3.5-6, Colossians 2.12-13. In Titus, the word *regeneration* is used, which says that God saved us by the *washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit*. Here, the *renewal* stresses the quality of our regeneration, describing something "new in nature, different from the usual, impressive, better than the old, superior in value or attraction."<sup>69</sup>

This is the same as John 3.3-5 calls the new birth or being "born again." This is a state or status that is ongoing. We live in it.

## Sanctification

After the new birth, the double cure is also realized through our continuous growth and spiritual transformation, known as **sanctification**. *Regeneration* makes *sanctification* possible. The two are connected as cause and effect. Paul talks about both here:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do, Ephesians 2.10.

Let's examine the keywords of this verse.

### ***Regeneration in Ephesians 2.10:***

#### **A New Creation**

We are His *workmanship*. We have been *created* in Christ Jesus. We have become a *new creation*; see 2 Corinthians 5.17. Ezekiel described it this way:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, Ezekiel 36.26.

This is what we could refer to as a spiritual heart transplant. Paul calls it several times an actual resurrection from the dead:

(He) made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2.5-6.

When you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses, Colossians 2.12-13.

Our *regeneration and renewing* are *by the Holy Spirit*, says Titus 3.5. At that moment, when we drink the Spirit into our inner nature, 1 Corinthians 12.13, is when healing begins.

## ***Sanctification in Ephesians 2.10***

### **The Purpose of Your Re-Creation**

Next, in Ephesians 2.10, Paul says we have been *created in Christ Jesus for good works*. This shows the goal of regeneration. When we do *good works*, it is another way of saying how we become holy or sanctified.

I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances, Ezekiel 36.27.

His presence within us begins the process of our sanctification. This happens because the Holy Spirit stays in our bodies to help us recover fully.

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you, Romans 8.11.

Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 1 Corinthians 6.19.

### **The Spirit is Given to Us for Power**

While we are helped by the Spirit within, we must also use our spiritual strength and work hard to get healthy:

Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose, Philippians 2.12-13.

These thoughts are truly remarkable: the Holy Spirit Himself dwells within us, and through Him, we have the power of God that enables us to be holy just as God is holy! That's why we should approach sanctification with *fear and trembling*, as Paul said above. God has placed the responsibility of sanctification upon us, but He doesn't expect us to achieve it through our sin-weakened abilities. Sanctification gives us the external power needed to overcome sin and become holy, just like God. Look again at verse 13. God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, is at work in you to help you both want to do what is right ("to will") and to enable us to *do* it ("to work"). Swete observes:

The Spirit is not merely . . . an aggressive force leading the human spirit against the flesh, or a defensive power shielding it from attack. Paul opens another door of hope; his indwelling Spirit is also a constructive power which builds up a new life within, cooperating with the spirit of man in the work of restoring human life to the image of God.<sup>70</sup>

However, this power is helpful if we actively *pursue holiness* and exercise our wills, as stated in Hebrews 12:14. Although the power is there, we must claim it and allow it to work within us. We should pray for its application, as mentioned in Ephesians 3:16, and *put to death the deeds of the body*, as stated in Romans 8:13. *Be holy* in 1 Peter 1:15, which is a command that we must obey. We are not puppets controlled by the Spirit, but we have the freedom to choose and act on His power. And yet, we must simultaneously acknowledge and remember that we can do these things only through the power of the Spirit who dwells within us. *Work out your salvation*, but remember *it is God who is at work in you*. Put sin to death *by the Spirit*.

God not only assists us with our initial salvation, but He also stays with us throughout our journey toward growth and transformation, helping us become more like Him.:

We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit, 2 Corinthians 3.18.

## What's In This for Us?

**Recognize the dual nature of sin's curse:** Understand that sin not only leaves us with a legal debt to God due to our guilt but also infects our nature, making us prone to further sinfulness. Acknowledging both helps us appreciate God's comprehensive salvation, addressing our legal standing and inner condition.

**Actively participate in your sanctification:** Sanctification is not a passive process. While salvation is a gift of grace through faith, becoming holy as God is holy requires our active engagement, Philippians 2.12; 2 Corinthians 7.1; Hebrews 12.14. This includes practicing spiritual disciplines, making morally upright decisions, and embodying Christ-like behavior daily.

**Seek the Spirit's power for transformation:** Recognize that the battle against sin and the pursuit of holiness cannot be won through human effort alone. Regularly pray for the Holy Spirit's empowerment, guidance, and conviction to lead a life that reflects the holiness of God.

**Embrace the process of regeneration and renewal:** Celebrate the reality that, in Christ, you are a new creation. You have a new identity. Baptism is the occasion for this spiritual renewal and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Allow this fact to inspire a lifestyle marked by growth, transformation, and a departure from sin.

**Invest in your local congregation and find those to hold you accountable:** Engage with a local congregation that can support, encourage, and holds you responsible for your spiritual growth. Share your struggles and victories, pray for one another, and study God's Word together to build spiritual growth and mutual edification within the body of Christ.

## Conclusion

Our exploration of sin's dual curse and the magnificent grace of God's double cure reveals the profound love and mercy bestowed upon us. Through the sacrifice of Christ, we are not only absolved of our guilt and released from the legal debt of sin but also regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, transforming our very natures and enabling us to live out our call to holiness.

This stresses the importance of active participation in sanctification, a process that is empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. It reminds us that while salvation is a divine gift, our growth in grace and holiness requires deliberate effort, continuous prayer, and a relentless pursuit of the Spirit's transformative power.

Moreover, the journey of sanctification is meant to be walked with others. Our engagement with fellow Christians provides support and accountability and mirrors the unified nature of God's kingdom. In fellowship with one another and unity with the Spirit, we find our greatest strength, encouragement, and opportunity for growth.

Therefore, let us move forward with a heart full of gratitude for the salvation and sanctification we receive in Christ Jesus. Let us commit ourselves to live out this new identity, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to pursue holiness, and to reflect the image of God in every aspect of our lives. In doing so, we honor the One who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, 1 Peter 2.9-10, and continues to work within us, shaping us into His masterpiece, Ephesians 2.10, for the world to see.

May we never take for granted the incredible gift of God's grace and the daily renewal offered to us through His Spirit. May our lives be a testament to the power of His transforming love as we journey together toward the fullness of life that God has prepared for those who love Him.

## For Class Interaction and Discussion

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### *Thought Questions for Discussion:*

1. According to the Bible, how do guilt and a sinful nature impact our understanding of the human condition?
2. Why is it impossible to overcome sin's consequence of intervention, and how does this underline the importance of grace?
3. In what practical ways does the process of sanctification manifest in a believer's life?
4. How does the Holy Spirit empower believers to break free from the cycle of sin and pursue a life of holiness?
5. How does engaging with a spiritual community contribute to a believer's journey of sanctification? Share personal experiences, if any.
6. What does being "a new creation" in Christ imply about our identity, and how should this influence our daily living?
7. Sanctification is often described as a journey. What are some signs that someone is growing in holiness?
8. How do we balance the understanding that sanctification is a work of God's grace, which requires our effort and participation?
9. Baptism symbolizes death to sin and new life in Christ. How does this sacrament relate to the concept of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit?
10. What challenges are faced while living according to our new identity in Christ, and how can we overcome them through the Holy Spirit?



## Group Activities

1. Divide into small groups, inviting members of each group to share their stories of how they came to understand their need for God's grace and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
2. Pair up participants and ask them to share one area of their life where the seekers will pray for each other, explicitly asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance and strength.

## Final Encouraging Word:

As we reflect on the process of sanctification, let's remember it is not about achieving perfection through our strength but becoming more like Christ through the power of the Spirit. The path of sanctification is marked by moments of struggle and triumph, doubt and assurance, but above all, it is underpinned by the unchanging grace of God.

Let us take heart in the promise that He who began a good work in us will continue until the day of Christ Jesus, Philippians 1.6. May we lean not on our understanding but on the Lord to guide us through every step of the way. And as we support one another in love and prayer, let's encourage each other to live out our new identity in Christ, reflecting His light and love in a world that desperately needs it.

Sanctification is not a sprint but a marathon. It requires patience, perseverance, and a constant reliance on God's grace. So, let's run with endurance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and perfecter of faith, Hebrews 12.1-2.

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<sup>63</sup> BDAG, p. 338.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 1037.

<sup>65</sup> The word *sinful* comes from the word *opheiletai*, which is translated as "debtor." See BDAG, p. 742.

<sup>66</sup> See Matthew 7.17; 12.33-35; 15.18-19; Luke 6.45.

<sup>67</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All*, p. 195.

<sup>68</sup> Cottrell, *What the Bible Says About Grace*, p. 71.

<sup>69</sup> Behm, Johannes. "Καίνος, Καινότης, Ανακαινίζω, Ανακαινώω, Ανακαινώσις, Έγκαινίζω." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-. (Behm 1964)

<sup>70</sup> Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A Study of Primitive Christian Teaching*. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1910, p. 344-45. (Swete 1910)