

Article 4 – Salvation Back to the Basics

Intro – Pardon Denied

- Back in 1830 **George Wilson** was convicted of robbing the U.S. Mail and was sentenced to be hanged. **President Andrew Jackson** issued a pardon for Wilson, but he refused to accept it. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall, who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." For some, the pardon comes too late. For others, **the pardon is not accepted.**
- The fact is that all men are condemned sinners, headed for eternal destruction. God has offered a pardon to every member of the human race, but that pardon (Jesus Christ) can be accepted or rejected. Only a fool would reject an eternal pardon but billions have already done so.
- God's pardon is Jesus Christ and the process through which God pardons us is called salvation. Tonight we dive into that inexhaustible subject.

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

*D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. **END***

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer.

- Thankfully "salvation involves the redemption of the whole man," specifically because each part of

who we are was condemned to hell through our willful sin against God. Every part of us needs to be saved and through Christ every part is – body, soul, and spirit.

- Salvation is offered freely to all – surely that is true. Jesus said “whosoever will” may come and inherit eternal life. Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of all mankind – everyone is invited!
- Rev. 22:17 – “*And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*”
- Salvation is offered to all men, but only those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior receive the gift of grace. Faith has always been the requirement for salvation (Rom. 4:3).
- “By His own blood (Jesus) obtained eternal redemption for the believer” – that is, He made atonement for our sins with His blood (Heb. 9:12). His blood satisfied the wrath of God and will forever be “the sinner’s perfect plea.”

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- We see from the article that salvation is multi-faceted, but in the broadest sense it includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Most never realize how much is contained in those few words, “I got saved.”
- Most importantly, “there is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.” Jesus

meant what He said when He told us that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). The only Way to God the Father is through Jesus the Son.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

- Regeneration means just what it says – rebirth, new life. It is “a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus.” Regeneration is what we’re referring to when we tell others that we’ve been born again!
- Nowhere is this more clear than Jesus’ words to Nicodemus – “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*” (John 3:5).
- Once a person has been regenerated, he/she is a new creature in Christ – “*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (2 Cor. 5:17).
- Regeneration begins with conviction. Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin (John 16), specifically it is impossible for a person to be saved until he knows he’s lost.
- Regeneration happens when someone responds to Holy Spirit conviction with “repentance toward

God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Simply put, we turn from our sins and ourselves and in faith we turn to Jesus.

- Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace,” meaning that **you can’t have one without the other**. Where there’s no repentance, there’s no faith, and vice versa.
- The article reminds us that faith is more than mere belief. James said, “*Even the demons believe, and shudder*” (James 2:19). Faith is the commitment of “the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.” The heart of faith is what we believe, and that belief governs what we do.

B. Justification is God’s gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

- Regeneration you’re probably familiar with, but justification maybe not so much. Justification is really a legal term. Think of it like a courtroom setting in which you’ve been convicted of sin.
- The case is being made against you and the evidence is overwhelming – you are a guilty sinner deserving of eternal damnation. Just when you’re about to be convicted and sentenced, someone steps up and offers to take your conviction and your execution in your place.
- That man is Jesus. He took your punishment on himself and by virtue of His death in your place, you’re pronounced innocent and His sinless perfection is applied to your account. You have avoided death through a redeemer named Jesus!

- That is justification – through faith in Jesus the righteousness of God was “imputed” to you (Romans 4), and by virtue of His perfection you stand before God “just as if you never sinned.”
- The full acquittal and righteousness provided to every believer through faith in Jesus brings “the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.” Truly, you can say you are “right with God” once you place your faith in Jesus – you have come into a “right standing” with Him!
- Paul explains quoting Psalm 32:1-2 – “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.*” Not guilty!

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life.

- “Sanctification” in the NT comes from the Greek word *hagios*, meaning “set apart.” When we say someone has been sanctified, we’re saying that God has set them apart for salvation.
- That being the case, it is the experience “by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes.” Having been saved and set apart, a believer is able to “progress toward moral and spiritual maturity.”
- How? By the “presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.” In other words, sanctification is both immediate and progressive.

- It's like this – through faith in Christ you're been saved, and you are being saved. In this case, through faith in Jesus you've been sanctified (set apart by God for salvation) and you're being sanctified (drawing closer to Him daily).
- For that reason, “growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.” In other words, we should be drawing closer to God with each passing day, week, month and year. If you're not closer to God today than you were this time last year, decade, etc. there is a problem.
- Remember, God set you apart so you could be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). Through prayer, Scripture, service, and many other disciplines we echo the desire of John the Baptist – “*He must increase but I must decrease*” (John 3:30).

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

- Glorification is the final and highest aspect of our salvation. It is our transition from the finite to the infinite – from the temporary to the eternal – from the corruptible to the incorruptible!!
- Paul explained to the Corinthians – “*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known*” (1 Cor. 13:12).
- When our faith is met with sight, we will worship in the presence of our Risen Savior Jesus forever. Then we will enter into an everlasting rest free from all the wickedness and problems of this life. “*Even so, come Lord Jesus!*” (Rev. 22:20)