



The following is the summary of the Sunday sermon that is sent to the body at Steadfast in an email called "The Weekly"

You Are Fallen Yet Redeemed

You are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

The Bible connects the origin of human sin with the rebellion of Satan. Ezekiel 28:11-15 describes the privileged position of Satan before his rebellion: "full of wisdom" and "perfect in beauty" (v.12), dazzling in appearance (v. 13), an "anointed guardian cherub" at God's throne (v. 14)—until "unrighteousness was found in you" (v.15). Satan was a created being with astounding beauty and power, but the Bible assigns pride as Satan's fundamental sin (1 Timothy 3:6). Isaiah 14:12-15 is a rich poetic image of Satan empowering the king of Babylon: "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Thus, the rebellion of Satan had begun. If we understand Revelation 12:4 correctly, one-third of the angelic host joined Satan in this rebellion (see also Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4).

Genesis 3 brings humanity into this rebellion. Will God's image-bearers join Satan? The tragic answer is yes, and all the devastation, dysfunction and hurt of a fallen, broken world began. Wayne Grudem posits two devastating consequences of sin:

- Sin struck at the basis for moral/ethical standards –i.e., "What is right?" In the Garden, God defined what was right and wrong. The test of that standard was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, from which they were not to eat. Adam and Eve were moral creatures and, when faced with an ethical standard, had the capacity to choose obedience or disobedience. Satan knew that and successfully challenged God's goodness and His ethical standards; Adam and Eve joined the rebellion. As God's revelation continued to unfold throughout history, humanity has persistently defined "what is right" its own way; ignoring the standards that God as Creator and Sustainer of all life had revealed.
- Sin also gave a different answer to the question, "Who am I?" The correct answer was that Adam and Eve were created persons: Of value and worth as God's image-bearers, yet dependent on Him and subordinate to Him as dominion stewards (Gen.1:26ff). But once they sinned, the answer changed— a declaration of independence from God. Since Genesis 3, humanity has been pursuing autonomy from God—a rejection of

Him personally and of His standards. In our Postmodern world today, humanity has embraced a thoroughgoing pursuit of autonomy, defined as a rejection of authority and ethical standards, all in the name of individual rights and liberties. ["Every man is doing what is right in his own eyes."]

Ephesians 2:1 declares that we "were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked" All of humanity enters the world separated from God, totally unable to merit His favor. Unable to earn favor with God and clearly guilty before Him, we are in a hopeless condition. But God's plan to rescue us was hatched as soon as Adam and Eve had sinned. Genesis 3:15 is what we sometimes call the first announcement of the Gospel (the *Protoevangelium*)—that the "seed" of the woman would one day "bruise the head" of Satan, the serpent (see Revelation 12:9). As Scripture unfolds the redemptive plan of God, it centers on identifying who this "seed" is. The Bible clearly identifies it as Jesus, whose death, burial and resurrection overcame and defeated Satan. But how thorough and complete is this defeat? How thorough is this victory over sin, evil, Satan—and death?

But, the Salvation God Offers Completely Redeems

Because humanity is "dead in its sin," and because God is perfect, righteous and holy, God must remake us; He must do something that will permanently deal with our sin, for He can have nothing to do with sin, evil or unrighteousness. Someone had to pay the price, suffer the punishment, for humanity's sin. Since death is the judgment for sin, someone had to die! Someone had to be the Savior of the human race. But the worth of salvation depends on the worth of the Savior. If He were sinful like every other human being, then His death could only pay for His own sin. He had to be perfect and He had to be sinless.

The Bible's teaching about Jesus Christ (Christology) and its teaching about salvation (Soteriology) here intersect. For salvation to be complete, the Savior had to be both fully and completely human and fully and completely God; He had to be humanity's perfect substitute. This is the message of Isaiah 52:13–53:12, and this is what John the Baptist meant when he declared, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Since Jesus' death, burial and resurrection provided a permanent, substitutionary atonement for sin (a "once-for-all" atonement—see Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 10:10), how does God apply this finished work to our lives? What now makes us acceptable to Him? Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one can boast" (ESV). If salvation is by grace through

faith, what has God done with my sin and why am I now acceptable to Him? The answer is found in the doctrine of justification by faith.

- Justification is the event whereby, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work, we are “born again” (regeneration) and declared righteous by God. Justification is forensic and involves the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.
 - Justification is **forensic**: It is a legal declaration by God, a verdict of acquittal, excluding all possibility of condemnation. This declaration is accomplished on a just basis, namely that the claims of God and His moral law against the sinner have been satisfied. Christ perfectly fulfilled all of God’s demands through His perfect life of obedience and through His atoning death, burial and resurrection. He paid the penalty so that we can be pronounced not guilty!
 - Justification is the **imputation** of righteousness: Because of the forensic nature of justification, God can also declare us righteous. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is “added to our account” so that His righteousness becomes our righteousness. Our sin was “added to Jesus” on the cross and His righteousness was “added to us” when we place faith in Him. Because we are sinners, the righteousness that God imputes to us is an “alien” righteousness; it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- The difference between justification and sanctification is the difference between an event and a process. Justification is the event whereby, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work, we are “born again” (regeneration) and declared righteous by God. Justification is forensic and involves the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. [See Romans 6:1-14]. Sanctification is the process, involving both divine and human cooperation, by which we become more and more like Jesus—the goal of sanctification. [See Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 4:19; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18]

Four Biblical Propositions that relate to understanding the Process of Sanctification:

- The authority of sin in our lives has been broken, not the power of sin in our lives—see Romans 6
- The Believer has two abilities—the ability to submit to and obey the “flesh” or the ability to submit to and obey the Spirit—see Galatians 5:16-26. As an act of our will, each day we must choose.
- Submitting to and obeying the “flesh” is called carnality (“fleshly”) in 1 Corinthians 3
- The Believer must therefore be in the process of a continual filling of the Spirit, i.e., as a daily act of faith submitting to His control—Ephesians 5:18

What is our role in the process of sanctification?

- It is an intentionally active role. Indeed, I believe we must have a strategy for holiness in our lives. See Ephesians 4:22-24

²²to put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- It involves an intentional trust in the Lord and a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit—a conscious dependence on the Lord stemming from humility and submission to a God who always has our best interests at heart. [Think of the old hymn of the church, “Trust and Obey.”]

Dr. Jim Eckman