

## **TTS Foundations 2023/24:** **[S13] "For Our Sake" (P5/5)**

### **Contents**

1. The Ordo Salutis – A Trinitarian Story of Our Joy
  - a. Stories of Conversion
  - b. Why does God save anyone?
  - c. Union with Christ
2. Regeneration – A New Humanity Created in the True Man
  - a. The Bondage of the Will
  - b. The Need for Regeneration
  - c. Two Alternative Ways of Looking at Regeneration
3. Justification – New Humanity at Peace With God in Christ
  - a. Some Time-Travelling in the TARDIS (!)
  - b. On Justification in General
  - c. On Roman Catholicism and Justification
  - d. Justification by Faith Alone
4. Sanctification – New Humanity Made Priests and Stewards
  - a. Comparing Paul and James on Works
  - b. What Should We Expect: On Suffering, Perfectionism, Pessimism
  - c. What is my Role: On Antinomy and Assurance
  - d. What is the Nature of the Christian Life: On Christlikeness
5. Glorification – New Humanity, In and For Christ, To God's Glory

## [1] The Ordo Salutis – A Trinitarian Story of Our Joy

This evening we reach the end of our five-part series on 'Soteriology'.

*"For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again"*

- As we reach a conclusion, I would begin with a strange question.
  - **THINK:** How did you become a Christian?

One of the most encouraging benefits of reading Church history? Reading stories of conversion. You realise **God's been in the business of saving sinners for a long time** – and in a way that's very familiar.

- **Justin Martyr** – c. 135AD, a 25-year-old man.
  - "When he had spoken these and many other things... he went away, bidding me attend to them; and I have not seen him since. But straightaway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me" [Dialogue with Trypho VIII]
- **Augustine** – 386AD, a 32-year-old man.
  - "I threw myself down somehow under a certain fig tree, and let my tears flow freely. Rivers streamed from my eyes, a sacrifice acceptable to you (Ps 50:19), and (though not in these words, yet in this sense) I repeatedly said to you: 'How long, O Lord? How long, Lord, will you be angry to the uttermost? Do not be mindful of our old iniquities' (Ps 6:4). ... As I was saying this and weeping in the bitter agony of my heart, suddenly I heard a voice from the nearby house chanting as if it might be a boy or a girl (I do not know which), saying and repeating over and over again 'Pick up and read, pick up and read'. At once my countenance changed, and I began to think intently whether there might some sort of children's game in which such a chant is used. But I could not remember having heard of one. I checked the flood of tears and stood up. I interpreted it solely as a divine command to me to open the book and read the first chapter I might find. ... So I hurried back to the place where Alypius was sitting. There I had put down the book of the apostle when I got up. I seized it, opened it and in silence read the first passage on which my eyes lit: 'Not in riots or drunken parties, not in eroticism and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts' (Rom 13:13-14). I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of this sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled. ... From there we went in to my mother, and told her. She was filled with joy. We told her how it had happened. She exulted, feeling it to be a triumph, and blessed you who 'are powerful to do more than we ask or imagine' (Eph 3:20). She saw that you had granted her far more than she had long been prayer in her unhappy and tearful groans" [Confessions VII.XII.29-30]
- **We could go on and on:**
  - Barth: a man stumbling on a dark belfry stair, catching a rope, and hearing the peel of Church bells.
  - Bunyan: "I felt my own heart begin to shake" [Grace Ab 39]

- Wesley: "I felt my heart strangely warmed" [May 24<sup>th</sup> 1738]
- Thompson: "[the] shade of his hand, outstretched" [Hound of Heaven]
- Tolkien on Lewis's conversion: "A lover – at least after a long pilgrimage – of our Lord" [Tolkien's diary, c. Sept 1931]

**Why did God do any of this? Why did he save us?** "*Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you*" [Isa 43:4]

Indeed, we must regain a sense of ***love as the end of all things***.

- Many conservative Christians can struggle with this.
  - After all, love has now become a political weapon.
    - "Love is love" – but love that's a weapon is no love at all. It's still a love of self, a man-centred love.
  - Neither are we talking about love in the abstract.
    - Re: Feuerbach "Essence Christianity" – the 'fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man'
- BUT – we're talking about love in concrete terms.
  - Costly, visible, and named – **LOOK**: 1 John 4:16
    - "*Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony*" [Col 3:14]
  - One of the greatest insights of Augustine:
    - The Christian faith is about love – not just as a message, but as a whole worldview.
    - God himself is love – he goes before (creative), he changes (makes us lovable), he fulfils (love in heart).

**LOOK**: Rom 5:6-8 – this is our focus today! How God does this, 'for us + for our salvation'. If theology can't sing here, it shouldn't sing at all.

- **AND SO we're asking a simple question – how is the Triune work of redemption applied to the redeemed?**
  - After all, this is a Trinity-shaped salvation.
    - The Father chose us in the Son.
    - The Son lives, and died, and rose again in our place.
    - With the Father he sends the Holy Spirit, who changes hearts and saves sinners.
- **In other words, we're asking how we were saved – just from God's perspective!**
  - Scripture itself gives some thought to this:
    - **LOOK**: Rom 8:28-30
  - Theologians have a fancy phrase for this:
    - *Ordo Salutis* – the 'order of salvation'.<sup>1</sup>
- **The *Ordo Salutis* is like a pneumatological 'zip'.**
  - Sealing and fastening the believer for Christ.
    - Each tooth locking into the next.
    - One irreducible complex.

---

<sup>1</sup> The construction of *ordines salutis* is largely a post-Reformation habit, and there are many variations. Some models conflate categories (e.g. the Westminster Confession including regeneration within calling), whilst others prefer brevity. (E.g. Calvin's account – faith, justification, and sanctification.) The account described here approximates that given by William Perkins in *A Golden Chaine* [1592].

- Of course, we're doing systematic theology here.
  - I.e. with Scripture we recognise a particular kind of logic to salvation.
  - BUT – we should also recognise that our stories will differ, as that divine logic works itself out in space and time. (E.g. fast/slow? Conscious/sub-conscious?)

### **With all that said, where do we even begin?**

**LOOK:** John 15:1-5.

**REFLECT:** What are your impressions? How does this describe our becoming Christians, and belonging to Christ?

### **It's impossible even to conceive of there being an *Ordo Salutis* outside of our union with Christ.**

- *"Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing"* [John 15:5]
  - **RECALL:** Eph 1:4 (chosen in Christ);
  - **RECALL:** Rom 6:5 (crucified and raised with Christ);
  - **RECALL:** 2 Cor 5:21 (made righteous with Christ);
  - **RECALL:** Col 1:27 (glorified in Christ).
- *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life IN Christ Jesus our Lord"* [Rom 6:23]
  - Our Union with Christ is not just a poetic construct, nor is it a theological fancy – it's central to how Scripture describes our salvation.
    - **FIRST:** it takes the focus away from man – salvation not only FROM but IN God. (GIGAWAN)
    - **SECOND:** it describes the Christ-centredness of salvation – the Son's gift and reward.
    - **THIRD:** it's the key to unlocking the full bounty of salvation – a recreated humanity, glorified in Christ.
    - **FOURTH:** it's profoundly tender – *"it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"* [Gal 2:20]. The breath you breathe.

*"For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness IN him"*  
[Col 2:9-10]

- **Our union with Christ is the only hope we have of rightly understanding our salvation.**
  - Whatever else salvation entails, the NT does not let us think of it as 'me here, God there'.
    - Not a case of going back to be filled over and over after – but permanently *abiding* in Christ, like a cup in a jug of water.

So, why does God save us?

What's the purpose of it all?

**To glorify himself** – immeasurable in power and splendour.

**To conquer the rebellion** – Satan, sin, death, and hell.

**To be a Bridegroom for a Bride** – new humanity, under new stars.

The Father all in all, through Christ, by the Spirit. (Remember this!)

## [2] Regeneration: A New Humanity Created in the True-Man

So, let's dive in. We'll begin with a big, meaty subject: **regeneration**.

**DISCUSS:** What do you think this means? What is regeneration?

### [2A] The Bondage of the Will

- **How does the Bible speak about human choices?**
  - **LOOK:** Luke 6:45
    - The heart as the rudder (or 'seat') of our emotions and desires.
- **The external reflects the internal.**
  - What we *choose* to do/say reflects what we *desire* to do/say. Our choices flow from the desires of our hearts.
    - ("Man can do what he wills, but he cannot will what he wills" [Arthur Schopenhauer])
- **BUT LOOK:** Gen 6:5 / Jer 17:9 / Ecc 9:3 / Mark 7:21-23
  - Under Adam, our hearts are not good – they're sinful.
    - **LOOK:** Rom 8:7-3 / 1 Cor 2:14 / John 6:65
    - "There is no one who seeks God" [Rom 3:11]
- **This is called the Bondage of the Will.**
  - "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures" [Titus 3:3]
    - "This universal slavery to sin includes those who appear to be the best and most upright. ... The most excellent thing about men is their reason and their will, but it has to be acknowledged that this noblest part is *corrupt*. ... It is in the reason and the will that God is known. But no one *by nature* knows God. We must conclude therefore that man's will is corrupt and man is *totally unable* by himself to know God or to please him." [Luther – Bondage of the Will, 2]
    - "[When] the will was conquered by the vice into which it had fallen, human nature began to lose its freedom. Again, man, using free will badly, has lost both himself and his will. Again, the free will has been so enslaved that it can have no power for righteousness" [Calvin – Inst. II.II.8]
    - "If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was 'changed for the worse' through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived" [Canon 1 of the Council of Orange, 529AD]

"Long mine imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night..." [Wesley]

**This is humanity, under Adam – lost, helpless, hopeless rebels.**

But remember what God is doing – creating a new humanity under new starlight. The end of all things? God wins.

BUT HOW?

**[2B] The Need for Regeneration**

- **LOOK:** Titus 3:3-5 / Eph 2:3-4 / Ezek 36:25-27
  - **God regenerates us!**
    - Made alive – like Lazarus.
    - With a new heart – one capable of desiring God.
      - *“The Lord opened [Lydia’s] heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul”* [Acts 16:14]
- **What’s the result of God’s regeneration?**
  - We’re *“conformed to the image”* of Christ [Rom 8:29]
    - **KEY POINT:** a new humanity, born again – after the True Man’s likeness.
  - Christ was *“faithful over God’s house as a Son”* [Heb 3:6]
    - **The True Man is faithful – so the Spirit unites us to him, and we’re granted faith.**
      - **LOOK:** Eph 2:8-9 / Phil 1:29 / John 6:29
      - (Re: Matt 11:27 + Acts 13:48)
- **AND SO – Regeneration Precedes Faith. A key principle.**
  - It’s ‘monergistic’ – i.e. there’s only one ‘energy’ involved.
    - *“So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy”* [Rom 9:16] // *“What do you have that you did not receive?”* [1 Cor 4:7]
      - *“The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it”* [Luther – Heidelberg Disputation 1518]

**[2C] Two Alternative Ways of Looking at Regeneration**

- **Roman Catholicism:**
  - *“The water of rebirth + renewal by the HS”* [Titus 3:5]
    - **LOOK:** John 3:5-8
  - EXCEPT remember:
    - *“I will sprinkle clean water upon you ... A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you”* [Ezek 36:25-26]
  - Jesus is certainly **using sacramental imagery**, but that doesn’t mean he’s describing a sacrament.
    - Re: John 6:35, coming = eating, drinking = believing.
- **Wesleyan Preventive Grace:**
  - Neutralising our bondage.
    - EXCEPT: (a) no clear scriptural teaching; and (b) why does one ‘neutralised’ person come but not another?

**AND SO – we must remember something very important.**

*“For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus... He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity”* [Eph 2:10+15]

- This is what being ‘born again’ means.
  - We’re talking about humanity, recreated in Christ’s image.
    - This is the beginning of God’s salvation.
    - ***It’s our first glimpse of new starlight*** – and it happens FOR the Father, it happens IN Christ, it happens BY the Spirit.

### [3] Justification: New Humanity At Peace With God In Christ

#### [3A] Some Time-Travelling in the TARDIS

- **When we exit, we meet a young monk. He looks distressed:**
  - "I've lived as a monk without reproach, but I still feel that I'm a sinner before God, and my conscience is extremely disturbed. I simply cannot believe that he's placated or satisfied with me. I can't stop thinking of Rom 1:17 – 'The righteousness of God is revealed'. I hate the righteousness of God. Is it not enough that we're crushed by every kind of calamity by the law, without God then adding pain by threatening us with his righteousness and wrath?!" [LW 34, pp.336-337 – paraphrased]
- **We leave the monk to his misery and re-enter the TARDIS.**
  - Curious, we pick up our Bibles and find that passage he mentioned – **LOOK:** Rom 1:16-17.
    - We rematerialise one year later, to check on him.
- **Remarkably, he's a totally different man – but why? We ask him and he tells us what happened.**
  - "At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of [those words in Rom 1:17], namely, 'In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live"'. There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. ... Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me... and I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I once hated the words 'the righteousness of God'. Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise" [LW 34, pp.336-337]
- **DISCUSS:** who is the monk, and what is he describing?
  - Martin Luther's 'Tower Breakthrough', c. 1516AD.
    - **Justification by faith alone.**

#### [3B] On Justification In General

- **THINK:** What do we know about justification?
  - δικαιόω (*dikaioō* [dik-aye-ah-oh])
    - (Re: "[Let] the righteous still do right" [Rev 22:11])
- **Justification concerns our righteousness before a holy God.**
  - How do we come to be in right standing before him?
  - How do we go:
    - **FROM:** "There is no one who is righteous, not even one" [Rom 3:10]
    - **TO:** "[Let] the righteous still do right" [Rev 22:11]?
- **It's here that we encounter a problem.**
  - Protestantism is defined by this doctrine.
    - AND YET – most in the Evangelical Church are accidental Protestants. We see a kind of 'flabby Protestantism' prevail.
    - The result? Most could not tell you why they're a Protestant and not Catholic.
  - Then they encounter Roman Catholicism – they know that salvation is about grace, not works.
    - "We're all about grace!" "Yes, we're about grace, too!"

- HENCE the rise of Roman Catholicism.
- What's our answer to the popularity of Romanism?
  - PARTLY: a manly, heartfelt Puritanism.
  - ALSO: we need to know why we're Protestants.

### [3C] On Roman Catholicism and Justification

- **DISCUSS:** What do we know about the RC teaching? (1545-63)
  - "Of this justification ... the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which (faith) no man was ever justified." [Trent VI.VII]
    - **The initial justification – baptismal cleansing / regeneration.**
  - "[And] the alone formal cause is the justice of God, not that whereby he himself is just, but that whereby he maketh us just... For, although no one can be just, but he to whom the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this is done in the justification of the sinner, when (by the merit of that same most holy Passion) the charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those that are justified, and is inherent therein: whence, man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives, in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these (gifts) infused at once, faith, hope, and charity."
    - **Justification as infused righteousness** – we will *eventually* be declared righteous because we will have been *made* righteous.
  - "Having, therefore, been thus justified, and made the friends and domestics of God, advancing from virtue to virtue, they are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day; that is, by mortifying the members of their own flesh, and by presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification, they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith cooperating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified" [Trent VI.X]
    - **By cooperating with God in faith, our good works further contribute to our justification.**
      - Hence 'venial and mortal' sins, indulgences, purgatory, etc.
- In other words:
  - **The RC model is that of an *analytic* justification.**
    - God looks upon sinners and cooperates with them to make them holy – so that when he 'analyses' them, he finds them righteous.

**REFLECT:** How would we respond to this, from Scripture?

You can't say, "it's all about grace" – because they'd say, "yes of course, grace is absolutely necessary".

### [3D] Justification By Faith Alone

- **LOOK:** Rom 3:21-31
  - "*They are **now** justified by his grace as a gift... effective through faith*" [v.24-25]
  - "*He **will** justify ... on the ground of faith*" [v.30]
    - Re: Rom 1:17 – "the righteous will live by faith"



- **LOOK:** Gal 2:16 / Eph 2:8-9 / Phil 3:8-9
  - **The eschatological judgement has been brought forward – we are declared righteous NOW, by faith alone, just as we will be declared righteous THEN, by faith alone.**
    - Hence *Sola Fide* – justification by faith alone.

**BUT WAIT.** We're 'declared' righteous – how does that work?

Does God declare us righteous out of nowhere? Does he create it out of nothing? Isn't this what Rome said during the Ref – a "legal fiction"?

***"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" [2 Cor 5:21]***

- NOT an analytic justification – but a synthetic justification.
  - **Something NEW has been added to us.**
- NOT an infused righteousness – but an imputed righteousness.
  - **Something ALIEN has been given to us.**
    - From *imputāre* – to reckon, to enter into the account.
- Let's have the old monk teach us!
  - "Faith does not merely mean that the soul realises that the divine world is full of all grace, free and holy; it also unites the soul with Christ, as a bride is united with her bridegroom. From such a marriage, as Paul says (Eph 5), it follows that Christ and the soul become one body, so that they hold all things in common, whether for better or for worse. This means that what Christ possesses belongs to the believing soul; and what the soul possesses, belongs to Christ. Thus Christ possesses all good things and holiness; these now belong to the soul. The soul possesses lots of vices and sin; these now belong to Christ. Here we have a happy exchange and struggle. Christ is God and a human being, who has never sinned and whose holiness is unconquerable, eternal and almighty. So he makes the sin of the believing soul his own through its wedding ring, which is faith, and acts as if he done it (i.e. sin) himself, so that sin could be swallowed up by him. ... Now is not this a happy business? Christ, the rich, noble, and holy bridegroom, takes in marriage this poor, contemptible and sinful little prostitute, takes away all her evil, and bestows all his goodness upon her! It is no longer possible for sin to overwhelm her, for she is now found in Christ and is swallowed up by him, so that she possesses a rich righteousness in her bridegroom" [Luther – The Freedom of a Christian, 1520AD]

**Luther described this as: *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae!***  
**(The article [of faith] on which the Church stands or falls.)**

**DISCUSS:** Why? Why place so much importance on it?

- *"Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin" [Rom 4:7-8]*
  - **Are you this person? How would you know?**
    - Because you've prayed enough?
    - Because you go to Church regularly?
    - Because you have the right politics?
    - Because you freely chose to know God?

- Because you were baptised and went to Mass?
- Because you're a charitable, good person?
- Because you really get into worship?
- Because you're nice?!

**LOOK:** Rom 5:1-2

- "Faith, thus **receiving and resting** on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification" [West Conf. XI.2]
  - "My hope is built on nothing less / Than on Jesus' blood and righteousness / I dare not trust the sweeter spring / But wholly lean on Jesus' name! / On Christ the Solid Rock I stand / All other ground is sinking sand / ALL other ground is sinking sand"
- **THIS is the article on which the Church stands or falls.**
  - THIS is what people have died for.
    - (LJG + Feckenham – 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 1554)
  - AND B+S – THIS is why you're protestant.
    - It's something to fight for.

**AND SO, BEHOLD: the teeth are beginning to lock together!**

The Spirit creates the new man in Christ's likeness (re: union).

The new man believes + walks in Christ's footsteps (re: discipleship).

He is made holy in Christ's righteousness.

Now "*we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" [Rom 5:1].

New humanity created by God in Christ.

New humanity desirous of God in Christ.

New humanity at peace with God in Christ.

(God's plan is coming together!)

#### [4] Sanctification: New Humanity Made Priests and Stewards

##### [4A] Comparing Paul and James on Works

- **LOOK:** James 2:24 – Ah. So... What's going on?
  - Much has been made of this throughout the centuries.
    - E.g. RCC – “the only time the Bible says, ‘by faith alone’ is here, and it rejects it!”
    - E.g. Robert Eisenman’s *James the Brother of Jesus* (1997) – James as true origin, Paul as usurper.
  - ALSO – Luther’s famous comment, re: ‘epistle of straw’.
    - (N.B. not quite how it’s been portrayed – “In a word St. John’s Gospel and his first epistle, St. Paul’s epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter’s first epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James’ epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it” (*Preface to NT* [1522]))
- **So, how should we think about this?**
  - **LOOK:** James 2:14-26
    - **DISCUSS:** What is James arguing here?
    - Does James contradict what Paul is saying?
    - “*So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead*” [v.17]
- **Faith alone saves, but not the sort of faith that stands alone.**
  - **LOOK:** Eph 2:8-10
    - **What we’re handling here is the Doctrine of Sanctification** – having *declared* us righteous (by imputation), God now *makes* us righteous (by infusion).
- **Justification and Sanctification are therefore distinct, but deeply connected.**
  - The *sylogismus practicus* – if we’re truly aliens, we’ll necessarily act like aliens! If we’re truly found in Christ, we’ll truly tend towards Christlikeness. (Re: good tree, etc.)
    - “[As] Christ cannot be torn into parts, so these two which we perceive in him together and conjointly are inseparable – namely, righteousness and sanctification. Whomever, therefore, God receives into grace, on them he at the same time bestows the spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15), by whose power he remakes them *into his own image*. ... The sun, by its heat, quickens and fructifies the earth, by its beams brightens and illuminates it” [*Inst.* III.XI.6]

**LOOK:** 1 Tim 3:16 – the “*mystery of godliness*”.

Some translations say, ‘of our religion’, ‘of our faith’, ‘of our worship’.

BUT – that’s not what the text says. (εὐσεβείας = ‘of our piety, of our religion, of our life of reverence’)

### What is the significance of this? It's two-fold.

- **FIRST:** note carefully – Paul connects the passion, resurrection, victory, and kingdom of Christ to *our godliness*.
  - We'd normally associate these things with history or doctrine – but Paul connects them to the Christian life!
    - Again – we're STILL dealing with our Union w/ X.
    - In some way, the whole Christian life is a participation in the life of Christ – **LOOK:** Col 1:24 (!)
- **SECOND:** also note – how does Paul talk about the Christian life? How does he describe our walk of godliness? As a "mystery"!
  - Any attempt to try and capture it one easy sitting will fail.
    - *"In any and all circumstances I have learned the **secret** of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me"* [Phil 4:12-13]
    - *"God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"* [Col 1:27]
  - The reason why we like the Puritans? They were experts in 'casuistry' – the application of truth to life.
    - From Latin *casus* – i.e. 'case'. What does Godliness look like in bespoke situations?

IN SUM – when we begin to examine sanctification and the course of the Christian life, there must be a humility. The scope here is massive.

AND ALSO – we must remember we're always talking about Union.

How should we approach the subject of sanctification?

After all, we've only got a relatively short amount of time.

Let's home in on three key questions:

1. What should we expect of the Christian life, this side of eternity?
2. What is our role in the Christian life, this side of eternity?
3. What is the nature of the Christian life, this side of eternity?

### [4B] What Should We Expect: On Suffering, Perfectionism, Pessimism

- **What should we expect of the Xian life, this side of eternity?**
  - After all, there are plenty in the modern Church which teach that the Xian life ought to be one of constant victory.<sup>2</sup>
    - **LISTEN:** 'Back II Eden' – "We were deemed to live a life that's beautiful / A life that's full, a life that's rich and plentiful ... Let's get back to Eden, live on top of the world".
  - This is about our expectation of the Christian life.
    - Many will say to new Christians – 'It's not going to be easy'. BUT – what exactly do we mean?

---

<sup>2</sup> "I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich. How many of my pious brethren say to me, 'Do you, a Christian minister, spend your time going up and down the country advising young people to get rich, to get money?' They say, 'Isn't that awful! Why don't you preach the gospel instead of preaching about man's making money?' 'Because to make money honestly is to preach the gospel'. That's the reason." (Russell Conwell – *Acres of Diamonds* [1915])

- **What can we expect of the Christian life? Some hardship.**
  - **LOOK:** 1 Pet 4:12-13 – we are sharing IN Christ’s sufferings
    - *“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death”* [Phil 3:10]
    - *“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also”* [John 15:20]
  - **BUT – why would God do this? Why not just take us?**
    - **LOOK:** 2 Cor 4:6-10 – we put Christ on display to the world. (Re: union).
    - *“He deserves to be called a theologian [who] comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross”* [Heidelberg Disputation]
- **What can we expect of the Xian life? Victory and challenge.**
  - ON THE ONE HAND: we must avoid **perfectionism**.
    - *“This is the glorious privilege of every Christian, yea, though he be but a babe in Christ. But it is only of grown Christians it can be affirmed, they are in such a sense perfect, as, secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. ... It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers”* [Wesley – *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* XII, 1777AD]
    - **LOOK:** James 3:2 / 1 John 1:8 / 1 Tim 1:15.
    - *Simil iustus et peccator.*
  - ON THE OTHER: we must avoid **pessimism**.
    - **LOOK:** 1 Cor 10:12-13
    - *“And this is what some of you used to be”* [1 Cor 6:11]

#### [4C] What Is My Role: On Antinomy and Assurance

- **What is my role in the Christian life, this side of eternity?**
  - Re: my experience at Northgate – the ‘hurt locker’.
    - Following the Parable of the Debtor – if we don’t forgive then we can suddenly stop being forgiven.
  - This is an important question:
    - ‘It is finished’ vs. ‘Take up your cross and follow me’.
- **Whereas justification is monergistic, sanctification is to a certain extent synergistic.**
  - In other words, the sinner is passive in justification – but active in sanctification. How? Because of regeneration!
    - *“For we are God’s fellow workers”* [1 Cor 3:9] / *“Do not let sin exercise dominion in your flesh”* [Rom 6:12]
- **BUT – remember, ‘the mystery of godliness’. There’s a truth here we need to observe.**
  - **LOOK:** 1 Thess 4:3/1 Thess 5:23 (re: Phil 2:12-13/Ps 121)
    - **KEY POINT:** We’re active in our sanctification – but God is sovereign over it, working his own ends.
    - *“Then [we learn] what it means for him to act with us: this is obviously when, by the continuous supply of his aid, he assists, increases, and strengthens that power which he has granted us,*

both for the completion of each particular work and for final perseverance through life. Or if you like to maintain that fine image of Paul's, it is when he invigorates by his own heavenly warmth the olives which have already been made fertile and waters them with dew, so that they may bear fruit. ... What is there in that which we can claim for ourselves? But after we have begun to be guided by the Spirit of holiness, we are now olives which are green and lively, drawing their vigour from the good root. ... [Is] that our own doing or may we boast of it in even the smallest measure? [No,] it is entirely derived from the root. Moreover, the root itself is [ours] not by nature but by grace; and even it is still not sufficient, unless God supplies from heaven continual power for life" [Calvin – *Bondage of the Will*]

- **Of course, this might make us wonder – does this mean can we lose our salvation?** <sup>3</sup>
  - If we're working it out, what if we stop working it out?
    - BUT – if God is doing it, how can we stop?
  - **LOOK:** John 6:39 / Heb 7:25 / Rom 8:38-39
    - The question isn't "*Can we lose our salvation?*"
    - The question is "**Does the Father give good gifts to his Son?**"
- **Overlaps with a vital aspect of sanctification: Assurance.**
  - **LOOK:** 2 Cor 13:5 (re: Matt 7:21-23, 'Lord, Lord!')
    - **DISCUSS:** How can we be sure that we are his?
    - After all, the NT assumes some degree of sealing – "*marked with the seal of the promised HS*" [Eph 1:13]
    - ("*A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed*" [Songs 4:12])

---

<sup>3</sup> This subject is often fraught with emotion and controversy, and there are several components to it. First, what about those we know who have fallen away? Speaking of those who were once part of the fellowship of saints, John says: "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us*" [1 John 2:19]. Jesus' parable of the sower assumes that some seeds fall on rocky ground with shallow soil. They sprout for a time but then fall away, for they were never truly rooted [Matt 13:5-6]. How do we apply this 'God's-eye' perspective to those whom we know personally? To begin, we don't know the fate of any one person. Only God knows who are truly his. ("*Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart*" [1 Sam 16:7].) More importantly, those we know who have fallen away still draw breath; their journey is not over, and God might yet call them to him. Remember what Augustine said of his mother's prayers – we believe in a God who is capable of doing far more than we can ever ask or imagine [Eph 3:20]. If we believe that God is God (even in matters of salvation), this gives us *more* reason to be hopeful, not less. If it were dependent on us to bring the lost sheep back to the shepherd, or even to stay the path ourselves, we would fail. But Jesus says: 'the sheep will hear my voice' [John 10:4].

Second, what about the warning passages in Scripture? Don't they suggest that it's possible to lose your salvation? Paul, for example, "*solemnly warns*" the Thessalonians that the Lord is an "*avenger*" in matters of purity [1 Thess 4:1-6]. Yet this same Paul, in the next chapter, tells them that God has "*not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation*" [1 Thess 5:9]. What's going on? Why warn us to fight the good fight, and to run the race, if the outcome is predestined? There are many perspectives here – but in short, these 'warning passages' perform a vital function. To those who truly belong to Christ, they serve to keep us on the right path. Remember Acts 2:22-24 – the crucifixion of Christ was predestined, but God used human means to bring about that predestined result. So too here: the salvation of God's elect is predestined, but God uses these warning passages as his means of preserving us. For those who (like the prodigal son) truly belong to the Father, but are not currently walking with Christ, they can also act like an alarm clock – waking us up to the eternal consequences of our earthly lives.

- This is important for our comfort. Historically, theologians have talked of assurance in four ways.
  - **Inferential assurance** – i.e. an intuitive assurance of the HS based on promises of God.
    - “The Spirit [witnesses by] whatsoever of Christ’s is applied to us by the Spirit. But, besides witnessing with these witnesses, the Spirit hath a direct witness by way of enlarging the soul; which is joy in the apprehension of God’s fatherly love. ... The Spirit doth not always witness [by] force of an argument... but sometimes immediately by way of presence; as the sight of a friend comforts without help of discourse” [Richard Sibbes]
  - **Deductive assurance** – i.e. an assurance based on the golden chain of *ordo salutis*. **LOOK:** 2 Cor 7:10-11
    - “The child of God can grab that link in the golden chain and feel with certainty the tug of all the rest... [Grab] any part of the *ordo salutis* within reach and you have the whole chain. Anyone clutching the middle links [can] be assured of possessing the end links” [Mark Shaw – On Perkins’ *Marrow*]
  - External witness – i.e. an assurance given by the grace of God’s sacraments.
    - **Luther on Baptism:** “Their baptism should have been called to mind again and again, and their faith constantly awakened and nourished. ... [When] we rise from our sins or repent, we are merely returning to the power and the faith of baptism from which we fell, and finding our way back to the promise then made to us, which we deserted when we sinned” [Luther – *Babylonian Captivity*]
    - **Calvin on Eucharist:** “the Father, of his mercy... has desired to attach to his Word a visible sign, by which he represents the substance of his promises, to confirm and fortify us, and to deliver us from all doubt and uncertainty” [Calvin – *Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*]

Ultimately, what is the best assurance? **LOOK:** Heb 12:1-2 – *sursum corda!*

Look to Christ! On Christ the solid rock I stand / All other ground is sinking sand.  
(Let the HS do the rest.)

#### [4D] What Is the Nature of the Christian Life: On Christlikeness

- **What is the nature of the Christian life, this side of eternity?**
  - We are a new creation, after the likeness of Christ.
    - BUT THEN – if that’s true, then it changes everything.
- **Remember what we established before...**
  - “Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” [John 15:5]
    - The Christian life is not a collection of tasks.
    - The Christian life is a life lived IN Christ.
    - All that we do is an expression of that union.

- **LOOK:** 1 Pet 2:9
  - Developing in Christlike virtue and godliness.
  - Putting Jesus on display, becoming conformed to him.
- **LOOK:** 1 Cor 12:12-13
  - United to Christ by the Spirit – TOGETHER.
  - The very body of Christ, acting in the world.
- **LOOK:** John 15:9
  - A tender, intimate union with Christ – re: prayer, *etc.*
  - “I need thee every hour / Most gracious Lord / No tender voice like thine / Can peace afford”

NOT JUST THAT – but if the Christian life is Christ-shaped, that *must* change how we think about our obedience before God.

- **When I was a teenager / young Christian, the cool thing to have? ‘WWJD’ bracelets.**
  - I’m not criticising those who wore them.
    - BUT – they illustrate something important for us.
    - Many in the modern Church think the Christian life is about abiding by an external standard – yes, it *used* to be the Law, but *now* it’s Christ’s example.
  - B+S – the wisdom of the Reformers / Puritans? That’s not how the New Covenant life works.
    - **LOOK:** 1 Cor 6:12-17 – notice, Paul doesn’t argue *ab extrā* but *ex intrā*.
    - The Xian’s relationship with ‘law’ is totally different.

**LOOK:** Rom 6:14-18 – ALSO: Jer 31:33

- **Forensic:** the Law inspects us – finds us wanting.
- **Civil:** the Law protects us – keeps us safe.
- **Moral:** the Law sanctifies us – makes us holy.

“So far, therefore, does a man love Christ, as he makes conscience to walk in his commandments; and the more unto Christ is our love, the less will our pains seem in keeping his law. The law’s curse, which, under the OT, was so terrible, is, under the New, by the death of Christ, abolished to the regenerate. The rigour which made it so impossible to our nature before, is now to the newborn so mollified by the Spirit, that it seems facile and easy” [Bayly – *The Practice of Piety*]

“But to fulfill the law means to do its work eagerly, lovingly and freely, without the constraint of the law; it means to live well and in a manner pleasing to God, as though there were no law or punishment. It is the Holy Spirit, however, who puts such eagerness of unconstrained love into the heart, as Paul says in chapter 5. But the Spirit is given only in, with, and through faith in Jesus Christ, as Paul says in his introduction. So, too, faith comes only through the word of God, the Gospel, that preaches Christ: how he is both Son of God and man, how he died and rose for our sake. Paul says all this in chapters 3, 4 and 10. That is why faith alone makes someone righteous and fulfills the law; faith it is that brings the Holy Spirit through the merits of Christ. The Spirit, in turn, renders the heart glad and free, as the law demands. Then good works proceed from faith itself. That is what Paul means in chapter 3 when, after he has thrown out the



works of the law, he sounds as though he wants to abolish the law by faith. No, he says, we uphold the law through faith, i.e. we fulfill it through faith." [Luther – Preface to the Romans]

**In all this, let's not lose sight of this central point:**

New humanity *created* by God in Christ.

New humanity *desirous* of God in Christ.

New humanity *at peace* with God in Christ.

New humanity *conformed* to Christ's image.

**What's his design in preserving & sanctifying us? LOOK: Rev 1:6**

*"We are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works"*

## [5] Glorification: New Humanity, In & For Christ, To God's Glory

Where's it all going? Where's it all headed?

**The Last Stage: Our Glorification** – Christ in you, the hope of glory!

- *"As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have born the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" [1 Cor 15:48-49]*
- *"For if we have been united with him in death like his, we will certainly be united in a resurrection like his" [Rom 6:5]*

**God's end in salvation:**

*To glorify himself* – immeasurable in power and splendour.

*To conquer the rebellion* – Satan, sin, death, and hell.

*To be a Bridegroom for a Bride* – new humanity, under new stars.

The Father all in all, through Christ, by the Spirit.

**There is a cosmic scale to this, with Christ at the centre:**

A new humanity, chosen in Christ by the Father.

A new humanity, found in Christ in his LD+R.

A new humanity, created in Christ by the Spirit.

A new humanity, faithful after Christ's likeness.

A new humanity, now at peace with God because of that faith.

A new humanity, conformed to Christ's likeness, ready to serve.

A new humanity, raised in Christ's resurrection.

**A new humanity – no longer rebels, dwelling with God and desiring him and glorifying him forever, in Christ, on a new earth, under new stars. The Father at last made all in all, through Christ, by the Spirit.**

*"For we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified" [Rom 8:28-30]*