

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 5 – God’s Amazing Work in Salvation

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Introduction

Last week we talked about the definition of true saving faith. God does an amazing work in each believer to bring about salvation. The results of true saving faith are the visible manifestations of what God does at the moment of salvation (and throughout the believer’s life). To understand this, it can be helpful to list the salvation process in order. Some of these steps occur simultaneously, but are ordered here for understanding.

1. Election – God’s unconditional choice from eternity past of individuals for salvation (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13). God’s choice is required because all are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1); dead people cannot choose to come alive.
2. The Gospel Call – God’s work in sovereignly bringing the gospel to the one He has chosen. All whom the Father appoints to eternal life (Acts 13:48) He will call to Himself (Rom 8:30) by sovereignly causing the gospel to be told to them (Acts 10; Rom 10:8-17).
3. Regeneration – God’s work that brings new life (2 Cor 5:17; John 3:3; Titus 3:5). God regenerates (John 1:13) instantaneously as he wills (James 1:18) by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5).
4. Conversion – The sinner exercises the gift of true saving faith (belief/trust, repentance, surrender, forsaking all, confessing as Lord, etc.).
 - 4a. Justification – God’s gracious work (Rom 8:33) where the believing sinner is declared righteous (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:10; Isa 55:6-7) in His sight; our sins are placed on Jesus (Col 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24) and His righteousness is placed on us (2 Cor 5:21).
 - 4b. Adoption – God’s work in making us a permanent part of His family (John 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 12:5-9).
 - 4c. Holy Spirit Indwelling – God the Holy Spirit’s act by which He permanently (John 14:16) takes up residence in the believer (1 Cor 6:19).
 - 4d. Spiritual Baptism – God’s act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:3-5) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).
 - 4e. Holy Spirit Sealing – God the Holy Spirit’s work which guarantees that the believer belongs to God (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30); providing the believer with eternal-security and assurance of salvation.
 - 4f. Holy Spirit Bestowing Spiritual Gifts – God the Holy Spirit’s supernatural, sovereign work where He gives spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:3-4) distributing to each believer (Rom 8:9) individually just as He wills.
 - 4g. Sanctification – God’s one-time work where He positionally sets the believer apart from sin and eternal death for Himself (2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10). Also, God’s work where the believer cooperates in the process to more and more die to sin, and live unto righteousness (2 Cor 3:18).
5. Perseverance – God’s work (with believer cooperation) that keeps Christians faithful, causing us to persevere in the faith, despite trials, tribulations, and temptations
6. Death – God’s work where the predetermined time comes for the believer to finally get to see the Lord face to face. We enter an intermediate state, where we are in the presence of the Lord, but without our glorified bodies.
7. Glorification – God’s work when we receive our new resurrected bodies.

The Result of True Saving Faith

Those that have been made new in Christ are such because they have exercised the gift of true saving faith. True saving faith is a living faith; it exhibits fruit in keeping with repentance; it is a faith that works; it is a faith that demonstrates itself true; it is a faith that is progressing in sanctification. Three through four above gives us a wonderful picture of all the God has done for us in Christ.

Regeneration

Regeneration is God's work that brings new, eternal, spiritual life to the sinner.

¹⁷Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Cor 5:17

⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them **you may become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:4

This is also called, "being born again."

³Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" John 3:3

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet 1:3

God regenerates mysteriously and instantaneously by the Holy Spirit.

¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even to* those who believe in His name, ¹³**who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** John 1:12-13

⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸**The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**" John 3:7-8

⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** Titus 3:5

Practical implication:

– A truly regenerated person will bear fruit in keeping with the new life.

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, **which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.** Eph 2:10

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹**Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.** 1 Cor 6:9-11

²⁶For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also **faith without works is dead.** James 2:26

❖ What are the visible manifestations of regeneration in my life?

Justification

Justification is a legal term that is equivalent to declaring one “not guilty” in a courtroom. It is God’s gracious work

³³Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? **God is the one who justifies;** Rom 8:33

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;** ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that **He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** Rom 3:23-26

¹⁶nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so **that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law;** since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. Gal 2:16

where the believing sinner is declared righteous in His sight;

²⁰because **by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight;** for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin. Rom 3:20

³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, **He also justified; and these whom He justified,** He also glorified. Rom 8:30

our sins are placed on Jesus,

¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.** Col 2:14

²⁴and **He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,** so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 1 Pet 2:24

and His righteousness is placed on us.

²¹He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** 2 Cor 5:21

³⁰But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor 1:30

²¹But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even ***the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;** for there is no distinction; Rom 3:21-22

Practical implications:

- There is no way I can be righteous enough to enter into a relationship with God. Since justification is by grace alone through faith alone, there is genuine hope for the unbeliever, otherwise we are hopelessly lost in sin.
- The security of our salvation is not based on us, but on God who justifies.
- When God looks at us He sees the righteousness of Christ, therefore, there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Salvation can never be revoked.

¹Therefore **there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** Rom 8:1

❖ How do I view my life before Christ? Am I condemned or free from guilt?

Adoption

Adoption is God's work in making us a permanent part of His family.

This transfer from a status of alienation and hostility to one of acceptance and favor is termed adoption. Millard Erickson

⁵He predestined us to **adoption as sons through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, Eph 1:5

¹⁴For all **who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.** ¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but **you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"** ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our **spirit that we are children of God,** ¹⁷and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. Rom 8:14-17

⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons.** ⁶Because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"** ⁷Therefore **you are no longer a slave, but a son;** and if a son, then an heir through God. Gal 4:4-7

Practical implications:

- We relate to God as a loving and good Father (Gal 4:6; see the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5-7 where "Father" is used 17 times and the section on prayer in Matt 6 where "Father" is used 6 times).
- We are able to be led by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:14).
- Fellow Christians are members of our family, our brethren, our brothers and sisters (e.g. Matt 12:50; Rom 1:13; 8:12; 16:1; 1 Cor 1:10; 6:8; 7:15; James 1:2; 2:15; Philem 1:2).
- Our Father loves us so much that He will discipline us.

⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; ⁶**For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.**" ⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

⁹Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? Heb 12:5-9

- ❖ Do I view God's discipline as good and right and something to be feared?

Holy Spirit Indwelling

Indwelling is God the Holy Spirit's act by which He permanently

¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, **that He may be with you forever;** John 14:16

takes up residence in the believer.

¹⁹Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God,** and that you are not your own? 1 Cor 6:19

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,** ¹⁴**who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,** with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. Eph 1:13-14

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an amazing spiritual blessing. When we exercise true saving faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells us. He functions as our helper, teaching us and guiding us in our spiritual growth toward righteousness. What a comfort and encouragement this is for the believer in Christ.

Practical implications:

- The indwelling Holy Spirit provides the power to wage war with the flesh.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. Gal 5:16-17

- ❖ Do I avail myself of God's resources to fight the flesh?

Spiritual Baptism (Union with Christ)

Spiritual baptism is God's act where the believer is united with Christ in His death

³Or do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?** ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, Rom 6:3-5

²⁷For **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** Galatians 3:27-28

and into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).

¹³For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13

Romans 6 describes spiritual baptism in detail. The believers union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis of deliverance from sin and how that union affects our progressive sanctification. The believer is "freed from sin and enslaved to God." We have changed masters. We were slaves to sin, now we are slaves to God. We must now present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God.

- Walk in newness of life (v4)
- Old self was crucified (v5)
- No longer slaves to sin; freed from sin (v6-7)
- Can consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (v11)
- Therefore we are free to chose righteousness (v12-23)

Practical implications:

- The believer is freed from the power of sin. Sin is now a choice.
- ❖ What is the pattern in my life; do I choose sin or righteousness?

Holy Spirit Sealing

God the Holy Spirit's work which guarantees that the believer belongs to God; providing the believer with eternal-security and assurance of salvation.

²¹Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²²**who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.** 2 Cor 1:21-22

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,** Eph 1:13

³⁰Do not grieve **the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** Eph 4:30

When God gave the Holy Spirit, He gave the only guarantee we will ever need. The role of the Holy Spirit in sealing believers provides the believer with eternal-security and assurance of salvation.

The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in three different passages, all written by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30). In Paul's day, an official document would be sealed with wax. An impression would be made in the hot wax with the signet ring of the king or another high ranking official. The seal would signify that the document was official. The Spirit of God is our seal.

Practical implications:

- The believer belongs to God. There is nothing that can break that relationship.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:38-39

- ❖ Because of all the great things God has done for me, including sealing, why should I worry?

Holy Spirit Bestowing Spiritual Gifts

God the Holy Spirit's supernatural, sovereign work where He gives spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:3-4) distributing to each believer (Rom 8:9) individually just as He wills.

¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Pet 4:10

A spiritual gift is a freely bestowed spiritual ability given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of service to the body of Christ (1 Pet 4:10). Spiritual gifts are not natural talents, but are special Spirit empowered abilities for service to the body of Christ. Talents are abilities that God has given each person through their parents as a result of general grace poured out on humanity (c.f. Matt 5:45) for the benefit of mankind in general. Talents may or may not be used to serve the body, but are not Spirit empowered.

Each believer is given at least one permanent (Rom 11:29) spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:7) which is to be employed to serve other believers as a good steward of God's grace (1 Pet 4:10). Spiritual gifts are given for the advantage of all (1 Cor 12:7), the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:26), the equipping of the saints (Eph 4:7, 12), and the glory of God (1 Pet 4:10-11).

Practical implications:

- Each member of the body is important; each plays a unique part as they are gifted by God.
- ❖ How do I use my gifts to serve the body of Christ?

Sanctification

Sanctification is God's one-time work where He positionally sets the believer apart from sin and eternal death for Himself. The believer is declared to be holy and identified as a saint.

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** 2 Thess 2:13

¹¹For both He **who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father***; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb 2:11

The believer's new position is described as:

- a citizen of heaven

²⁰For **our citizenship is in heaven**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Phil 3:20

- an alien and stranger

¹¹Beloved, **I urge you as aliens and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 1 Peter 2:11

- a member of a holy and royal priesthood, and God's own possession

⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ...

⁹But you are **A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION**, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Pet 2:5, 9

- a member of the family of God

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household**, Eph 2:19

This setting apart is occurs at conversion, but sanctification is also God's work where the believer cooperates in the process to more and more die to sin, and live unto righteousness. This "practical" or "experiential" or "progressive" sanctification comes as the Spirit does His transforming work within us day by day (2 Cor 3:18). We will look at this more in later lessons.

Practical implications:

- The believer's entire perspective of life in this world is changed.

❖ Do I live as if I am a citizen of heaven? What would it look like if I did?

Summary

God's work in salvation is amazing. He regenerates; converts, justifies, adopts, indwells, spiritually baptizes, seals, bestows spiritual gifts, and sanctifies.

God has done a supernatural work in the true believer. The true believer has been changed (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20) and will therefore bring about fruits in their life in keeping with repentance (1 Pet 1:8-9; John 14:14, 23; 1 John 2:3-6)

This is a forever-change and one that has practical implications for our life. God's work continues throughout the life of a true believer.

⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

It is this work that we will talk about in future lessons.

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 5 – The Results of True Saving Faith

Re-read each of the sections above regarding the supernatural work of God in the believer.

How do I view my old life before Christ? And now after exercising true saving faith?

What does God's amazing work mean for how I live?

What does God's amazing work mean for how I relate with God?

What does God's amazing work mean for how I relate with other believers?

What does God's amazing work mean for how I relate to the unsaved?

Read Romans 6

Who is my master?

What do I consider myself concerning myself (6:11)?

Read John 15:1-11

What is true of the true believer (those who are in Christ)?

What is meant by "abiding in Christ"?

What are some examples of fruit?

What type of fruit do I bear?

Read 1 Pet 1:8-9; John 14:14, 23; and 1 John 2:3-6

What do I think about Jesus?

What does my relationship with Jesus drive me to do?

Who do I care more about obeying, Jesus or myself?