



Sermon – September 22, 2019
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Verses Covered

Ephesians 5:3 – 6

Ephesians 2:8 – 9, 13 – 14

Romans 4:1 - 3

James 2:20 – 23

Romans 1:21 – 24, 26

Hebrews 12:5 – 6

1 John 5:16 – 17

Revelations 20:11 – 15

1 Corinthians 3:12 - 15

So we're going to have to walk through a good bit of stuff today. When I was coming up in church, every church pretty much had the same, and I only know Baptist. But we pretty much had the same idea everywhere you went. Generally, most pastors were not good speakers. They were not good preachers. They didn't put that emphasis in their life. It was more on the idea of shepherding than doing anything quality from the pulpit. But you had two evangelists that came in every year. You had one that came in the Spring for a couple weeks. One that came in the Fall for a couple weeks. And these guys were kind of the highlight of the year. The church would sort of be in a little bit of a doldrums and these guys would come in and kind of pump it up. Now hardly anybody uses them anymore. As a matter of fact, a couple years ago I was at the convention in Phoenix, and I went out before on a Sunday morning, I decided I'd go out and walk some and I was coming back in and I found, Peg and I were going to go to church, but I found the COSBE group, the Council of Southern Baptist Evangelists. So I went in there to listen to them preach. They had three or four hours of different guys preaching. So the very first guy got up and blasted guys like me who don't use those guys anymore. Talked about the fact that we're not right with God, we don't believe the Scripture, and we're not listening to the Holy Spirit. So I'm in the back going, "Hmmm, OK."

But the reason we don't use them anymore is because of the passage in front of us today. What they would do is, obviously these guys make their living off the quality of their preaching and how many people came forward when they preached. And so these guys would preach and they had great skill at making people feel guilty. Now we're going to look at a passage today that if I were to treat it right, treat it incorrectly, I could easily make you believe that you're not a Christian.

And so these guys were notorious for having people walk the aisle that were believers and then just totally mess up the church spiritually. I remember talking to my pastor after one of these guys had come through. And he said, "Yeah, I'm just spending the next two weeks putting out the fires." Because he had deacons that had long been believers, but these guys had taken a Scripture like we're going to look at today, and had pulled it out of context and had just made them believe that they weren't. And so he was putting out all these fires spiritually. So I want us to be clear today. So we're going to do a little groundwork, OK. Now we're going to learn three words today. Most of you probably know what they are. We're going to learn three words. We're going to look at the Scripture and evaluate those three words based on the passage we see today so that you don't misunderstand. Because the passage we're going to look at today can make you feel particularly guilty. In Ephesians, chapter 5, in verse 3 he says:

³But sexual immorality all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴no foolish talk, no crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you may be sure of this that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure or who is covetous, that is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Now I can take that today and make you leave here pretty sure you're not a Christian because I don't know a ton of us in this room that this week didn't covet something. There's probably a ton of us in this room who hit some websites we shouldn't have hit. Ton of us in this room that have gone to an R rated movie and got caught up in the physical intimacy being developed inside the film. I can make you believe out of this passage that you're not saved. So I don't want to do that. I want us to be clear on what it says. So we're going to have to walk through. So you're going to have to bear with me.

So we're going to learn three words that I think most of us know, but we're going to learn them. Seminary has its own vocabulary. Only God knows why, but they do. So first thing; right here. We're going to imagine a chair here. First word is justification. It's a word that means that God is going to treat me just as if I had not sinned. Now, justification, look at, now we're going to cover some ground. Keep your Bibles opened. Moist your fingers because we are travelling. And I want you to look at a couple things particularly. Look at Romans 4. And we've already looked at Ephesians 2. You go to Romans 4 because we're going to pull this with the next one. We looked at, we've already gone through Ephesians 2.

⁸For by grace you've been saved through faith; this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God; ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So very clearly justification means I did zero to earn it. It was given to me. He goes on further and he talks about the fact that we, he says,

¹³Now in Christ Jesus you were once far off, away, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace,

So I have this clear statement. Nothing I do, it's not going to church, it's not praying, it's not reading my Bible, it's not being a nice guy. The blood of Jesus applied to my account by my response to the Holy Spirit declaring that to me, I am justified before God. I'm clear. I'm good. Now Paul says, right, Romans 4, listen to this.

¹What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ²If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

So Paul says Abraham, now hear that, is an example of this justification. He was justified by what he believes. Just like the Ephesians were. Just like you are. Nothing you do, nothing at all, your justification is simple, it is clear, it is concise. It is the Holy Spirit coming to you and telling you two things. That you're a sinner and you've missed the glory of God, but that God has made a way to forgive you for that missing. And if you'll believe what the Holy Spirit's telling you, that God will take the blood of Jesus, apply it to you, and then plant Himself back in your life through the person and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. Now, you don't do anything to get that. It's free. It's yours. You do zip. It's given to you. Justification.

Next word is sanctification. Sanctification is, now this is where we're going to have to work through some things. Sanctification is what happens when justification occurs. Now I want you to listen to the book of James and listen to what he does. Because he does the opposite of the apostle Paul. He, as a matter of fact, listen exactly, verse 20 of chapter 2.

²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and that Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, it was counted to him as righteousness."

So you have James using the same guy in the Old Testament and saying that he was justified by his works. Paul says, "No, no, no, no. His works didn't justify him; he was justified by his faith." But James is actually saying not justification, but sanctification. He's saying, if a guy is really justified, it's got to show up in his life. And that's absolutely clear. His illustration is perfect. If you believe God, it will show up in your life at some point. If it does not show up in your life, there is no sanctification in your life. You have not been justified. That's clear. His point is that when God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the reason he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, according to the book of Hebrews, is he knew he was the child of promise and he knew if that was true, that God would have to raise him from the dead. So his belief in God honoring His promise was what caused him to do the work of offering Isaac up. Your belief in justification will create sanctification in your life. Now, sanctification is not perfection. Sanctification, now listen to me carefully here, sanctification is a struggle. Now hold that.

Third word we're going to learn today is glorification. This is what occurs when we die. At the end of time there are two judgements that will occur. One on those who have not been justified and one on those who have been justified. Sanctification then is what occurs in my life when

justification has occurred. If there is no sanctification, according to James, there is no justification. When people say, “Well, I know Jesus but I can do anything I want to.” Then I question, in a sense, I don’t them, but I would want them, and if that’s your attitude, I would want you to go home and question where you are. Because sanctification has to occur. But, again, it is not perfection; it is, now listen, a new and different struggle. Go back to the book of Ephesians. Now we go back to what we read.

Everyone who is sexually immoral, impure, who is covetous, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Now when I read that, that’s tough. I’ve seen a lot of deer rifles I coveted. I’ve been on deer leases that I really coveted. I’ve been immoral. I’ve thought some impure thoughts since I met Christ. Now if I just look at those two things and I read them just point blank, then I’ve got to look at myself and go, “Oh my goodness! I’ve not been justified. I’ve coveted. I’ve gone to movies and thought the wrong thing. I have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.” What he’s saying is he’s speaking in absolute terms. There is a difference, now listen to me, between a person who doesn’t struggle in these things and a person who does. If you listen, Romans 1, he’s very strong. He talks about the fact:

²¹though they knew God, Romans 1:21, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they’d become futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

By the way, just as an aside, just hit me. The other day, Union Theological Seminary, anybody know where that is? New York. It so fits here. They had a service where they confessed their sins, they put a bunch of plants in the room and confessed their sins to the plants who keep us alive by taking care of our oxygen and carbon dioxide deal. And they confessed their sins to the plants. I’m in trouble because I mow plants every week. So he goes on and says,

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.

And then he goes down,

²⁶For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions;

Now, and he goes on there to talk about a same-sex relationship. There is a distinction between Romans 1 and Ephesians 5. When the Holy Spirit’s in me, remember we looked a couple weeks ago about grieving the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit’s in me and I begin to sense His grief, I will now struggle with my sin. If you’re in Romans 1, there’s no struggle. If you’re in Romans 1, you’re doing anything you want, doesn’t bother you, doesn’t affect you, you don’t care, has absolutely no conviction. If there’s any conviction, it’s totally from your conscience. There’s zero conviction from the Holy Spirit of God. And if that’s true, then you’ve never been justified because the Holy Spirit’s not in you. Because if He’s in you, you’re going to feel His grief. Because here’s where your struggle is. Now I don’t have time to go into this today, but here’s

where your struggle is. Your struggle is you now have the Holy Spirit in you who is making you feel grief when you're away from what God wants you to be and giving you joy when you're in where God wants you to be. Now that's what the Holy Spirit is doing. He's in you. The enemy, who was in you that is gone now, is on the outside trying to talk you out of being obedient to the Holy Spirit. This is why you have Paul write Romans 6, 7, and 8 in the order he did. In Romans 6 he talks about our old man being conquered in the blood of Christ. Romans 7 he talks about the struggle we face. And then in Romans 8 he talks about the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. That in the power of the Holy Spirit we can stop and conquer this struggle that we have in our life between what He's grieving us about and what the enemy's trying to talk us into. You're going to sin until you die.

Now, but if you're a believer, if you've been justified, your sanctification will be a struggle between yielding to the Holy Spirit and listening to the enemy. Now inside this there are three things that may occur, OK. Let me back up. Two things that may occur; one thing's certain will occur. If the Holy Spirit's in me, then He is going to convict me when I'm not where I should be. I'm going to sense His grief and He will give me joy when I am where I'm supposed to be. He's the arbiter of the glory of God in my life. Now if, though, and I have free will. We know that from Revelation 3:20 when Jesus is standing on the outside door of His church and He's knocking and nobody even knows He's gone. I have free will. I can decide, "You know what, I think the enemy is right." I can be just like Adam and Eve. I can think, "The enemy's right. This is better for me than this." I can do that. If I do that long enough then Hebrews 12 comes into existence. Listen to this.

⁵“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him; ⁶for the Lord disciplines the one He loves; he chastises every son whom He receives.”

Now so in this struggle, if I start listening to the enemy more than I listen to the grief of the Holy Spirit and the joy of the Holy Spirit, then God will enact discipline on my life. The struggle will intensify. If I covet and go to an immorality as a believer and I quench the Holy Spirit of God in my life, then discipline will come and now I will struggle with that to the point of if I say, “No” to that, then this is what happens. In 1 John chapter 5, listen to this.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, a brother – that's a brother in Christ, and God will give him life to those who commit sins that don't lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that he should pray for that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

If I ignore and quench the Holy Spirit and then I ignore and laugh at His discipline, He will, now listen, if I'm a believer, take me home. Which explains glorification. What happens to me as a believer here when I die is going to be rooted on what happens here in my life as a child of God rooted in what happened when I became justified. Now I want to read you two things. Now I want you to listen. This is always the hard one. This is yours if you've not been justified.

¹¹I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it, from His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, books were opened; another book was opened, which is the book of life;

and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to what they had done. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown in the lake of fire.

So if you say "No" to Jesus, this is what you're coming to here. When He comes back, you're in this judgment. One pronouncement. You're going to stand up there, He's going to look at what you've done, He's going to look in the book, your name's not there, you're not going with Him. Now I've heard people mock this and say to me, "Well, I'll be with my friends." Let me tell you what Hell is so we're real clear here. Whatever God wants to bless you with, He takes away there. When I get to heaven, He blesses me with Himself. That's gone there. He blesses me with a perfect world. That's gone there. He blesses me with friends. Those are gone there. You have no one you ever see again for eternity. Now that's if there's no justification. If there is, and God's begun to work on you with sanctification, you're now evaluated on your sanctification. Here's what Scripture says. And that was Revelation 20. Now this is 1 Corinthians 3. Listen.

¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation, which is Jesus, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, ¹³each one's work will become manifest; for the day will disclose it because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; though, now listen, he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Two judgements. If I've not been justified, I face a God who can't find my book, my name better be in. If I have been justified, now I will stand before this God and He will evaluate my sanctification. If in my sanctification, well let me put it in, if I've spent 33 years here preaching for my glory, then when I get there and He evaluates my sanctification, He's going to look at me and say, "You did everything for yourself. You have nothing that I can reward you with here except being here." If, now listen to his phraseology,

¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

If I'm justified and He goes to work on my, sanctifying me, and I quench the Spirit and I ignore His discipline and He takes me home, I get there, but as if through fire. There is a reward system coming here. I've no idea what that is. I know there are hints at it in Revelation that we'll sit on thrones, we'll judge the nations, we judge angels. There are all sorts of hints at it. So I don't know what it means, but I do know what he says is, "If you're not justified, you face Him in a bad way. If you're justified, then He will evaluate how well you allowed Him to sanctify you." Now let me finish one thing here. I don't get to decide who's sanctified and justified. If I die, I met Christ in the beginning of my junior year in high school, after about six months I'd fallen away, I slacked up. If I had died in that span between that time frame and the time frame when God called me to preach, everyone would assume his confession was fake and wasn't real, it wasn't legit. It was real. God got me back by yelling at me in a moment in the shower. He restored a sanctification

process in my life. Now we're not going to judge each other. I don't know your heart. But I will tell you this. You're the only one who can know your heart. You can know whether or not you've been justified and you can know it by whether or not it's a struggle for you from the enemy to reflect the glory of God. Now we're going to be evaluated and we're going to be judged. Every person in this room, every person in the Brazos Valley. Ephesians 5 simply says that if there's no sanctification, there's no justification. If there's justification, there will be sanctification. And with that will be glorification. I love that because what it means is this. He gave me His Son. He gave me His Holy Spirit. His Holy Spirit has worked hard in my life and I hope that when I face Him, I know my name's written there, I just hope that I've done it right. That all of us can know inside our soul by the barometer of the grief and the joy of the Holy Spirit of God.

Let's pray.

Father, I don't anybody in this room that belongs to you that thinks they don't. But Father I don't want anybody in this room that doesn't belong to you to think they do. And so real simply, I ask Your Holy Spirit to move among us and reveal to us who we are, where we are, and what we are. Honor that in Jesus Christ name.