

**General Topics :: When I found favor with God****When I found favor with God, on: 2009/2/5 14:51**

A couple of weeks ago I started a thread called (www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id27180&forum35&post_id&refresh Go) "Is the "Gospel" Fair"

Within that thread "graceamazed" ask: "How exactly did God get a hold of you and save you? What is the means of your justification before God?..."

Since then, I have found a letter that I wrote a few years back in response to someone who asked me a similar question.

This particular portion of letter provides a brief explanation of how this once sinful and rebellious man found favor with God. I thought it might be good to post it here.

Written sometime within the first couple of months of 2007

Brian,

"Now regarding your question about justification, you ask: "Again, I wonder, according to you, what is justification and how can I be justified?"

I'm not sure I can answer this question directly. I don't think I can tell you how to be justified, and I don't think I can tell you a definition of "justification." However, I can tell you about a man who once was not justified but now is.

If we were to begin to examine my life starting in my teen years, you would see a young man who was devoted to spiritual things. My great devotion began as I read some books about a man who supposedly had great faith named Smith Wigglesworth. As I read about the "miracles" that reportedly had taken place through his ministry, I decided that I too wanted to be a man of great faith and see such "miracles." To be such a great "man of faith," I tried to mimic the life that this man supposedly lived. I tried to pray without stopping. I would carry my Bible everywhere. I tried to do good works such as visit nursing homes or stand out in front of Wal-Mart and pass out tracts. I also tried to live a life of "holiness." I tried to not sin in anyway (of course I would often fail in this endeavor).

Some watching my life may have thought that I really loved God, but the truth was, love for God was not the motivation for all this "work." The motivation of all this work was the desire to be like the man I had read about. So in reality I was simply trying to bargain with God. Please don't get me wrong, I really thought that I was doing what was right. I thought that God wanted me to do miracles and such things. However, God was not pleased with all I was doing because it was simply actions through which I thought I would gain God's favor so that he would work such "miracles" through me.

A few years later I would discover the author Leonard Ravenhill. Reading the books by Leonard Ravenhill led me to do even more work. As I read his stories about the supposedly great men like Charles Finney and John Wesley, a desire was born to preach with the "power" that they supposedly preached with. According to Ravenhill, the only way to preach with such power was to pray several hours a day. And so I entered into harder work than even before. Many mornings I would rise at 5:30 a.m. and drive to my "church" to spend a couple hours in prayer (the "pastors" usually let me have a key). On Sundays I would often stay at "church" between the morning and evening service to pray. I would usually fast when doing this. This was a very miserable time in my life, however, I thought it would all pay off when I could finally preach and see people fall down under "conviction."

As I look back to this time in my life, I am pretty confident that God was the one tugging at my heart. At that time he was beginning a process that in many years to come would bear fruit. However, despite the fact that God was beginning to tug at my heart, he was in no way yet pleased with my life and all I was doing. I was in no way justified. In no way did G

od look at my life with pleasure, for I did not yet have faith towards God and his word. At that time in my life my faith was in the authors who sounded spiritual. I gave them my trust and failed to fully trust the scripture for what it really said (I don't think that this was intentional rebellion as much as ignorance and foolishness).

During these years I was very certain that I was saved. I can't say that I felt anything really real inside me, but I did firmly believe the "gospel" that I had grown up hearing. I believed that I was saved because I believed that Jesus died on the cross for my sins. I could not explain the "gospel" that I believed, nor could I defend it in scripture, nevertheless I was certain I was saved because the popular "gospel" said that I was. As I look back to these years I am speaking about, it amazes me that I was so willing to trust my eternal soul to a message simply because it was popular and believed by many. Had the Lord not shown me mercy, and had he let me die in my then current state, I would have perished for all of my sins. For little did I know that I was not truly in Christ. And since I was not in Christ, my sins had not yet been paid for. Had I died then, I would have had to pay for them on my own.

The greatest evidence that I was not in Christ was the evidence that I was still a prisoner to sin. Despite my utter determination to live a life of "holiness," I would continue to give in to the very sins that I tried to resist. In addition to my bondage to sin, it was also evident that I was not truly in Christ because I did not bear any of the true fruits of the Spirit. Sure, I tried to be good. I tried to be kind. But all of that was just that; my trying, my effort. In no way did these things flow naturally from me, but instead it was always my own hard work.

Brian - that is who I was. I could say a lot more about the many years that followed. During those years I would be involved in ministry positions at various "churches." However, for the sake of staying brief I will say little of those years. Just be certain that nothing changed. I was always a prisoner of sin, and I was always working to please God for motives that were selfish in nature. I was in no way loyal to God simply because he was worthy of my loyalty. In fact I wasn't loyal to him in any way. My loyalty was to man. My loyalty was to the institutionalized "church." My loyalty was to myself. My loyalty was to all the authors and teachers that I held dear. And because of my misplaced loyalty, I was not justified in God's eyes. He was very displeased with me. He took no pleasure in me at all. Had I not repented, I would have died only to receive wrath. However, God was very merciful to me. He called me to repent, and when he called, I answered.

Three-and-one-half years ago, God began to get a hold of my heart. He began to show me the error of my way. He showed me his displeasure. He showed me my foolishness. When I was brought face to face with such things, I acknowledged them and I turned from them. I resolved to give God and his word my complete allegiance regardless of what it cost. This was not an idle commitment, but I sincerely meant my decision. And then it happened... as a result of this sincere unwavering commitment to be loyal to God, I for the very first time was "justified". For the first time in my life, God looked down on me with pleasure. Was I yet perfect in all my actions? By all means no. But God would take care of that in his time. He would deal with my sin and my evil nature. But despite my sin and my imperfection, he was pleased because he knew that above everything else in my life, I wanted to please him.

As a result of the pleasure that God had towards me, he wanted to give me gifts. The first gift and the greatest gift that God would give me was the gift of salvation. He brought me to his Son, and just as I gave my loyalty to God, I gave my loyalty to his Son. As the Son saw my loyalty, he took me to himself in marriage. In my marriage to Christ, "I became one of his bone and flesh of his flesh." I was truly one flesh with Christ. And through this miracle of marriage to Christ, I obtained the gift of salvation.

By being married (or one with) to Christ, I died with him on the cross. By being "one" with Christ, I rose with him and was declared a Son of God. Because I died with him, my sins were paid for in his death. And also, because I died with him I was freed from the devil's kingdom (for how could I serve the devil when I am dead?).

It was wonderful to die to Satan's kingdom. It was wonderful to be truly free from the power of sin. It was wonderful to have my sin's paid for. But the best part of being married to Christ is being resurrected with him. For through my resurrection with Christ, I was resurrected as a son of God with the nature of God (the Holy Spirit) inside me. And through this nature of God I constantly bear fruit that makes God smile.

Brian - what I just said was a very brief description of what has happened to me. Because of my attempt to make it brief I realize that it is possible that it was confusing. If you want to read a more detailed account of all of this you can go to the web link that I sent to you before.

The bottom line is this. I once was rebellious towards God (even though I was unaware of my rebellion). Because I was

rebellious, God was not pleased. Because I was rebellious, I was not justified in God's sight. In my rebellion I was a slave to sin. In my rebellion I was incapable of bearing any fruit unto God. But when I turned to God with all my heart, he was pleased and I was justified. Turning to him was the only part I played in my salvation. The rest was up to God and his Son. You can't choose to be married to Christ. Christ chooses you when he sees true devotion and loyalty toward him. You can do nothing to save yourself. It is only a gift that God can give when he sees that you have sincere faith toward him.

I hope this helps, and I hope that your search for truth ends with the wonderful knowledge of knowing that you are truly pleasing God. There is nothing better than knowing that the life you are living is a life that is filling God with joy and pleasure.

Sincerely,
Jason

Full deliverance of Christ - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2009/2/6 9:03

My friend after reading your testimony I find that God has done something wonderful in your life. I have posted this to find out what man would you call yourself.

- .The Regenerate Man
- .The Impotent Man
- .The Wretched Man
- .The Almost-Delivered Man
- .The Delivered Man

"O Wretched Man that I Am!"

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 7:24,25).

You know the wonderful place that this text has in the wonderful epistle to the Romans. It stands here at the end of the seventh chapter as the gateway into the eighth. In the first sixteen verses of the eighth chapter the name of the Holy Spirit is found sixteen times; you have there the description and promise of the life that a child of God can live in the power of the Holy Ghost. This begins in the second verse: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." From that Paul goes on to speak of the great privileges of the child of God, who is to be led by the Spirit of God. The gateway into all this is in the twenty-fourth verse of the seventh chapter:

"O wretched man that I am!"

There you have the words of a man who has come to the end of himself. He has in the previous verses described how he had struggled and wrestled in his own power to obey the holy law of God, and had failed. But in answer to his own question he now finds the true answer and cries out: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." From that he goes on to speak of what that deliverance is that he has found.

I want from these words to describe the path by which a man can be led out of the spirit of bondage into the spirit of liberty. You know how distinctly it is said: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." We are continually warned that this is the great danger of the Christian life, to go again into bondage; and I want to describe the path by which a man can get out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rather, I want to describe the man himself.

First, these words are the language of a regenerate man; second, of an impotent man; third, of a wretched man; and fourth, of a man on the borders of complete liberty.

The Regenerate Man

There is much evidence of regeneration from the fourteenth verse of the chapter on to the twenty-third. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me": that is the language of a regenerate man, a man who knows that his heart and nature have been renewed, and that sin is now a power in him that is not himself. "I delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man": that again is the language of a regenerate man. He dares to say when he does evil: "It is no more I that do it,

but sin that dwelleth in me." It is of great importance to understand this.

In the first two great sections of the epistle, Paul deals with justification and sanctification. In dealing with justification, he lays the foundation of the doctrine in the teaching about sin, not in the singular sin, but in the plural, sins - the actual transgressions. In the second part of the fifth chapter he begins to deal with sin, not as actual transgression, but as a power. Just imagine what a loss it would have been to us if we had not this second half of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, if Paul had omitted in his teaching this vital question of the sinfulness of the believer. We should have missed the question we all want answered as to sin in the believer. What is the answer? The regenerate man is one in whom the will has been renewed, and who can say: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

The Impotent Man

Here is the great mistake made by many Christian people: they think that when there is a renewed will, it is enough; but that is not the case. This regenerate man tells us: "I will to do what is good, but the power to perform I find not." How often people tell us that if you set yourself determinedly, you can perform what you will! But this man was as determined as any man can be, and yet he made the confession: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not."

But, you ask: "How is it God makes a regenerate man utter such a confession, with a right will, with a heart that longs to do good, and longs to do its very utmost to love God?"

Let us look at this question. What has God given us our will for? Had the angels who fell, in their own will, the strength to stand? Verily, no. The will of the creature is nothing but an empty vessel in which the power of God is to be made manifest. The creature must seek in God all that it is to be. You have it in the second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, and you have it here also, that God's work is to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Here is a man who appears to say: "God has not worked to do in me." But we are taught that God works both to will and to do. How is the apparent contradiction to be reconciled?

You will find that in this passage (Rom 7:6-25) the name of the Holy Spirit does not occur once, nor does the name of Christ occur. The man is wrestling and struggling to fulfill God's law. Instead of the Holy Spirit and of Christ, the law is mentioned nearly twenty times. In this chapter, it shows a believer doing his very best to obey the law of God with his regenerate will. Not only this; but you will find the little words, I, me, my, occur more than forty times. It is the regenerate I in its impotence seeking to obey the law without being filled with the Spirit. This is the experience of almost every saint. After conversion a man begins to do his best, and he fails; but if we are brought into the full light, we need fail no longer. Nor need we fail at all if we have received the Spirit in His fullness at conversion.

God allows that failure that the regenerate man should be taught his own utter impotence. It is in the course of this struggle that there comes to us this sense of our utter sinfulness. It is God's way of dealing with us. He allows that man to strive to fulfill the law that, as he strives and wrestles, he may be brought to this: "I am a regenerate child of God, but I am utterly helpless to obey His law." See what strong words are used all through the chapter to describe this condition: "I am carnal, sold under sin"; "I see another law in my members bringing me into captivity"; and last of all, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This believer who bows here in deep contrition is utterly unable to obey the law of God.

The Wretched Man

Not only is the man who makes this confession a regenerate and an impotent man, but he is also a wretched man. He is utterly unhappy and miserable; and what is it that makes him so utterly miserable? It is because God has given him a nature that loves Himself. He is deeply wretched because he feels he is not obeying his God. He says, with brokenness of heart: "It is not I that do it, but I am under the awful power of sin, which is holding me down. It is I, and yet not I: alas! alas! it is myself; so closely am I bound up with it, and so closely is it intertwined with my very nature." Blessed be God when a man learns to say: "O wretched man that I am!" from the depth of his heart. He is on the way to the eighth chapter of Romans.

There are many who make this confession a pillow for sin. They say that Paul had to confess his weakness and helplessness in this way, what are they that they should try to do better? So the call to holiness is quietly set aside. Would God that every one of us had learned to say these words in the very spirit in which they are written here! When we hear sin spoken of as the abominable thing that God hates, do not many of us wince before the word? Would that all Christians who go on sinning and sinning would take this verse to heart. If ever you utter a sharp word say: "O wretched man that I am!" And every time you lose your temper, kneel down and understand that it never was meant by God that this was to be t

he state in which His child should remain. Would God that we would take this word into our daily life, and say it every time we are touched about our own honor, and every time we say sharp things, and every time we sin against the Lord God, and against the Lord Jesus Christ in His humility, and in His obedience, and in His self-sacrifice! Would to God you could forget everything else, and cry out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Why should you say this whenever you commit sin? Because it is when a man is brought to this confession that deliverance is at hand.

And remember it was not only the sense of being impotent and taken captive that made him wretched, but it was above all the sense of sinning against his God. The law was doing its work, making sin exceeding sinful in his sight. The thought of continually grieving God became utterly unbearable - it was this brought forth the piercing cry: "O wretched man!" As long as we talk and reason about our impotence and our failure, and only try to find out what Rom 7 means, it will profit us but little; but when once every sin gives new intensity to the sense of wretchedness, and we feel our whole state as one of not only helplessness, but actual exceeding sinfulness, we shall be pressed not only to ask: "Who shall deliver us?" but to cry: "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord."

The Almost-Delivered Man

The man has tried to obey the beautiful law of God. He has loved it, he has wept over his sin, he has tried to conquer, he has tried to overcome fault after fault, but every time he has ended in failure.

What did he mean by "the body of this death"? Did he mean, my body when I die? Verily no. In the eighth chapter you have the answer to this question in the words: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." That is the body of death from which he is seeking deliverance. And now he is on the brink of deliverance! In the twenty-third verse of the seventh chapter we have the words: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is a captive that cries: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He is a man who feels himself bound. But look to the contrast in the second verse of the eighth chapter: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." That is the deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord; the liberty to the captive which the Spirit brings. Can you keep captive any longer a man made free by the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"?

But you say, the regenerate man, had not he the Spirit of Jesus when he spoke in the sixth chapter? Yes, but he did not know what the Holy Spirit could do for him.

God does not work by His Spirit as He works by a blind force in nature. He leads His people on as reasonable, intelligent beings, and therefore when He wants to give us that Holy Spirit whom He has promised, He brings us first to the end of self, to the conviction that though we have been striving to obey the law, we have failed. When we have come to the end of that, then He shows us that in the Holy Spirit we have the power of obedience, the power of victory, and the power of real holiness.

God works to will, and He is ready to work to do, but, alas! many Christians misunderstand this. They think because they have the will, it is enough, and that now they are able to do. This is not so. The new will is a permanent gift, an attribute of the new nature. The power to do is not a permanent gift, but must be each moment received from the Holy Spirit. It is the man who is conscious of his own impotence as a believer who will learn that by the Holy Spirit he can live a holy life. This man is on the brink of that great deliverance; the way has been prepared for the glorious eighth chapter. I now ask this solemn question: Where are you living? Is it with you, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" with now a little experience of the power of the Holy Spirit? or is it, "I thank God through Jesus Christ! The law of the Spirit hath set me free from the law of sin and of death"?

What the Holy Spirit does is to give the victory. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." It is the Holy Ghost who does this - the third Person of the Godhead. He it is who, when the heart is opened wide to receive Him, comes in and reigns there, and mortifies the deeds of the body, day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment.

I want to bring this to a point. Remember, dear friend, what we need is to come to decision and action. There are in Scripture two very different sorts of Christians. The Bible speaks in Romans, Corinthians and Galatians about yielding to the flesh; and that is the life of tens of thousands of believers. All their lack of joy in the Holy Ghost, and their lack of the liberty He gives, is just owing to the flesh. The Spirit is within them, but the flesh rules the life. To be led by the Spirit of God is what they need. Would God that I could make every child of His realize what it means that the everlasting God has given His dear Son, Christ Jesus, to watch over you every day, and that what you have to do is to trust; and that the work of the Holy Spirit is to enable you every moment to remember Jesus, and to trust Him! The Spirit has come to keep the link with Him unbroken every moment. Praise God for the Holy Ghost! We are so accustomed to think of the Holy Spirit as a luxury, for special times, or for special ministers and men. But the Holy Spirit is necessary for every believer, every moment of the day. Praise God you have Him, and that He gives you the full experience of the deliverance in Christ, as H

e makes you free from the power of sin. Who longs to have the power and the liberty of the Holy Spirit? Oh, brother, bow before God in one final cry of despair:

"O God, must I go on sinning this way forever? Who shall deliver me, O wretched man that I am! from the body of this death?"

Are you ready to sink before God in that cry and seek the power of Jesus to dwell and work in you? Are you ready to say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ"?

What good does it do that we go to church or attend conventions, that we study our Bibles and pray, unless our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit? That is what God wants; and nothing else will enable us to live a life of power and peace. You know that when a minister or parent is using the catechism, when a question is asked an answer is expected. Alas! how many Christians are content with the question put here: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but never give the answer. Instead of answering, they are silent. Instead of saying: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," they are forever repeating the question without the answer. If you want the path to the full deliverance of Christ, and the liberty of the Spirit, the glorious liberty of the children of God, take it through the seventh chapter of Romans; and then say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Be not content to remain ever groaning, but say: "I, a wretched man, thank God, through Jesus Christ. Even though I do not see it all, I am going to praise God."

There is deliverance, there is the liberty of the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Ghost."

Taken from Absolute Surrender by Andrew Murray

Re: Full deliverance of Christ, on: 2009/2/9 11:13

Collin,

Though I'm not sure how it fits into the definitions in your post, I am certainly a "delivered" man.

I was born into the world as a son of Adam. And as a son of Adam, I was a prisoner to Satan whom Adam defected to long ago. However, when I place sincere faith (loyalty, love, and trust) in God, God brought me to his Son. And just as I placed sincere faith (loyalty, love, and trust) in God, I then placed the same faith in his Son. When the Son saw my sincere faith in him, he was pleased and he took me in marriage to be "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." And through this miracle of being married to (or baptized into) Christ, I took part in his death and resurrection.

As I died with him, I died to the bondage of my former captor, Satan. As a result of this, I was completely delivered from his grasp and power over my life. At that moment, I was completely delivered.

But not only was I delivered from Satan's bondage, I was also resurrected into the family of God.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, he declared at that time, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Hebrews 1:5)

Well, since I am in Christ (through the miracle of marriage (or baptism)) this declaration was also declared about me (as well as all who are made "one" with Christ).

Truly, I am now a son of God. And as a Son of God, I now have the nature of God. And because of his nature (aka - the Holy Spirit) inside me, I naturally bear fruit that pleases God. It is not work of any kind, but rather that natural outflow of my life.

So yes, I am delivered. I am free from Satan's bondage because of my death with Christ, and I am also full of the righteous nature of God because of my resurrection with Christ. It's a wonderful miracle. It's the miracle of the gospel.

I will try to answer your pm at some point in the future.

Jason

Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2009/2/9 18:27

When I said your testimony I meant what I read in the letter. I read in your testimony things that I have not heard much people say.

Quote:

-----The idea that one who is truly baptized into Christ can still be a sinner in nature is a lie.

Your testimony that got me really excited God has been talking to me about this over the last few years.

Quote:

-----For many miserable years, I believed an anti-Christ message. I believed, "Christians aren't perfect, they're just forgiven." I believed that although we should do our best not to sin, complete victory over sin was not possible until we reached heaven.

How do you describe sin

Quote:

-----By sin, I mean clear conscious acts that I know displease the Lord. Once something is clear to me that it displeases the Lord, it will not be consciously repeated in my life. I have no fear of failing God by doing something I know displeases him. While the devil still has the power to tempt me, he has absolutely no power to compel me to give in.

Know before I run of somewhere I'll give a short testimony of my own. Nearly ten years ago I walked out of the church to tally and utterly disgusted with what I saw going on. As I crossed the street on leaving the church I prayed "God I believe everything you said to me I don't know how your going to do it but I believe you'll do it". The Holy Spirit spoke "You'll be just like Job"

In July 2006 and not being in the church since I stepped out that day blisters started appear on my body. The words of the Holy Spirit rang in my ears again "You'll be just like Job" I went to the Doctor and the viral infection I have cannot be cured by man. I decided to go on a forty day fast so God could work in me.

God did great things in my life during that Fast but the point I want to bring out here is this. During that time God let me see that in me there was a Sin nature. That this sin nature was system was so deeply engrained within me that I believed that it is was me. That with all our best attempts we will never be able to overcome this system as it's more than a match for me.

Paul was also aware of this system.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

God also led me to find out there where men in the past that have had that system dealt with because of what Jesus has done. The way God help me was through Duncan Campbells testimony. In Duncans testimony he describes two definite works of the Holy Spirit.

- 1.Salvation
- 2.Holiness

God has not done this second work of the Spirit in my live yet. But in the last three years I dug deeper and deeper into the teaching behind it. There are many men who have taught this.

Wesley called in Christian Perfection
Duncan Campbell called it the second blessing

Andrew Murray called it Christ is All in All
J. Hudson Taylor called it the Exchanged life
Samuel Logan Brengle called it Holiness
William Booth called it Holiness
The hidden Christian calls it THE VICTORIOUS LIFE

The list could go on and on but in there teaching I find what you describe in your testimony.

There is a better way to walk with God. (Taken from the Website Enter His Rest)

Mt. 11:28-30

“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Most interpret these verses to refer to the good way of salvation and the rest in Him from your acts of sin and the ensuing guilt. Actually, as well as this it refers to a little-known better way to walk with God.

This way is better because it has been made free from all the just mentioned "carnal labor and worldly weight". You do not find this better way by getting something more than the New Man, but by getting rid of something that is old:

“...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.” Ephesians 4:21-24

“And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All of these things come from within and defile a man” Mark 7:20-23

Did you know that even though you are saved and all your previous acts of sin are forgiven, that the foundational sinfulness of the fallen heart remains intact? Did you know that all your acts of sin, both past and future have their root in the corruption still quietly hidden within your heart of hearts? New acts of sin are manifestations of what was already hidden in seed form within the heart. Acts of sin are conceived and empowered by dark seed-forces such as:

delicious deep-down cast-iron prejudices
a hunger to be accepted by others -making little "white" face-saving lies a necessity

juicy envies that know the grass is greener on the other side of the fence
lurid demonic lusts that ache to spill over from the safety of the marriage bed
overweening pride that arrogantly puffs up at every opportunity
demanding our own way -and so ignoring the interests of others and God

cruel hard-hearted stubbornness that turns from the right way
sneaky selfishness that denies that its desires are not lawful.....
cunning ambition that lusts to be heaped with honour, wealth and power

These inward things are not acts of sin themselves. They are instead parts of the whole pre-existing world of sin, sinfulness and iniquity in concentrated potential secretly locked in your heart just waiting to come forth some day and get you back into the deadly trouble which comprises this lost God-averse world you were born into.

Pardon is the remedy for new acts of sin, but there can be no covering or excuse for the heart that is just continuing to be its own natural-born self. It is not an act of sin for your heart to be the way it was born, so the only remedy for it is to willingly crucify it on the cross with Christ. Such an unworthy heart is unlawful since by nature it not enabled to obey the ten commandments, and therefore the only cure for it is to be cleansed from it.

Now once that unworthy hidden world of sinfulness is gone, what is left? You are. The Holy Spirit is. But your heart is now unhindered from the fall and set free to be as Godly as you wish it to be. In my own case, the changes were subtle at first but opened out over time to become totally revolutionary as I gradually learned what I could do with this complete spiritual freedom.

But teaching regarding the old (former or natural) man and how to be cleansed from it in a moment of time has become rare. As a result carnality dogs the steps of virtually every believer today. The worldly weight that follows keeps us often more conscious of the ways of the world than we are of working out our salvation in the fear of God. This keeps our spiritual armor full of holes and maintains a subtle (or sometimes blatant) undesired distance from God. The fruits of the Spirit remain under-developed distant ideals -and we display for all to see, spiritual spots, wrinkles and other spiritual blemishes from the world. Legion are the doctrines and excuses we use to maintain the idol of "self-esteem".

So virtually all believers end up unknowingly missing out on enjoying the full expression of the Bible's central theme: blameless Holiness and how to obtain it. Matthew 11:30 above ("Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light.") is claimed, but never made into a reality. The gospel is quietly laborious, and though we do our best, our hearts remain helplessly less than lowly.

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