

Date: August 12, 2012

Subject: The Gift - Eph. 2:8

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" Ephesians 2:8

The words translated, "are... saved" are from the Greek words, "este sesōsmenoi," and form what is called a "paraphrastic verb;" a construction intended to place special emphasis on the continuing results. In this case, the effects of salvation are an ongoing part of every true believer's life. In addition to this, "sesōsmenoi" is a passive participle.

In order to highlight these nuances, we may translate it this way, "For by grace are ye being saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" In other words, salvation is a process including our justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification

Our justification is when we are first regenerated by the Spirit of God (see John 3:3 ff) which usually takes place as one is under the hearing/preaching of the incorruptible Word of God (1 Peter 1:23); after which, one will depend upon

the righteousness of Jesus Christ by a true and living faith. When the sufferings and death of the perfect Son of God are preached, as the only substitute for our sins, His sheep hear His voice and repose upon the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls by faith in Him and cease, all works of the law,
from

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:28

Once the Holy Spirit renews and enables the heart of God's elect to believe ~~and~~ ~~embrace~~ the promises of God - this faith may be different in degrees and is often assulted, assailed, and weakened; but Grass up in many to the attainment of a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour of their souls.

Sanctification

After justification is sanctification. On the one hand we are sanctified at the time of our justification; we are set apart as chosen vessels for the service of God, we are set apart from

world and brought into favour with God. On the other hand, our sanctification lasts our whole Christian life whereby our love for sin weakens, and our love for Christ strengthens our obedience to the Word of God.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence [Greek: "epithymia" desire for the forbidden, lust], even as the Gentiles ~~which~~ which knew not God:

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

Here in 1 Thessalonians 4, sanctification is our abstinence from fornication and keeping our bodies pure from unlawful sexual activity, both in deed and in thought; but sanctification doesn't just deal with the sin of fornication, but with every sin in our life.

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts

"in your ignorance; but as He Who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [Greek: "anastrophē" meaning our manner of life, behaviour, conduct, etc.]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
1 Peter 1:14-16

Sanctification is that blessed doctrine of God changing and conforming His people to the image of His Son - Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29).

You see beloved - and I am speaking to those justified - we don't go straight from justification to glorification; because in between the time when we first truly believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and when we finally go to heaven (glorification); is our sanctification - or growing "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (see 2 Peter 3:18). This distinction between our justification and sanctification is very important for us to know and learn; and which will further the joy of faith in God's elect. We will return to this a little later; first, let's explain our glorification for those unfamiliar with the term.

Glorification

At the very end of our salvation is our glorification; meaning at the final resurrection when all of God's elect receive their spiritual ~~bodies~~ bodies.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power."
1 Corinthians 15:42-43

Not only is our body raised - or resurrected - in glory; but will also be changed to a sinless body like our Lord Jesus Christ, (actually, the two are referring to the same thing).

For our conversation [i.e. "citizenship"] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."
Philippians 3:20-21

At the end we will be perfectly sinless and all of ~~the~~ ^{the} sinful relics of ~~the~~ ^{our} flesh, will be forever gone. This is our hope as Christians who desire to please our Saviour perfectly, but are hindered by our flesh which lusts against the spirit. (Gal. 5:17).

A Simple Illustration

"For by grace are ye being saved through faith;..."

There's a beginning to our salvation (i.e. justification), a middle (sanctification), and an end (glorification).

We are like a little boat lost at sea, drifting to destruction and ready to sink (although spiritually we would be ^{already} sunken), this would describe our life under the curse of God and to die under His judgment. Until a large ship ^{Christ} finds us and casts us a chain to connect our little boat to this large ship - this would be our justification, "...through faith;..." (Eph. 2:8). Now this large ship pulls us safely home - to our glorification; but the journey between these two points describes our sanctification. There may be

storms and hurricanes and many other types of trials; but because our little boat is connected to this large ship by the chain, it cannot sink (at least in this analogy); and the shorter the chain, beloved, the closer we sail to the ship, and the closer we sail to the ship, the less turbulence (having a chaotic or restless character or tendency; causing unrest or disturbance; unruly) we have, and the greater is our "joy and peace in believing." (Rom. 15:13).

This doesn't mean "smooth sailing" once we become a Christian as many teach. We read in Philippians 1:29

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;"

But the more we "grow in grace," the more we are sanctified, the more we yield our "members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6:19), the stronger in faith we become. We grow from stubborn, whining babes in Christ, to mature Christians in the faith; and when God's providence causes us to bend in a way we

may not desire or like, rather than saying, "Why me...?" We wonder, "What's God up to?" Will you grab hold of that for yourself, beloved? Whatever trial you enter in life, remember, there is nothing outside of God's control; therefore everything that happens to us has meaning, and when things get difficult - and they will - look to God by faith in Jesus Christ and wonder, "What's God up to?"

The Key to Sanctification

Earlier, I mentioned that it's important for us to distinguish between our justification and our sanctification; because it is very easy for us to base our justification on our sanctification - this is absolutely wrong! The basis of our justification is Jesus Christ and His righteousness, by faith alone. We cannot determine our salvation by our obedience to the law or we will fall into "legalism" like the Pharisees, which is a works gospel. By this amazing doctrine, Christ removes the threatings of the law and moves His people to obedience - not by rigor - but by love, "If ye love Me, Keep My commandments." (John 14:15).

It is by love He prods us to obey, will you remember this the next time you are tempted, beloved? This is the key to our sanctification, "faith which worketh by love." (Gal. 5:6).

The Gift of God

"For by grace are ye being saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" Ephesians 2:8

Some teach that "the gift of God" is His "grace"; others say that "faith" is the gift of God; although both are possibilities, the words translated "that" (really, "this") and "the gift" are in the neuter gender in the Greek, and "grace" and "faith" are both feminine. And although there are examples to support this interpretation, (though rare); I ~~prefer~~ prefer it to mean the whole process of our salvation, from start to finish, our "being saved... is the gift of God"; and notice it is done not because of faith, but "through faith." Faith is the "chain" which connects us to "the Captain of [our] salvation" (Heb. 2:10). How many links are in your chain beloved? Are you afflicted,

tossed with tempest, and not comforted (Isa. 54:11)? You may be held with the chain, but have drifted too far from the Ship. Well hoist that main sail! Every man on deck! Rid yourself of the slack in your chain and draw nearer to the One who died for you by taking all of your sins upon Himself, and look upon the One whom we pierced (Jn. 19:37), surely "He is altogether lovely" (S.S. 5:16) and "precious" (1 Pet. 2:7); and thank Him! Thank Him in all you do! Thank Him in all you say! Thank Him in all you think! Thank Him always in everything, by love, for ... "the gift."

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15

Your servant for Jesus sake,

Ed. T. Usher

Take Time to be Holy by Longstaff 1822-1894

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
abide in Him always, and feed on His Word;
make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
spend much time in secret with Jesus alone;
by looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide,
and run not before Him, whatever betide;
in joy or in sorrow still follow thy Lord,
and looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul;
each thought and each motive beneath His control;
thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.