

Date: August 26, 2012

Subject: Born of God - 1 John 5:4 (part one)

"For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Lately we have really focused on the doctrine of justification and how it must never be confused with the doctrine of sanctification.

By sanctification I mean a growing in loving obedience to our Lord and Saviour - Jesus Christ; whereby we love what God loves and hate what He hates, more and more, day by day; until that great and glorious Day when Christ Returns, and we are rid of these sinful ~~§~~ bodies as they become changed into glorious spiritual bodies, and ~~the~~ we become perfect.

The doctrine of justification consists of the Holy Spirit of God creating a new heart in the sinner, and he or she subsequently "works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly" and consequently, "his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. 4:5), and so he is justified.

You see my beloved friend, i confess that i once was a "Pharisee", my faith became mingled with my works, and sin found its opportunity to deceive me, and so slay me (see Rom. 7:11).

For me, faith wasn't good enough; and so i chased after righteousness; but the faster i ran after it, the farther i became from it. i had a real zeal for God, but i was ignorant of God's righteousness, and so i went about to establish my own (see Rom. 10:2ff.). i had to be more obedient to the law, i had to learn ^{more} doctrine, i had to do all these things - or so i thought; but what i really had to do, truly what we all have to do... is submit. Submit ourselves to God's righteousness, by faith in Jesus Christ.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." (Rom. 10:4).

As May 21, 2011 came, and as May 21, 2011 went, and turned into May 22nd -

the longest and saddest day of my life - slowly on, and i mean very slowly, the Lord began removing the scales from my eyes and taught me the ~~greatest~~ ^{greatest} doctrine ever known, which is the doctrine of faith.

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

Are you beginning to see the importance of separating the doctrines of justification and sanctification? If our justification declares our innocence, and our sanctification is our progressive obedience to the law of God; if we are not careful to keep them separate, they will merge together; and therefore, we will seek our "innocence" by our "obedience."

Moreover - and i hope that i really have your attention - by mixing these two doctrines, we may never have any real assurance that we are one with Christ... why? Because our obedience is never perfect, so we are never able to

vicious circle: "I am obeying the law of God and so I feel saved. I have sinned and now feel unsaved. I am obeying the law of God and so I feel saved. I have sinned and now feel unsaved. I am obeying the law of God..."

Has this happened to you? Do you know of the struggle of which I am speaking? Not everybody does, I know that; but my hope and prayer to God is that if you are one of those precious souls that knows what I am talking about, and you still lie under the burden of guilt because of your sins, and you feel caught into the ups and downs of "being saved" and "not being saved" because you are looking to your ^{own} obedience and so have not yet found of that blessed rest in Jesus Christ, it is for you my beloved brother, or my beloved sister, that I so labour and may the truth of the Gospel made effective by the Holy Spirit of God, ease ~~the~~ ^{the} burden of guilt and cleanse your conscience by faith in Jesus Christ, Who never changes nor waivers.

Now I don't mean that everybody who believes is saved; nor should we ever stop

examining ourselves as the Scriptures tell us to do - for this is a healthy exercise that we should engage in all our life; and I am not saying to "accept" Jesus Christ either, for that is not taught in the Scriptures.

But beloved, before we continue, make sure you understand the difference between our justification and our sanctification; and if you have any doubts, stop right here.

Stop looking to your obedience, stop looking at your "good works," stop looking to yourself completely; even your faults; and look to the blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, which "cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) Look to Him for the forgiveness of your sins by faith, and then... "lie down" in the green pastures which He hath purchased for thee O beloved sheep, and rest thyself in His yoke which is easy, and His burden is light. (Mat. 11:30) Cleave unto Him who loved thee and who gave Himself for thee, by faith O beloved! Now, to those who have entered by the Door, by faith in Him who is the Door (see John 10:7); now that justification and sanctification have been distinguished and separated; now, let's get to our text this week.

"For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4

There are three points I would like to bring out of this text:

- I. It applies to all of those who are already justified, "For whosoever is born of God"
- II. It speaks of our daily battle with sin and the process of our sanctification, "overcomes the world"
- III. How we obtain this victory over sin, "even our faith."

I. "For Whosoever is Born of God"

Immediately all the imposters are excluded, and only the regenerated of God's elect are in view, and not ^{only} some of them, but all of them, "For whosoever is born of God."

To be "born of God" is to be "born again" like we read in John 3:7-8

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind blows where it listeth [i.e. "wishes"], and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

This spiritual birth is something we cannot perceive; like the instant a baby is conceived in the womb of the Mother is imperceptible, so is everyone who is born again. This is a spiritual work of God that He is pleased to work when His people are under the hearing of the Word of God.

Now eventually the Mother will know that there is a baby inside of her, eventually she will know that she is pregnant; this is a result of the conception... so it is, with us beloved. When the Spirit of God creates within us a new heart, we don't start shaking or screaming, we don't even know it happened, there is none of these theatrics in ^{a true} ~~an~~ spiritual birth as is so commonly believed today.

But just as the result of the conception will give awareness to the mother that she has a baby in her womb, so does being "born of God" have a result in our life beloved, we ^{truly} receive Christ by faith. Listen to this, John 1:11-12

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Now before I read the next verse, notice how some people received Christ and believed

on His name, and others did not... why? Why do some receive and believe on Christ, and others do not? Is it because some have a little goodness inside them? Is it because they have had enough sin in their ~~life~~ life and now want to change? They may have had enough of sin and now want to change, but it isn't because of anything good of themselves; it's because they have been "born of God." The very next verse reads,

"who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 1:13

What comes first, our receiving/believing in Jesus Christ ~~or~~ or being "born... of God"? Without a doubt, those spoken of here in John chapter 1 verse 12, received and believed Christ as a result of being "born of God." They were "born of God" first, and then they received and believed in Jesus Christ.

Now people receive and believe in Jesus

Christ all over the world, does this mean they are all saved? No, but just as a counterfeit bill doesn't make a true bill counterfeit also; each bill must be tested individually to see if its genuine, so it is with us.

Maybe you have believed in Jesus Christ long ago, maybe it was just recently, maybe you will do so now, but the real test is, is it genuine? Have you submitted to God's righteousness? Have you found the rest by faith in the blood of the Lamb? Have you understood the importance of separating the doctrines of justification and sanctification?

I know all too well about the anguish of soul that comes from mixing my works (i.e. obedience) with faith, and it is my prayer that this feeble and imperfect letter may be received with God's blessing and may He cause all His sheep to "lie down" (Ps 23:2) by comforting them with His rest by faith, which comes by being, "born of God."

We will continue our study of this passage next week - God willing.

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

Rev. D. W. W.

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People by Olearius 1671

Comfort, comfort ye My people,
 speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
 Comfort those who sit in darkness,
 mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
 Speak ~~to~~ ye to Jerusalem
 of the peace that waits for them;
 tell her that her sins I cover,
 and her warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is crying
 in the desert far and near,
 bidding all men to repentance,
 since the Kingdom now is here.
 O the warning cry obey!
 Now prepare for God a way;
 let the valleys rise to meet Him
 — and the hills bow down to greet Him.
 Make ye straight what long was crooked,
 make the rougher places plain;
 let your hearts be true and humble,
 as befits His holy reign.
 For the glory of the Lord
 now over earth is shed abroad;
 and all flesh shall see the token
 that His word is never broken.