

# Truth for Today

*The Bible Explained*

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast Date:** 13 November 2016

**No.** T0963

**Speaker:** Mr. Stephen Thomson

## Things which accompany salvation: Sanctification

In our talk today we will be continuing the series looking at the “Things which accompany Salvation”. These ten talks are all based on the little book, “*The Great Salvation*” written by FB Hole, which has been republished together with “*Outlines of Truth*” (by the same author) under the title “*Salvation*” (ISBN: 9780901860170).

Earlier this year we considered, Forgiveness; Justification; Redemption and Reconciliation. Last week we looked at Salvation, and our subject today is Sanctification. In the following weeks, in the Lord’s will, the talks will be on, The New Birth; Quickening; The Gift of the Holy Spirit and New Creation. How great indeed is the salvation which has come to us in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ! Often I think we limit God’s great salvation by viewing it relative to our great need, when in fact its greatness is because of its source, God Himself.

There’s a huge amount to be learned from these subjects and well worth our careful consideration. Remember if you miss any of these talks you can listen to them or download the transcripts from our website which is [www.truthfortoday.org.uk](http://www.truthfortoday.org.uk)

I guess we are all used to the idea of the package deal. For example, all-inclusive holidays are popular with many as the flights, the transfers, the accommodation, the food and drinks, the activities etc. are all part of the package. I expect most holidaymakers would take the time to read and find out exactly what was included in their deal. I wonder, then, why is it that some Christians seem to be unaware of the many blessings which accompany salvation? Of course, the basic need we all have is forgiveness, without which we remain under the guilt of our sins. Wonderful, wonderful day when we come to realise that “*Christ died for our sins*” (see 1 Corinthians 15:3) and that His sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary is the basis on which our sins can be forgiven by a holy and righteous God. Many of us will have sung as children:

*He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good:  
That we might go at last to heaven,  
Saved by His precious blood.*

*Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)*

As I was growing up, I would often hear Gospel preachers say that with salvation came the knowledge of sins forgiven, of peace with God, and of hope for heaven. Well, that’s a good start, but the great salvation is far more than that! Think of the younger son (the prodigal as we often call him) in Luke 15:11-32, returning in repentance to the father. He looked for forgiveness and a servant’s place (Luke 15:18-19). What he received was far, far greater than his needs or even his wants; he received the blessings that came from the loving heart of his father! The father said, “*Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry*” (Luke 15:22-23). And you’ll notice, too, that these blessings, the privileges of being a son, were bestowed upon him straight away! We know that great blessing awaits the Christian in heaven. The Apostle Paul says to the believers at Corinth, “*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*” (see 1 Corinthians 2:9). But the Apostle John reminds us that we are the sons (or children) of God, now, (see 1 John 3:2) and our desire as we look at these tremendous blessings which accompany salvation is that we might be in the enjoyment of these things now!

So what do we know about sanctification? A good place to start with any word study is with a good Bible dictionary where we learn that the term means “to set apart to sacred purposes, or to consecrate”. In his book, Mr. Hole tells us that the fundamental meaning of sanctification as found in both Old and New Testaments is “a separation” or “a setting apart”.

When I do a word study in the Scriptures, I always like to find the first mention. It often sets the tone on what God wants us to learn from its use as we go through the Scriptures. Well, we don’t have to read further than Genesis 2:3 to find the first mention. We read, “*And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*” It is most interesting that the very first mention is of God

setting apart a day unto Himself. You see, in our talk today, my primary focus is on God and what He has done, and we shall see that He has sanctified us, and set us apart unto Himself. Perhaps we could use the term “positional sanctification” to describe what God has done for us through the work of Christ. Of course, the Scriptures speak of “practical sanctification” too, and we need to be exercised about that - but my burden is to stress that from God’s side, the divine side, we are sanctified, holy, consecrated people set apart to Him, by Him.

The same word appears in different forms throughout the Old and New Testaments where we find, ‘sanctified’, ‘holy’, ‘consecrate’, ‘dedicate’, ‘hallowed’, and ‘saints’ used to convey the meaning of being set apart or separated, to God. This is not an exhaustive list but these are the main ways in which the Hebrew word “*qadowsh*” and the Greek word “*hagias*” are used. If we search in a concordance, we will find little clusters of the word used especially in Exodus and Leviticus in the Old Testament and in Hebrews in the New Testament. This will not surprise any who know their Bible. As we have already seen, the Sabbath day was sanctified by God, and His earthly people were under the instruction to “*keep it holy*”, (see Exodus 20:8). If you read Exodus 19 (that’s the chapter just before the law was given to Moses), you will find several references to sanctification:

- In Exodus 19:6 we find, “*a holy nation*”;
- In Exodus 19:10 and Exodus 19:14 we have “*a sanctified people*”;
- In Exodus 19:22 we get the mention of “*sanctified priests*”; and
- In Exodus 19:23 we read of “*a sanctified mountain*”.

Later in Exodus and continuing into Leviticus, we read of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, of the tabernacle, of the altar, the vessels and the sacrifices.

Although we must always clearly distinguish between the nation of Israel who were God’s chosen people in the Old Testament and the church as found in the New Testament (and we must understand that all believers from Pentecost until the present day are members of this company, the assembly or church, meaning “called out ones”), the mind of God in relation to sanctification is true of both companies. He has set them apart to Himself. He chose Israel to be His earthly people and set them apart from all the other nations round about, and as members of the Church, His heavenly people, He has sanctified us in Christ Jesus, and we are saints by divine calling (see 1 Corinthians 1:2 and footnote in JN Darby’s translation).

Although the term “saints” is used frequently of believers in the in the New Testament, I usually refrain from using it in these radio talks because of the thoughts some might have in relation to it. Perhaps you think that to be a saint you need to be an extra special or a more holy person than the average Christian, but that’s not a biblical view. In fact, the verse I have just quoted, 1 Corinthians 1:2, was from the Apostle Paul’s greeting to the Corinthian Christians, whom we know were not all in a good spiritual condition. We read that there were divisions amongst them (1 Corinthians 1:10); there was unjudged immorality within the company (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), there was disorder evident even as they took part in the Lord’s supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), but that didn’t change the fact that they were saints! In 1 Corinthians 11:30 we read that there were even those who were unfit for living and had been removed by God, nevertheless they were saints, holy ones as called by God Himself. If there is any doubt in your mind about what I am saying, let me give some verses which will establish the fact that all believers are saints of God.

- Acts 9:13;
- Ephesians 1:15;
- Ephesians 3:18;
- Colossians 1:4;
- Colossians 1:26;
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13; and
- Philemon 1:5.

We could give more but these are surely enough to dispel any doubts as to the fact that all Christian believers are saints, God’s holy ones, and that irrespective as to how our personal or practical holiness measures up. Not that we should ever be complacent or careless in this regard. Peter in his epistle reminds New Testament believers of the principle established in the Old Testament, “*Be ye holy; for I am holy*” (1 Peter 1:16).

So returning to our starting point of things which accompany salvation, how much do we value and appreciate the blessing of sanctification? That being saved by His grace, He has sanctified us, setting us apart, and consecrated us as priests in His service. Did you know that if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a priest? Just as the term ‘saint’, so the term ‘priest’ is commonly misunderstood even amongst Christians. The notion of clergy and laity in the church of God has no biblical authority, rather the priesthood of all believers is taught. In fact, if we were to continue reading in Peter’s first epistle, we would find in 1 Peter 2 that he speaks of all believers as “*an holy priesthood*” (see 1 Peter 2:5) and “*a royal priesthood*” (see 1 Peter 2:9). Peter explains the functions of this hallowed

position that we have before God. (I have used the word hallowed because it carries the same meaning as sanctification). He tells us that as holy priests we are *“to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”* (see 1 Peter 2:5) and as royal priests we are *“to shew forth the praises of him who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvellous light”* (see 1 Peter 2:9). So we are set apart to be worshippers of God, and witnesses for God. What grace, that the likes of you and me can be employed in this divine service. Note the order, it is worship followed by witness!

I again go back to my childhood days and can recall the older Christians saying that before they heard a young man preach the Gospel, telling sinners of the greatness of Jesus, they would prefer to hear him speak to the Father in worship, telling Him of the greatness of His Son. I know we need to be careful and not set rules, and sinners need to hear the Gospel. But let us never neglect the service of worship! Remember the words of the Saviour to the woman of Samaria when He said, *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him”* (see John 4:23).

Are we all worshippers? I suggest that there is something wrong if we are not! We don't have to wait until we have mastered the truths of Scripture to become a worshipper. The simplest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can speak to the Father of their appreciation of His Son, and that is what the Father seeks. And this wonderful privilege is not restricted to the times we meet together as believers. No, we can worship the Father in spirit and truth anytime as led by the Holy Spirit. It's not our subject today, and I don't want to digress, but perhaps I should say in case any are confused about the fact that we are all priests, that when Christians meet together for corporate worship, according to 1 Corinthians 14:34, the women are to keep silence. So in the assembly, or the church if you like, the men are audible while the women are silent, but both audible and inaudible Spirit led worship ascends to the Father as a *“sweet smelling savour.”* I realise that perhaps some listeners won't accept this, and I don't wish to be contentious, but the Apostle Paul says in the same chapter, in 1 Corinthians 14:37, *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”*

And what about witnessing? Perhaps it is more difficult to witness. Perhaps we feel that we need to know our Bibles to be able to answer the questions which are put to us, but if we are saved, we can individually testify to this great fact, that Jesus is my Saviour. Remember the man who was born blind (whose story we read in John 9:1-41). He didn't pretend to have all the answers; in fact, he confessed that he knew very little. But what he knew was that whereas he was blind, now he could see (John 9:25), and that it was a man called Jesus who had opened his eyes (John 9:11). There's no argument against a personal testimony like this! Remember, too, the words Jesus spoke to Legion (whose story we read in Mark 5:1-20). Jesus said to him, *“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee”* (Mark 5:19). I remember reading about a drunkard who, before conversion, spent every penny he had on alcohol, but he was saved and delivered from his old life. His so called friends mockingly said to him, *“Tell us about the story of water being turned into wine”* (Referring to John 2:1-12) He didn't yet know that story, but he answered, *“I don't know about that, but I can tell you about drink being turned into furniture”!*

If we look closely at the words Peter uses, he speaks of *“a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”* The point is, I think, that our actions should shout louder than our words when it comes to witnessing. Perhaps you've heard this poem by Edgar Guest (1881-1959):

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;  
And the best of all preachers are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.  
I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;  
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;  
For I might misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding how you **act and how you live.***

Now for the short time we have left, I want to bring to your notice a few verses in the epistle to the Hebrews. We noted earlier that there were clusters of the word “sanctification”, in Exodus, Leviticus and in Hebrews. As any Bible student will know, the Hebrew epistle contrasts what the Israelites had in Old Testament times with what we Christians have in our day, and that the characteristic word is ‘better’. The teaching is that in Christ, we have One who is better than the things they had. Just look at the first few chapters and you will see that the Son is better than the prophets; than angels (Hebrews 1:4); and than Moses and Aaron. As our Great High priest, our Lord Jesus Christ is the

mediator of the new covenant and His shed blood is the end of all sacrifice, purging our consciences from dead works and opening up to us the new and living way of approach to God. Amongst the nations of the world Israel's blessings were great, but as Christians, ours are greater! Their blessings were temporal and earthly, but ours are eternal and heavenly. Oh, that we might enter into the enjoyment of these things!

The danger is that the people of God today go back into a system of organised worship with many trappings which belong to the Old Testament way, the shadows and types, and the Holy Spirit is quenched amongst the saints of God as they gather to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I said at the beginning, my focus must be on what God has done in setting us apart for Himself, what we have called positional sanctification. But before I finish I must say a few words about practical sanctification. In the Lord's intercessory prayer as recorded in John 17, He says to the Father, *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). And in Paul's letter to the Ephesians 5:25 he says, *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"* (Ephesians 5:25). And in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians after listing some of the awful sins that belonged to their old lives, he says, *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:11). So in these three quotations we have the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit active in our sanctification, by the application of the word of God.

The Psalmist asks the question in Psalm 119:9, *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"* and gives the answer, *"By taking heed thereto according to thy word."* Although we have chosen not to speak very much today about practical sanctification, it is very necessary and it should follow that when we appreciate what God has done for us, in setting us apart to Himself, this should cause us to want to be separated to Him in a practical way, and in a way that others can observe. As saints of God, we should not be characterised by the world in which we live. The Apostle John brings before us that wonderful day, the hope of every believer, when we shall see Him as He is. And what is the practical outcome? *"Every man that hath this hope in him [that is in Christ] purifieth himself, even as He [that is Christ] is pure"* (1 John 3:3)

Finally, and I have deliberately kept this verse Hebrews 2:11 to close today's talk: *"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."* But read the Hebrews 2:5-18 to get the full blessing of what is being taught. Deity belongs to God alone, but we are partakers of the divine nature, we have the life of God, eternal life, through the work of Jesus Christ our Lord, the One who is not ashamed to call us brethren (Hebrews 2:11). Let us never be ashamed to call Him our Lord!

May God bless you all.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.