

MARY CRAIG MINISTRIES, INC.

SERIES: THE BENEFITS OF SALVATION

MESSAGE: INTRODUCTION PART TWO

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This is Part Two of our Introduction to our new series, "The Benefits of Salvation."

In Psalm 103, we read:

1Bless the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!
2Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
3Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
4Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
5Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,
So *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6The LORD executes righteousness
And justice for all who are oppressed.
7He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the children of Israel.
8The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
9He will not always strive *with us*,
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
10He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

11For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
13As a father pities *his* children,
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
14For He [\[a\]](#)knows our frame;
He remembers that we *are* dust.

We began last week with this Psalm of David. The whole Psalm identifies various benefits of belonging to the Covenant Lord. With the New Covenant in Christ Jesus,

everything is better. For example, believers have a better covenant, better promises, a better priesthood. Christ is better than angels. His sacrifice of Himself for sin does not need to be repeated but is a once for all time sacrifice on behalf of those for whom He died.

To further our understanding of the benefits of salvation in, through, and by Christ, we must lay the foundation. So we will be delving into the application of the accomplished work of Jesus Christ in His effecting atonement within the post creation world. In other words, how is a person saved effectually? What is the order of what happens? Who is involved in what?

Last week we spoke about God as being a God of order and how He superabundantly supplies salvation out of His goodness, wisdom, grace, and love. To review:

- I. Two Divine Acts:
 - Effectual calling through
 - Regeneration

- II. Two Divine-Human Activities:
 - Repentance unto life and
 - Faith in Jesus Christ

- III. Three Divine Acts:
 - Justification,
 - Definitive sanctification,
 - Adoption (and the Holy Spirit's sealing)

- IV. Two Divine-Human Activities:
 - Progressive sanctification
 - Perseverance in holiness

- V. One Divine Act:
 - Glorification

Again, I will be drawing on the work of John Murray from his book, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, and on Dr. Robert L. Reymond's *Systematic Theology*.

We continue today with God's three divine acts: justification, definitive sanctification, and adoption.

God's eternal decree to justify is absolutely prior to faith (Romans 5:1-11). Justification is prior to faith just as the accomplishment of redemption (work of Christ) is prior to the application of it (work of the Holy Spirit).

But what about actual justification in the order of the application of redemption? The Scripture states that we are justified by faith, from faith, through faith, and upon faith (Romans 1:17; 3:22, 26, 28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:24; Phil. 3:9). Faith is God's appointed instrument through which He dispenses the grace of justification. Justification is upon the event of faith, or through the instrumentality of faith. God justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Faith is prior to justification.

Faith, however, is connected with calling. It is the human response to the divine summons to believe in Christ. (Acts 16:31) It does not constitute calling, but it is the inevitable response of the elect soul to the divine call. God calls with a divine summons to believe in Christ and to enter thereby into fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9). Call and response coincide. Calling precedes faith, which precedes justification. So does regeneration. Regeneration must be prior to faith.

Ephesians 1, 2—as sinners we were dead in trespasses and sin. Saving faith means that the whole soul turns in loving trust and self-commitment to Christ. People are incapable of that until renewed by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:4ff, John 6:44, 45, John 3:3. Regeneration precedes faith.

4But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, **5**He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of new birth_a and renewal by the Holy Spirit. **6**This is the Spirit He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7**so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs with the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7 NKJV

John 1:13 These are they who have been begotten [*egennethesan*], not by blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of a husband/man, but by God. True believers are “born-out-of-God ones.” Regeneration is the necessary precondition and efficient cause of faith in Jesus Christ. Cf John 3:3, 5, 1 John 5:1, 1 John 3:9a. God's regenerating activity is the cause and the believer's not sinning is one effect of that regenerating activity. 1 John 5:18 also tells us to understand that the cause behind one's not sinning is God's regenerating activity. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God, meaning that God's regenerating activity is the cause of one's believing that Jesus is the Christ, and conversely that such faith is the effect of that regenerating work.

1Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2**looking unto Jesus, the **[a]**author and **[b]**finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1, 2 NKJV

Ephesians 2:1-5—Paul's term for regeneration *means* “being made alive.” Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, God out of His great love, made us alive, and that regenerating work is the cause preceding the effect of a person's faith response to God's summons to faith and repentance.

Calling in Scripture is given distinct emphasis and prominence as that act of God whereby sinners are translated from darkness to light and ushered into the fellowship of Christ. Salvation in actual possession takes its start from an effectual summons on the part of God and since it is God's summons, it carries within it all that it takes to be made effective. Calling, therefore, precedes regeneration.

Repentance is the other side of a coin to faith. Repentance is joined to faith. Together, we call repentance and faith conversion. Acts 16:31, Acts 2:38, Acts 20:21, 1 Thess. 1:9

For they themselves report what kind of welcome you gave us, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to await His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead— Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10 Berean

Adoption comes after justification. One is not adopted into the family of God without first being accepted by God and made an heir of eternal life.

Sanctification is generally thought of only as a progressive work. Yet the NT often represents it as a "once for all" [time] definitive act as well. (Acts 20:32, Acts 26:18, 1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Cor. 6:11, Eph. 5:26. Definitive sanctification is an act occurring with or accompanying justification and adoption. God has defined the believer; and now the Holy Spirit makes it so.

And now, brethren, I commend, or entrust, you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Acts 20:32 KJV

To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: 1 Corinthians 1:2 NASB

God defines the believer as "holy ones," or "saints." The believer is defined as being holy, blameless, and beyond reproach in Christ. This righteousness is that of Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is imputed to the believer. It is a garment which clothes us. With such definition, the Holy Spirit's work is to make it so. The believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit, set apart for the purpose and use as intended and designed by the Lord; separated unto the Living God; cleansed and purified; consecrated for a holy use.

Sanctification is a process that begins in regeneration, finds its basis in justification, and derives its energizing grace from the union with Christ effected in effectual calling. It is a continuous process and is so properly placed after adoption. Perseverance complements this sanctifying process and could be placed in our order either before or after sanctification. Believers persevere because the Holy Spirit preserves. 2 Peter 3:18, Phil 3:13, 14

So here is our order: Effectual calling through, regeneration, repentance unto life/faith in Jesus Christ; justification; definitive sanctification; adoption (and the Holy Spirit's sealing); progressive sanctification; perseverance in holiness; glorification.

This order reflects the application of salvation as it is effected with the post-creation world. In the eternal plan of God, we have the precise inverse; God begins with the fulfillment of His purpose in mind. God's whole purpose and divine plan before the creation of the world has been to glorify the Son of God, namely Jesus Christ, as the firstborn among many brethren. Salvation glorifies Jesus Christ, who also glorifies His Father. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ. (See John 16.) The Father has sent the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus, who was sent by the Father to save.

Pray. We praise You today for the glory of your gracious work of salvation. We bless You and thank You. May Your face shine on us. May You grant us the Peace. May You keep and preserve us. May the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, reveal Jesus Christ to us. May our blind eyes be opened, the eyes of our mind to perceive, understand, and comprehend; and may the eyes of our hearts be opened to receive what the Holy Spirit reveals. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ that we may less and less receive imperfectly that which the Holy Spirit reveals perfectly. We ask, therefore, that the Holy Spirit bring home to our hearts the things of Christ, that we might know Him and the power of His resurrection, as we fellowship in what He experienced. We thank you, for Life. May we walk worthy of our calling, confessing Jesus Christ come in the flesh, God Incarnate, our Lord and Savior. In His Name we pray. Amen.

Mary Craig, D. Min.

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