

## *“Walking Towards the Light”*

*Psalms 4:1-8; I John 1:5-10*

May 16, 2021

### Recap

- Authentically Christian
  - o Step one – Surrender
  - o Step two – Realize that there is help
  - o Step three – turn your will and your life over to the care of God
  - o Step four – Take stock of your life.
    - To that end, we’ll talk about sanctification and how we can participate in it.
    - To truly be Christian, one needs to take an inventory of your present life.
      - The first step towards solving any problem is to recognize that you have one.

### Introduction

- Measuring talent according to one standard when another is far more appropriate.
  - o What if we were to consider judging a flying contest and somehow a bear got into the contest?
    - The bear wouldn’t do well, would it?
- In a similar way, if we measure ourselves by the standards of the world around us, we can come up with
  - o The measure we Christians evaluate ourselves is through comparison to Jesus.
- The Christian is called to the ongoing work of self-evaluation in order to be sanctified in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Sanctification

- It may surprise you but the goal of the Christian life isn’t to make it into heaven.
  - o Instead, the goal is to expand our relationship with Jesus Christ
    - Jesus Christ IS life
      - **John 1:4** – “In him was life, and the life was the light of men
      - **John 10:10** – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
- Sanctification is a never-ending process.
  - Origen – There is always more of God to know and love (He’s infinite)
- Justification and sanctification
  - o Being made holy – set apart for God.
  - o Different than justification – that is the means by which God in Christ moves us out of the darkness and into his glorious light
    - Justification is entirely the work of God.
    - Jesus “justifies us” through his death and resurrection
      - We are “Set right” with God
        - o **Romans 5:18** – “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.”
- Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit occurring within us.
  - o Now, make no mistake about it, it FEELS very much like we’re doing all the heavy lifting, but we are being powered by God.
- Calvin once wrote that where there is no spirit of sanctification, there may not be justification.
  - o God is going to make Holy those who He has saved.

## From Sin to Sanctification

- There is something that works against being sanctified
  - o Sin
- Now, you might be thinking, I'm okay when comparing myself to really bad people.
- But remember, there is a power working against us.
  - o **1 Peter 5:8** – “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- So, we need to take stock, take inventory if you will
- But we can't evaluate ourselves by the measure of this world. We must go to the Word.
- 10 Commandments – Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 10
  - o These are the positive traits, the things we're supposed to be doing
- 7 Deadly Sins
  - o Anger, Pride, Greed, Gluttony, Sloth, Lust, Envy
    - These are our “enemies” so to speak
  - o These aren't codified directly in the Bible but all of the deadly sins are strongly encouraged against in the Word
- First step in sanctification is Sleuthing out your Sin
  - o This likely seems like a real drag. I get it.
    - No one likes the idea of dredging up the past, especially those dark and dreary corners
    - But remember, we are to be fearless and we have a goal (Growth in Jesus)
      - **Joshua 1:8-9** – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

## Sleuthing out Sin – Biblical Warrants

- **Proverbs 4:23-27** – “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward,  
and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet;  
then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.
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- **Lamentations 3:40-42a** – “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven: “We have transgressed and rebelled,
  - o Lamentations is a tough book
  - o Written as Jerusalem is torn to the ground and people are carted off forcibly into exile
  - o There, the people realize that their abandonment of God led to their misery
    - They knew they needed to look over matters
- **Matthew 5:4** – ““Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
  - o When we examine our life and our sin, we mourn the things we've done, the things we should've done
    - Not to feel bad about ourselves
      - Sin is forgiven through Jesus Christ
    - But rather we mourn our past lives to be comforted
      - Both with the forgiveness we've received as

## Sleuthing out Sin – Practical Matters

- Now, believe me, the goal here isn't just to remember every bad thing you've done, it's to figure out what is working against you as a means to surrendering the behavior to God
- Where to begin
  - IN PRAYER
    - This is tough work.
    - If we're going to truly be fearless, we're going to need God's Help so that's where we start.
- Methods
  - Take the 10 Commandments
    - Study them, perhaps read more about them.
      - Great book - Stanley Hauerwass and Will Willimon, The Truth about God – The 10 Commandments and Christian life
        - Gives us new ways to think about these commandments in new ways
  - To the process here is to take an ideal goal and consider ways in which you routinely transgress.
    - For example – “Thou shalt not covet.”
      - You might think, “I don't want my neighbor's BMW, so I'm not covetous.”
      - BUT Do you compare your life to other people's?
        - That is a hidden type of covetousness that is largely overlooked.
  - Take the 7 Deadly Sins
    - Make a chart
    - Take time during the week to consider each of the deadliest.
    - Ask God to reveal those places to you in your own heart
    - Take, for example, anger
      - Consider the times in your life that you've been really, really slothful.
        - I can look out in my backyard sometimes, see the overgrown weeds poking out and I just know, I'm procrastinating on doing the lawn.
  - Take what irritates you the most about other people
    - Ask, where are those behaviors in me.
    - They're there...I promise
      - **Romans 2:1** – “Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

## Close with Lord of the Rings

- Wormtongue and the King Théoden of Rohan in the Lord of the Rings
  - Visually he goes from decrypt old man into a vital, active and energetic king again.
- And while fiction is nice, let me tell you about a transformation I personally saw
  - Amy T.

## Scripture and Quotes

**1 John 1:5-10** – “This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

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