**What Is The Gospel? (Andy Acreman, TCF)**

**Week 4 – Released from the Power of Sin Over Us**

* Recap the titles of the previous three parts of this teaching series
* We are now looking at our everyday living and how it is changed by our salvation. Here are the topics…
  + **What is ‘Sanctification’?**
  + **Being set free from the generational curse**
  + **Walking with the Holy Spirit in a holy life**
  + **Fruit: the Proof of the Pudding!**
  + **Is Faith dead without Works, James?**

**Sanctification**

* Is anyone a ‘Saint’ here today? (Nearly everyone’s hand should go up!).
* Are there any sinners here? (Hopefully *no-one’s* hand will go up!). *Romans 5:8 NIV. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
* *1 Timothy 1:9 NET. …realizing that law is* ***not*** *intended for a righteous person,* ***but*** *for lawless and rebellious people, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane…*
* ‘Sanctification’ means ‘Holiness’, which also means ‘*setting apart a person or object’* for God’.
* A *sanctified* person, or a *‘saint’*, means a *‘Holy’* person – one who is *‘set apart’* for the purposes of God. We are *different!*
* *Acts 26:18 AMP. [Paul was sent] …to open their [spiritual] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness and release from their sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified (set apart, made holy) by faith in Me.'*
* *1 Corinthians 1:2 NIrV. We are sending this letter to you, the members of God's church in Corinth. You have been made holy because you belong to Christ Jesus. God has chosen you to be his holy people. He has done the same for all people everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is their Lord and ours.*
* *1 Thessalonians 4:7 NIV. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*
* *Hebrews 10:10,14 NIV. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all… [14] For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*
* There seems to be two kinds of holiness! A holy *status* that was completed at the same time as we were justified - and a holy *process,* in terms of our behaviour, that is ongoing. How do these two relate to one another?...
* [Joke about a car and a bicycle.] *A Porsche driver is driving steadily along the road.  He overtakes an old man on a bicycle. Suddenly the old man shoots past him on the inside.  Blow this, he thinks!  I'm not going to be overtaken by a pushbike, so puts his foot down a bit and once more overtakes the bike. No sooner is he past but the bike shoots past again! "Right, if that's how you want to play!", he thinks, and increases his speed again to overtake the bike, and again a few seconds later the bike shoots past. This goes on for quite a few miles until the Porsche driver has to stop at some traffic lights. The old man, gasping for breath stops next to him. "I admire your stamina but why do you keep overtaking me" asks the Porsche driver? "I'm not overtaking you - my braces got caught on your wing mirror"!*
* Now Sanctification is a bit like this. It’s as though our holy behaviour is attached by an elastic band to the engine of our new holy status in Christ! Sometimes there is a bit of a delay whilst the behaviour catches up. That’s a normal part of the Christian life: behaviour catching up with spiritual status. *Philippians 3:16 NIV. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

**Being Freed from the Generational Curse**

* So how does this work? Last week we saw we have been ***justified*** – forgiven & declared accepted by God. Justification is the doorway into ***all*** God’s blessings.
* But imagine a prisoner who has been declared innocent who is still locked in his cell. Or a slave legally set free who remained in servitude to his master. There would be no day-to-day benefit in the change of the law.
* So any Christian who is justified, but still in slavery to sin, is not much better off at the present time. Future = good; present = miserable! No what God intends. How does our salvation benefit us on a day-to-day basis?
* We’ve just ended Romans 5 with a statement in v20 NIrV. *…But where sin increased, God's grace increased even more.*
* Romans chapter six was written to answer some practical questions that Paul had been asked about grace and sin…
* *Romans 6:1-4 NIV. What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? [2] By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? [3] Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*
* Imagine a wonderful healthcare system where every medical treatment was perfect and available ‘on demand’ whenever it was needed – no queues, and no shortages! And its range of treatments would increase when necessary to cover yet more and more sicknesses. (Just like God’s grace). Would you attempt to get sicker and sicker just so you could benefit from all this additional superb healthcare? No! The purpose of such a system is to cure every sick person and return them to lead healthy lives. Similarly, the purpose of God’s grace is to cure us all from sinfulness and to help us to lead holy lives day by day.
* How does God’s grace work (see verses 3 – 10)?
  1. By *joining* us to Christ by a *spiritual* baptism. Which also *removes* us from Adam’s doomed generation. *1 Corinthians 15:22 NIV. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive… Romans 5:19 NIV. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*
  2. By filling us permanently with God’s indwelling Holy Spirit
  3. The effect of both these is to free us the power of sin…
* Proof texts for (#3) – on a PPT slide:
  1. *Romans 6:2 …We are those who* ***have died*** *to sin…* (death = ‘separation’)
  2. *Romans 6:6 …that we should* ***no longer*** *be slaves to sin*
  3. *Romans 6:7 …because anyone who* ***has died*** *has been set free from sin.*
  4. *Romans 6:11 …****count*** *yourselves dead to sin...*
  5. *Romans 6:14 For sin shall* ***no longer*** *be your master…*
  6. *Romans 6:17 …you* ***used to be*** *slaves to sin…*
  7. *Romans 6:18 You* ***have been*** *set free from sin…*
  8. *Romans 6:20 When you* ***were*** *slaves to sin…*
  9. *Romans 6:22 But* ***now*** *that* ***you have been*** *set free from sin…*
* We have been released from gaol. Set free! Sin no longer controls us!
* *Do* we sin? *1 John 3:6,9 NIV. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him… [9] No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.* **However…**
* *1 John 2:1 NIV. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But* ***if anybody does sin,*** *we have an advocate with the Father-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*
* Well, yes, we *do* sin. But we are no longer under the *power* of sin. Nothing forces us to sin any longer. Sinful habits should fall away. We will always know when we are tempted and will be given a way out – an ‘Off Ramp’ (1 Corinthians 10:13). And if we miss that ‘off ramp’ – there is still forgiveness and cleansing.

**Walking With the Holy Spirit in a Holy Life**

* Imagine that a kind, godly friend was by your side every minute of the day and night – and could read your mind. Do you think that you would often give in to temptation? No! Well… He is. He is called the Holy Spirit. (A clue in the name!)
* *Galatians 5:16-17,25 NIV. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want… [25] Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*
* *Ezekiel 36:26-27 NIV. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*
* We have an ***inner Christlikeness***, giving us positive motivation towards holy living. This is the ***key*** to living the Christian life. (More about this next month).

**The Proof of the Pudding**

* Is there any outward evidence that we have received salvation? Oh yes!...
* *John 15:1-5,7-8 NIV. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. [2] He cuts off every branch in me that bears no* ***fruit****, while every branch that does bear* ***fruit****, he prunes so that it will be even more* ***fruitful****. [3] You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [4] Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear* ***fruit*** *by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear* ***fruit*** *unless you remain in me. [5] "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much* ***fruit****; apart from me you can do nothing. [7] If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much* ***fruit****, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*
* The ‘fruit’ is the result of us being joined to the Vine – to Jesus. His life in us constantly produces this fruit. So what does ***Fruit*** look like in everyday life?
* *Galatians 5:22-23a NIV. But the* ***fruit*** *of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness and self-control…*
* It’s one ‘fruit’ with nine ‘flavours! *(Can you ever decide between the different flavours of homemade ice cream?!)* We, the branches, are joined to Christ (the Vine) and so we receive the nourishing ‘sap’ of the Holy Spirit; automatically, we will produce abundant fruit for Him. Fruit is attractive, it is nourishing, it contains the seeds of new life. We are referring to our character and our behaviour as new people. Fruit is the purpose, the outcome, and the evidence of our relationship with Jesus, then. If ***no*** fruit, then it is a dead branch with no sap in it – outwardly joined to the vine, but with no inward connection.

**Is Faith Dead Without Works, James?**

* The Letter of James – the biological brother of Jesus and the Leader of the Jerusalem church – says the same thing about faith and ‘works’:
* *James 2:14-17,20-22,25-26 NET. What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can this kind of faith save him? [15] If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacks daily food, [16] and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and eat well," but you do not give them what the body needs, what good is it? [17] So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself... [20] But would you like evidence, you empty fellow, that faith without works is useless? [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? [22] You see that his faith was working together with his works and his faith was perfected by works… [25] And similarly, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another way? [26] For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*
* During the Reformation 1517, Martin Luther hated the Letter of James, because it was used by his opponents to undercut the doctrine of salvation by faith *alone.* But if we examine the writings carefully, we will see that there is no contradiction. James was simply testing faith to see if it was genuine or false.
* The presence ‘of God’ inside us is *invisible*; but it must be *made visible* by our outward actions, behaviours, motivations, and relationships. Or else it is false! Jesus declared John 14:9 NIV
* Jesus answered: *John 14:6 NIV. "…Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father…”.*
* Can *we* also declare that anyone who has seen *us* has seen Jesus?

**Summary**

* **‘Sanctification’ is a *status* and a *process* that involves us being ‘set apart’ for the person and work of Jesus. We are *different.***
* **Mankind is from Adam’s generation and is under a curse of sin and death; we have been moved from Adam’s family to Christ’s family (spiritually). To a life free from the power of sin.**
* **Walking with the Holy Spirit is the key to avoiding sin and pleasing God.**
* **The Holy Spirit produces ‘fruit’ in us – the lifestyle and character of Jesus!**
* **Only Faith that results in good works is genuine faith – merely theoretical or intellectual faith is empty and phoney!**

*There in the ground His body lay  
Light of the world by darkness slain  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ*