

# Entire Sanctification Obtainable

by Dougan Clark

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of entire sanctification as a provision of God, which involves the removal of inbred sin and the heart being made holy.*

**Scripture:** Romans 6:22, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Entire Sanctification", "Christian Perfection"

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## Description

Dougan Clark preaches on the necessity of entire sanctification as a crucial element for Christian privilege, enjoyment, and service, emphasizing its role in securing a place in the celestial city. He discusses theological definitions, the conditions of repentance and faith for receiving the benefits of the atonement, and the significance of justification, regeneration, adoption, and the witness of the Spirit in the believer's journey. Clark delves into the concept of entire sanctification as the removal of inbred sin, highlighting God's provision for this grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

This would seem to follow as a necessary corollary from what has been said in the preceding chapter. If entire sanctification has been proved to be not a matter of option but a matter of necessity; if we cannot attain to the highest results in Christian privilege, nor in Christian enjoyment, nor in Christian service without this blessed experience, and if, at the end, we cannot be admitted into the celestial city unless we possess it, surely we cannot doubt for a moment that our gracious Heavenly Father has provided a way by which this indispensable requisite. both for time and for eternity may be received.

But before discussing this proposition in detail let us have a clear understanding of what is meant by entire sanctification, and, as a preliminary, let us study a few simple theological definitions.

In the first place, my reader will have no difficulty in believing that I fully accept the Arminian doctrine of the universality of the atonement. The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for the salvation of all mankind, and its benefits are offered to all. "He tasted death for every man." But it does not follow that all men will be saved, and this for the reason that the atonement is not unconditional but conditional. It is offered to all, and all are invited and entreated to accept it. But it is available only in the case of those who believe. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." A universal atonement, therefore, does not by any means imply a universal salvation.

Redemption is a term of broad and varied application. It is either general or special. In one sense it is as broad as atonement. Atonement is for sin; redemption is from sin and from all the sad results of sin. In its more special meaning it is applicable only to those who accept the atonement. For these it implies release from the bondage of the will under the law of sin and death, or justification and regeneration. It brings also release from the power and existence of depravity or entire sanctification. It promises, in the future, the complete glorification of the saints in body, soul and spirit at God's right hand, and the deliverance of the creation itself from the "bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

The first condition on which the benefits of the atonement are offered to the sinner is repentance. Both the Saviour Himself and His forerunner began their public ministry with words of like import, viz: "Repent ye and believe the gospel." Repentance does not mean penance-- not a voluntary sacrifice in our own will for an expiation of sin--nor is it merely sorrow for our past sins, although "godly sorrow" is one of the elements of true repentance. The sorrow of the world may produce remorse, that continual biting which tortures the soul of the lost; but remorse is not repentance, and the sorrow of the world worketh not life but death. True repentance involves a change of mind, a change of purpose, a change of will, and implies not only a godly sorrow for sin --sorrow not only because the sin has resulted in physical or mental or financial or reputational disaster--but because it has grieved the Spirit of our God; and it implies not only sorrow for our sin but the determination to forsake it as well. It is the afterthought, and involves both regret for what we have done and the purpose to do so no more.

The next, and specially indispensable, condition for receiving the benefits of the atonement is faith. This means nothing more nor less than taking God at His word. We are assured that without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," because it makes them real. It is "the evidence of things not seen" because it convinces the mind of their actual existence. It is true that all men believe something, and, therefore, that all men have faith. It is not true that all men believe God, and, therefore, not true that all men have saving faith.

And here we must make a distinction. Faith is often said to be the gift of God, and in the sense of the grace of faith, or the power of believing, this is true. But the act of faith is the actual exercise of the power of believing, which God has given us. It involves the putting forth of the choosing power of the human will, that we may accept the salvation which is offered us. God has given to us all the faith faculty, just as He has given to us the seeing faculty. In the one case, as in the other, we are responsible for the exercise of the faculty thus given. The proper object of the seeing faculty is the world around us, with all its multiplicity of existences. We may open our eyes and see or we may close them and fail to see. The proper object of the faith faculty is truth, and especially gospel truth, the truth of salvation through a crucified and risen Lord. We may exercise our believing power and accept this great salvation or we may close our faith-eyes, and fail to see and believe, and this to our eternal loss.

For God commands us to believe and holds us responsible for obedience to that as to all other of His commands. The fact of the command involves the power to obey. Our will, therefore, our choosing power, must be put on the believing side, and not on the side of unbelief. It is not that we are required to believe without evidence. It is that our depraved hearts are not willing to believe when the evidence is ample. And, therefore, our eternal destiny is made to hinge on our obedience to the positive command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." The great and crying sin of our fallen humanity is unbelief. It is this that has sundered us, as a race, from our union with God, and it is faith which is to be the bond by which we may again be reunited to Him. "He that believeth not the Son is condemned already."

Repentance and faith are the conditions on which God promises to give us the grace of justification. This is pardon for all our past sins. God, for Christ's sake, looks upon us as though we had not sinned. He accounts us just, for Jesus' sake, although we are not just in reality. And herein it is that gospel justification differs from legal justification. The individual who is accused of crime and who is brought into court and determined, by a jury of his peers, not to be guilty, is at once acquitted and released from all penalty. He is justified solely on the ground of his innocence. But no man ever has been or ever will be justified in the court of heaven on the ground of his innocence. Every responsible human being has broken the law of God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And none of those who have broken the law can be justified by the law, that is to say, not one. The law justifies those, and those only, who keep it. None of us have kept it, not one of the race of men save only the man Christ Jesus. The law condemns all those who break it. All the race of men have broken it save only the man Christ Jesus. Therefore, all are under condemnation. But condemnation is incompatible with justification. Therefore, again, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Are we not, then, in an absolutely hopeless condition? We should be so but for Christ. But, blessed be God, "He hath found a ransom." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jesus Christ "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." And so it comes to pass that we can be freely justified by His grace, not because of our innocency but because He bore the penalty in our stead. He took the place which was rightfully ours and that is on the cross. He procured for us the place which was and is rightfully His, and that is at God's right hand. He suffered what we deserved, and by that very suffering He made us partakers of what He deserves. Glory forever to His Holy Name!

By the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, therefore, justice is satisfied, and the penalty of the broken law is removed. God is infinitely merciful, but He is also infinitely just. He loves the sinner with a boundless love, but He hates the sin with a boundless hate. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and will not look upon sin with the smallest degree of allowance. His mercy and His love may compassionate the sinner, but this will be of no avail so long as His justice is against him. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But in the marvelous plan of salvation by a crucified and risen Lord, both the attributes of mercy and justice are enlisted on behalf of the sinner. The mercy of God pardons Him, the justice of God justifies Him, and all for Jesus' sake. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." And in accordance with the way of salvation which He Himself has devised, we can now plead with Him that He would be unjust not to forgive us when we have complied with these conditions. And so we arrive at the conclusion that justification is an act of God's grace by which our sins are pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ. And this act is instantaneous. God does not pardon sins gradually, nor one at a time, nor by piecemeal, but to every one who repents and believes, He utters the gracious language, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." As if by a single stroke of the recording angel's pen, the whole dark record is blotted out forever. "As far as the east is from the west so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Glory.

Regeneration is a work of grace which always accompanies justification. God does not justify a sinner without, at the same time, giving him a new life. This new life is a spiritual life imparted to the soul, which before was dead in trespasses and sins, by the Divine energy of the Holy Ghost. If a sinner should be pardoned, without, at the same time, receiving a new nature, he would inevitably fall into sin again. His

lifetime on earth would be spent in sinning and repenting. But our merciful Father having for Christ's sake looked upon him as just and righteous, when he was not so in reality, now bestows upon him a new nature which is just and righteous. He makes him a partaker, indeed, of the Divine nature, and that is a nature which is holy and just and good. And this is the new birth. Men may be full of physical life and of intellectual life, but until they are born from above they are totally destitute of spiritual life. Regeneration, therefore, is that act of God's grace by which we are born again.

Adoption is the reception of the newly justified and regenerated believer into the family of God. No longer enemies, nor even strangers and foreigners, those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, now receive the adoption of sons. They become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. This is their pedigree and they rejoice to declare it. A human governor or ruler may pardon a guilty criminal, and grant him a reprieve, but he never takes him into his own family. He may forgive the guilty one, but he cannot bestow upon him a new nature, nor can he consent to recognize him as a brother or a son. But God not only remits the sins of those whom He saves, He not only delivers them from wrath and from punishment, but He gives them a new nature by which they can respond to His love, and He takes them into His own household as children and heirs, yea, as joint heirs with Jesus Christ." "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ."

The witness of the Spirit is something not easily defined, but it is well known by those who experience it. It is an impression or consciousness wrought into the mind of the believer by the Holy Ghost, which gives him the satisfactory assurance that he is a child of God. Before this, he believes, now he knows. This witness, therefore, expels doubt and infuses into the heart of the new-born child of God, a calm, definite and indisputable persuasion that all is now right between himself and his Heavenly Father. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Now the graces that have been mentioned, namely, justification, regeneration, adoption and the witness of the Spirit, are all received co-instantaneously. They always accompany each other, and whoever has one of them has them all. The witness of the Spirit, it is true, is not always a constant experience. It may be intermittent, but, nevertheless, whenever it is present, it accompanies or attends the other experiences to which we have alluded. And we may add that all these graces are but different aspects of the same salvation and are properly and conveniently designated, in common language, by the single term conversion, which term, therefore, must be understood to include and imply justification, regeneration, adoption and the witness of the Spirit. It is proper, also, in this connection to remark that conversion is always a definite and instantaneous event, and never a prolonged process. Just so certainly as every human being that comes into this world has a definite, natural birthday, so every one that comes into the kingdom of God has a definite, spiritual birthday. Some people do not know when their natural birthday occurs, nevertheless, they know that they have been born. Some Christians do not know when their spiritual birthday occurs. Nevertheless, they know that they have been born again. Conversion is the crossing of a definite line out of Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom. There is no half-way ground, there is no neutral territory, there is no place where a man can truthfully say, I am neither converted nor unconverted. One moment he is out of the ark of safety, the next moment he is in it.

Entire sanctification is an act of God's grace by which inbred sin is removed and the heart made holy. Inbred sin or inherited depravity is the inward cause of which our outward sins are the effects. It is the bitter root of which actual sins are the bitter fruits. It is the natural evil tendency of the human heart in our

fallen condition. It is the being of sin which lies back of the doing of sin. It is that within us which says No, to God, and Yes, to Satan. It exists in every human being that comes into the world as a bias or proclivity to evil. It is called in the New Testament, the flesh, the body of sin, our old man, sin that dwelleth in me, and the simple term sin in the singular number. In the Old Testament it is called sin and iniquity. "Behold," says David, "I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." And when the Seraph brought the live coal and laid it upon the mouth of Isaiah, the prophet, his words were, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged."

Now all Christian denominations are agreed as to the real existence of this inbred sin and also as to the fact that it is not removed at conversion. "This infection of nature doth remain," says the Anglican Confession, "yea, even in them that have been regenerated." Most church creeds, indeed, give no reason to expect, and most Christian believers do not expect to be rid of sin till near or in the hour of death. And it is regarded as serious heresy in some quarters for a man to either preach or claim that the blood of Jesus Christ does really cleanse from all sin.

But God has in every age and in every dispensation required His children to be holy. And to be holy signifies the destruction or removal of inbred sin, nothing more and nothing less and nothing else than that. How this is accomplished will be discussed further on, but here we say that the removal of innate depravity is entire sanctification, and that God has most surely made provision in the atonement of Jesus Christ for the removal of innate depravity. Therefore, He has made provision for entire sanctification, and, therefore again, this wondrous grace is obtainable. Inbred sin goes back to the fall of man in the garden of Eden. If not as old as the human race, it is at least as old as the fall. Since sin entered through the beguiling of our mother, Eve, by the serpent, inbred sin has existed as a unit of evil in every child of Adam and Eve. The only exception is the man, Christ Jesus, the God man, the Divine man, the promised seed that should bruise the serpent's head. But as He, the Lord Jesus Christ, was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and as inbred sin is one of the works of the devil, therefore its destruction is provided for in the atonement, and, therefore, still again, entire sanctification is obtainable.

The simplest meaning of the word sanctify is to separate or to devote to sacred uses. It has this signification nearly always in the Old Testament and in a few passages in the New. In other words, whatever is consecrated is sanctified in this limited sense. But from the primary meaning is easily derived its secondary and prominent meaning, of separation from all sin, inward as well as outward, and this is what Paul calls being sanctified wholly. It is entire sanctification as distinguished from partial sanctification. This latter appertains to all Christians, and is technically so used in the New Testament. The former is the experience of those, and those only, from whom inbred sin has been removed.

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