

Justification and Sanctification 1 (Romans 5:2)

by Ernest O'Neill

Justification is when God treats us as if we had never sinned, even though we have sinned, based on our belief in an objective fact about God's character.

Duration: 41:38

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 6:14-15, Romans 3:25-26, Romans 5:2, Romans 8:29

Topics: "Justification", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the concept of restlessness and uncertainty that many people experience in their lives. He refers to the letter written by Paul to the Romans in 57 AD as a guide for understanding this sense of dissatisfaction. The preacher highlights that throughout history, notable figures like Moses and Paul have emphasized the importance of being made in God's image and aligning with His plan for our lives. He also emphasizes the tendency for individuals to hold onto their personal rights and resist yielding to God's will, which ultimately leads to falling short of God's glory and experiencing dissatisfaction.

Transcript

We've been studying, dear ones, the explanation of reality that Christianity gives. And we've been studying it as it's outlined, you know, in that letter that Paul wrote to the Romans in 57 AD. And this morning we're looking at Romans 5, and perhaps you'd look at it.

Romans 5 and verse 2. It's page 980 in that black RSV. Romans 5 and verse 2. Through Him, that is Jesus, we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

And a lot of us have found that we have had a real sense of discontent in our own lives. Most things have been going well for us, and many people might even look upon us as being successful, but deep down we sort of felt we somehow weren't quite hitting life. And we weren't quite making it.

And there was a kind of restlessness inside us. And many of us took two alternatives. You know, we either rationalized the feeling away by saying it wasn't real, and we didn't really feel this restlessness, and life couldn't be any better than it was anyway.

And most people were feeling the same half-hearted satisfaction as we felt. Or, on the other hand, we identified it with having the wrong job, or the wrong wife, or the wrong house, or the wrong vacation, or the wrong salary. And we gave ourselves to trying harder at all these things to try to make those things right, thinking that life itself would get right too.

Now, what we've been saying over the past that down through the centuries, outstanding men have consistently pointed to one reason for that sense of restlessness, and that sense of uncertainty that we have. And, for instance, Moses wrote it in Genesis, if you like to look at it. Genesis chapter 1 and verse 26.

Genesis 1 and 26. Moses must have written this about all 1400, maybe 1500 BC, about three and a half thousand years ago. And he says, then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness.

And Moses said, God's plan for you was that you would be like him, made in his image. Or, you know, Paul wrote it another way in Romans 8 and 29, if you check it there. Maybe 1500 years later, suppose about 1900 years ago.

Romans 8 and 29. It's page 983. And Paul wrote, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

And again, you see, that God planned for us to be like himself and actually to be like Jesus. The reason we have so often a sense of restlessness and a feeling that we've missed the mark somehow, and we're not quite hitting life as it should be, is because, really, we're not like this man Jesus. And there's something that continually moves inside our conscience and keeps making us realize that.

And that that is the spirit of reality inside us that makes us feel we're not quite hitting it. There's something in life at which we have not yet arrived. And many of us, you know, go on 40, 50, 60, and we never get to the place where we feel we've arrived.

And these men say, you see, the reason is because you're not fulfilling the plan that your creator had when he made you. We keep thinking, you know, it's because we haven't all the social security settled, or we haven't the life insurance settled, or we haven't the house finished or decorated yet, or we haven't the children at college. We keep attributing it to other unfinished tasks.

And really, what the people who have spoken of God have said is the real reason we feel we haven't arrived is that we're not fulfilling the plan that God had for us when he first made us. Now, in what way are we not like God? Well, you know, lots of ways. If you just look at some of the events in Jesus' life, you'll see it.

Look 2 and 51. Look chapter 2 and 51. It's page 890.

And he, Jesus, went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. That's his parents. And his mother kept all these things in her heart.

And in that way, many of us have not fulfilled God's plan for us. We've either resented our parents or we've sort of put up with them. But really, we haven't been to them what Jesus was to his parents.

And we haven't honored them and loved them. And many of us have not even accepted them. Maybe many of us have just rejected our parents all through our lives.

And because we have not entered into the plan that God had for us, we have a constant sense of falling short. That's really the way the Bible puts it. You know, all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Well, the glory of God is Jesus. Remember it says in John, we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And the reason we have this sense of uncertainty and not having arrived in life is because we have fallen short of the glory of God.

We're not like Jesus. All of us in this theater this morning were made to be like Jesus. Your parents were intended to experience a Jesus in their homes.

A Jesus who would love them, who would bless them and accept them when they did make mistakes, and who would build them up by the respect that you give them. But many of us, you see, have not been like that. And so God witnesses that in our hearts by a sense of restlessness and a sense of having fallen short.

And we keep thinking, oh, it's because we haven't achieved all we want to achieve. It's just because we haven't achieved one thing. We're not really like Jesus.

And you get it, you know, if you look at his attitude to his friends, Matthew 6 and 14 through 15. And verses 14 through 15, and it's about page 839. And this is the way the glory of God behaved in regard to his friends, you see.

This is the way Jesus behaved. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And many of us have failed to do that. In regard to our friends, we hold grudges. Many of us have treasured resentments over years and years.

Many of us have relationships at the moment that are poisoned because a root of bitterness has grown up in our heart. Some of our friends did something to us, or said something to us, or at one vital time they let us down. And we have allowed a root of bitterness and resentment to grow up in relationship to them.

And our lives are not open to them at all. And when we meet them, there's a kind of a haze over our eyes. Because we can't be open, we can't be honest with them.

We can't really look them straight in the face. And that's another way, you see, in which we've fallen short of God's glory. And it's that that makes us feel that we haven't really arrived.

It's not all the other things about economic success and professional success. It's just that we haven't really achieved God's plan for us. Or, you know, if you like to look at just one other, look 22 and 42.

Look 22 and 42. And it's page 917. 917.

Father, if thou art willing, it's verse 42 of look 22. Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

And one of the marks of Jesus' life was that whenever it came to God's will over his, he always yielded his. He always yielded his own personal rights. But we, you know yourself, have fallen short of Jesus again and again in that we will not yield our personal rights.

Of course, we have a right to express our own personal opinion whenever we want to. And we feel, you know, that is a democratic principle. And we ought to be able to do that.

And we wouldn't dream of yielding that right. Doesn't matter who it hurts. Doesn't matter what situation it confuses.

But we are very reluctant to yield our own personal rights. We're very reluctant to yield our right to our own will, to do something at a certain time for the sake of somebody else or for the sake of God. We're very reluctant to yield our own right to earn money and spend money as we want to.

And in many other ways, we won't yield our personal rights. And we're falling short of God's plan for us. Now, that's the one really why so many of us feel dissatisfied in our lives.

Because in relationship to the only significant other in the universe, and remember there is really only one significant other. You can talk about your dad or your professor or your authority figure, but there is only one significant other in the universe. And that is the Father of the whole creation who is alone able to do anything finally for any of us.

And it's because in relationship to the only significant other in the universe, we have a feeling of falling short, a feeling of hiding from him, of not meeting all the plans that he had for us. It's because of that that we have this sense of falling short and of failing. And really many of us, you know, won't even admit this.

And that's why so many of us have all kinds of physical tension and emotional tension in our lives. God pointed it out, you know, in one of the Psalms. If you look at it, 32 and verses 3 and 4. Psalm 32 and verses 3 and 4. Really, many of us, even when we hear this diagnosis, won't accept it or won't admit it.

And it's our refusal to admit God's account of reality that brings the kind of physical troubles that we have. Psalm 32 and verses 3 and 4. What we say, falling short of God's glory is just sin, you see. It's just independence of him.

And it's page 480. When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.

My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. And it's so stupid, you know. So many of us take the old tranquilizers and think what we need is more sleep and more rest.

Or what we need is a vacation. If we could only get another vacation. And really, our strength is being dried up as the heat of summer.

And our face is growing pale and our body is becoming weak because we're disagreeing with the one significant other in the universe, God. And brothers and sisters, that's the situation really in which many of us find ourselves. We try to eke it out, you know, by sensitivity groups and by another book on psychology.

Or maybe by taking a degree in psychology. But somehow, we still are under this problem of feeling that we haven't arrived. Because really, as far as God's plan for us is concerned, we just haven't arrived.

What I'd like you to see this morning is that it really makes a difficulty for God. Now think, first of all, to understand justification, you have to see that the difficulty here is not only on our side, but there's a great problem that this makes for God. And I'll show you in just a couple of verses.

The problem is that God is a just God. Now, that's in Romans 2 and verses 6 through 11. Romans chapter 2 and verses 6 through 11.

It's page 978. Romans 2 and verses 6 through 11. For he will render to every man according to his works.

To those who by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. He will be just to those who obey. But for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury.

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek. But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God chose no partiality.

That is the first problem God has. He is a just God. He is the director of the universe.

He is the final arbiter as far as morality is concerned. And he has to hold to what he said, that anyone who sins against me or who falls short of my glory must die. I must destroy them.

Otherwise they will destroy my universe. And God is a just God and he is bound by his justice. Now, that would be no problem for God if he was just a just God.

But would you look at the other part of God's character in 2 Peter 3 and verse 9, 2 Peter 3 and verse 9. That's page 1063, 1063, 2 Peter 3 and verse 9. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. And the real problem is that God is merciful. And God is not willing that any of us should perish.

And yet because he's a just God, he's committed to destroying all of us who have fallen short of his plan. Now, that is the difficulty that God is in. You can see what he can do.

He can, for instance, just establish his mercy. Just establish his mercy without any concern for justice. Or he can establish his justice without any concern for mercy.

Now, that's what he did, you remember, way back at the time of the flood. If you look at it in Genesis 7 and verse 23, that's what God did initially. He decided, alright, I'll establish my justice.

They have fallen short of what I wanted them to be, so they'll obviously destroy my universe, so I will simply destroy them. And you get it in Genesis 7 and 23. Really, an event you know that is reinforced by geologists, by the discoveries they have made of the sedimentary rocks.

And it's page 6, Genesis 7 and 23. He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground. Man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air, they were blotted out from the earth.

And God there established his justice. Without justice, everything would collapse into chaos. You know that.

Without justice, we would all do whatever we wanted, and the thing would be chaotic. And in order to prevent that, God established his justice. Or, you see, he could just establish his mercy.

And this he did too in 9, chapter 9 and verse 15, if you like to look at it, just over the page there, Genesis 9 and 15. I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. And God could simply have established his mercy and said, look, do what you want.

I won't harm you in any way. Live just the way you want. Prostitute if you want.

Be immoral if you want. Spread venereal disease if you want. Do whatever you want.

Pollute the air. Pollute the water. Kill each other.

I'm showing my mercy to you. I'm letting you do what you want. You can see, loved ones, that real love does not express only justice, which is not concerned with the individual.

Nor does it only express mercy, which is not concerned with the order in which people live. Real love includes forgiveness and mercy. And yet it's very difficult to establish them both, isn't it? I mean, every mom and dad finds the problem, don't you? Every one of us who own anything that we control find the old problem of how do you mirror your justice to them, and yet how do you show your mercy to them? And you can see that mercy without any concern for sin is not mercy at all.

If sin isn't important enough to be punished, then it isn't serious enough to forgive. All you do is overlook it. But if justice is not tinged at all with love of individuals, then justice itself is something harsh and unreal and impersonal.

And you see that God's problem was inside his own nature. How do I really forgive these dear ones that I love, and yet how do I declare to them that I hate their sin, and I detest it, and I cannot bear it near me in my own heaven? And you know that really the answer was found in God realizing that if part of himself was punished for our sin, then we would suddenly realize that he hated sin more than he loved himself. If part of himself was punished for our sin, we would suddenly see, yeah, sin means everything to God.

It means so much that he would destroy his own family for that sin, and we would in no wise be easy about our attitude to sin. And yet God himself would be able to remain just and punish sin, and yet be able to extend his mercy to us. Now, that's really what God did, you remember, in Jesus.

Maybe you just look at it because it's the heart of justification. It's Romans 3 and 25 and 26. Romans 3 and 25 and 26.

And it's page 979. Romans 3 and 25 and 26. And you remember the last couple of words of the previous verse, Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. See, he had not destroyed the world again by a flood. He had passed over the former sins.

It was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous, that he's still a righteous and just God, and also that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. In other words, when Jesus died, it made it possible for God to be merciful to us and yet to retain his just attitude to sin. And that's what this present verse, you know, that we're studying this morning is saying in Romans 5 and verse 2. It says, you see, the first part of the verse, through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand.

In other words, we stand in a broad and sunlit place now with God because he has no reason to destroy us in order to show forth his antagonism to sin. He's free and able to look upon us with love. Now that's what justification is still.

Justification is when God treats you and I as if we had never sinned, even though we have sinned. But he treats us as if we have never sinned, not because he has had any problems wanting to do that. He has always wanted to do that.

He has always loved us with all his heart, but his problem before was how to do that without seeming to be indifferent to sin. But ever since Jesus died for that sin, we can have no doubt of God's antagonism to sin. If he'd destroy his own son in order to establish his attitude to sin, then we know sin means a lot to God and he will not tolerate it.

And because of our belief in that, God treats us as holy people. That's what justification is. It's God treating us as being holy and righteous people even though we have not been, simply because Jesus has died for us.

Now, it might be good, you know, to look at one or two things about justification just to be sure of it. Do you see that it's not a subjective feeling to be felt? Do you see that? It's not a feeling to be felt. It's an objective fact about God's character that you believe.

You're not asked this morning to feel God's love in justification. You're not asked, do I feel I'm justified? You're asked to believe a fact that has taken place in time and space and has enabled God to be merciful towards us even though he still remains just. In other words, justification is based on our belief in an objective fact that Jesus' blood has been presented before the Father for us.

Now, it's not a subjective feeling to be felt. So, if I ask you this morning, do you feel justified? You can't feel justified. You can't feel justified.

If I say to you, now listen, because of what you did to me last week, I'm having nothing more to do with you. And then a friend of yours comes, explains the whole thing to me, makes it right and I say, okay, because of what your friend explained to me, I'm really, I love you. I just accept you as my friend.

Now, that's not something you have to feel. You have to believe. You say, okay, if you say my friend came to you and made things right, all right, I believe it.

I may not feel it. I may still come to you and wonder, do you still hate me? Do you still not accept me as your friend? But I believe that my friend has made things right. It's an objective fact, dear ones, to be believed.

That's why you see it says in Romans 5 and 9, if you look at it, Romans 5 and 9, since therefore we are now justified by his blood. Now, you are justified in remaining alive here in God's world without being destroyed by a flood because Jesus has been destroyed in your place. You are justified in remaining alive.

And because Jesus has allowed God to punish sin in him, God is justified in allowing us to remain alive. Now, that is an objective fact based on Jesus' sacrifice. You can see an instance of it, you see, in Exodus of this, the effect of the outpoured life before God.

It's Exodus 12 and verse 23. And it's the effect that the blood of Jesus has on God and the way we are to appreciate it in justification. Exodus 12 and verse 23 and it's page 55.

And you remember, God explained, kill a lamb, put the blood on your doorpost. When the angel of death passes over all other houses, he'll see the blood on your doorpost and he'll pass over and not destroy your children. You remember, Exodus 12 and 23.

For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians. And when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. When God saw the blood, he did not destroy the people.

The people did not sit in their houses saying, do I feel that God is going to do this? Can I feel the effect of the blood on my doorpost? Can I feel that God is going to forgive me? No. They sat inside and said, God told us to put the blood in the doorpost. He's going to pass over us and not destroy us.

We rest in that fact. It doesn't matter whether we feel it or not, we believe it. Now, do you see it's the same with Jesus? Many of us get into trouble with our justification because we want to feel the blood of Jesus.

We want to feel what God feels. That's not what you're asked to do. You're asked to believe that the blood of Jesus means your forgiveness to God, so you have to accept the meaning of the blood as God accepts it.

If God treats the blood of Jesus as taking the place of your death, then you've to do the same. You've to rate things the same way God rates them. You've not tried to try to feel that blood applied.

That's the first thing. It's the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus can never be more justified than you are when you first become a Christian.

Do you see that? The blood of Jesus can never justify you any more than it does when you first become a Christian. So, you can never become more justified. You can become the Pope if you want to.

You can become the most saintly person that ever lived, but do you see you will never be more acceptable to God than when you first became a Christian and believed that Jesus had died for you? Because at the end of the day, dear ones, God accepts us all because Jesus has died for us, not because we're good or holy people. Now, it's good, you see, to establish that because I'd like you to see that that's justification. And you can never be more justified than you are when you first become a Christian because you're justified in God's eyes not by how good you are, but by Jesus' death for you.

Now, would you move over with me to this other big experience that we're beginning to talk about in Romans? The experience of sanctification. You remember that the reason God was antagonistic to us was because we had fallen short of his glory. In other words, God's will for us is to become like him, to become like his Son.

And you see that in all kinds of places, but you see it there in Genesis 3 and 26. You remember, let us make man in our own image. You see it again in Romans 8 and 29 that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of a Son.

You see it in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 3. And this brings out this word sanctification. And maybe we should look at it just so that we understand it plainly. 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 3. And it's page 1030 in the

Black RSV.

And 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 3, page 1030. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from immorality. In other words, the real purpose God made us was not just to forgive us, but actually to make us like himself.

Now, that we call sanctification. Those of you who know a little Latin, sanctus is holy and theo is to make or to be made. And sanctification is to make a person holy.

Justification was God treated you as holy because Jesus had died for you. Sanctification is God's making you holy. Now, many of us come into difficulties when we begin to move into sanctification.

And here's how we do it. We see that we're the same as the Corinthians. You get that in 1 Corinthians 1 and verses 1 through 3. Many of us see we're the same as the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 3, sorry, and verses 1 through 3. It's page 992. 1 Corinthians 3 and 1 through 3. Many of us see that, yeah, we're Christians. A man like Paul can call us brethren, but there is some sense in which we have not entered into real sanctification.

We have not really become like God. He treats us as if we're like him, but our own characters are not like him. But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ.

And many of us find we are carnal people inside. Yes, we're children of God, but inside we're not like God. Even though God treats us as if we were like him because of Jesus' death, inside we're not like God.

I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you are not ready for it. And even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving like ordinary men? And many of us who have been justified by our belief in Jesus' death for us are still behaving like ordinary men and women.

We get jealous. We get angry. We get impatient.

We get irritable. And we haven't really entered into this experience of sanctification that is not only a crisis event, but is also a progressive event. And many of us have not entered into that.

Now, do you see that in that situation, Satan is eager to get hold of our consciences? And I'll show you how he does it. In Galatians 5 and 21, Galatians chapter 5 and verse, well, if you like to look at 19, from 19 on, Galatians 5 and 19. And many of us see we're like the Corinthians.

We're like these Galatians. We're justified. But this business of sanctification we have not entered into in any real sense.

Now the works of the flesh are plain. Immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like. And many of us who are justified, we don't drink and we don't carouse, but we have envy.

We have jealousy. We have dissension. We have anger.

We have hostility to other people. And then we read the next line. And this is where Satan often steals our justification from us.

I warned you, I warn you as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And there our hearts drop. And we want to enter into sanctification, but we look at that verse and we see, this is the way I am.

I get angry. I get jealous, so I'm not going to inherit the kingdom of God. And then we take the next vicious step.

We say, I must produce those things in my own life, otherwise I'm not going to get into the kingdom of God, even though I do believe Jesus has died for me. Now, loved ones, that's the wrong step. Because that again is the old self getting up on its hind legs and saying, I'm going to be like God.

Because I know Jesus has died for me, but I can see I have to produce those things in my own life in order to get into the kingdom. Now, dear ones, do you see that that is not the attitude that God wants you to take? God wants you to see that you are acceptable to him even though you sin 70 times 7. You are acceptable as long as your heart is soft enough to repent and you are ready to believe that Jesus has died for you, because that's the basis of your justification. Your sanctification is something that the Holy Spirit begins to work in your own heart, and you can trust him to work in time to get you into the kingdom of God.

Now, do you see how different that attitude that we take is to the attitude expressed in this verse that we're studying this morning? Romans 5 and verse 2, page 980. Through him, Jesus, we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand. And it's the perfect tense that means we stood in this at the time we met Jesus, and we stand in it now, and we stand in it as long as we believe Jesus has died for us.

We stand in it firmly, and then we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. Now, that's the attitude the Father wants us to take towards sanctification. Not to get into this old self-help attitude where we say, I must overcome the anger in myself, I must overcome the jealousy, I'm condemned until I overcome it.

But no, we rejoice in the hope of sharing the glory of God. We have a sure and certain expectation that God, through the Holy Spirit, is going to share his glory, the glory of his Son's character with us through the Holy Spirit. And we rejoice in that, and we walk on day by day glad and rejoicing.

Now, the other attitude is utterly depressing. The other attitude is the one whereby we come into a situation where once again our anger is exposed. We get thoroughly irked with ourselves, thoroughly fed up and irritated, and we say, I can do better than that.

And do you see it? I saying, I can do better than that. It's so different to God's declaration about us that there is no good thing in us. But the child of God that is walking on in the right attitude towards sanctification is one who comes into a situation, loses her temper, and immediately sees, Father, you're right, there is no good thing in me.

I see that you're not accepting me because of anything good that there is in me. I can't even live the life you want me to live. Lord, I thank you even for this situation where you've exposed to me again that there's nothing good in me.

Father, I want you to show me that I am unable to produce any of the beauty that you, Jesus, have. And the only way to do it is for you to destroy me completely on the cross with him and just give me his Spirit through the Holy Spirit. But do you see it's a totally different way.

Now, brothers and sisters, I share it with you this morning because I know a number of you are anxious to go on into the beauty of Christ. And you and I know that that's what has put people off the churches. We've all been trying justification, justification, we're saved by the blood of Jesus, but we have not gone on into sanctification.

And yet many of you are anxious to go on into it by the old self-help method. Now, that isn't God's way. The attitude of the child of God is, through Jesus we have access to the grace in which we stand.

We stand in this grace of God's forgiveness till eternity, as long as we're ready to believe that Jesus has died for us. That's why God justifies us. But we also rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

And we walk day by day, greeting each moment when God exposes our own unchristlikeness to us. We greet it as joy and we thank you, Father. I thank you.

You've shown me I'm rotten. You've shown me I'm absolutely hopeless. I'm a selfish, miserable creature.

Lord, you're showing me that there's nothing that you can do but destroy this whole thing absolutely with Christ on the cross, and then remake me completely by filling me with the Holy Spirit. But do you see, it is a glorious trust that God is going to do this in us. Our loved ones, it is not a position of strain and striving.

Now, I agree with you. There is a glorious desperation that we all come to, where we're willing to do anything if God will fill us with the Holy Spirit. But do you see, it isn't something that we strain into ourselves or strive into.

It is a rejoicing in a sure hope of sharing the glory of God. And just look at those things. The glory is of God.

It is of God. It isn't of your own producing. It is sharing His glory.

It is the Holy Spirit giving you the attributes of Jesus day by day. It is a rejoicing. It is not a sad irritation with yourself all the time.

You're only irritated with yourself when you're still hoping for something good from yourself. When you've really given up any hope of getting anything Christ-like out of yourself, then at last you're ready to rejoice. And then it is a hope.

It is a trust and a quiet rest ready to receive this when God finds it possible to give it to you, when you have entered into all the conditions. But do you see, that is the relation of justification and sanctification they want. But if you don't take that attitude, you see what happens.

You try to enter into sanctification, you start beating yourself over the head because you're not meeting God's standards, you fall into salvation by works, and you fall out of trust in the blood of Jesus. And so you lose everything. Now that is not God's will for us.

God's will is that we as a body should walk continually day after day, knowing that God is accepting us because of Jesus' death, and yet walking on more and more into the fullness of the Holy Spirit, until we're really absolutely like Jesus. That is what God wants. So really, you know, I pray that those of you, you brothers and sisters who are really serious about this, that you'll back off a wee bit from trying to produce it yourselves.

And that you'll begin to hand it over to the Holy Spirit and saying, Holy Spirit, I am a miserable mess, so big a mess, I can't even begin to estimate what it'll cost to put me right. Bit like the floods, really. Bit like the floods in Pittsburgh.

We can't estimate the trouble, can't estimate the damage. Okay, say to the Holy Spirit, I'm such a mess, Holy Spirit, I don't know where to begin. Now will you show me where to begin? And let him take you step by step.

And he will take you the whole way. Why? Because we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. God will fulfill what he has begun in you and me.

That was his purpose in beginning it.

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