

Justification and Sanctification 2 (Romans 5:3)

by Ernest O'Neill

God strengthens our faith in Jesus' blood through afflictions and suffering, and uses these experiences to make us holy through the Spirit.

Duration: 33:56

Scripture: Exodus 6:8, Matthew 7:16, Romans 5:9, Romans 8:16, Galatians 5:19, Galatians 5:21-22

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Sanctification Process"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of surrendering our lives to God and allowing Him to direct our paths. They emphasize that we often change the ground of our justification from our belief in the blood of Jesus to the way things are working out in our lives. The speaker also highlights the transformation that occurs when we surrender everything to God, as our lives begin to take on order and purpose. They caution against justifying our actions and instead encourage us to trust in God's control over our lives. The sermon concludes by mentioning that God wants to strengthen our faith as we face difficult challenges, reminding us to remain steadfast in our belief in Jesus.

Transcript

During this year here in the theatre, we've been talking, if you remember, about justification. And you know the way you do something wrong, you lose your temper at home, or you cut somebody out of a lane of traffic on the freeway, and immediately you begin to say to provoke me. Well, I have the right to do it.

Well, he was just asking for it. Well, people can't walk all over me. And you begin to justify yourself, and to satisfy your conscience that really you were fully justified in doing what you did.

This is the very opposite of what God wants us to do. He wants us immediately we'll lose our temper, or cut somebody out of a lane of traffic, to see that we did it because we don't trust that God is in charge of our lives. We feel we have to look out for ourselves, and we're refusing to let the life of Jesus minister through us to other people.

And that really God has every right therefore to destroy us before we destroy him and his universe. And then God wants us to see that he has actually destroyed Jesus instead of us. And for that reason we are justified in coming to him and asking him for forgiveness.

And he is justified in not destroying rebels like us, but in accepting us as children. And that's real justification as opposed to self-justification. Now you remember that we saw that a remarkable miracle takes place whenever we begin to admit our sins before God, and accept Jesus' justification.

And you'll see that thing in Galatians, if you like to look, Galatians, and chapter 4 it is, and verse 6. And it's page 1014, page 1014, and Galatians 4 and 6. So immediately we believe that God has justified us in Jesus, because he has destroyed Jesus instead of us, and so he has no justification for destroying us also. Then in verse 6, And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So the moment you experience God's justification, that moment also God sends the Spirit of his Son into your heart.

And the Spirit of his Son begins to work another miracle inside you. Because you believe that Jesus died for you, God treats you as holy even though you're not. But he then sends the Spirit of his Son into you, who begins to try to make you holy.

And so there are two great miracles in the Christian life. Justification, where God treats you as if you'd never sinned, because Jesus has died for your sins, and so they're cast out of God's memory forever. And sanctification, where God begins to make you like himself.

He begins to make you holy. And sanctus fia, you remember in Latin, is just to make holy. And it's that magnificent experience of sanctification that we're beginning to move into here in the study of Romans.

Where God sends the Spirit of his Son into us, and that Spirit begins to make us more and more like God. Now it is important, you see, to see that there are two differences. In justification, instead of enemies of God, you become friends.

But you're still sinners and not saints. In justification, you come into the favor of God, but you have not yet come into the image of God. So it's really a half of the work is done.

God treats you as holy because of Jesus, but inside you still are not holy yourself. And that's what Jesus begins to deal with. He begins to try to make you holy through his Spirit.

I think it's important to see, brothers and sisters, that there is a time lapse between the two experiences. God deals with us individually in regard to sanctification as he dealt with the Israelites. He gave the Israelites a promise at the beginning of his dealings with them, but it was many years afterwards that that promise was realized.

Now you'll see that if you look at it in Exodus 6 and verse 8. Exodus 6 and verse 8. And our own individual experiences parallel this experience of the Israelites as a nation. Exodus 6 and verse 8. And I will bring you, it's page 50, and I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession.

I am the Lord. And they had 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and they still had that promise. Then they had hundreds of years of fighting in the land of Canaan itself, and they still had that promise.

Now do you see there was a great gap, a great intervening time between God giving the promise that I'll bring you into Canaan land and him actually bringing them in. And all that time, their relationship with God was maintained by faith, not by sight. Their tenuous contact with God was maintained by their faith in His Word.

Now it's the same with many of us who have experienced justification. We're on the way to becoming like Jesus. And all the while we're on the way to becoming, our contact with God is maintained by faith and not by sight.

And it's important to see that. Now some of us don't really move in that realm, you see. Some of us come under the law again like the Galatians.

Here's what many of us do. And we looked at it briefly last day. Look at Galatians, you know, in chapter 3 and verses 1 through 5. Galatians 3, 1 through 5. Many of us come into, fall into this salvation by works again at this point in our lives.

It's page 1013. O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish having begun with the Spirit? Are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so many things in vain if it really is in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith? The Galatians had fallen back into salvation by works.

Many of us do the same thing over this whole miracle of sanctification. How do we do it? Well, turn to Galatians 5 and you'll see it there. We know that we're accepted by God only because of the blood of Jesus.

Romans 5 and 9 were justified by the blood of Jesus. But we come to a verse like Galatians 5 and 19. 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 you see, we see that we have some anger still in our lives. We have some jealousy still in our lives.

We have some envy still there. We have some impurity still there. And then we read the next verse which just destroys us.

I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And so we say those things are in our lives. So we're not sons of God.

So we have no relationship with God. So we won't enter the kingdom. Now dear ones, do you see why we do that? Because we ignore two words in that verse.

We ignore the word shall and we ignore the word inherit. And do you see that both of those words indicate that there is an intervening time between the moment we're justified and the moment we're sanctified wholly like Jesus. It's an experience that begins the moment we first receive Jesus, but it's an experience that goes on and probably will go on until we meet him face to face.

And though it's an experience with great crises in it that are very real and that really deliver us from the power of sin, yet there is a real sense in which it's a process that goes on until we meet Jesus face to face. But many of us, you see, come to this verse and we say, we'll won't inherit the kingdom. That means we're not Christians.

Okay, we better get rid of these things. And we begin to try to root out envy and jealousy and anger by sheer strong willpower. And we're not long in that way before we've developed our independent wills again.

And of course, it's not long before we're out of any relationship with Jesus. And it's all because we forget that the only reason God accepts us is because of the blood of his Son. We change the ground of our justification.

We change it to having a life without anger or jealousy or envy. Dear ones, it doesn't matter how saintly we ever get in this life. We'll never be more acceptable to God than we are today because of the blood of his Son.

And God wants us, as he requested from the Israelites, he wants us to walk this intervening time trusting his word, trusting his promise that the good work that he started in us, he will complete inside us. In other words, there is an intervening time space. Many of us go further, you know.

We go to, oh, it's Matthew 7 and 16. Matthew 7 and 16. And really, what we do is we condemn ourselves.

We don't give the Holy Spirit any chance to do it rightly. We condemn ourselves wrongly with false condemnation. And we look at a verse like, it's 840, page 840, and Matthew 7 and verse 16.

And Jesus says, you will know them by their fruits. We look into our lives, introspection again, one of the greatest sins really in the Christian life. We look into our lives and we see there's no joy in my heart.

There's no peace in my heart. So, I'm not a Christian. You will know Christians by their fruits.

Jesus is saying that you will know false prophets by the fruits of their ministry. He's even saying that other people will know you as a Christian by your fruits. But he's not saying you will know yourself to be a Christian by your fruits.

But many of us look inside and we say, oh, there are no fruits. So, we aren't converted. We aren't justified.

We aren't accepted by God. Loved ones, our justification depends on the blood of Jesus. God looks at the blood of Jesus and sees that blood outpoured for your sins and mine.

And he says, I'm willing to accept you because of the blood of my son. Now, that's why Paul gives this presentation of sanctification in Romans, you remember. And we read it just last day, the verse we studied last day.

Romans 5 and verses 1 and 2. It's page 980. Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him, we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand.

And we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. Now, that's the attitude of a Christian who is walking as God wants him to walk. You're justified by the blood of Jesus and you're rejoicing in the hope of sharing the glory of God.

You're not beating yourself over the head trying to make yourself a saint. You're not exercising your willpower trying to get rid of the anger and the jealousy and the envy because you see that the love, joy, peace are fruits of the Spirit. They're things that the Spirit brings about in you if you let them.

They aren't things that you can bring about yourself. And the right attitude of a Christian walking on into sanctification is that stated in Romans 5 and 2. We rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And we thank God for every time he shows us something in us that has to change.

Now, that's what God begins to do. God begins to work upon us to do two things. To strengthen our faith in our justification.

And secondly, to destroy our old independent selfish wills. Now, brothers and sisters, that's what the Holy Spirit begins to do in us after we've become Christians. He works to strengthen our justifying faith and he works to destroy that independent selfish will.

And all the experiences that we come into are planned with that purpose in mind. All we can do today, you know, for a few minutes is to talk about how God strengthens justifying faith. And next day when we deal with the next verse, we'll try to deal with how he destroys our selfish independent wills.

But do you see that the first thing before God begins to work on us to make us like himself, he has to strengthen our faith in his justification of us. In other words, he must make sure that we are in no doubt that he accepts us as his children. Because he's going to take us through some hard things.

And we'll often want to look up and say, Father, you don't really love me because of this hard thing. So, the first thing God has to do is to really assure us that we are his children. Now, to do that, loved ones, the first thing he deals with is our weak faith in the effectual nature of Jesus' blood.

And it is weak. And you'll see that in a moment. That's the first thing God begins to work on.

And that's the explanation of this next verse. And maybe we should read the verse and then I'll show you how it applies. In verse 3. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance.

So, the reason God allows us to come into afflictions is to strengthen our justifying faith, so that he can begin to work on those independent wills without making us doubt our salvation. Now, do you see that? Now, what is he to do first of all? Well, first of all, he has to deal with the perversion of faith that Satan works in us immediately after we become converted. We believe that God accepts us for Jesus' sake.

And Satan gets in and begins to pervert that faith. How does he do it? Well, you know, when you turn your whole life over to Jesus, one of the great changes that comes about is that your life begins to take on order and pattern at last. Your life was chaotic before.

You didn't know where it was going. It was meaningless and purposeless. Now, it seems, as you surrender everything to the Father, your life begins to take on pattern and order.

You begin to know where your future is going. You begin to see order in your home life. You begin to see some kind of plan in your career.

And somehow, things begin to fall into place. Now, that change comes, of course, because we've at last taken our hands off the wheel of our lives, and we've really given God the chance to direct them. But do you see, it isn't long before we change the ground of our justification.

We change it from our belief in the blood of Jesus to the way things are working out in our life. And it's not long before, in testimonies and in prayer meetings and in fellowships, we're busy sharing about the

preciousness of Jesus, about the beauty of the death of Jesus. No.

We're sharing about the great things the Lord has done in my life this week. And we're sharing the great, the way the Lord turned that out just beautifully, going across the road, and it's just changed. And we share how God does things in our lives.

And at the beginning, it's good, loved ones. But do you see that if you go on sharing that kind of thing, you're going to more and more take part in infantile kind of fellowship. Because it's not long before you yourself and your friends become preoccupied with the way things are turning out right in your life.

This becomes the mark of a child of God. It's not long before you've declined into an Old Testament faith, where you begin to say you're right with God because things are going right with you. You know the kind of joke that many people, whether they're Christians or not, make.

Oh, why does it go with you? Oh, because I live right. And that creeps into our Christian life. And we begin to sense, yeah, we're right with the Father, all right, because things are turning right beautifully.

And then do you see what God does? He knows that that is weak faith. He knows that it's virtually no faith at all. It brings little glory to Jesus, and it doesn't draw us closer into Jesus.

It draws us more and more into ourselves, and more and more into preoccupation with the way our own lives are going. And so God allows afflictions to come into our experience. And you see what many of us do? Like the little kid, you know, ah! We cry out.

We don't rejoice in the sufferings. We don't see what the Father's trying to do. We start shaking.

We start saying, oh, what's wrong? Things aren't going right. They were going right before. We do exactly what Satan wants us to do.

We begin to doubt if we're in a right relationship with God. If you're a farmer, the crops fail. If you're an insurance man, you stop selling insurance.

If you're a teacher, the classes start swinging on the lights. If you're a housewife, the children start being impossible, and the house begins to bear down upon you. Now, loved ones, do you see that that's why God allows us to come into afflictions? So that at last, He'll break us from that dependence on things going right being the mark of a Christian.

And that's why old Paul says, we rejoice in our sufferings. Why? Knowing that this will produce endurance. Endurance is a Greek word, and it means a strong, brave courage that goes on and on even if the roof falls in.

And you see that God's desire is to strengthen our faith in Jesus' blood, and in the fact that God has accepted us as His children because of Jesus' death, whatever it looks like to other people. And that's why He allows afflictions to come upon us. So, loved ones, really, truly, unless you're very, very young in the Christian life, and God therefore has to treat you just very gently, unless you're very, very young in the Christian life, you're bound to have come into some afflictions and sufferings.

Now, what you need to do, you see, is to look up to the Father and say, Father, why has this come? Why are you allowing this to come? What is it in my attitude to you that is not right? And really examine yourself. Do I really believe that I'm accepted by God because of Jesus' death? Or am I beginning to

believe I'm accepted by God because of the way things are going? Because do you see the danger? Satan can make things go right too. He's the prince of this world.

And that's why God wants to take us from under that perversion of faith, that walking by sight instead of by faith. Now, that's one of the ways God strengthens justifying faith, by taking away that walking by sight instead of by faith through allowing us to come into afflictions. That's what old Paul means when he says, you see, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces homony, who produces that brave courage that keeps going whatever things look like.

It strengthens justifying faith. Isn't it true? In every difficulty, you've been closer to Jesus than ever before. Isn't that right? Isn't it right? It's prosperity that is difficult, isn't it? You need to be mature to take prosperity.

Remember old John Wesley, who was used by God in the 18th century. He said, at the beginning of my life, they used to drive cattle among his congregations, you know. They used to stone him and imprison him.

And he said, at the beginning of my life, they stoned me, they imprisoned me, they insulted me, they ignored me. And my time with God was safe. Now, they laud me, they praise me, they talk about me, they write books about me.

And my soul has never been in such great danger from Satan. And you see that the afflictions are the good times, brothers and sisters. God uses the sufferings to bring us into that place where we believe we're accepted by him because of Jesus alone and his blood.

What is the other kind of affliction he uses? Well, many of us experience a great relief when we receive Jesus into our own lives. It's just a tremendous deliverance, you know, when the guilt lifts off your conscience and you begin to sense, I'm accepted by God. And all the worry goes and all the concern about what your future is going to be and how you're going to be after death comes.

And you just have a great peace and great joy. Now, the tragedy is that many of us begin to lean on that joy and that peace. And so, you can tell infant fellowships by their attitude to joy and peace.

Many infant prayer meetings will be all concerned with how we all feel, you know. Boy, I didn't feel good in that prayer meeting. That means they didn't feel joy or they didn't feel peace.

Or if a meeting is sort of singing and uplifting and joyful, they'll say, boy, that was a really good meeting, good service. And so, bit by bit, people begin to depend on the peace of God's presence rather than God's presence. They begin to depend more on the feeling of joy than they do on the absolute assurance that God really loves them.

They begin to want to feel God's love more than believe in God's love. Now, brothers and sisters, do you see that that is a perilous situation? That is a weak faith in Jesus' death for your sins. It isn't long before Satan can begin to produce the same kind of joy.

In fact, you can get it with drugs. You can get it with alcohol. So, it isn't long before Satan begins to make your circumstances right and you seem to have that, still have that joy, and yet underneath your faith has crumbled.

Now, this is why God allows us to come into affliction in our emotional lives. What does He do? After we've been walking a while with Him, He withdraws peace. He withdraws joy.

And oh, so many of us, you know, are like the little kid. Oh, you hurt me. And we want it back.

We want it back. And so many of us say, we're not right with God. That's why we haven't got joy and peace.

We're not right with God. Loved ones, do you see that we're right with God because we believe that He has accepted us through the blood of Jesus that has been presented to the Father? It's naked faith. And that's why old Paul says, we rejoice in Satan.

When he withdraws peace and joy, when he withdraws the love from our hearts, when we begin to have to exercise our wills to show these in our lives, then that is God bringing us into sufferings because we know that suffering will produce endurance. And that endurance is that word homony, you know. And it means something that stays under the load.

It means an attitude that stays under the load, remaining under the load of affliction without faltering or complaint and going right on no matter what the load may become. Now, that's the meaning of that word. And you see, that's the kind of faith that God produces in us as we learn to do without the feelings of joy and of peace.

Now, brothers and sisters, that's one of the reasons why Paul says we rejoice in our sufferings. We rejoice when God allows our circumstances to become really hairy. We rejoice when God withdraws those great feelings of joy and peace because what happens inside is we sink back into the beginning of the whole miracle, our faith in Jesus' blood presented before the Father.

Oh, I remember old Bunyan, you know, John Bunyan, who wrote The Pilgrim's Progress. He was being hounded from town to town. And they were at last determining to imprison him for life.

And he said, whatever comes, I will leap into eternity by blind faith, come heaven, come hell. Now, that's it. I will leap into eternity by blind faith in Jesus.

Whether heaven comes after that or hell comes after that, I will believe Jesus, whatever. Now, loved ones, God is out to strengthen that faith. Why? Because, you'll see next Sunday, He's going to bring us into some hard things to deal with that old independent selfish will of ours.

And as we come into those hard things, there will be a great temptation, you know, to wonder, am I still justified? Am I still justified? That's why God strengthens that faith in Jesus in Romans 5 and 9. We are justified by the blood of His Son. So, I really pray that if any of you today are, you know, teetering like that, that you will see what God is doing in you. And that you will allow Him to strengthen that faith and be prepared to go by naked faith.

Not by sight, that is, not by circumstances and not by feeling, but by naked faith in Jesus. And that's the place of peace and rest. And it's a place where God can begin to work on us and begin to sanctify us by His Spirit.

Do you know, John, it's so long that from I've listened to you with your being down south that I can't make out what you're saying. Yeah, yeah. John, you heard him probably even better than I did, that he says that

how really do you distinguish between the Spirit and the soul? And how can you be sure that you're walking right if you've heard nothing recently from your Spirit? And it seems, brothers and sisters, that the basic verse, you know, for assurance in the Bible is Romans 8 and 16.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And you remember, our spirit's witness is the witness of our own human spirit that we have experienced of those. Galatians 5 and 22, I think it is, the fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace.

And we don't look in and say, you know, do we really feel love? Because probably you'll never feel that you feel enough love. But it's that other people see Jesus in our life and that lets us know that our own spirit is witnessing. The witness of God's Spirit with a capital S is that we have a sure trust and confidence that Jesus has died for us.

A trust and confidence within. And it's that witness of our spirit, John, that assures us that we are children of God. It's not the witness of our feelings that we feel joy or we feel peace.

But it's the witness that other people are seeing Jesus in us because they see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. And it's the witness within, a sure trust and confidence that we have that Jesus has died for us. A belief in Him.

So that's really how we walk in regard to our own assurance. And the only one that we should allow to spoil that assurance is the Holy Spirit Himself. And the only way He will spoil it is when He convicts us of a definite sin.

A definite particular sin. And then we can deal with that definite particular sin. The Holy Spirit never brings a vague sense of guilt upon us.

He always says, that is wrong. And we deal with that. So if you have not the Holy Spirit dealing with you in a particular way and you're sensing a definite hold back in a certain part of your life, then you walk according to that.

Now you know how to discern between your soul and your spirit. The vital thing is you don't try to do it yourself. Because it's your soul, your mind looking in and trying to distinguish what is your spirit and what is your mind.

All your mind can see when it looks in is your mind. So it comes up with the irrevocable answer and the answer that will repeat again and again. You're walking by your mind.

So you can't distinguish between your soul and your spirit by looking in with your mind. You remember it's Hebrews 4 and 12 and you have the two answers. Breaking experiences, you remember, that Paul talks about.

Christial but not perplexed. Breaking experiences and revelation. You remember the Holy Spirit says that the Bible divides between the soul and the spirit, revealing the intentions of the heart.

And it's the Holy Spirit that distinguishes between your spirit and your soul. And what really, the way it really works is, oh I see, I'm not doing too well. The way it really works is that you're doing something and suddenly the Holy Spirit just hits you and says, now there's a little emotionalism in there, isn't there? And you look up to him and say, Holy Spirit, yes, I can't get rid of it.

I give it over to you. Will you discipline me in this regard? And he'll break more breaking experiences until gradually he brings your emotions under his control. That's what normally happens.

But again, loved ones, I don't want to sound as if I'm advertising, you know, I get 10 cents on every cassette. No, I don't. But would you remember the cassettes in the library? Because they are really fairly complete and lengthy treatments of the subject.

And often sitting there listening, God can speak to you, you know, in a way that he cannot in a group. And dear ones, I think we really need to pray. Holy Spirit, we remember what you taught us when we first began our studies in the evenings.

You taught us that we could not bring these things about by ourselves. And Holy Spirit, we would not try to do that. We would receive from you the warning that you have given us about the emotions.

And we would trust you, Holy Spirit, in your own unique way, to bring our emotions under your control. So that when we clap, it is because you are clapping. When we sing, it is because you are singing.

When we pray, it is because you are praying. And when the body does something, it is because you, Holy Spirit, have prompted us to do it because Jesus has told you. So Holy Spirit, we would give ourselves to you now tonight, telling you that whatever it costs you to bring our emotions and our minds and our wills under your control, we want you to bring that about in our lives.

However breaking it may seem, however abandoned we may seem at times, we give you the right, Holy Spirit, to bring us into a daily bearing of the cross so that our souls become submissive and efficient servants of our spirits. And so that the Holy Spirit of Jesus flows out freely from us to others, and the world sees Jesus and not our personalities. We ask this for his glory and in his name.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and evermore.

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