
GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE GOSPEL

SINNERS WASHED AND OWNED

A message delivered by Pastor Marc Minter on October 9, 2016

First Baptist Church of Diana, TX

INTRODUCTION

Rosaria Butterfield wrote, “I was thirty-six years old, **happily partnered** in a lesbian relationship, and **recently tenured** in the English department of Syracuse University, **poised and ready** to work in the field of Queer Theory.

Somehow, I missed the ‘party-like-it’s-1999’ paradigm, and my world was turned upside down and inside out.” As she explains, Rosaria’s world was ruined by Christ through the loving, patient, and ordinary ministry of a local church pastor.

She said, “...[As] the years unfolded after my conversion, I started to look dangerously cleaned up. **I’m not**. Well-meaning church ladies **who had** been raised on the right side of the Christian tracks... **and who gave** themselves unearned kudos for good choices... **thought** I was one of them...”

“**But**,” she said, “**I’m not one of them**. I’m Mary Magdalene. I’m Rahab the Harlot. Left to my own devices, I am much more the whore next door than the girl next door. I’m a woman with a past, and Christ’s call on my life did not lobotomize me. Nor did it leave me with the sentiment that Christians are better, nicer, more honest and a more [enjoyable group of friends]. **We are not**. No way. At least, not in my experience.”

Rosaria said, “My conversion left my former friends and family thinking I was loony to the core. **How could I leave a worldview that was open, welcoming, and inclusive** for one that (1) believes in Original Sin, (2) values the law of God, (3) seeks conversion into a born-again constitution, (4) believes in the truthful ontology of God’s Word as found in the Bible, (5) claims the exclusivity of Christ for salvation, and (6) purports the redemptive quality of suffering?”

“**Only one reason**,” she said, “because **Jesus is a real and risen Lord** and because **he claimed me for himself**.”

Rosaria went on to say, “**Life stories are messy, contradictory, and humiliating.** Mine is... **If you are struggling with your sin,** trying to apply God’s expectations and the balm of his purpose to each clobbering temptation, my hope is that... **[you will] fight the good fight, for the honor of Jesus is at stake** in every encounter, every thought, every relationship, every decision.”

She wrote, “**If you have lost the fight** and now believe that the Bible and the God who stands behind it cannot be trusted, **I hope that you will [discover] the humiliating reality that we don’t measure up,** and that it is never too late to repent—again—and turn back to the God who made you. Jesus understands you better than you understand yourself.”¹

With these words, Rosaria Butterfield demonstrates why I love her writing. I have thoroughly enjoyed everything I have read from her so far. Not only does she write with superior prose, she really gets the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Did you hear what she wrote as a counter, a hope for the two distinct perspectives?

“**If you are struggling,**” she said, “**fight the good fight**” “**for Jesus’ sake... for His honor.**”

“**If you have lost,**” in other words if you are overcome by your sinful desires, if you are a slave to sin... she said, “**it is never too late to repent – again – and turn back to the God who made you.**”

From this sinner, who was transformed and is still being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we may learn much. But her understanding of the Gospel comes from the same place we will look today. God’s Word tells us of the Good News that saves the guilty, the Good News that shapes the broken, and the Good News that satisfies our soul.

May God help us to understand afresh today what it means that God graciously washes sinners and He owns the ones He has washed.

¹ Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne (2015-07-01). Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ (Kindle Locations 251-275). Crown & Covenant Publications. Kindle Edition.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 6:9–20

9 **[Do] you not know** that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 **And such were some of you.**

But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

15 **Do you not know** that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

16 Or **do you not know** that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.”

17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

19 Or **do you not know** that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) WE TEND TOWARDS LAWLESSNESS AND LEGALISM

(2) LEGALISM IS OBLITERATED IN THE TRUE GOSPEL

(3) LAWLESSNESS IS OBLITERATED IN THE TRUE GOSPEL

(4) LET US BE DISSATISFIED WITH ANYTHING LESS THAN THE TRUE GOSPEL

(1) WE TEND TOWARDS LAWLESSNESS AND LEGALISM

The Gospel of Jesus Christ confronts us in our lawlessness, and it mocks us in our legalism. However, I believe it is quite easy to show that we still tend towards both – lawlessness and legalism – even if we have a pretty good understanding of the Gospel.

Our tendencies (towards these two) can be demonstrated from any number of angles, and one of the primary roles I have (as your pastor) is to constantly push for adjustments to our default settings. The Apostle Paul admonished his disciple, Timothy, repeatedly in this regard.

Timothy was a pastor/elder among a few churches over the course of his ministry, and Paul told him to be a “good servant of Christ” by “training in the words of sound doctrine;” and “putting these truths” in front of the congregation regularly (1 Tim. 4:6). The pastor’s role is certainly more, but it is never less than training himself in biblical truth and pushing others towards sound doctrine as well. By God’s grace, I pray that I have performed my task faithfully so far, and I pray that God will help me to improve as we grow together.

With our focus currently on gender, sexuality, and the Gospel, I will try to point out our tendencies towards lawlessness and legalism from this angle today.

Let us first consider our tendency toward lawlessness. *Antinomianism* is a big word that comes from the smashing together of two smaller words. “**Anti**” meaning *against*; and “**Nomos**” (a Greek word) meaning *law*. **Anti-nomos** literally means **against law**. *Antinomianism* may be an unfamiliar word to us, but we are very familiar with the concept – *lawlessness*.

It is our tendency to take an antinomian (lawless) position on many different kinds of issues. Just think about the last time you brought up the topic of sin with a friend or a family member...

Has anyone ever confronted you in your sin?

Or, have you ever sought to confront sin in someone else?

If you have ever been part of a conversation like that, then you have likely heard the phrase, “**You can’t judge me!**” Of course, this phrase might be said with

different tones and in varying contexts, but the idea being conveyed is an appeal to have no restraints upon one's desires. The person who says "*You can't judge me!*" is essentially saying, "*I want to do this thing... and you cannot say that it is not allowed or it is against the law.*"

We recognize this to be foolish in regards to sins like murder or idolatry, but not-so-much when it comes to sins like greed, drunkenness, or lust. We are usually quick to claim freedom from God's law when it comes to sins we routinely commit. However, this denial of God's law, this refusal to submit to God's law, and this rebellious posture towards God Himself is not ok...

It is actually lawlessness... and it is a compounding of sin.

Individuals are not the only ones with an antinomian or lawless tendency. Whole groups can converge on this very idea.

Entire churches (not true churches, you understand; but I'm merely using the vernacular of the day)... **Entire churches have made lawlessness** their central tenant. "*Woodland Christian Church*" in Longview expressly affirms homosexuality on the basis of the kind of lawlessness I am talking about today.

The Woodland Christian Church pastor, Robert Phillips, wrote in a blog post recently, "*We have been taught to believe that if we don't measure up... if we fail to follow the rules... then we deserve to be punished. But the truth is quite the opposite. God deeply loves us. We are completely forgiven by Him and fully pleasing to Him. He accepts us completely.*"²

Do you hear the unconditional denial of law here? This "pastor" says, the "*truth*" is, we do not "*deserve to be punished*" simply because we have failed to "*follow the rules.*" In fact, he says, "*[God] accepts us completely*" without any thought of our having broken any rules at all.

This is, with all due respect to Mr. Phillips, a childish and ignorant statement concerning God's love and His rules.

Consider what the Apostle Paul says about God's rules and those who break them. Paul says (in Romans 2), "*We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who...*" are covetous, envious, malicious, deceitful, gossips, slanderers,

² <http://wcciv.org/wordpress2015/2016/03/10/time-for-transformation/>

prideful, disobedient, foolish, and several other things (Rom. 2:2; cf. Rom. 1:29-31). **God's judgment "rightly falls" on these, the Bible says.**

And Paul goes on to say that those who practice such things are in fact "**storing up wrath**" that will be poured out on them on the "**day of wrath**" when God will reveal His final judgment (Rom. 2:5).

So, we are not to assume that God's love somehow abolishes His rules, but this is exactly what many people often do. AND we are likely to do the same – especially when it comes to our favorite sins.

Woodland Christian Church is not the only self-proclaimed "welcoming church" or "affirming church" in our area. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Longview also affirms homosexual behavior among their membership. In addition to these two groups in Longview, there are seven more "churches" in the Tyler area who openly affirm homosexual behavior as right and good.³

I cannot personally speak to the motives behind any of these, but I do want to say that the motives may actually be good. It is common for people to feel the need to soften God's law in order to help a guilty person feel less guilt. I get it... I feel the urge to do this myself. I do not like to be the bearer of bad news, and it is much easier to simply leave out that part of the conversation.

However, our tendency towards lawlessness needs no encouragement... The true Gospel should correct us here, but I will get into that more in a moment.

Legalism is the ditch on the other side of the road. Legalism is where we usually go when we do not believe we are particularly guilty of some sin or another.

Have you ever heard someone say, "*That person needs Jesus...*"?

Not always... but this joking phrase is sometimes motivated by a posture of judgmental pride. One person may look at another, and believing themselves to be superior, he or she will proceed to condemn the other person from a distance.

"She shouldn't be doing that." "He shouldn't have said that." "She shouldn't be wearing that." "He ought to know better than that."

³ <https://www.tylerareagays.com/gay-friendly-churches.html>

All of these may be true, but the condemnation is **distant** and **unhelpful**.

Notice the pronouns I just used... “He” and “She”

Pointing out the “should’s” and “ought’s” is not wrong to do in Christian community, but these are not to be said of “he” or “she.” These are to be said in the context of relationships and personal encounters.

A brother or sister in Christ may come to me and say, “**Marc, you said something out of line back there... What’s up with that?**” or “**Marc, you did something a moment ago that was out of character for you... What’s going on?**”

Rather than this truly biblical interaction (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1-2), our tendency is to sit back and demand legalistic adherence to our particular code. We don’t jump in the messy situation to help our brothers and sisters, instead we pull up a lawn chair and condemn them as they drown in the mire.

Going back to the gender and sexuality issues... We may become aware that a man has sexual desires that are out of line. Such is common to man. But when we become aware of this, our legalistic categories spring into action.

In a flash, we will go through the mental checklist... “**Is this sinful desire something I have experienced before?**” “**Is this something I experience now?**” “**If I call out this brother’s sin, will it make my sin look worse... or might his sin make mine look less sinful?**”

Often, on something that feels like instinct, we will assess the situation and then legalistically categorize this person in our minds. If the sin is similar to something we say or do, then we will probably say nothing to the brother.

Ah, but if the sin is different from ours, or is perceived to be more heinous than our own, then we load our guns and commence firing.

Oh, we will not say these things to the man drowning in his sin, but we will say to others, “**Did you hear about Marc?**” “**I didn’t think he was that kind of man...**” “**Can you believe what Marc did?**” And on, and on we go...

This is legalism... and it is shameful, nasty, and disgusting in God’s sight.

Of course, individuals can gather in groups around this kind of error as well. In fact, there is a small church not too far from here that thought it was a good idea to put the following phrase on a big sign in front of their building: “*Homosexuality is an abomination to Jesus and our country!*” (the exclamation point was included on the sign).⁴

While it is true that homosexual behavior is an abomination to Christ, the posting of this kind of slogan on a sign in front of a church building is foolish (it’s foolish on any building, but especially on a church building).

The church is a group of sinners who understand how such sin can be forgiven and washed clean. The church is a gathering of sanctified saints who were once dominated by sin. The church is a committed group of washed sinners who are striving to live holier lives to the glory of the Savior who bought them by His precious blood. **How dare we say to another sinner**, “*Your sin is too bad... You are unwelcome here.*”

Legalism, like lawlessness, is an ignorant and childish perspective of God’s love and God’s rules.

Both are a poor substitute for the true Gospel of Christ, and both are obliterated when the true Gospel comes on the scene.

(2) LEGALISM IS OBLITERATED IN THE TRUE GOSPEL

The true Gospel confronts and obliterates legalistic thinking. Looking now to our primary passage, let’s see the true Gospel take shape.

The Apostle Paul says, “*the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Cor. 6:9), and then he lists many ways in which personal “unrighteousness” is demonstrated. According to the Scripture:

- “*sexually immoral*” people [those who are sexually active before or outside of marriage] are unrighteous;
- “*idolaters*” [those who desire anything or anyone more than God] are unrighteous;

⁴<http://www.kltv.com/story/14987620/hemphill-church-sign-speaks-out-against-homosexuality>

- “**adulterers**” [those who break the marital covenant] are unrighteous;
- “**men [and women, by inference] who practice homosexuality**” [those who engage in any same-sex sexual behavior] are unrighteous;
- “**thieves**” [those who steal from others] are unrighteous;
- “**greedy**” people [those who always want more] are unrighteous;
- “**drunkards**” [those who habitually drink until they are drunk] are unrighteous;
- “**revilers**” [those who are verbally or physically abusive] are unrighteous;
- “**swindlers**” [those who forcefully steal from others] are unrighteous.

According to the Scripture, none of these unrighteous people should feel the slightest bit of hope that they shall “**inherit the kingdom of God**” (i.e. be saved and go to heaven). Indeed, this is not the only place where “unrighteousness” is spelled out in Scripture, and (generally) all humans everywhere should feel the weight of their sin.

The same author of this passage wrote elsewhere, “**None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one**” (Rom. 3:10-12). It is significant to note that Paul quoted every bit of this from several Old Testament passages. The Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate author of all Scripture, is clear in His assessment of all humans everywhere.

You are unrighteous. Because of your disobedience, your breaking of God’s laws, you are condemned by God.

Therefore, there is no amount of legalistic living that will justify you. The length of your church membership, the date of your baptism, and the money you gave in the church offering plate have not done anything in the slightest to release you from the penalty of your sin.

Even these, if done with legalistic motives, will only condemn you further.

But the true Gospel shoves that kind of legalism out the window. The true Gospel is more beautiful and more powerful than the tattered garments of legalism.

After Paul lists these sinful expressions, reminding his hearer that they are not deserving of grace, he says, “**And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

Oh, what joy may the sinner know because of the substance of these words!

Let us savor this statement, and squeeze every drop from this declaration of the true Gospel.

First, Paul says, “**such were some of you...**” He does not deny their guilt, but instead presses in upon it. He reminds them of the sin that once defined their wretched hearts and lives. After he has listed several things that demonstrate the unrighteousness of guilty sinners, he calls upon his hearers to admit that they are examples of exactly this kind of unrighteous display.

But! But, he does not stop there... He says that these marks of unrighteousness no longer define them! Though they are guilty of these very things (or indeed they “were”), they are not guilty anymore! Some of them were abusive to others, some were thieves, some had been promiscuous... In fact, in Corinth, sexual perversion was rampant. Prostitution was common and the worship of false gods included many sexual practices. Some of them were adulterers, some had lived as homosexuals, some had been previously known as the town drunk.

And yet, all of this is put in the past tense... “**such were some of you...**”

What had happened?! Had they made a new year’s resolution? Did they turn over a new leaf? Had someone come to town and taught them how to “become a better you...”?

NO! Paul says, “**you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified...**”

So, secondly, we may see here that the turning point has come. If Paul deflated his hearers by reminding them of their past, he fills them to bursting by reminding them of their present.

Though they had been utterly guilty of sin, and unrighteous before God, that is not their present status. In fact, Paul says their wickedness had been addressed in **three ways** – Washing, Sanctifying, and Justifying.

“**Washing**” is understood well enough by us here. We know what it is to be dirty and grimy, and we know the pleasure of a fresh shower that makes us clean. Similarly, Paul says that these wicked sinners had been washed clean from their guilty stains. They had been cleansed from sin and shame.

The words “**Sanctifying**” and “**Justifying**” are probably not so easily accessible to us. And yet, these are the more profound in their substance. These thoroughly biblical terms tell us so much more than the simple truth, “**Dirty things became clean.**”

So much has been written and said about what it is to be “sanctified” and “justified,” and I will only be able to scratch the surface here... But consider the wonder of God’s gracious grace in words such as “sanctified” and “justified.”

We may think of some things as “common” and other things as “sanctified” or “sacred” even in our own day. Maybe your mother (like mine) taught you that the “church house” is “sacred”... or Maybe you consider Sundays to be “sacred” days... The separation of the “sacred” from the “common” comes to us from the Bible. “**Sanctified**” means **holy, devoted to God, pure.**

Now think about the incredible transformation for Paul’s hearers in Corinth. Paul said they were “unrighteous.” They were unclean and impure. They were utterly unworthy to be in God’s presence; but now they are “sanctified.” They are holy, devoted to God, and pure. This is more than the mere washing of a pot; this is the transformation of a pot to a vase.

The word “Justified” also has much more underneath it than we will be able to expose today. But, at the very least we may say that this refers to the legal transfer of guilt away from the sinner. God does not simply ignore sin; He is able to release sinners from their due penalty, only because He has punished it already.

And this gets us to the next feature in the progression of Paul’s statement concerning the true Gospel.

So far we have unpacked the reality that the Corinthian Christians were once just as wicked as all of the unrighteous ones who will not inherit the kingdom of God; and we have also celebrated the wonderful news that there was washing, sanctifying, and justifying work done on their behalf.

Now we may ask, “How is this so?” “Who has washed, and how has it been done?” “Who has sanctified, and on what basis is this possible?”

So, we shall, thirdly, look to the glorious Savior and His gracious Spirit. Paul said that the washing, the sanctifying, and the justifying was done “**in the name of Christ**” and “**by God’s Spirit.**”

All along, Paul has been telling us that the miraculous and gracious work was done **on** and **in** the Corinthian Christians, so we have known not to congratulate them on their job well done. But now we see exactly where credit is due.

The new status, the pure standing, and the legal pardon is all enjoyed under the “**name**” of (that is the authority of) “**Christ.**” **Christ has earned it!** He has won such a treasure, and it is His priceless gift to convey.

Paul says elsewhere (in Romans 3) that God’s righteousness comes to unrighteous sinners (not through lawful obedience, for none is willing to perfectly obey) but through the person and work of Christ, whom God put forward as a sacrificial offering that satisfied God’s perfect justice (Rom. 3:21-25). In this way, Paul says, **God is both just** [*for He has rightly poured out justice upon Christ*] **and the justifier of the one who trusts in Christ** [*for He pardons the sinner from all guilt and gives the sinner the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ*] (Rom. 3:26).

This spectacular reality is what Paul means by “**in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...**”

And yet, there is still more...

This priceless pardon and amazing absolution is applied to the sinner “**by the Spirit of God.**”

Paul says elsewhere that God “**saves**” sinners, “**not because of works**” done by them, “**but according to his own mercy...**” And Paul says this saving mercy is applied to the sinner, “**by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...**” (Titus 3:5–6).

Therefore, God is glorious and gracious from start to finish! The Corinthian Christians are not commended for their legalistic changes and behavior modifications...

No, they are reminded that God has washed them, God has sanctified them, and God has justified them; and God has done all of this by the authority of Christ and the power of His Spirit.

What legalistic step are you adding for yourself today?

Do you think that you are more deserving of salvation today than you once were?

Have you somehow earned a better standing before God than other sinners because of all the good stuff you do?

Or, Do you despair because you are still not measuring up to the standard of righteousness?

Let the true Gospel correct your legalistic thinking, and find real rest in Christ today.

What legalistic step do you require of someone else?

Must a repentant sinner be totally free from sin before you will embrace him as a brother in Christ?

Must a repentant sinner have the same hobbies as you before you will give her time in your day?

Must a repentant sinner look and speak like you before you will come alongside him in his struggle to live a life that is pleasing to Christ?

Oh, taste and savor the true Gospel and do not be content with legalism any longer!

(3) LAWLESSNESS IS OBLITERATED IN THE TRUE GOSPEL

If legalism requires too much from the sinner in order to be forgiven, then lawlessness expects too little from the truly forgiven sinner. Legalism says, “you must do this or that, in order to be saved...” Lawlessness says, “salvation makes no difference at all to a person’s life...”

Legalism says, “Christ’s work is not enough, you must add to it...” Lawlessness says, “Christ is not important enough to affect you significantly...”

Both are wrongheaded ways of thinking, but let’s hear how the Apostle Paul argues against lawlessness from this passage. He obliterates lawlessness with the true Gospel, but he begins with a simple and weighty truth.

Paul says, “Do you not know that ***your bodies are members of Christ?***” (1 Cor. 6:15).

The foundation for all that Paul is going to say about sanctified Christian living is the reality that **Christians** (those who love and trust Christ) **are joined with Christ**. This profound union (Christians “in Christ”) is a mystery, referenced several times throughout the New Testament (Eph. 3:6). Jesus speaks of Himself as the “vine” in whom the “branches” (those people who love and trust Him) are grafted and grown (Jn. 15:1-17). Being “in Christ” is a major comfort and a tremendous joy; and it is a powerful motivation for holy living.

Paul elaborates on this union by saying, “***he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him***” (1 Cor. 6:17). There is some sense in which those who trust and love Christ are “joined” and “one” with Him. Paul further says, “Or do you not know that ***your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?***” (1 Cor. 6:19). Paul draws upon significant biblical familiarity when he speaks of God’s Spirit indwelling believers in the same way God’s concentrated presence filled the Old Testament temple.

Once again, we find ourselves swimming in very deep water as we read through the Scriptures, but let’s keep moving our arms and kicking our legs so that we do not start to sink. We will go scuba diving another day...

“You are members of Christ” is not just a profound declaration... It is a call to live accordingly – a call to live lawfully.

Paul goes on to say, “***You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body***” (1 Cor. 6:19b-20).

Here we find both the “cart” and the “horse,” and both are perfectly in their place. The basis for our good standing before God is also our motivation for our good living before God. Think about what Paul tells us here...

He says, “you are not your own...” This, of course, is true of all people – but especially true of Christians. No human is his or her own person (really). All are

created by God and sustained by Him every minute, and this means that every person is utterly dependent upon God. “You are not your own” is a drastic understatement.

Speaking to Christians, however, this statement has even more weight. “You are not your own” because God created and sustains you; AND “you are not your own” because “[you were bought with a price...](#)” What a sting this is to me when I sin! What an embarrassing truth this is to me when I begin to imagine that I have somehow begun to deserve God’s love and grace.

I was once a slave to my sin, controlled by my worldly passions, and imprisoned by my prideful selfish desires. But, Christ came and bought me! He paid the price to set me free! This kills my pride, humbles my heart, and spurs me on to live for His glory – rather than my own.

Indeed, this is what Paul says should be the result. He says, “[So, glorify God in your body.](#)” In other words, because you are not your own, and because Christ has purchased your rotten self and made you free, you should let these truths motivate you towards holy living – sanctified living.

Paul uses the slave metaphor elsewhere when he says, “[just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification](#)” (Rom. 6:19).

And the Apostle Paul clearly presents the goal of Christian living when he says, “[For this is the will of God, your sanctification... that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor... For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you](#)” (1 Thess. 4:3–8).

So, we may be corrected from thinking and living lawlessly. The true Gospel does not free us from obedience; the true Gospel frees us to be obedient to God’s law.

We neither depend upon obedience for our salvation, nor throw obedience out the window because of our salvation.

(4) LET'S BE DISSATISFIED WITH ANYTHING LESS THAN THE TRUE GOSPEL

Brothers and sisters, for Christ's sake... for our church family's sake... for our community's sake... for the sake of the Gospel and the souls of those who do not yet embrace it, let us be utterly dissatisfied by anything less than the true Gospel.

May God cause our hearts to grieve when we sin against the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased us by His blood. Let us mourn that we have sinned and grieve over our sins that still remain.

May God make us dissatisfied to stay safely tucked away behind our shallow legalism. Let us be more concerned about being banished to superficial relationships than we are concerned about getting hurt someone.

May God put within us an unquenchable thirst for genuine joy in the hearts of those people we have known for years. Let us not be satisfied that our loved ones merely say, "I am a Christian..." but let us urge them towards the real joy that the Gospel brings.

May God make the true Gospel so well-known and well-loved among us, that we are immediately provoked when we encounter any substitute. Let us patiently and graciously kill legalistic and lawless ideas among our church family.

John Newton once mused on the Apostle Paul's words, "**By the grace of God I am what I am...**" (1 Cor. 15:10). Newton said, "I am not what I **ought** to be. Ah! how imperfect and deficient. I am not what I **wish** to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I **hope** to be; soon, soon, I shall put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfection.

Yet, though I am not what I **ought** to be, nor what I **wish** to be, nor what I **hope** to be, **I can truly say, I am not what I once was**—a slave to sin and Satan; and **I can heartily join with the apostle**, and acknowledge, '**By the grace of God, I am what I am.**'"

May we, by God's grace, be Christians who are sanctified, who are being sanctified, and who are satisfied in nothing by the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON THIS SUBJECT

“What is Sanctification” by John Whitecross

http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/whitecross/wsc_wh_035.html

“Sanctification” by John Bunyan

http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_bunyan/joh_bunyan.Sanctification.html

“Sanctification” by C.H. Spurgeon

<https://www.monergism.com/sanctification-c-h-spurgeon>

“God Sanctifies His People” by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/god-sanctifies-his-people>