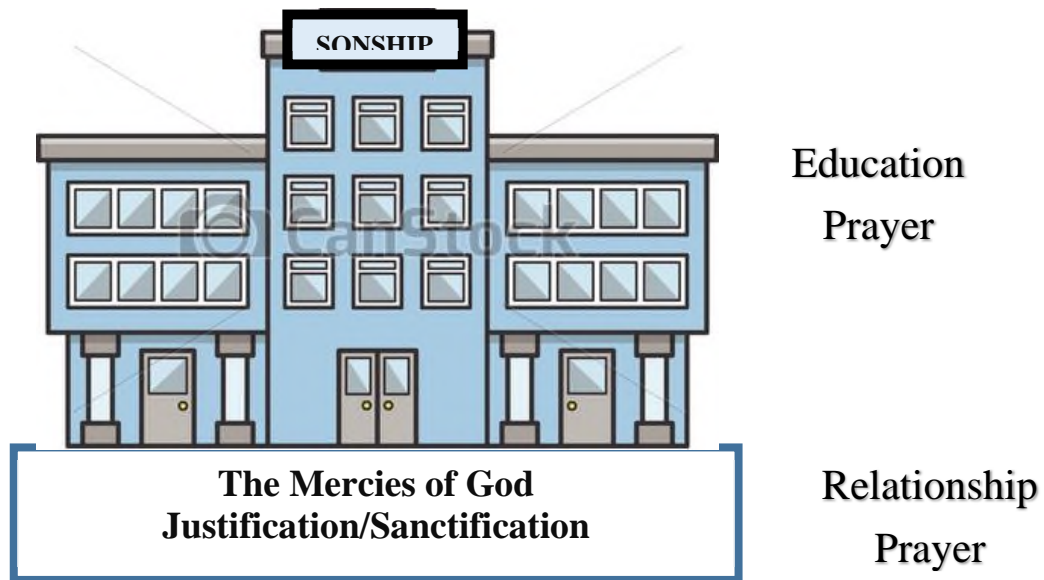


March 17, 2019

Session 67: The Issue of Salvation

Last week we finished up Relationship Prayer. Relationship Prayer is about the mercies of God. The mercies of God pertain to the elements of our new identity in Christ; our justification and sanctification. Our new identity was given to us the moment we trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior. The elements of our justification and sanctification are taught to us in Romans 3-8. These are the mercies of God and they are the foundation upon which the structure of our sonship lives will be built.



Also last week, we started looking at what I called Edification Prayer. But, in order to avoid confusion, I am changing the name to "Education Prayer." Both kinds of prayers are part of a process whereby we are "edified." So, to call one "edification" prayer is to insinuate the other is not edifying, and that would not be true.

What I mean by Education Prayer is prayer as it pertains to:

- The godly things which God wants to produce in us, but were not automatically given to us "in Christ"
- The forms of doctrine beginning in Romans 12:3
- The doctrines whereby Christ is formed in us

The mercies of God are similar to the education doctrine in that:

- God is the author of both (We cannot generate either)
- We need to be taught about both from God's word
- We need to live out of both of them
- Both serve to edify us

- We will need to spend time talking to God about both

So, there are three components to every step of our edification: prayer, the word and our response to the doctrine. I have told you before that God is not doing anything simply because we ask Him to.

I can anticipate an objection; what about the prayer of salvation, isn't God saving us just because we prayed? The answer is: He is not.

God does not save anyone in response to a prayer because salvation is not obtained through any prayer; it is obtained through faith.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

I know that when people talk about being saved, they use terminology like, "Ask God to save you," or "Ask Jesus to come into your heart," or "Ask God to forgive you sins." But the truth is, in order to be saved, we do not ask God to do something; we trust in something He has already done. That is called faith. Therefore, Paul taught us that we are saved by grace (which means it is not earned or deserved, but given as a free gift) through (or in response to) "faith."

And what is our faith in? Our faith is in the provision that God Himself made for our salvation; the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. God knew exactly what was needed to obtain salvation. In the person of His Son, God performed everything that needed to provide for salvation. Our only part is to trust in what God provided for us. When we trust the provision that God made for us; that is "saving faith."

Therefore technically, salvation is not obtained by asking God to save us. We are not saved by asking God to "come into our hearts." We are not saved by asking God to forgive our sins. We are not saved by asking God to do anything. We are saved by trusting what He has already done.

We put our faith (trust) in the finished work of Jesus (which He performed in His death, burial and resurrection) and in response to our faith (a non-meritorious action) in what Jesus did, God justifies us unto eternal life; He forgives our sins and imputes the righteousness of His Son to us and much more.

Salvation is not a prayer which asks God for anything. Salvation does not require a prayer at all. Salvation is hearing and believing the gospel and responding to it by faith.

This is why we say, "We trust Jesus as our only and all-sufficient Savior."

If all you are doing is asking God to save you, but you are not trusting what Christ did to satisfy God's justice against you, then you are not saved; God did not answer your prayer to save you because salvation is not a "prayer" issue; it is a trust issue, a faith issue.

Just like getting help to suffering people is not accomplished by prayer alone; it is accomplished by people getting involved, in the same way, salvation is not obtained by praying for it; it is given in response to our faith.

Saving faith demands trust in what God did for you and offers you as a free gift of grace.

That is the critical part: The kind of faith that saves us is the kind that is trusting what Jesus has done as sufficient to save us, as sufficient to satisfy God's justice against us, as sufficient to pay for our sins. And if we are saved by grace through faith (and we are), then saving faith is not asking God to do anything! It is trusting something He has already done.

Saving faith is trusting that "the faith of Christ" (the faithful performance of Jesus Christ) had done everything necessary to save us. We are simply trusting Him; trusting what He has already done for us. That is what it means to "believe."

Romans 3:22 Even **the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and **upon all them that believe**: for there is no difference:

1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching **to save them that believe**.

And what are we to believe? We believe that God, through His Son, provided everything necessary to save us from our unsaved condition.

And just to show you the verses for the issue of salvation and imputed righteousness:

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified **by the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Notice it does not say, "by faith **in** Christ." It says, "by the faith **of** Christ" which means it is His faith. And His "faith" is not referring to Jesus' trusting in something; it is referring to His faithful performance with regard to providing redemption.

The bottom line is that we are justified by His faithful performance and not by anything else.

Notice also that "the faith of Christ" is set in contrast to "the works of the law." Paul says the law cannot justify anyone. I believe that is true not only in this dispensation, but in any dispensation. Why? Because justification by the law demands perfection and the only one to live a perfect and sinless life was Jesus Christ. He did not need to be saved (by the law or by grace) because he was not born in sin. Jesus did not have a sin nature. So, Jesus did not have sin "status" like we do. But even though He was "without sin," in His status, He still needed to be perfect in the sense of His function.

Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through **the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

In response to our faith in “the faith of Christ,” we are given the righteousness which is of God. Or, to say it another way, in response to our trust in the faithful performance of Jesus Christ, God has given us His righteousness.

The point here is that, once again, this is a “faith” issue, and prayer is not how this gets done.

But now, let us take this back to the main point we were making with regard to our edification: Prayer alone is not all God is expecting from us. While prayer is a necessary part of the process, prayer alone will not edify us.

Prayer is part of a process that includes the word of God and our response to the word. But, prayer alone is not enough to change our inner man and it was never intended to be.

Obviously, the purpose of Education Prayer is to play its role in our edification unto godliness.

Prayer does play a role in the process of the word of truth working in us and we know this from Romans 8.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We “do not know” but, in response to that, the Spirit makes intercession. The intercessory ministry of the Spirit is to make known that which we do not know. The intercessory ministry of the Spirit is not to pray for us, for that does not solve our problem of not knowing. What does solve our problem? The word of truth tells us those things which we do not know. That is the intercessory ministry of the Spirit and we need to know how to pray in connection with “the will of God.”

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God***.

So, what are the mechanics of Education prayer? What role does prayer play in the process of our edification? Prayers role is part of the process whereby we take the potential of the doctrine and turn it into a functional reality.

For example:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

It is one thing to know that “all things” have the potential to work together for our good, but it another thing for us to experience that in the mist of our tribulations. As David Busch said, “[The doctrine] must go from the written epistle to the living epistle.”

As we become familiar with a particular form of doctrine, we employ a couple of different kinds of prayers. But, we do not pray to know the truth, no matter how sincerely we may ask. The truth has already been revealed in God’s word. Our own study, pastors and teachers, and fellow saints may help direct us to what we need to know, but the truth is found in that portion of God’s word which pertains to us. God will not magically inform our thinking. The Spirit will not give you a sign. God is not arranging circumstances.

The first form of prayer that follows our understanding of the doctrine is to begin talking with God about what we understand. This is very similar to the kind of praying in Relationship Prayer. One difference being that we are not praying about something we already possess, but something God wants us to possess.

In this kind of praying, we are getting familiar with the doctrine by putting our understanding into words. We are gaining an appreciation for what the doctrine is meant to accomplish and that should always be something we understand and can intelligently talk about. For example, there is doctrine that is meant to affect how we treat other believers. There is another doctrine that is meant to produce peace in the midst of tribulations. There is another doctrine that equips us to function together as members of the same body.

But no matter what the particular form of doctrine may be, we should be able to identify what the doctrine is designed to do. This first form of prayer concerns getting the details worked out in our own minds. What is this kind of prayer doing? It is moving the doctrine from our minds as information, to our hearts so that we begin to live out of it. If we do not understand the doctrine properly, there will be a breakdown in this first form of prayer. We will find ourselves halting and searching for the right words, we may be a little unsure and we may even say something that we almost immediately know is not right. This is all part of the process. It just means that need to keep working on our understanding of the doctrine.

Let me take you back to something Paul wrote to Timothy and show you the same principle in Israel’s program.

The book of First Timothy is a pastoral epistle, like 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. After writing four chapters of instructions, Paul exhorts Timothy to:

1 Timothy 4:15 **Meditate upon these things**; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and **unto the doctrine**; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

What does it mean to “meditate?” We are not talking about the religious discipline whereby we “empty our minds, fold our legs, close our eyes and hum.”

We are talking about:

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Meditate: 1) to reflect upon, consider, study 4) to exercise the mental faculties in thought or contemplation

Paul is exhorting Timothy to reflect upon the doctrine and how that doctrine is working in him. In other words, be thinking about the doctrine and give yourself wholly to it. Notice the meditation is on the doctrine, the word.

It was the same way in God’s program with Israel.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but **thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do** according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The meditation is constant.

Psalms 49:3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and **the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.**

Here is the principle of understanding.

Psalms 63:6 When I remember thee upon my bed, *and* **meditate on thee in the night watches.**

David does this at night.

Psalms 77:12 **I will meditate** also of all thy work, **and talk** of thy doings.

Psalms 119:97 MEM. O how love I thy law! it is **my meditation** all the day.

The point here is that spending time talking to God about that which we have come to understand, getting those thoughts into our minds to such a degree that they are what we talk about, getting familiar with the doctrine, that is what needs to be happening with us, just like Joshua, David and Timothy. Yes, the doctrine Joshua and David were meditating on was different from ours, but not Timothy’s.

After we have engaged with that first kind of prayer which works to make us familiar with the doctrine, the next form of prayer serves to activate the doctrine. That is to say, this second kind of prayer takes what is in our heart and reminds us/impels us to put it to work in our life. This

prayer is the catalyst for taking what we have learned and putting it into practical use in our everyday life.

As we employ the doctrine, this is where any insufficiencies and shortcomings will show up. For example, if we do not adequately understand the doctrine, this is another place where it will be made manifest. If we have some attitude that has not been dealt with by the doctrine properly, this is where the process will break down.

As we move the doctrine into our everyday experience, this is where “pray without ceasing,” and “continue instant in prayer” come into play. This is prayer which is always running in the background, scanning our thoughts and evaluating our actions in light of the doctrine. This is the prayer that serves as a filter through which all of our decisions are supposed to pass.

This kind of prayer is the time in which we ask the following questions:

- In view of this situation, what has God said about it?
- Have I identified the real “need” here?
- In light of the doctrine, what am I to think about this situation?
- In light of the doctrine, what am I going to do about this situation?

Let’s take a couple of examples to make sure we have this down.

Suppose the situation is that you are sick or injured; the Sufferings of this Present Time.

What has God said about you being sick or injured (SoPT)? What should you be thinking?
Next, what is my greatest need in this situation?

Lastly, what will I do about this situation?

Example #2: What has God said about the sufferings of Christ? What should we be thinking about this situation?

Next, what is my greatest need in this situation?

Lastly, what will I do about this situation?

Let’s stop here and recap what we have so far. The first kind of prayer is about the doctrine we have learned. We are getting familiar with it to the extent we can talk to our Father about it. We understand what the doctrine is designed to do. This kind of prayer establishes the doctrine in our heart.

Education Prayer serves in several ways.

- Prayer move the doctrine from our minds to our hearts
- Then, prayer brings the doctrine to our attention (activates the doctrine) throughout the day so that we live out of what we know
- Prayer is the way we continually evaluate our thoughts and actions in light of the doctrine

(We have gone over this kind of praying before, so I won't reteach it again. But you can go back and review those lessons if you need to. These would be sessions 39-44.)