

TRUSTING GOD FOR A CHANGE

Part Two

“Three Pieces of Change”

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are *called* according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he *called* them to come to him. And having *called* them, he (justified) gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

And what shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

Rom 8:28-32 New Living Testament

I. Review-The Defining Moment

Last week, we saw that the deep, inner change we seek can't come from self-effort, i.e. willpower, imitating others, education, or anything pertaining to natural ability. The ultimate futility of our human ability takes us to the Cross, the place where we are helpless and in the hands of God alone. The call of God is beyond the natural, in the realm of the supernatural, a calling that begins at the Cross.

II. Three Pieces of Change

A. Consider Christ's Calling

1. The deep desire for change down inside of us is supernatural.
2. This is God at work within us, “calling” us to come to Him.
3. Everything begins with this call from God to be CHANGED into the “image” of Christ, to be CONFORMED to His character.

B. A Three-Fold TRANSFORMATION or “Three Pieces of *Change*”

- Justification
- Sanctification
- Glorification

1. This is a sort of “Divine Directory” whereby we can locate ourselves.
2. If you're at a large shopping mall and you're looking for a particular destination, you'll consult a directory. You need to know where you ARE and where you are GOING. Then you can see how to get there. So it is

with your journey toward God! The “destination” is Christ-likeness. Where you are in relation to that determines what to do next.

- a. If we are far from God, the first call is to *justification*.
- b. If we are born-again, we have entered into a life-long process of *sanctification*, whereby we are being “conformed to the image of Christ.”
- c. Those who are justified and (being) sanctified, await *glorification*, the transformation of our natural bodies into supernatural bodies.

III. Christ’s Call to Change

A. Justification: A Legal Decree, as When a Judge Pronounces a Sentence

1. The picture of justification is a guilty person standing before God’s judgment seat and making a plea of “Guilty.”
2. Our plea is also for mercy, based on our faith in Christ bearing the punishment for our sins on the cross.
3. We agree with God’s verdict of our guilt, but we remind Him that Christ has already paid the price of our acquittal with His own life!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

John 5:24 NAS

And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Acts 13:39 KJV

B. Sanctification: A Life-long Growth Process of Change into Christ-likeness

1. The root is Latin, “sanctus,” from which we get the English words “saint” and “holy.” (Latin for “Holy Spirit” is “*spiritus sancti*”)
2. This period of change between the moment we are justified and the future moment when our bodies are glorified will be the center of our study. We will focus much of our time in this series on this element of salvation.

But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV

C. Glorification: The Ultimate Instantaneous Change that Occurs When We Receive our New Bodies

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
1 Corinthians 15:50-53 KJV

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body, which it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Phil 3:20-21 KJV

IV. Three Kinds of Change

A. Things in Common

1. These changes are inseparably linked, and are *sequential* in experience: The order cannot be broken.

- a. You can't be glorified unless you are justified.
- b. You can't be sanctified unless you are justified.
- c. You can't be glorified unless you are sanctified, and you can't have either if you're not justified.*

*We recognize some people struggle with dogmatic things, with statements of objective truth or finality. But upon reflection, a reasonable person would have no more trouble with the sequence of salvation than with accepting other facts like the law of gravity or the nine-month gestation period of human reproduction. Just as night follows day, so glorification follows sanctification, and sanctification follows justification.

2. The actual agent of change is God, not man.

- a. In each case, the *change* itself is accomplished by God
- b. Man is, in a sense, passive.*

*As in physical growth, a child will eat, drink and sleep, but the actual growth of the child is something that happens to the child, an occurrence that happens naturally. In the Spirit, we do avail ourselves of the "means" of grace; but the actual (spiritual) growth toward Christ-likeness is a work of God and is supernatural.

3. Participation in any of these three "pieces of change" presupposes participation in all the rest: All who are justified are being sanctified; all who are being sanctified will be glorified. (See Romans 8:28-30)

B. Where They Differ: Justification and Glorification are Instantaneous; Sanctification is a *Process*.

1. Justification

- a. Happens in a moment of time; one moment you are “unjust”, the next moment you are “justified”. (To be justified means “just as if I’d never sinned.”)
- b. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ to our account is a unilateral, sovereign decree of God.
- c. Justification (right-standing with God) is a legal transaction whereby righteousness is “imputed”, not “imparted”; we never have righteousness apart from Christ.

2. Glorification is also an instantaneous, sovereign act of God when the body is changed from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption.

3. Sanctification is the center of our study in the series, a process of change from one level of growth, maturity and Christ-likeness to the next. This transformation is depicted in terms of “from” and “to”:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image **from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Cor 3:18 KJV

They go **from strength to strength**, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

Ps 84:7 KJV

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed **from faith to faith**: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

Rom 1:17 KJV