

Made Holy by the Holy Spirit

Lesson #5

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Eph 2:13-22 NIV)

1. There are two temples mentioned here. There is the old temple with the courtyard walls dividing Jewish and Gentile worshippers. How do these two temples compare to each other?
2. In the new temple, made up of humans who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, how is the holiness of the God who indwells the temple made clear to those who see the temple?

What Christians from the past have taught about how the Holy Spirit does and doesn't make Christians Holy.

Today we will focus here on the views of Martin Luther. He had profound influence on what many Protestants believe. Many Protestant Christians don't realize that their ways of interpreting the Bible came from him. He saw justification and sanctification as working something like this: We hear the word of the Gospel and believe in it. Christ then creates a new heart in us by His presence in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit. The Christian is truly changed by hearing and believing in the word of the Gospel. Our identity is changed at its deepest levels. Luther says that to know who we are in the deepest portion of our heart which will be our identity for eternity, we must know Jesus Christ better, because He is the one who makes our heart new.

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ So **faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.** ¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." **Romans 10:14-18** (ESV)

1. How can a person come to have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? What must happen?
2. What is the responsibility of everyone who believe in Jesus Christ? Why?

¹² But to **all who did receive him, who believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were **born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:12-14** (ESV)

1. What has to happen for a person to become a child of God?
2. Believers are born again in accordance with whose will?

Luther believed that believers still sin. Because Christ is in our heart God does not count our sins against us. God will impute only the righteousness of Christ to a believer. The key to understanding this is that the goal of the Christian life is not so much to become more holy or more righteous, but to become more like Jesus. Holiness and righteousness are things that come out of our relationship to Jesus work in us. Luther believed that holiness comes only from the holiness of Jesus Christ at work in us, not from anything we do. Holiness comes only from what Jesus does. So, we should pursue faith in Jesus and seek to live out our faith in Jesus. Luther thinks that seeking after

righteousness would be wrong because it would result in justification by works, but to pursue faith in Jesus, that is the goal of the Christian life (³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33 (ESV)). If someone else does something it is more difficult for us to understand it, because we didn't do it. So, it is a little difficult to grasp how this works because the Christian doesn't really do any of the work, Jesus does everything.

¹⁶ yet we know that **a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ**, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law**, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ **I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. **Galatians 2:16–21** (ESV)

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, ¹³ for **it is God who works in you, both to will and to work** for his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me. Philippians 2:12–18 (ESV)

1. What do you think about Luther's view of sanctification? If we are saved by faith in what Jesus did does that mean we shouldn't try to be holy?
2. If we focus on making Jesus the center of our lives how is that different than trying to be holy in the way we act toward other people?
3. Where does the will to do what pleases God come from in the believer's heart? Does that mean we shouldn't "try to be holy"? How could the ideas of "cooperative grace" and "operative grace" help us to answer these questions?

For Luther the way to grow spiritually, to become more like Jesus, is a wild ride. First of all, we are not in control of the process. God is. That can cause us to feel helpless at times. When we sin, we should look to the law, feel our guilt, repent, and turn to Christ. Then, we receive the truth of the Gospel, and Christ in us transforms us. We cannot remove ourselves from this struggle, or battle (¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Romans 7:19 (ESV)). Yet, this is the way of life and victory. Luther believes that no other path offers either life or victory. ¹ It may involve suffering and a sense of helplessness, but **no other way of life offers true hope. The Christian life is a repetition of being broken down in our sin, repenting, and receiving Christ as our Savior from our sin.**

¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For **I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.** ¹⁹ For **I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.** ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but **I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind** and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! **Who will deliver me from this body of death?** ²⁵ **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. Romans 7:15–25 (ESV)

1. Because we are locked in a spiritual battle of wills, between the old nature and the new nature, does that mean our life has to be an uncontrollably wild ride?
2. How can we gain a sense of control in our lives?

¹ Once again I am deeply indebted to the lectures of Dr. Phillip Cary – Lecture Six on Luther.

Luther would say that reading the Bible, praying, and worshipping and fellowshiping with other Christians are essential parts of hearing and receiving the Gospel but they only help us to become more like Jesus if we believe in Him. Reading the Bible, praying, good works, and spending time in worship and fellowship with other Christians **without any personal faith in Jesus** doesn't make us more holy. Luther spends quite a bit of time saying that these activities can become a source of prideful self-righteousness, which can lead a person away from faith in Jesus Christ because they think their actions can earn their salvation. However, the same activities, **when done with faith in Jesus**, become a deep experience of **joy**. Showing love for God brings believers great joy in serving Him. Only Jesus can make us holy. We can't make ourselves holy. We must receive the holiness and righteousness that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, produces in us as a gift we did not earn.

Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk**, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1Pe 2:2-5 NIV)

1. If we, as believers in Christ, are "living stones" being built into a "spiritual house" what do we know about this "spiritual house"?
2. What kind of sacrifices can we make to God that are acceptable to God?
3. ⁹ But **you are a chosen people**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, **that you may declare the praises of him** who called you out of darkness **into his wonderful light**. (1Pe 2:9 NIV) – What does this verse indicate about the kind of sacrifices that might be acceptable to God?
4. ¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us **continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name**. (Heb 13:15 NIV) -- What does this verse indicate about the kind of sacrifices that might be acceptable to God?

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1** Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God--this is your **spiritual act of worship**. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:1-2 NIV)

1. When we offer our bodies as living sacrifices how do our minds become transformed by renewing. Is it something God is doing or something we do?
2. How do we test and approve what God's will is? How can we know what God's will is?