CLA Camp Hill, PA
Teacher – Jim Hoffman

Based on the "NEXT" booklet by Daniel McNaughton and Shane Wilson



# "only the believer is obedient, and only those who are obedient believe"

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** 

#### Assurance of Salvation

• 1st John 2:3 And we can be sure that we know him <u>if we</u> <u>obey his commandments.</u>

 1st John 3:9 Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them.

• 1st John 3:14 *If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers,* it proves that we have passed from death to life.

 So as we go through this series I suspect what we are really talking about in 2017 as discipleship is what the Bible calls "sanctification". (Bonhoeffer would agree)

• John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

• 1<sup>st</sup> Thes 1:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

 Sanctification is both initial and complete, and it is also progressive – wait, what?

• 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But <u>you</u> <u>were washed</u>, <u>you were sanctified</u>, <u>you were justified</u> in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

 Heb 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 35), sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christ-like affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 35), sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christ-like affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

Are there varying levels of obedience to Christ?

• Yes, but one who claims to know Jesus and makes no effort to obey Him is not a Christian.

• The kind of obedience John notes is not perfect obedience to the moral codes and laws of God, but rather an imperfect obedience that flows from a desire to obey.



 This idea that Christian obedience is as much about intent as it is conformance is born out in Paul's iterations of Romans 7.

• Rom 7:18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. *I want to do what is right*, but I can't. 19 *I want to do what is good, but I don't*. *I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway*.

- The word "discipleship" does not appear in the Bible it would seem to be a foreign concept to the New Testament writers that one could be a Christian without being a disciple.
- Discipleship is a combination of conversion <u>and</u> sanctification.
- Matt 28:18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and <u>make</u> <u>disciples</u> of all the nations, <u>baptizing them</u> in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 <u>Teach these new</u> <u>disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.</u> And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The word "discipleship" does not appear in the Bible because "sanctification" does.



"Theology ministers understanding, enabling disciples to act out their knowledge of God. Theology is eminently practical. It is all about waking up to the real, to what is — specifically, to what is "in Christ." It takes imagination to see what is in Christ, for Christ is the meaning of the whole, the ultimate pattern in whom all things are held together (Colossians 1:17). Disciples demonstrate understanding by conforming to what is in Christ. To be a disciple is to know Jesus Christ and to put that knowledge into practice. There are no armchair disciples; there is no alibi for discipleship. One can't be a disciple in theory. No, doctrines are what disciples live by, because doctrines inform us what is in Christ. Creation, incarnation, Trinity, and atonement are not abstractions to be thought, but meaningful patterns to be lived." Kevin VanHoozer

• Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

• Saved by grace through faith, but also saved to do the things God designed you to do.



 God saved you for a purpose – that you might bring Him glory.

 To think that one could be saved just to avoid hell is something that I think wreaks of foolishness.

• While salvation is <u>for us</u>, it is not first and foremost <u>about us</u>.

# Christians Aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven

"[It] certainly needs to be said that Christians are forgiven. And it needs to be said that forgiveness does not depend on being perfect. But is that really what the [bumper sticker] communicates? "Unfortunately, it is not. What the slogan really conveys is that forgiveness alone is what Christianity is all about, what is genuinely essential to it. "It says that you can have a faith in Christ that brings forgiveness while in every other respect your life is no different from that of others who have no faith in Christ at all. This view, so pleasingly presented on bumpers and trinkets, has deep historical roots. It is by now worked out in many somber tomes of theology, lived out by multitudes of those who sincerely self-identify as Christians." Dallas Willard

• So as we go through this series I will be teaching from the point of view that being a disciple is not something different from being a believer.

• Do not think there are two levels of belief – one that just concerns itself with the avoidance of hell, and another that seeks to glorify God while avoiding hell.

• "We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone" — Martin Luther

 "Can we believe that the essence of Christian faith and salvation covers nothing but death and after?
 Can we believe that being saved really has nothing whatever to do with the kinds of persons we are?"

Dallas Willard

 Once again, our approach to discipleship will be that to be a Christian is to be a disciple, and that saving faith is far more than fire insurance.

- Discipleship matters because in it God can be glorified, and we will be called to account for what we did with the time, talent, and treasure we were given.
- 1st Cor 3:12 12 Anyone who builds on that foundation (Jesus) may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

- So we should begin here "spending time with Jesus" is not meant to be taken literally because if one is a Christian, He lives within us 24/7/365.
- John 14:15 "If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

- Matt 11:28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
   29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
   30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."
- The importance of spending time with Jesus cannot be overstated – while it is true that His Holy Spirit lives in us, the Bible clearly tells us that He can be grieved, and He can be quenched, thus interrupting our time with Jesus.

• Eph 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

• When we live like the world (when we are openly living like there is no God), which is exactly opposite of what a disciple ought to do, we grieve Him – we cause Him sorrow, and disappointment.

• "God is not interested in making merely nice people; he wants to make people perfect, like Christ." c.s. Lewis



Rom 8:29 For God knew his people in advance, <u>and he</u>
 <u>chose them to become like his Son</u>, so that his Son would be
 the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

• So, one could say that to be a disciple is to be like Christ (at least to some degree) – *it is the manifest will of God*.

• In fact, any progress we want to note in our walk with Christ needs to measured by how much we are like Him.

Eph 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;

• When we sin, we grieve Him, when we disobey, we quench Him. In multiple places the Holy Spirit is compared to fire so the metaphor is appropriate.

 He is ever within us seeking to influence and guide us in our decisions – so when we disobey His leading, it is like throwing a bucket of water on Him and extinguishing His ministry to us.



- His Spirit is within us to "comfort" (help, strengthen) us, but there is a difference between having His Spirit, and us spending time with Jesus.
- Spending time with Jesus ought to be intentional and could involve every aspect of your life.
- Col 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

We can spend time with Jesus in LARGE GROUPS.
 (preaching and teaching)

• Matt 5:1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them.

• Matt 13:1 That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. 2 <u>And large crowds gathered to Him</u>, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. 3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying,



 We can spend time with Jesus in SMALL GROUPS. (Bible studies, accountability groups, and the like)

 Matt 13:10 And <u>the disciples came</u> and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 Jesus answered them, ....

• Matt 17:Six days later <u>Jesus took with Him Peter and James</u> and <u>John his brother</u>, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

 We can spend time with Jesus in a ONE ON ONE setting with a spiritual coach.

 Matt 18:20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

• 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim 3:But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance. 11 You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured.

We can spend time with ALONE with Jesus.

 James 4:8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

 Matt 6:6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.



# Challenges from Pastor Shane

What will you do to ensure you spend time with Jesus?

• To which weekend service will you be faithful?

How will you prioritize your small group?

• When will you spend time with Jesus?