



Drink Your Milk-Part 2

A Crash Course in Justification & Sanctification

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I had to go to the doctor this week for a stress test. Just the title, you know, I'm thinking, it doesn't make you want to go take this, does it? A stress test. They should really rename that if they want us to keep our appointments.

But I go in, I go into this room, this nurse walks in, first thing she says, "Take off your shirt." That was the stressful part for me right there. That was hard. But then she starts hooking you up like the bionic man, you know, and you got all these wires hanging off. Then they put you on the treadmill. This guy says, "You ever been on one of these?" Man, I'm offended by that. I said, "Yeah, I've seen one."

So they get you, you know, if you've taken one, they get you on, they get this monitor there, and off you go. And I'm telling you, man, it's rough. And then he's trying to carry on a conversation with you while you're there sweating and chugging and all that. It's tough.

And I didn't want to go. And I got to tell you, I scheduled it, and Maggie can attest to this, I scheduled this like four or five times, and every time something came up where the stress test didn't seem like the priority. But finally I got in and took it, and everything checked out. You know, you'll be glad to know—or not glad to know, I don't know which—but my heart's in good shape and it's all strong and all that.

But what's odd is you don't know. There's a little, you know, concern because you're thinking, "I feel okay." He says, "You have any heart pain?" "No, I don't feel any heart pain." "Well, you know, we better check it out. You're old enough and all the things that you're not supposed to be, so we'll get on there and we'll check it out." And then you leave and you feel so good because you're like, "Yeah, everything checked out." But you don't really know.

Our spiritual health is a lot like that. You see people on Sunday and they're carrying their Bible and they're there with their wife and they're smiling. They look like healthy Christians. You wouldn't think otherwise. And yet you really don't know. As a matter of fact, sometimes we don't know about our



own spiritual health. We're not sure how healthy we are. We kind of look at ourselves in the spiritual mirror and think, "Well, I think I'm okay. I think I'm healthy."

Well, last couple of weeks before Easter—I should say about a month ago—we looked at Hebrews chapter 5, which kind of reminded us that we've got to take a serious assessment of our spiritual health and make sure that we're not just thinking we're healthy or looking like we're spiritually healthy, but we've got to make sure we are healthy. We've got to have some abilities to do some things that he starts to throw out in front of us, and then he analogizes it all with food. And he says if you're stuck on the baby food, you're going to be sickly and anemic. You need to grow up and eat the meaty food. Move on.

And then we got to chapter six right after Easter, and we looked at the elementary list—the baby food list—and I'm telling you, last week, if you looked at that, and even as we preached through the first two on the list of six, you know it's easy to look at that and feel a little spiritually retarded or anemic or sick, because the basics list doesn't look all that basic. As a matter of fact, for a lot of us, we sat there and we looked at that, and then we compared it to what we're hearing today in the modern church, and we're saying Christendom seems a little sick, because these don't seem like basics.

And yet last week, I know for a lot of us, we said, "You know what? We understand it, we get it, we've heard it, we can file it away. Great. Next week we'll deal with the last two on the list. We've dealt with the first two." Today, we come to the middle two. And this is all from the first three verses of Hebrews chapter six.

And if you haven't already opened your Bible, take a look at this, because what we need to do, if we think we're spiritually healthy, is: here are the basics. You ought to have these things mastered. There should be no confusion in your mind about these. It's kind of like hooking up all those wires and saying, "Okay, get on this and go." And it should be that our spiritual heart can handle these truths. We should be able to manage these things.

So last week, we dealt with the first two. Next week, we'll deal with the next two, Lord willing. And this week, we'll deal with the middle two. And if you haven't found your worksheet, you'll need it this week, because we're going to try to, as we start this, get ourselves reacquainted with what has been affectionately called in our study the elementary curriculum. And if these are things God says you got to have wired to be healthy, we want to make sure and take the effort and the energy to say we're going to make sure that we've got these things wired and mastered in our lives.



First thing we need to do is look at the context. And you've got a chart for that, my favorite thing, and it's not even Thursday night, and we're putting charts together, but here it goes. We've got a chart that looks something like this, right, on your worksheet, if you found that. Verse 1, the end of verse 1, started this list, and we had two of them last week: repentance from acts that lead to death and of faith in God. And we said, okay, if we're going to understand what this is all about, these two group together nicely, and most of us immediately saw the list and said those two fit together, and they relate to something that we can summarize as entering the Christian life.

Jot that down in the box next to it. If we are going to enter the Christian life, we've got to know something about repentance and faith, because we have to know what it means to turn from sin and embrace by faith God's payment for my sin, Jesus Christ—exclusive faith in Christ—and I've got to know those things. So repentance and faith, man, that's all about entering the Christian life. Okay?

Take a look at the last two here: the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Those things kind of speak clearly when we know what those are. And if we needed to summarize those, we could put this in the box next to it: that's the stuff on the other side of the Christian life. That's when, here on this earth, my life in following Christ is over. Now I get to be with Christ. Or perhaps the dreaded news that maybe I don't get to spend eternity with Christ, but I'm on the other side of the Christian life.

If we're going to understand and try and make sense of this middle section, it helps us to at least group these together. Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment—those naturally couple together. Repentance from acts that lead to death and faith in God—those naturally couple together.

So now we're dealing with this middle box right here. The two in the middle at the beginning of verse 2 are this: instruction about baptisms and the laying on of hands. Those are the two middle ones. And as I look at that, I think most people look at it, they start to scratch their head. "Those are the basics, huh? I'm not even sure if I know what that's all about."

So what we want to do before we even proceed in our study is try and figure this box out. And to do it, I want to move to letter B under number one, and I want to think through these two phrases and see if we can make sense of those. Sorting out verse 2, first part, 2a. Are you with me? That first chart wasn't too hard. We're only two-thirds done with it, but it wasn't too bad. This one's not too bad either.



Let's see if we can make sense of it. You've got a chart that looks something like this. What we've done is we've taken the middle section and the middle two, the baby food topic three and four, and we've put them now side by side: instruction about baptisms and the laying on of hands.

Okay? Knowing that the first two were about entering the Christian life and the last two are about the other side of the Christian life, let's try and figure this out. It would seem to mean something about the present condition of our Christian life, so let's think it through.

Instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands. This has a ceremony in view—clearly a ceremony of some kind in view. So let's look at this box right here. If you think through what baptism is, and even because it's plural, it helps us realize we're talking about this ceremony you might picture of dunking someone in water—more on that later and why it's plural, we'll get to all that—but at least let's just say, okay, that's the ceremony in view.

There's another pattern in the New Testament that's a ceremony that relates to the laying on of hands, and that's when pastors get around people and they lay their hands on them and they put people in ministry. As a matter of fact, even today, if someone's going—if I entered ministry years and years ago—and I was ordained by a group of pastors, and those pastors, after reviewing my life and my doctrine, put their hands on me, prayed for me, and placed me into ministry.

Ceremony: baptism—dunked in water. Laying on of hands—being placed in ministry.

Biblical examples of being dunked in water: how about Acts chapter 10, verse 47, and 1 Corinthians 1:16? In Acts 10, we had that whole situation with Peter and Cornelius and his Italian friends, and they repented of their sins, they put their trust in Christ, and they become followers of Jesus, they receive the Holy Spirit, and then Peter says, "What prevents these guys from being dunked in water? Let's dunk these guys in water. Can we refuse that of them? Let's do the ceremony."

Or 1 Corinthians 1:16, outside of the book of Acts, we've got an example of Paul going to a place called Corinth, and he's winning people to Christ, he's preaching the gospel of Jesus, and he leads some people to Christ, and he baptizes them ceremonially in water. He dunks them in water. Okay?



How about the laying on of hands? Lots of examples in the New Testament of this. Let's use two. Acts chapter 6—one in the book of Acts that we have—and this is when the deacons, if you know the book of Acts, you know chapter 6 is when they pick some people from the church family who live good godly lives, and they are going to commission them to serve people, in that case, the Hellenistic Jews. And they're having this big debate about serving food. So they commission these guys to do that and they lay their hands on them and they say, "We're going to put these people in charge of something within the church."

Or 1 Timothy 4, verse 14 that you wrote down—an example of Paul talking to Timothy, the senior preaching pastor at Ephesus, and saying, "Don't you remember how you got this thing? You got it when the pastors laid their hands on you and commissioned you to this work."

There's four examples, two in each category.

What's the reality here that is being solemnized? If this is a ceremony, all "solemnized" means is this is a ceremony that is picturing something else. What's being solemnized here? Well, as it relates to baptisms, it's having been placed in Christ. And that's what we're saying.

For instance, in Acts chapter 10, verse 47, Peter's going, "Hey, these people are now in Christ. They've been placed into the family of God. They're under the allegiance of Jesus. Now let's solemnize that with this ceremony of dunking them in water." Same thing in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 16. Paul says, "These people have now become followers of Christ way out here in Corinth. Let's dunk them in. Let's solemnize the fact that they are now in Christ."

As it relates to this—and Acts 13 is a good example of this—people who had been set apart to do ministry: God says, "I want these people to do this," so we are solemnizing the fact that these are God's choices to lead in particular areas of ministry. And in that regard, what they're trying to do as church leaders is simply recognize that these people have been set apart by God to do a particular task. Okay?

Prerequisite. These are the important boxes. If I'm going to go through the ceremony and solemnize this thing about being placed in Christ, what's the biblical word that helps me think through what I've



got to be to do this? Here's the biblical word: it's called justification. I have to be someone that the church leaders who dunk me in water are convinced that I'm justified, that I am now cleansed of my sin before God, that I'm no longer headed for condemnation before a holy God, that I've had my sin nailed to the cross, that I'm now rightly in Christ, and I've got to be justified before I go through the ceremony of baptism. That's the prerequisite in Scripture. We see it throughout the book of Acts.

What is the requirement here that I've got to be convinced of before I lay my hands on someone? For instance, 1 Timothy 5 says, "Don't lay your hands on people hastily. Be thoughtful about it, because you've got to make sure they've got the right kind of heart and they're the right kind of people." What does it require? What do I have to make sure has been happening in their life? Sanctification.

Sanctification is the word—as we'll talk about here in just a minute—where they have made some progress in the Christian life, and I feel like that's the right kind of person to do the job. When they, for instance, said, "You're going to pastor," and these pastors gathered around, they spent all day in oral exams making sure that they thought I was the right kind of person to lead a church. So that's what took place. That was, whatever, 20 years ago almost now. That is what they were testing. Is the guy sanctified?

What we do here at church before we baptize someone, we want to make sure you're justified. And if you're going to lead in ministry, we need to make sure there's some significant success in sanctification. Justification, sanctification. Okay?

Aspect of the Christian life that's in view: we're talking about, in justification, your position before God. Are you right with God? Have you made peace with God? That's what justification is all about. Am I someone who now is in the right legal standing—forensic standing—with God? That God looks at me and says, "That guy's forgiven. That guy's had his sin taken away. His resume that was dotted with all these black marks—it's now gone. He's judicially, forensically, legally, however you'd like to say it—his position now before God is right."

Sanctification, I'm talking about progress. Has this guy made progress in spiritual growth? Has he come along, has she come along far enough to where we say, "Yes, you're the kind of person that is able to be commissioned to lead"? You can do some things. You can—even if the service is menial, like it seems to be in Acts chapter 6 to serve tables—are you godly enough, and do you have the right attitude, the right motives enough? You've made enough progress in your spiritual growth now to pass



out food to those widows in need. Yes, we're going to set you up as an exemplary model of servanthood. Well, great. We got to make sure you've made progress in the Christian life.

Time frame. How long does it take to get judicially and forensically right with God? Years in purgatory. That's what we learned last week, right? How long does it take? It's instantaneous. How many times do I have to do it? One time. The time frame as it relates to justification is immediate, instantaneous, and it's a one-time event. If my sins are nailed to the cross because of repentance and faith, it's done. I'm justified.

Okay, what about sanctification, progress in the Christian life? Oh, that takes a while. That's continual. As a matter of fact, even when you hit certain levels that may make you qualified for service and leadership in ministry, guess what we still expect? As Paul said of Timothy, who's qualified not only in himself to pastor, but to put other people in positions of leadership in ministry, Paul still looks at him and says, "Make sure your progress is evident to everybody. Keep right on growing. Keep right on maturing."

Left-hand column: instructions about baptisms speaks in a ceremony-solemnized way of the concept of justification, my position before God. Laying on of hands was the pattern in the New Testament—though it's not an ordinance, it's not a ceremony that is laid out as a specified way to put people in ministry—but it was the way they did it at the New Testament time to lay hands on people, which a lot of people still do in putting people in positions of ministry. It was all about making sure those people were sanctified.

Back to letter A. Let's go back up now and try and figure out this box. If we needed to summarize, we know the first two deal with entering the Christian life. The last one deals with, on the other side of the Christian life. Let's put it this way: the middle one has to do with our position and progress in the Christian life.

So I need to, if I'm going to eat big boy food in the Scripture, I need to make sure all the baby food is eaten. And that means I've mastered the concepts of entering the Christian life. I know the gospel. I know what repentance and faith is all about. I know what happens on the other side of the Christian life. I have some sense of what eschatology is all about—the end times, where we're headed, the resurrection, the judgment. And I know something about, if I'm going to move on to big boy food, I know something about the basics of my right standing with God—justification, my position before God—and what it means to make progress in the Christian life. Does that make sense?



Let's move on to number two. If justification is a one-time event, let's just kind of encourage it this way: let's make sure you've been justified, okay? And we want to deal with two parts—the reality of it and the ceremony of it—because both are required. Both are commanded. Oh, one's a ceremony, one's a reality, but let's make sure both of those have taken place in my life.

Okay? There are certain words in the Greek language that we do not translate. We simply transliterate them. Romans chapter 8 says sometimes we, in our hearts, we cry out to God, "Abba, Father." Remember that? Abba. It's not translated. It is in the next phrase—"Father." Abba means dad, daddy. So some words like that, that's an Aramaic word, comes right out of an Aramaic context, and we just change the letters from Greek letters to English letters, or Aramaic letters, or Hebrew letters to English letters. It usually happens with Greek.

One word that we've done that with is the word *baptizo*, or *baptisma*, or depending on whether it's a noun or a preposition, or a participle, or a verb. It has different endings, but *baptizo* is the basic verb. And we've said, now we're not going to translate that, we're just going to transliterate that. And you've heard me say that a million times. But were you forced to translate it, you would have to translate it one of the following ways: to immerse, to submerge, to dunk, to dip, to place into. That's what the word *baptizo* means.

And the issue at hand here is a ceremony about dipping people, dunking people, submerging people in a ceremonial way that speaks of another dipping, dunking, submerging. And that's the reality of it.

Before I go any further, some people are going to say, "I read a commentary once, and the commentary said washings is plural because, you know, in the Essene community out there where they found the Dead Sea Scrolls, and maybe John the Baptist was a part of that, they had all these ritual washings, and in the Qumran ruins there were these little pools where they would dip people, and the Pharisees had all these washings, and even the word washings is used elsewhere—the Pharisees and how they washed their hands before all these ceremonial rituals."

Listen, if we have to master the instructions about baptisms, I guarantee you the only instructions about the Essene baptisms or the Pharisees' washings would be this: forget about them. Okay? That'd be the only instructions about those kinds of washings. We're only left in the New Testament with two kinds



of washings, or *baptizos*, if you will. Only two kinds that we can state positively. So the baby food has got to be limited to two, which would be the reality and the ceremony.

So let's talk first of all about the reality. Letter A on your outline. And let's just use the translation, instead of *baptizo* or baptism, "being placed into." That's what baptism means. And the instruction about baptisms—there's only two in Scripture that can be spoken of in a positive way. All the rest are gone. There's no New Testament instruction about being washed or dipped like the Pharisees used to do or the Essene community in the Dead Sea. All we know about is the reality of being placed into Christ and being placed into water.

Let's talk about that being placed into Christ. Turn, if you would, to Romans chapter 6. I want you to look at this text and to show you that when Scripture speaks of the important baptism, or when in Ephesians Paul says there is one baptism, the baptism in view is the baptism of being placed into Christ. That's the salvific one. That's the one that saves you. That's the one that takes your sin and nails it to the cross.

As we saw on Easter, if you remember that sermon, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, I have to die with Him. How do I die with Him? I have to be placed into Him, and He's already died on the cross. I have to be in Him somehow. I need to be, one of Paul's favorite phrases, *en Christos*—in Christ. I need to be somehow placed into a kind of, almost a metaphysical relationship with Christ that I am now Him. I'm in Him. And because I'm in Him, if He died and already paid for hell, then I've already paid for hell. I've died with Him. Being placed into Christ.

Look at this in Romans chapter 6, verse number 1. Are you there? Verse 1: "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning that grace might increase?" You might think that if grace really does cover all sin, it doesn't matter how bad the sin is. Well then, what does it matter? Matter of fact, let's just let God be more gracious and sin more. And he says, verse 2, "No, that's stupid. By no means. We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer?"

Now, wait a minute. Died to sin? I didn't die to sin. When did I die to sin? "Or do you not know," verse 3, "that all of us who were"—here it comes—"baptized into Christ..." Now, again, that's not a translated Greek word. That's a transliterated Greek word. That means that you're just reading a Greek word there. But what does it mean? Placed into, submerged in, dunked into Christ. "Don't you know that all of us that were placed into Christ Jesus were placed into his death?" Remember that? 2



Corinthians 5. That's what I need to be. I don't want to go to hell. You want to go to hell? Not going to be a good place. Let's all vote. No, I don't want to go to hell.

How do I get out of hell? I've got to die the punishment of sin. How do I do that? I've got to be in Christ. I need to be placed into Christ so that all of my sin is placed into a place where God's punishment is poured out. That's the cross. I need to be baptized into Christ. And if I'm baptized into Christ, guess what? I am baptized into His death. And that means I've already paid for sin. I've died to sin. I don't want to sin anymore. I shouldn't want to, at least.

Verse 4: "We were therefore buried with him through being placed into death"—baptized into death—"in order that, just as Christ was"—here's the great metaphor—"raised from the dead." He was literally raised. I am metaphorically and judicially, forensically raised from the dead through the glory of the Father. Then we too may live a new life. If we've been united with Him in His death—that's what it means to be baptized into His death—we will certainly be united with Him in His resurrection and we'll live a new life. And not only that, we'll actually be resurrected like He's resurrected to a perfect and glorified body to go to a perfect and glorified place.

But I've got to be baptized into Christ. The whole point of the book of Romans—and we're studying it on Thursday night. This week we've got a break, day of prayer, we're going to celebrate Mark Tappan's ministry. But we'll get back to Romans and we're going to lead right up to the whole point of: how do I get in Christ? That's what the book's all about. And we've been studying for weeks. The first thing is to recognize you need to be, because we're in sin. The point of this is you need to get placed into Christ.

Look at chapter 8, verse 1. Chapter 8, verse 1 in Romans. It all leads up to this statement. This is the apex, the crowning verse of all of Romans. Here it comes. Romans 8:1. We memorized it as kids. Remember this: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in..." What does that mean? Baptized into, placed into Christ Jesus. You don't want to go to hell. That's how you do it. You've got to be placed into Christ.

How do I get placed into Christ? Oh, you want to talk about entering the Christian life? Two words: repentance and faith. That was last week. Get the tape, right? That's how we start this thing. The reality is being placed.



The question for you is, have you repented of your sins and put your trust in Christ? Are you sure that you're in Christ? Because if you're not in Christ, it's not a very safe place to be. You need to be in Christ—the only place where God's wrath has already been. I know we think the floods and the hurricanes and the buildings coming down are all God, you know. Listen, we haven't experienced God's wrath. People say "hell on earth." It's not hell on earth. Hell has only been spent in one place—on the cross. You've got to be in that place.

How do you get in that place? Get in Christ. How do you do it? Repent of your sins. Put your trust in Christ. Make sure you've been justified, placed into Christ.

Oh, there's a ceremony that comes with it. Pressure for all you unbaptized people? You've got to be placed into water now. Does that save me? No. But see, if I asked it this way, it would be a trick question: does baptism save you? Yes, but no. But yes, but no. Because you've got to ask this follow-up question: which baptism are you talking about? Did you catch that? You have to ask a follow-up question. Which baptism are you talking about?

There's two baptisms that we can instruct you on in Scripture. All the other ones—here's the New Testament instruction: forget them. Pharisaical washings, we don't care about. The two instruction—the baptism about, I mean, the instruction about baptisms—only two. One saves you, and one is a picture of that salvation. Both are required, by the way. Both are commanded. But one is the one that saves you. The other one is the one that solemnizes your saving baptism.

Baptism is for those who are already saved. If you want examples of that, I already gave you one in the list of examples. Acts chapter 10 is a good example, but the one on the back of your worksheet or the bulletin is a good example. Do we have that text there or not? We just have the words, but we don't have the text, I don't think. Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing"—demonstrative pronoun or personal pronoun here, what is it?—"them." "Them." Got to take a circle around "them" and point back to some kind of noun. What would be the noun that I point back to? "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." "Them" refers to what noun? Disciples.

I don't baptize people to make disciples. I make disciples and then I baptize them. What's a disciple? Someone who's in Christ. Therefore, baptism does not save me, but once I'm saved, I'd better get baptized. Why? Because God told you to. "I don't want to." Tough. Do it anyway.



Your friend says, “Well, I don’t want to be faithful to my wife anymore.” “Well, you say you’re a Christian.” “Well, I don’t want to do it.” What do you say? Tough. Obedience is obedience. Obey God. God told you to be baptized. Christ said it. If you haven’t been baptized and you say, “I’m justified,” prove it. Obey Christ. Christ said you need to be baptized in water.

“Oh, I’ll just do it in my jacuzzi in my backyard. My wife can do it. She’ll baptize me, I’ll baptize her.” Bad idea. That’s like me saying, “My kids joined the Cub Scouts. They never really went to the meeting and took the Weebow pledge or whatever it is. My two boys just kind of did the pledge to each other to get in the club.” That’s not how it works. You need somebody with the big uniform on with the big scarf and the big hat to say, “Raise your right hand. You want to get into this club, here’s how it works.” “But I’m already in the club.” “Yeah, you are, but Christ said go through the ceremony to solemnize your getting into the club. My mom wrote the check already. It’s paid for. I’m in the club.” Go through the ceremony. You’ve got to do it.

“Well, I’m going to do it to myself.” Can’t do it to yourself. “Let my friend do it.” Can’t have your friend do it. You’ve got to do it when the church is assembled, when you have leaders of the church dunking you in water to say, “Hey, this person’s dunked into Christ.”

I’m going to make it really easy for you. I got a table set up for you in the lobby right now. George is going to be there. You can argue with George about why you don’t want to get baptized. And George will argue with you and tell you you’ve got to be. He’s going to give you a book, he’s going to give you a form, fill it out, read the book, and get on the schedule. Because in July—I think it’s the 18th. Is that the day? Does anybody know? What is it? 23rd—we’re going to dunk some more people in water. Under the sycamore tree at Saddleback Valley Christian School in a nice big blow-up pool. It looks a little funny, but you need to do it.

“Well, I got baptized after I became a Christian in another church.” Great. Done. Finished. But if you haven’t been after you became a Christian, then you need to do it.

1 Peter 3, because that needs to clarify one thing. Everybody’s going to bring this up. Let’s clarify 1 Peter 3 for all your Church of Christ friends or people who think differently about baptism. There’s a clear biblical distinction between the ceremony and the reality. The reality is a baptism by the Holy Spirit into Christ. That saves you. There’s another one that’s by a pastor into water. That’s the ceremony. Those are the two baptisms in Scripture that we need to be instructed about. One obediently solemnizes the other.



In 1 Peter chapter 3, some people stumble over this text because it says right there, “Baptism saves you.” I’ve already conceded that point. Baptism does save you. Which one though? 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 21. Talking about the flood—you had an ark, went through the flood. Isn’t that interesting? They were saved through the flood, through the water. Oh, that’s interesting. Water. Oh yeah, that’s the baptismal ceremony. Got it.

Verse 21: “And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you.” Okay? “Not the removal of dirt from the body”—not that one. Not the splish-splash one. “But the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” That’s crying out to God in repentance and faith. “It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” It saves you. What saves you? The baptism of being placed into Christ, not being placed into water by a pastor, but being placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Another name for that in the Scripture is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is not a Pentecostal invention or charismatic thing. That means the day I cried out with a good conscience, a pledge of a good conscience to God, “God, save me,” I was then, by the Holy Spirit, my files were taken out of my file cabinet and they were placed into Christ. That’s baptism of the Holy Spirit into Christ.

There’s another baptism that’ll wash off any gunk that you might have on your body at the time. It’s the baptism by a pastor into water. That’s not what he’s talking about here. Is that clear in the text? “The water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body, but a pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Christ Jesus,” because He did all the work.

Ceremonial baptism with water is a kind that may physically wash some of the dirt off your body, but Peter says, “I’m not talking about that one.” The saving comes with the baptism that instantaneously accompanies a pledge of a good conscience toward God when one sincerely cries out to God in repentance and faith. He is placed into the family of God. He is placed into Christ by virtue of His death and resurrection.

So, if you’re not justified, repent of your sin and put your trust in Christ. If you are justified, but you haven’t been ceremonially dunked, sign up in the lobby when this is over. Okay? Don’t buy an Angel ticket. Don’t go get a donut or cookie or whatever’s downstairs. Go right through one of those three doors into the lobby, argue with George, grab the paperwork, then you can come down and eat a cookie



and buy an Angel ticket. Make sure you've been justified. That'd be a good thing. All in favor of that? I'm in favor. Let's get justified. Make sure you have been—one-time event, happens instantaneously. Then you do the ceremony that celebrates the instantaneous justification.

This one—continual process. We need to, number three, make sure you are being sanctified. Make sure you're being sanctified. You've got to make sure you've been justified, but you've got to make sure you're being sanctified.

More word stuff. Okay? "Sanctified." We use that word because it's translated into English that way, but it comes through Latin. Latin was really the first non-Greek Bible, for the most part, if you don't count Coptic. But we go from Greek to Latin, and in Latin the word *hagios* or "holy" in its various forms was translated into the word *sanctus*. That's the Latin word for holy. *Sanctus* means holy.

"Holy" means, if you look it up in the dictionary, to be "set apart." That's why, when people build a church and they've got a lot of money and they don't build a multi-purpose room, they call the room that they worship in the "sanctuary." And that means you can't play basketball here, can't park your RV here, you can't play bingo in here. This is the sanctuary. We never build those in Southern California because we can't afford to have a building that's a sanctuary.

In the Old Testament, they had a true sanctuary. Real estate prices were low. And it was a place where they worship. Now, bring your friends and say, "I want to park my camels here in the sanctuary." What are they going to tell you? "No. We will poke you in the eye with a hot iron. You can't do it." Why? Because this is the sanctuary. What does that mean? Set apart. Not for camel parking. Not for bingo. Not for falafel eating. That was hard to say. I shouldn't have started that sentence. It is only for worship.

Then actually, in the sanctuary or the tabernacle or the temple, they had another room that we call, in English sometimes, the "inner sanctum." It's also an old radio show, I think. The inner sanctum. What's that mean? Sanctum, sanctuary, *sanctus*. Sanctum means that's the Holy of Holies. That's the special room. You can't even really worship in there. As a matter of fact, 364 days a year, all you do is just let the Ark of the Covenant sit in there. Once a year you can go on Yom Kippur and have a special little thing where you confess all that. But no, it's a special, special room. It's set apart within the set apart room.



Does that help you with words like “sanctity,” “sacred”? All these words come from *sanctus*. Or how about this word: “saint”? You know what a saint is? That’s not right, Catholics. It’s not that. What’s a saint? It’s a Christian. A holy one. What is a holy one? Someone who is set apart. No canonization required. All you have to do is repent of your sins and put your trust in Christ. And if you are justified, you become a saint.

That’s why, if you look just linguistically through the New Testament for the word “sanctification,” you will find that sometimes sanctification refers to justification—being set apart judicially and forensically, one time. But then, most of the time, it says, but then it’s a process of practically becoming *sanctus*, holy.

Two parts to this on your worksheet. Let’s fill these in. There’s the process. Let’s put it out this way: the process of sanctification is simply—just remember the word “holy”—it’s the process of becoming increasingly holy. And here’s the other side of becoming holy. As it relates to sanctification and laying on of hands, it means now I’m more useful to God. I am becoming increasingly holy, and at various points along the process of becoming holy, I become increasingly more qualified to do more things for God. Because if I’m less holy, I’m not qualified to do things for God. The more holy I am, the more I am like Christ, the more doors of opportunity open up for me, and not only opportunity, but responsibility before God to do things in the body of Christ, which leads to the laying on of hands ceremony.

A lot of passages. Did you bring your Bibles? What for? To turn to a few passages, right? So don’t get mad at me. You brought your Bible. But let’s quickly, in this section, look at a few passages.

Let’s start with Romans chapter 12, verse number 1, 2, and 3. Actually, we’ll stop at verse 2. Romans chapter—what did I say? 12. That’s right. Romans chapter 12. You will see in Romans chapter 12 that sanctification is a process, which, by the way, if you’re really schooled in theology, will rule out certain theories of sanctification. Keswickian sanctification. If you don’t know what that is, don’t worry. It’s not shoe polish. So I didn’t connect with anybody. Don’t worry about it then. If you know what it is, it doesn’t work in this model. Wesleyan. Now, some of you know what that is. The Wesleyan theory of sanctification. This doesn’t work. Sanctification is a process, as clearly stated in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. Let’s look at it.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy”—which is what chapter 11 was all about—“to offer your bodies as living sacrifices.” Now, here’s an important word that in Latin is translated



sanctus. What's the word? "Holy and pleasing to God," which is your spiritual act of worship. Now, I offer myself to God, but you know what? Here's the holy thing's kind of a process. How do I know? Verse 2: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed"—here's a process now—"by the renewing of your mind. And the more you renew that, and the less you're conformed to this world, you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will." And all of us who've experienced something on the journey of sanctification know that just is a process. And the farther I get up this hill, the more I see clearly His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

2 Corinthians chapter 3. It has a moral aspect to it. I now become more like Christ. Look at it this way: sanctification, *sanctus*, sanctuary, sanctify, saint—all those things. It's a setting apart from something and a setting apart to something. And in a moral sense, it's setting apart from sin and setting apart to Christlikeness, as this passage will say clearly.

2 Corinthians 3, verse 18. 3:18. Now, the imagery here is Moses coming off the mountain. His face was glowing, so he put the veil on because it kept going away, and it was like a light bulb or one of those sticks and it starts to kind of mellow out. It's not as bright anymore. It's not how it was though, or should be with us.

Verse 18: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being"—process now—"transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Do you see that that's a process? When I become a Christian, I'm not looking a whole lot like Christ. But the longer I go in the process—it's called sanctification—the more I should be looking like Christ, which means the less I'm looking like my old self, which was characterized by selfishness, self-absorption, and sin. Now, no longer. My sin may not have been your sin, but we're all into that thing—living for ourselves. Not there. I'm being set apart from that, and I'm being set apart to be more like Christ, reflecting His glory as I'm transformed into His likeness. Doesn't mean you look like Him, obviously, because we don't even know what He looks like. It means that I'm acting like Him. I'm speaking like Him. I'm thinking like Him. Therefore, it becomes easier for me to see what His good, perfect will is in this world.

2 Timothy 2. A couple more. Halfway there. 2 Timothy 2. The other side of this coin is being useful to God. If we are set apart from sin, God says, "Ah, there we go. Now I can use that person." And the more set apart from sin we are, the more God sees that we're useful. And the analogy—and often misunderstood, by the way—in 2 Timothy chapter 2 is God looking around His house at different things. And just like you, I assume, have paper plates tucked away in one of the cabinets, and regular



plates, and then over here somewhere, with dust on them, you have the special plates called china. Do you have those three sets of plates in your house?

God's looking at His church, and He's seeing paper plates—that's hot dog, corn dog, right? Regular plates—casserole, stew, steak. China—frou-frou food, right? Whatever you put on china. I don't know. We don't ever pull ours out. But you've got three different sets. That's the picture here.

Verse 20, in a large house there are articles—this is 2 Timothy 2:20—"not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. Some are for noble purposes, and some for just, like, common stuff, ignoble purposes. If a man cleanses himself from"—now here's the problem with the NIV. It says "the latter." And unfortunately, that'll put your mind back to the closest phrase. That's not technically what the Greek text says. *Houtos* here, the demonstrative pronoun, points back further. "These things," literally, is what the Greek text says.

What things? You can draw a line up to verse 14, quarreling. Verse 16, godless chatter. Verses 17 and 18, doctrinal fudging and foolishness. Verse 19, wickedness. "If he cleanses himself from the latter," here's what he'll be: "an instrument" or some kind of article "for noble purposes," which is what verse 20 was all about, "made"—here it is—*hagios, sanctus*, "holy." Now I'm an article of gold or silver for noble purposes, and look at the next word— isn't this great?—"useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

If I'm still—look at the things, verse 14—if I'm still the bickering, quarreling person, and I'm always nitpicking people's words and argue, argue, argue, then you're not very useful for God. Okay? You may think you're Mr. Doctrinal Smart Guy, but you're not. God can't use you. You're just little baby Christian. "Oh, can't use that guy. It's paper plate." Okay. But if you can get rid of that and the godless chatter and all that foolish talk and doctrinal equivocation and wickedness, verse 19, then you will be more and more holy and more and more useful, prepared to do any good work. And that's what God would want of us—that we would be becoming increasingly holy, because when we do, we get increasingly useful to God. That's called sanctification. Sanctification. Is that clear in that passage? Crystal. I hope. It was in my head.

Letter B. If you become increasingly holy and useful to God, guess what God wants to do? Put you to work. And He wants to see you commissioned into fruitful ministry. Who does that in the church, by the way? Leaders in the church recognize that God has set people apart and they commission people into service. Even the lead preaching, senior pastor guy, even he has to be put and commissioned into



ministry by pastors. That's the way it works. And the Bible says that's our goal—for church leaders to look at us and say, "Useful," and we're going to commission you with all the rights and privileges of this particular ministry post.

Example: Acts 13. Here's a good example. The phrases here are great in the bottom of Acts chapter 13. I think I referred to that earlier. It's the church in Antioch. They're getting together. Let's look at the very beginning of this passage. Last one I'll turn you to if you're getting tired. Acts 13. Look at this one.

Here's the practical side. I said the moral side of it is—ethical side of it—I am being set apart from sin to Christlikeness. And if you want to, you can say that's kind of the reality. The practical is that now I am being set apart for ministry. And leaders should be recognizing people that God is setting apart in their morality and ethics and spiritual growth, that the church is now saying, "You need to be involved in ministry."

Take a look at this. Verse number 2: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now, look at this, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" That's an interesting phrase. God had already called them to do it. In God's mind, they were already set apart. What is now God saying to these people in the church? Set them apart. Sanctify them. "Well, wait a minute. They're already sanctified, and God has already sanctified them to do the work." Now you guys sanctify them.

Verse 3: "So they respond. So after they had fasted and prayed"—they wanted to make sure, that's the 1 Timothy 5 passage, "don't do it hastily"—"they placed their hands on them," laying on of hands, "and sent them off." "Go do the work."

My goal as a Christian, no matter how laborious it may feel, is that I will be increasingly holy and useful so that someone will put their, quote-unquote, hands on me. It's not an ordinance. It doesn't always have to happen that way. But that someone will say, "Mike, here, get to work for God." That ought to be my goal. And if that's not your goal, you don't understand the baby food of the Christian life. The baby food of the Christian life is: justification leads to sanctification. And sanctification means somebody's putting their hands on me in terms of leaders and churches and saying, "Get to work. Serve the Lord." Because you're increasingly more useful to God, get to work. That's what sanctification ends up being. That's the goal of sanctification.



Okay, notes real quick. There's three little quick sub-references I want you to put down. And I know there's no room under letter B. Let me give you three examples that go in canonical order—chronological and canonical order—that move me from commissioning to the most simple to the most responsible.

Jot this one down. I think it was already in the examples. Acts chapter 6, verse 6. Let's just put it down: commissioning servants. Here are deacons, *diakonos*, servants. This is as mundane as passing out cookies after a service. But God says that there is, at a particular point in your Christian life where you ought to be commissioned to serve other people in the church. Could be watching babies in the nursery. It could be picking up chairs after the service is over. It could be running cables, taking speakers down. But you ought to be commissioned at some point to service. And if you're sanctified, you'll get to that place—being commissioned to serve. Commissioning servants.

Next level, Acts 13:3. This team, Barnabas and Saul, were now leaders in this. And he wasn't the big hotshot by chapter 13, not yet. He was being commissioned to lead this church-plant team. These guys together were. I put it this way in Acts 13:3: they were commissioning leaders. Commissioning servants. Secondly, commissioning leaders. There's a difference between serving in an area where it's the kind of, "Well, they need this, so I'm going to serve in this way." Commissioning leaders is now taking the responsibility because I've become increasingly holy, useful to God, doctrinally, spiritually, behaviorally, ethically, morally. Now I'm going to take the lead. I'm going to lead a small group. I'm going to lead someone through Partners program. I'm going to lead a children's ministry team. I'm going to teach a Sunday School class. I'm going to move from the service to the leadership.

Thirdly, the pastoral epistles talk a lot about laying on of hands. And it does in reference to pastoral leadership. Okay? Commissioning lead pastors in particular. And I'll just put it that way because that's what 1 Timothy 4:14 and 5 are all about: commissioning preaching pastors. And there are some people listening to me on the radio or on a CD or in this auditorium right now who God is setting apart to be a preaching pastor. Stop fighting it. If God has gotten you to the place where you are being set apart for that, let us commission you to do the work.

And this is the great thing about Compass Bible Church: we're all about planting churches. Were you here Thursday night? We're all about planting churches. And God may be calling you to do this. And it's often the people that sit back there and go, "Mike, you don't know what you're doing." Great. I don't. You do. Let's commission you to do the work.



“I’m just going to do it myself.” You can’t. The Bible says you need to be commissioned by leaders in the church to do it. But let us do it. Let us work with you. Let’s work together at this, and let’s get you into being a lead pastor somewhere. Because guess what? If Compass is half of what we as a staff think it’s going to be, in terms of starting churches with a common not only doctrinal stance but value stance, we’re going to need a lot of lead pastors. Came to church, they made me a pastor.

Not trying to make you pastor today, okay? But can we start with some service level, and then can you be open, as God takes you down the road, to some leadership level? And then let’s always be open to the fact that God may pluck you out, and it’s never pretty. Trust me, I’ve been through it. You will go kicking and screaming into it, but if God wants you there, you’ll be there. Don’t fight Him. It’s not worth it. You need to be commissioned, perhaps, into full-blown pastoral ministry. But we need to start with the service.

And if you’re sitting here going, “That doesn’t sound good to me,” then you don’t understand the basics of the Christian life. Justification gets me saved. Sanctification gets me useful to God. We need to be useful.

I was a band geek in high school. Have I told you that? Full-blown, okay? And band geeks have to go and play for the football players at the football games every Friday night. And you know what we used to think, sitting up there in the bleachers? We had good seats for every game, but you know what we always think about the football players, privately and secretly? We wish we were one. Because all the cheerleaders are very interested not in the band geeks, but in the football players. And on Friday all we could do is tote around our instrument case while they’re wearing their jerseys. And all the pretty girls are dancing around, cheering on the guys with the jerseys on.

And I remember, just like most band geeks, thinking to myself, “Is there any easy way to get on the team? Can I do something that gets me the jersey, but I don’t have to get hit by those really big guys? Don’t give me the ball. I don’t want to run with it. I don’t want to get tackled. I don’t want to sweat. I just want to have a jersey.” And you know what God says to that? No.

Some of us want to be justified without being sanctified, because sanctification means we work out and eventually get put in the game, and we take a few hits, and it’s work. If you are a typical Southern California, oh, Orange County Christian, you won’t get this. But you are not called to be a consumer.



You are called to be pulled into the body of Christ, to grow up, and it's going to be hard, but you are called to serve, to lead, and maybe even to pastor. God's going to call you to do that, and you need to be open to it. And you've got to recognize if you're on the sidelines and think you can join the team without being useful in the game, you can't.

Let's just concede the point. I want to be on the team because I want to go to heaven, but now that I'm on the team, I've got to have some responsibility. And one day we're going to get our act together—we're working on it—we're going to have some opportunities and make it easier for you to know, what are the areas where I can get involved? Because that will be the next question, and we'll get there. But right now, get creative. Talk to people that you see leading in ministries around here. Say, "How can I get involved in that?"

Some of you guys watch our musicians up here every week and you know, you know what? God has gifted me to do that, but you know what? I just want to sit back and I don't want to do that. You know what? Stop. Get off. Talk to Bob. Get up here. Ask, "How can I... is God calling me to do that?" Get involved.

You drop your kids off there, you think, "Man, you know what, I want to..." Get involved. You've got a jersey. Get involved. If you don't have a jersey, get a jersey and get involved, because that's how it works. Okay?

Let's pray.

God, help us to understand the basics of the Christian life that are really basic, and yet for a lot of us, it seems we've found nice little rationalizations to avoid sanctification, which ultimately is going to lead to some demands in my life. It's going to mean another night out. I can't do the home thing and watch my TV and sit on my couch. It's going to demand some effort. I'm going to be criticized. There are going to be people that don't like me. I'm going to step on...

God, I just pray we get past all of that and be willing to recognize that if you have justified us, it's time for us to grow in our sanctification. And that'll mean eventually people are going to be putting their, quote-unquote, spiritual authority on us, putting their hands on us and saying, "This person's called to do that ministry." And God, I pray we wouldn't fight it anymore.



Get us plugged in. Get us involved. Move us from passivity in the body of Christ to activity. And God, if there are some here that are not justified, they haven't repented of their sins and put their trust in you yet, I pray they'd do it—even today, even now, even as we sing a song right now. Let their hearts be drawn to the place of genuine contrition over their sin and a full and exclusive trust in Christ. And then, God, may we hear their story in the middle of July, as we baptize people ceremonially to show what's happened to them here today, this afternoon.

God, do some great things in our midst. I pray that everybody here would do some real thinking about justification and sanctification in their Christian life.

In Jesus' name, amen.