



SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY

Discipleship Plan

**Year Four
Second Quarter – Part I
Christian Character**

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Second Quarter – Christian Character

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Lesson One: Do You Know the True Jesus?

Primary Verses: “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.” Matthew 24:24-25 (NKJV)

Teaching Text: Colossians 1:13-20

Supporting Texts: John 1:1-14 and Hebrews 1:1-14

This week’s primary verses are, first and foremost, a warning with eschatological concerns (eschatology is the study of ‘end times’ or ‘last things’). Jesus warned His hearers that in days ahead of them, there would be a time when many would come with convincing evidences claiming to be God’s anointed. While our lesson is not specifically on the Bible’s teachings on future events, the verses do alert us that some persons are likely to be declaring faith in a “Christ” who isn’t actually God’s Son. Faith in a false, so-called “Christ” cannot save. The “Jesus” of the Watchtower, or of the Mormons, of Islam, etc. are “false christs.” It is imperative that the true Jesus is presented so that salvation is secure and authentic.

“... two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; so that the Lord Jesus Chris is truly God and truly man, yet He is one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.”

—London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689 (Article 8, “Christ the Mediator”)

At the crux of the question, “Who is Jesus?” is another question, “What is Jesus?” Is He merely a man? Or is He God? The amazing reality of Jesus’ nature is that He is *both*. In our teaching text, there are terms used of Jesus that can only be applied to God. We are told that all things were created for, by, through Him. More incredibly, we are told that in Him, all things consist or have their being. Christ is before all things and He is first in all things (He has the preeminence). Can all of these things be said of any mere creature?

In addition, the passage in Colossians makes at least two direct allusions to the humanity of Christ. In verse 14, we are told that we have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” And in verse 20, it is said that peace came through the “blood of His cross.” This can only be understood as a reference to the crucifixion and death of Jesus. But where in His divinity, He could not die, in His human nature, He could, and did. The Bible does not err in leading us to choose between the divinity or the humanity of Christ. Instead, God’s word informs us that Jesus is the God-Man, eternally existent with the Father and the Spirit, yet with human ancestry through the Virgin Birth.

Questions to Consider: How would you respond to someone who says, “Just give me Jesus—keep all that doctrinal stuff to yourself!” The Jehovah’s Witness who knocks at your door loves to use Colossians 1:15 because he/she believes that being “firstborn” means that Jesus was the first in a series of created beings. How would you answer such a challenge to His divinity? See Genesis 41:50-51, Jeremiah 31:9, and Psalm 89:27. What does the term “firstborn” really mean? Why does it matter to have a Savior Who is both God and man?

Challenging the Class: Every so often, a choir member is found who appears to sing well with the group but can’t hold a tune individually. But when it comes to explaining and defending the deity and humanity of Christ, every believer should be able to sing that song well. How’s your solo coming along?

Lesson Two: Have You Received and Believed the True Gospel?

Primary Verses: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘the just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:16-17 (KJV)

Teaching Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

Supporting Texts: 1st Corinthians 15:1-11; Galatians 1:1-9

“If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such manner the gifts of God that they are not also the good merits of him justified; or that the one justified by the good works that he performs by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and in case he dies in grace, the attainment of eternal life itself and also an increase of glory, let him be anathema.”

The 32nd Canon of the 6th Session of the Council of Trent

The Council of Trent was a convention-like body consisting of the leading theologians, chief clergy members, and at times, members of the monarchy from various countries that embraced the Roman Catholic faith as the state religion. The main purpose of the Council was to condemn the relatively new reformation movement and to reaffirm the same doctrines that brought the protest against the Pope, the general body of Roman Catholicism, and their doctrines. Due to interruptions from war and civil unrest between the years of 1545-1563, the Council of Trent convened for 18 years.

The reformers, particularly Martin Luther and John Calvin, and their followers were utterly convinced that the scriptures taught salvation by grace **alone**, through faith **alone**, in Christ **alone**, according to the Scriptures **alone**, to the glory of God **alone**. The earlier quotation from Trent is radically opposed to the biblical truth that sinners are justified before God by faith alone. As Baptists, we agree with other branches of Protestantism that grace saves and we access that salvation *through* faith in Christ, Whose atoning work on the Cross is perfect and therefore needs no sinners’ effort to attain salvation. The Roman view, on the other hand, has always taught that while God’s grace is necessary for salvation, it is not sufficient.

From the days of Trent to the present, Rome has affirmed and re-affirmed that God’s grace plus good works, enabled by God, are necessary for salvation. This belief constitutes a different gospel which falls short of the biblical standard. The Vatican has boldly asserted that anyone who believes good works are not necessary for salvation, but merely the evidence of it, is under the curse of God (anathema). But the Bible condemns men for preaching/teaching a different gospel of salvation (Galatians 1:6-9). How ironic!

Questions to Consider: While we celebrate “Jesus paid it all,” are there behaviors/attitudes in our lives that reflect a desire to place trust in our own goodness/good works? How great is the gap between *believing grace is sufficient* versus *believing grace is necessary* for salvation? In what ways does this gap speak to the differences between how one group views Jesus’ work as Savior over and against the other group’s view?

Challenging the Class: According to Jonah 2:9, “Salvation is of the Lord.” Salvation depends on God’s mercy and not man’s efforts (Romans 9:16). As we share the gospel, let’s be careful not to rob God of His glory or to otherwise diminish the perfect work of Christ on our behalf by appealing to anything but grace.

Lesson Three: Is Your Life Characterized By God-Centered Humility?

Primary Verses: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” 1st Timothy 1:15-17 (NASB)

Teaching Text: Luke 14:1-11

Supporting Texts: Luke 18:9-17; James 4:13-17

At first glance, it may seem odd to have begun a series of Sunday School lessons on Christian Character with two lessons heavily centered on doctrine. However, any discussion regarding how one should live in Christ cannot really take place without first examining who Jesus is and what the Father has done for us in Him. Being born-again is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit *necessary* for our salvation, due to our unworthy sinful state in which we were utterly unable to please God (Romans 8:5-8).

We did not even have the strength to go to God ourselves for we were “dead in sins” (Ephesians 2:1) and in Jesus’ own words, “No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). It is no wonder that we needed a perfect Savior, both God and man, to ensure a successful sacrifice to atone for sins. As Romans 5:6 tells us, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.” Isn’t humility the natural result when a person has considered salvation by the true Jesus via the true gospel? So, we see that good character takes its root in true doctrine, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Humility is not a trait unique to Christians. A person may observe that another has surpassed them in rank, ability, stature, etc. and sense within themselves a need to lower themselves in that person’s presence. This gesture can be honorable or an honest estimation of themselves in comparison to another. But God-centered humility is not derived from natural observations of men, but is established by a supernatural revelation of the Holy Spirit Who reveals to us not only the spiritual poverty of our condition in Adam but also the riches resulting from relationship with Christ through Whom the Father adopted us to be joint heirs with Him. God-centered humility is not about fearfulness before men, but loving dependence upon God Who has given us all things and most precious Christ, though we were undeserving.

Questions to Consider: What does humility often look like? Is humility an attractive character trait in our culture today? Why or why not? **Fill in the blank.** Humility is often mistaken for _____. **True or False?** The moment you see yourself as humble, you’ve actually become proud. How would you justify your answer? What biblical characters were commendable for their humility? How does humility towards God affect relationships with other believers? What role does humility play in the use of our spiritual gifts? How does it affect our relationships with non-believers, especially in the way we evangelize?

Challenging the Class: Many have seen lists of character traits in scripture and by their own strength attempt to make themselves humble, forgiving, kind, etc. This effort can easily lead to legalism and works-righteousness which is abhorrent to God and insulting to Christ’s sacrifice. Responding to biblical truth and depending on the Holy Spirit is the only way to produce authentic humility that pleases God.

Lesson Four: Are You at War with Sin (or Have You Signed a Truce)?

Primary Verses: “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.” 1st John 3:7-9 (ESV)

Teaching Text: Romans 8:1-3

Supporting Texts: 1st John 2:28-3:10

“Let me summarize for you what you need to know. The Bible says that there are two kinds of people: servants of Satan and servants of God. It’s one jersey [team] or the other. And the way you can tell which jersey [team] you’re wearing is by the role that sin plays in your life.” Pastor Mike McKinley

Reading is essential to writers. Mixing paint colors is a necessary skill for artists. Keeping rhythm is crucial for drummers. Like a writer who can’t read, an artist who can’t mix colors, or a drummer who can’t maintain the beat, a Christian who isn’t fighting sin can *hardly* be called a Christian. If you’re ready to reply with, “Well, nobody’s perfect,” you’ve missed the point entirely. A call to fight sin is not an insistence that one will **never** sin. The call to fight is a call to **fight**.

Consider a boxer. He/she makes a profession of punching. Success in the boxer’s career is dependent upon one basic rule - do more effective hitting than being hit. No boxer expects to have a career without being hit. But, while the boxer knows he/she will suffer some crushing blows, he/she doesn’t happily *intend* to be hit. Each hit represents a failure to defend, but each hit is not necessarily a defeat. Just as the boxer fights knowing he/she will be hit and even knocked down, every once in a while, the Christian knows that sin will get the better of him at times. But in both cases, the intent is to fight.

In some corners of the Church, the focus on God’s love and acceptance has been skewed to the point of diminishing a healthy, biblical view of holiness. The proper celebration of God’s powerful saving grace cannot ever lead to licentious, immoral living. A casual attitude towards sin indicates a low view of the grace that came to deliver us *from* sin.

Think about it. Would the Father have gone to the trouble of sending His Only Begotten Son to save us from the ultimate penalty of sin in the *next life*—and by that sacrifice ensure that the Holy Spirit indwell our hearts—only to have us embrace sinful pleasures in *this life*? Is it any wonder that Titus says the grace of God itself teaches us to renounce ungodliness and live uprightly in the PRESENT age (Titus 2:11-12)?

Questions to Consider: Agree or disagree. The degree to which a self-professed believer is at war with sin is the degree to which one can test whether or not he/she is in the faith. Generally speaking, would you say Christians are more afraid of being called “judgmental,” than they are concerned with holy living and speaking the truth? Why or why not? Last week’s lesson was on God-centered humility. How can we balance biblical humility with the need to encourage one another in our struggle against sin?

Challenging the Class: Examine yourself: Are you only at war with sins that offend you personally or are you at war with all sin because all sin offends God personally? Being at peace with some sins implies a truce with sin itself. God forbid!

Gospel-Driven Sanctification

Jerry Bridges

Early in my Christian life I heard someone say, "The Bible was not given to increase your knowledge but to guide your conduct." Later I came to realize that this statement was simplistic at best and erroneous at worst. The Bible is far more than a rulebook to follow. It is primarily the message of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, with everything in Scripture before the cross pointing to God's redemptive work and everything after the cross--including our sanctification--flowing from that work.

There is an element of truth in this statement, however, and the Holy Spirit used it to help me to see that the Bible is not to be read just to gain knowledge. It is, indeed, to be obeyed and practically applied in our daily lives. As James says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

With my new insight, I prayed that God would use the Bible to guide my conduct. Then I began diligently to seek to obey it. I had never heard the phrase "the pursuit of holiness," but that became my primary goal in life. Unfortunately, I made two mistakes. First, I assumed the Bible was something of a rulebook and that all I needed to do was to learn what it says and go do it. I knew nothing of the necessity of depending on the Holy Spirit for his guidance and enablement.

Still worse, I assumed that God's acceptance of me and his blessing in my life depended on how well I did. I knew I was saved by grace through faith in Christ apart from any works. I had assurance of my salvation and expected to go to heaven when I died. But in my daily life, I thought God's blessing depended on the practice of certain spiritual disciplines, such as having a daily quiet time and not knowingly committing any sin. I did not think this out but just unconsciously assumed it, given the Christian culture in which I lived. Yet it determined my attitude toward the Christian life.

Performance-Based Discipleship

My story is not unusual. Evangelicals commonly think today that the gospel is only for unbelievers. Once we're inside the kingdom's door, we need the gospel only in order to share it with those who are still outside. Now, as believers, we need to hear the message of discipleship. We need to learn how to live the Christian life and be challenged to go do it. That's what I believed and practiced in my life and ministry for some time. It is what most Christians seem to believe.

As I see it, the Christian community is largely a performance-based culture today. And the more deeply committed we are to following Jesus, the more deeply ingrained the performance mindset is. We think we earn God's blessing or forfeit it by how well we live the Christian life.

Most Christians have a baseline of acceptable performance by which they gauge their acceptance by God. For many, this baseline is no more than regular church attendance and the avoidance of major sins. Such Christians are often characterized by some degree of self-righteousness. After all, they don't indulge in the major sins we see happening around us. Such Christians would not think they need the gospel anymore. They would say the gospel is only for sinners.

For committed Christians, the baseline is much higher. It includes regular practice of spiritual disciplines, obedience to God's Word, and involvement in some form of ministry. Here again, if we focus on outward behavior, many score fairly well. But these Christians are even more vulnerable to self-righteousness, for they can look down their spiritual noses not only at the sinful society around them but even at other believers who are not as committed as they are. These Christians don't need the gospel either. For them, Christian growth means more discipline and more commitment.

Then there is a third group. The baseline of this group includes more than the outward performance of disciplines, obedience, and ministry. These Christians also recognize the need to deal with sins of the heart like a critical spirit, pride, selfishness, envy, resentment, and anxiety. They see their inconsistency in having their quiet times, their failure to witness at every opportunity, and their frequent failures in dealing with sins of the heart. This group of Christians is far more likely to be plagued by a sense of guilt because group members have not met their own expectations. And because they think God's acceptance of them is based on their performance, they have little joy in their Christian lives. For them, life is like a treadmill on which they keep slipping farther and farther behind. This group needs the gospel, but they don't realize it is for them. I know, because I was in this group.

The Gospel Is for Believers

Gradually over time, and from a deep sense of need, I came to realize that the gospel is for believers, too. When I finally realized this, every morning I would pray over a Scripture such as Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all," and then say, "Lord, I have gone astray. I have turned to my own way, but you have laid all my sin on Christ and because of that I approach you and feel accepted by you."

I came to see that Paul's statement in Galatians 2:20, "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," was made in the context of justification (see vv. 15-21). Yet Paul was speaking in the present tense: "The life I now live" Because of the context, I realized Paul was not speaking about his sanctification but about his justification. For Paul, then, justification (being declared righteous by God on the basis of the righteousness of Christ) was not only a past-tense experience but also a present-day reality.

Paul lived every day by faith in the shed blood and righteousness of Christ. Every day he looked to Christ alone for his acceptance with the Father. He believed, like Peter (see 1 Pet. 2:4-5), that even our best deeds--our spiritual sacrifices--are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ. Perhaps no one apart from Jesus himself has ever been as committed a disciple both in life and ministry as the Apostle Paul. Yet he did not look to his own performance but to Christ's "performance" as the sole basis of his acceptance with God.

So I learned that Christians need to hear the gospel all of their lives because it is the gospel that continues to remind us that our day-to-day acceptance with the Father is not based on what we do for God but upon what Christ did for us in his sinless life and sin-bearing death. I began to see that we stand before God today as righteous as we ever will be, even in heaven, because he has clothed us with the righteousness of his Son. Therefore, I don't have to perform to be accepted by God. Now I am free to obey him and serve him because I am already accepted in Christ (see Rom. 8:1). My driving motivation now is not guilt but gratitude.

Yet even when we understand that our acceptance with God is based on Christ's work, we still naturally tend to drift back into a performance mindset. Consequently, we must continually return to the gospel. To use an expression of the late Jack Miller, we must "preach the gospel to ourselves every day." For me that means I keep going back to Scriptures such as Isaiah 53:6, Galatians 2:20, and Romans 8:1. It means I frequently repeat the words from an old hymn, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

No "Easy Believism"

But doesn't this idea that our acceptance with God is based solely on Christ's work apart from our performance lead to a type of "easy believism"? In its most basic form, this is the notion that "Since I asked Christ to be my Savior, I am on my way to heaven regardless of how I live. It doesn't matter if I continue in my sinful lifestyle. God loves and will accept me anyway."

By a similar way of thinking, the claim that God's acceptance and blessing are based solely on Christ's work could be taken to mean that it really doesn't matter how I live right now. If Jesus has already "performed" in my place, then why go through all the effort and pain of dealing with sin in my life? Why bother with the spiritual disciplines and why expend any physical and emotional energy to serve God during this earthly life if everything depends on Christ?

The Apostle Paul anticipated such "easy believism" in Romans 6:1 when he wrote, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" His response in Romans 6:2, "By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" answers the question, "Why bother?" Paul was not responding with "How could you be so ungrateful as to think such a thing?" No, instead he is saying, in effect, "You don't understand the gospel. Don't you realize that you died to sin and if you died to sin, it's impossible for you to continue to live in it" (see Rom. 6:3-14).

We Died to Sin

Now, however, we come to a big question. What does Paul mean when he says we died to sin? It's fairly obvious he doesn't mean we died to the daily committal of sin. If that were true, no honest person could claim to be justified because we all sin daily. None of us truly loves God with our whole being and none of us actually loves our neighbor as ourselves (see Matt. 22:35-40). Nor does it mean we have died in the sense of being no longer responsive to sin's temptations, as some have taught. If that were true, Peter's admonition to abstain from the passions of the flesh would be pointless (see 1 Pet. 2:11). So what does Paul mean?

Some Bible commentators believe that Paul means only that we have died to the penalty of sin. That is, because of our union with Christ, when Christ died to sin's penalty we also died to sin's penalty. Well, it certainly means that, but it also means much more. It also means we died to sin's dominion.

What is the dominion of sin? In Romans 5:21, Paul speaks of sin's *reign*. And in Colossians 1:13, he speaks of the *domain of darkness*. When Adam sinned in the Garden, we all sinned through our legal union with him (see Rom. 5:12-21). That is, because of our identity with Adam we all suffered the consequence of his sin. And a part of that consequence is to be born into this world under the reign or dominion of sin. Paul describes what it means to be under this dominion in Ephesians 2:1-3. He says we were spiritually dead; we followed the ways of the world and the devil; we lived in the passions of our sinful natures and were, by nature, objects of God's wrath.

This slavery to the dominion of sin then is part of the penalty due to our guilt of sin. Through our union with Christ in his death, however, our guilt both from Adam's and from our own personal sins was forever dealt with. Having died with Christ to the guilt of sin, we also as a consequence died to the dominion of sin. We cannot continue in sin as a dominant way of life because the reign of sin over us has forever been broken.

This death to the dominion of sin over us is known theologically as *definitive sanctification*. It refers to the decisive break with, or separation from, sin as a ruling power in a believer's life. It is a point-in-time event, occurring simultaneously with justification. It is the fundamental change wrought in us by the monergistic action of the Holy Spirit (that is, by the Spirit acting alone without human permission or assistance) when he delivers us from the kingdom of darkness and transfers us into the kingdom of Christ. This definitive break with the dominion of sin occurs in the life of everyone who trusts in Christ as

Savior. There is no such thing as justification without definitive sanctification. They both come to us as a result of Christ's work for us.

Consider Yourselves Dead to Sin

So we are free from both the guilt and the dominion of sin. But what use is this information to us? How can it help us live out a gospel-based pursuit of sanctification? Here Paul's instructions in Romans 6:11 are helpful: "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

It is important we understand what Paul is saying here because he is not telling us to *do* something but to *believe* something. We are to believe that we are dead through Christ to both sin's penalty and its dominion. But this is not something we *make* come true by believing it. We simply *are* dead to sin, whether we believe it or not. But the practical effects of our death to sin can be realized only as we believe it to be true.

The fact is that we are guilty in ourselves, but God no longer charges that guilt against us because it has already been borne by Christ as our substitute. The sentence has been served. The penalty has been paid. We have died to sin, both to its guilt and to its dominion. That is why Paul can write, "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin" (Rom. 4:8).

But the question arises, "If I've died to sin's dominion, why do I still struggle with sin patterns in my life?" The answer to that question lies in the word *struggle*. Unbelievers do not struggle with sin. They may seek to overcome some bad habit, but they do not see that habit as sin. They do not have a sense of sin against a holy God. Believers, on the other hand, struggle with sin as sin. We see our sinful words, thoughts, and deeds as sin against God; and we feel guilty because of it. This is where we must continue to go back to the gospel. To consider ourselves dead to sin is to believe the gospel.

This doesn't mean that we just believe the gospel and live complacently in our sin. Absolutely not! Go back again to Paul's words in Romans 6:1-2. We died both to sin's guilt and its dominion. Though sin can wage war against us (hence our struggle), it cannot reign over us. That is also part of the gospel. But the success of our struggle with sin begins with our believing deep down in our hearts that regardless of our failures and our struggle, we have died to sin's guilt. We must believe that however often we fail, there is no condemnation for us (Rom. 8:1).

William Romaine, who was one of the leaders of the eighteenth-century revival in England, wrote, "No sin can be crucified either in heart or life unless it first be pardoned in conscience.... If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power." What Romaine was saying is that if you do not believe you have died to sin's guilt, you cannot trust Christ for the strength to subdue its power in your life. So the place to begin in dealing with sin is to believe the gospel when it says you have died to sin's guilt.

Progressive Sanctification

Warring against our sinful habits and seeking to put on Christlike character is usually called sanctification. But because the term *definitive sanctification* is used to describe the point-in-time deliverance from the dominion of sin, it is helpful to speak of Christian growth in holiness as *progressive sanctification*. Additionally, the word *progressive* indicates continual growth in holiness over time. The New Testament writers both assume growth (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 2:19-21; Col. 2:19; 2 Thess. 1:3); and continually urge us to pursue it (see 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; 2 Pet. 3:18). There is no place in authentic Christianity for stagnant, self-satisfied, and self-righteous Christians. Rather we should be seeking to grow in Christlikeness until we die.

This progressive sanctification always involves our practice of spiritual disciplines, such as reading Scripture, praying, and regularly fellowshiping with other believers. It also involves putting to death the sinful deeds of the body (see Rom. 8:13) and putting on Christlike character (see Col. 3:12-14). And very importantly it involves a desperate dependence on Christ for the power to do these things, for we cannot grow by our own strength.

So sanctification involves hard work and dependence on Christ; what I call *dependent effort*. And it will always mean we are dissatisfied with our performance. For a growing Christian, desire will always outstrip performance or, at least, perceived performance. What is it then that will keep us going in the face of this tension between desire and performance? The answer is the gospel. It is the assurance in the gospel that we have indeed died to the guilt of sin and that there is no condemnation for us in Christ Jesus that will motivate us and keep us going even in the face of this tension.

We must always keep focused on the gospel because it is in the nature of sanctification that as we grow, we see more and more of our sinfulness. Instead of driving us to discouragement, though, this should drive us to the gospel. It is the gospel believed every day that is the only enduring motivation to pursue progressive sanctification even in those times when we don't seem to see progress. That is why I use the expression "gospel-driven sanctification" and that is why we need to "preach the gospel to ourselves every day."

1 [[Back](#)] The quotation from William Romaine comes from his *The Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith* (Cambridge, England: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1793), p. 280.

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