

*Nuggets and Gems from the Bible*

SAVED  
IN HIS LIFE —  
FROM  
SELF-LIKENESS

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***Living Stream Ministry***  
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## **SAVED IN HIS LIFE— FROM SELF-LIKENESS**

The key verse in the book of Romans is [5:10](#): “For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved in His life.” Reconciliation to God through Christ has been accomplished already, but salvation in His life from so many negative things is still a daily matter.

The death of Christ on the cross has already dealt with all negative things. Since Christ’s death has already dealt with the negative things, why do we still need to be saved in His life? We need such a salvation because we need to experience what Christ has accomplished for us. All that Christ has accomplished on the cross is an objective fact, but we need a subjective experience of this fact, an experience in life. Christ died on the cross as our substitute, but furthermore there is the need for us to be identified with Him in His death. The only way Christ’s accomplishment in substitution can be applied to us in experience is by our having Christ as our life. This is the identification that brings us into the reality of the fact.

There are numerous items from which we need to be saved in Christ's life, such as the law of sin, worldliness, naturalness, individualism, and divisiveness. Here we shall cover another item, which is self-likeness.

## THE EXPRESSION OF THE SELF

In [Matthew 16](#) the Lord Jesus spoke about denying the self immediately after He had said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan!" Although Peter was speaking out of his love for the Lord, in the eyes of God Peter was Satan at that moment. According to [Matthew 16](#), Satan is the reality of the self. Self is the incarnation of Satan. As Christ is the embodiment and expression of God, so self is the embodiment and expression of Satan.

Every human being is a self. Not only were we born with the self and in the self, but we were born a self. As long as we are natural, we express the self. Whether we love others or hate them, what we express is the expression of self. As long as you are natural and in the self, what you express is the self, not Christ. The expression of Christ comes only out of the life of Christ.

When we speak of being saved in the life of Christ from self-likeness, we mean being saved from the self. Self-likeness is the expression, the

appearance, of the self. The expression of your self is your self-likeness. We need to be saved in the life of Christ from such a self-expression. When Christ died on the cross, He pronounced the sentence of judgment on the self, but this judgment still needs to be executed. Christ has judged the self objectively; we need to execute this judgment subjectively in our experience.

## **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD**

To be saved from the self is to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. This means that to be saved from the self is to be made truly a son of God. [Romans 8](#) speaks of children of God, sons of God, and heirs of God ([vv. 16, 14, and 17](#)). We are children in the initial stage, sons in a more advanced stage, and heirs in the stage of maturity. [Romans 8:14](#) says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Not until we have the leading of the Spirit of God can we be considered sons of God. Until then, we are simply children, those who can cry “Abba Father” and who have the witness of the Spirit with their spirit. In order to be an heir, we must be both matured and qualified.

Through this process of conformation, the

firstborn Son will have many brothers. As the Son of God, Christ was the unique, only begotten Son. Now through His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, Christ has become the firstborn Son, and the many sons, who are the brothers of Christ, are being conformed to His image. [Romans 1:3 and 4](#) say, “Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, and was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead.” In these verses Christ, the Son of God, is the prototype, whereas in [Romans 8:29](#) the many brothers are those who have been “mass-produced” from the prototype. In [1:4](#) the one Son is designated, but in [8:29](#) the many sons are conformed. The designation of the one Son is related to the prototype; the conformation of the many sons is the work of “mass production.” Having gained the prototype, God is now seeking to have the “mass production” in order to produce many sons in the image of the Firstborn.

## **SANCTIFICATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND GLORIFICATION**

The central concept of the book of Romans is not justification by faith but that God is making

sons out of sinners in order to form the Body to express Christ. God's goal is not justification; it is the Body. In the book of Romans there are sections on justification (3:21—5:11), sanctification (5:12—8:13), and glorification (8:14-39). There is also a section on transformation (12:1—15:33). **Romans 8:30** says, “And whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” In this verse Paul does not mention redemption or reconciliation. In **chapters three, four, and five** he does speak of propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation. Propitiation is for redemption, redemption is for justification, and justification issues in reconciliation. The reason Paul does not mention propitiation, redemption, or reconciliation in **8:30** is that they are all included in justification. For this reason, there are not separate sections in this book for propitiation, redemption, nor reconciliation. All are covered in the section on justification. In the same principle, in **8:30** Paul does not mention sanctification or transformation, because both are included in glorification.

In this verse Paul says that we have been predestinated and called by God. Before the foundation of the world, God, according to His divine

foresight, marked us out. He predestinated us in eternity past. Then, in time, He called us. Thus, those whom He foreknew and predestinated, He called. When God called us, He justified us. Through God's justification, our problems with Him have been solved. This does not mean, however, that justification marks the end of God's dealing with us. After justification we still need to be sanctified, transformed, and ultimately, glorified. Hence, sanctification and transformation are for glorification. [Second Corinthians 3:18](#) says that we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. This proves that transformation is for glorification.

## **THE PROCESS OF GLORIFICATION**

Many Christians hold strictly an objective concept of glorification. According to them, one day those who have been saved and regenerated will suddenly be glorified. The glorification of the believers, they claim, will take place instantaneously at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Some portions of the Bible seem to indicate this. For example, [Colossians 3:4](#) says that when Christ our life appears, we shall appear with Him in glory. However, [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) speaks of being transformed from glory to glory, that is, from one degree of

glory to another. In [1 Corinthians 15:40 and 41](#) Paul speaks of different kinds, or degrees, of glory. In this chapter Paul also uses the example of a grain of seed that is “not made alive unless it dies” ([v. 36](#)).

Take a carnation seed as an example. Before it is sown into the earth, the carnation seed has no glory. But after it is sown, it begins to grow out of the earth as a tender sprout. This is the initial stage of glory. As it grows and develops further, it passes into another stage of glory. Eventually a blossom appears. This is the full glory of the carnation seed. This glory does not appear instantaneously or suddenly. On the contrary, it is a matter of gradual growth from one stage of development to another. It is the same in principle with our glorification. Although our glorification may appear to be a sudden occurrence, it is actually the consummation of a process of gradual growth and development in life.

## **AN ORGANIC, METABOLIC CHANGE**

After we have been justified, we need to be sanctified. Sanctification is mainly related to transformation, which issues in glorification. To be sanctified is to be transformed not only in outward form, but also in inward nature. Transformation denotes an inward, organic, metabolic change.

Christ as the organic seed of divine life has been sown into us, Now this seed must develop within our being. We were born natural and common. God's concern is not to change us from bad to good, from impatient to patient, from full of hatred to loving. God cares only to make sons out of sinners by putting His Son as the seed into us. Hallelujah, the seed of sonship has been sown into our being! Although our being is natural, this seed will produce an organic and metabolic change within it. Whatever is changed in this way becomes sanctified.

We may use tea as an illustration. Suppose you have a cup of plain water, water that has the natural taste, color, appearance, and essence. The water is natural, not because it is clean or dirty, but simply because it is water. In order to change natural water into tea-water, tea leaves must be put into the water. Then the essence of the tea will work within the water to "tea-ify" it. Through this process of "tea-ification" the water will eventually have the appearance and taste of tea. In fact, after the water has been permeated with the essence of tea, it will no longer be called water; it will be called tea.

We are the cup of plain, natural water. Whether we are clean or unclean, pure or impure, we are

natural because we are “water.” But God has put Christ, the heavenly “tea,” into us, and the organic element of this “tea” is causing a metabolic change in our natural life. Day by day Christ is transforming us with His essence.

## **GOD’S WORK IN ALL THINGS**

God not only works on us from within, but He also “causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to the purpose.” How I worship God that He is working all things together! Because of His working, eventually we all shall be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Everyone in the New Jerusalem will be in the image of the Son of God. In order to accomplish this, He causes all things to work together for good.

[Romans 8:29 and 30](#) indicate that all the work is God’s. He foreknew, He predestinated, He called, He justified, and He glorified. Notice that the verbs here are in the past tense. According to [verse 30](#), even glorification has already been accomplished. Although we can easily believe that we have been predestinated, called, and justified, we may have difficulty believing that we have already been glorified. But in the eyes of God there is no time element. In His eyes we have been glorified already.

Whenever I am desperate about today's situation, the Lord comforts me and encourages me to rest, for He is doing all the work. In fact, in a sense, the work has already been finished. According to the book of Revelation, Satan is in the lake of fire, and the New Jerusalem has been built up. The fact that the Apostle John could see Satan in the lake of fire and the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God indicates that in the eyes of God these things have already taken place.

We all are being sanctified and transformed, whether or not we feel that anything is taking place within us. If you compare your condition today with the way you were several years ago, you will worship the Lord and thank Him for the sanctifying work He has done in you. Once the Lord has "tea-ified" us, we cannot be the same, even if we decide to leave the church life and go back to the world. You may return to the world, but you will not be able to eradicate the work of sanctification and transformation the Lord has done within you. By contacting Christ and the church something happens within us organically. Day by day the Lord is sanctifying and transforming us.

## **THE INTERCEDING SPIRIT**

Although no one likes to suffer, the more we

suffer, the more we are sanctified. As I remember the saints in the presence of the Lord and pray for them, I often pray that they will have peace and joy. Not knowing how to pray for the saints, I sometimes groan before the Lord, acknowledging that He alone knows their real need. As [Romans 8:26](#) says, “The Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness; for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” In our groaning the interceding Spirit prays for the saints to be conformed to the image of the Son of God.

## **THE GOAL OF GLORIFICATION**

Sometimes we may not be happy with the way the Lord deals with us. For example, a brother may not be content with the wife he has; he may think that another brother has a much better wife than he. But we all have the husband or wife who is best for us. Whatever the Father gives us is the best. He knows what we need. Those who suffer are truly under His blessing. Every wife, every husband, and every environment is the best. Everything that happens to us is God’s best for us. You should praise the Lord not only when you have an excellent job but also when you are unemployed.

There may be times when unemployment is better for you than a good job. The Lord is never mistaken in the way He deals with us. He knows what He is doing.

Praise the Lord that He is now sanctifying and transforming us in order to glorify us! Through the work of transformation, He is conforming us to the image of His Son. Do not separate sanctification, transformation, and conformation; all three are interrelated and are for the goal of glorification. Today we are in the process of glorification. One day, when this process has been completed, we shall all be in glory.

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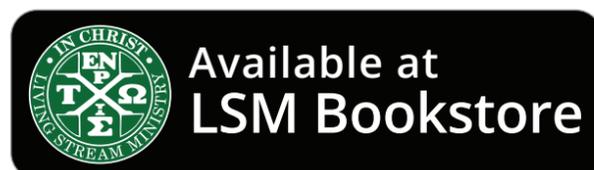


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