***Spirituality

RV67-02***

We are studying the letter to Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22, segment number 19. We have seen that the Lord Jesus Christ stressed three spiritual defects which were facing the Laodicean Christians, and which they urgently needed to correct. He told them they were poor in terms of the gold of the divine viewpoint to be found in Bible doctrine. They were materially very well-off in this congregation, but they were very poor in terms of the gold of the viewpoint of doctrine. As we have seen, the Lord has provided a system for securing the gold of divine viewpoint, but these people were smug with their fool's gold – the fool's gold of human viewpoint. They inflated their material wealth; their money; and, their possessions with being spiritually rich. Of course, none of that material wealth could be taken into heaven when they died. None of it could be taken with them.

So, the point that the Lord is making is that you're really very poor. When you get to heaven, you're going to discover this. That's a very important observation for us to note. What we are is what we are going to take into heaven. What we are here now, in terms of spiritual wealth, is what we will be in heaven. It's going to have a direct effect upon the quality of our eternity.

This is a very basic truth which is not often touched upon. Preachers don't like to say that because, naturally, once they say that, the members of the congregation say, "Well, that sounds like that's very important then. I have a great deal personally at stake, of going out into heaven as rich as I can be spiritually. How do I do that?" And once they ask that question, if it is answered on a biblical basis, I'm sorry to say that we discover that, within most pulpits of the land today, the individual believer doesn't have a chance of developing spiritual wealth to take over with him. He has very little opportunity because the Word of God is so neglected. What people come to church and listen to is challenge; inspiration; platitudes; and, ideals, but they do not know the deep things of the Spirit of God.

So, in Laodicea, the Lord said, "You people are poor. You do not have the divine viewpoint of doctrine, and I urge you to buy this from Me." Furthermore, you have a second problem, and that is that you're naked in terms of the garment of experiential sanctification." They wore the undergarments of salvation, but they lacked the outer garment of godly living and divine good service. So, their condition was shameful before the Lord and before his elected angels. They would so appear in this shameful condition of undergarments at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That's what the Lord was telling them: "While you have the covering of salvation, you do not have the white garments of sanctification in your experience: godliness in your life; and, divine good production in your service."

The diamond of personal godliness is described in the doctrine of sanctification, therefore. Sanctification: what does it mean? You should know this now. You should be able to pop an explanation (a definition) of sanctification immediately. It means "to be set apart" to that which is compatible to God's holiness. Sanctification means to be set apart to something. Sanctification, you should also know immediately, does not mean to be sinless. Sanctification is not sinlessness. It is "set apartness."

We have also seen that there are three aspects of sanctification. Positional sanctification is to be set apart in Christ to eternal life from eternity past. There is experiential sanctification which is to be set apart to holiness in daily life on earth. There is also ultimate sanctification, which is to be set apart to becoming sinless in heaven, like Jesus Christ.

**The Phases of Salvation and Sanctification**

The Laodiceans were failing to enter into all the phases that their salvation provided for them, and therefore, they were naked. Salvation and sanctification are related in a very wonderful way, and we want to look at that, first of all, in this session.

1. **Justification – Positional Sanctification (In the Past)**

There is phase one of salvation. Phase one of salvation can be summarized by the word "justification." This is salvation in the past. The Bible speaks about salvation as being a complete past which imputes absolute righteousness to every believer. This is one way that the Bible describes salvation. Here are a few Scriptures that demonstrate that. In Luke 7:50, He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." The very language of Scripture there is a declaration of something that is an established fact. It is, in effect, a past event. You are saved.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved (past), it is the power of God." Here again is a declaration of salvation as a past accomplished fact.

2 Corinthians 2:15 says, "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish." This is a distinct position of being saved. It is an established fact.

Ephesians 2:5: "Even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ. By grace you are saved." This is a past event. Verse 8: "For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves. That is the gift of God." This is a past event condition.

2 Thessalonians 2:13: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Notice what Paul says: "That God has chosen you from the beginning unto salvation, through sanctification (the setting apart of the Spirit), and through the believing of the truth." The truth of what? The truth of the gospel.

So, there is a facet (a phase) of salvation which is in the past. It is summarized by this word "justification" because justification means that you have been given absolute righteousness, and here is a declaration that you have received this in the past.

This past tense of salvation is just as perfect as God Himself. So, because it is such a perfect salvation, the believer can never be lost again. We have several verses: John 5:24; John 10: 28-29; and, Romans 8:1, all of which declare to us that a person who is saved is secure, because the salvation provided is as perfect as God. In Romans 8:1, I do want to call to your attention that, in your King James translation, the latter part of the verse should be omitted: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." The rest of the verse was inserted by some scribe. The words, "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" should be omitted. He picked those words up from verse 4, because it seemed so shocking to this scribe, who obviously was a legalist (a works-oriented person) to read that verse and say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." That's where the Greek text ended. The scribe said, "There's something wrong there. What if he murders somebody? What if he's adulterous? What if he steals? What if he does this and that? You can't say that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." So, he qualified it by slipping in those words which are not in the best manuscripts. This has been established as being added.

So, there is a past tense of salvation, and the Bible establishes that it's a perfect salvation because it's produced by a perfect God. This phase one of our salvation produces positional sanctification. Positional sanctification is the undergarment that the believer wears.

1. **Edification – Experiential Sanctification (In the Present)**

Then we come to phase two of salvation. Phase two of salvation may be summarized by the word "edification." This is salvation in the present – edification. Again, the Bible speaks about salvation in terms of the freedom of the believer from the present reigning power of evil in the believer's daily life. There is a present salvation where evil does not have to control the individual believer in his daily life. That's a tremendous truth. Let's look at a few verses. Romans 6:14: "For sin (and it's singular, so it's referring to the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace." This is a totally different condition that releases the Christian from the domination of the sin nature.

We see a salvation in the present in Romans 8:2 that says, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." We are free from the controlling, reigning authority of sin.

2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in the mirror, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This says that we are being changed now from an image of sinfulness into an image of sinlessness.

In Galatians 2:19-20, we see salvation in the present tense: "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I may live unto God. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." The believer is living a life which is something more than just the sin nature trying to do the best it can.

In Philippians 1:19, we have another verse on salvation in the present: "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Paul knew that things would work toward his edification.

Philippians 2:12-13: "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." How do you work out your salvation with fear and trembling? You do this in the present – in the godliness of your lifestyle in the present: "For it is God who works in you, both to will, and to do His good pleasure."

So, phase two (our life here on earth) is summarized by the word "edification." There is a present tense to salvation in a gradual releasing of us from the power of sinful living, and that is related to sanctification as experiential sanctification. That is the outer garment that the believer wears. Positional sanctification is the undergarment. Experiential sanctification is the outer garment. As we have seen, if all you have is the undergarments, the Bible views that as being naked, because you are, in effect, unclothed. So, the problem for the Laodicean Christians was that, although they were saved (they've got the undergarments of their justification), they have lacked the outer garment of edification. Therefore, Jesus Christ said that they were spiritually naked.

1. **Glorification – Ultimate Sanctification (In the Future)**

Then there is a third phase: phase three. This one is summarized by the word "glorification." The Bible speaks about salvation in the future. The Bible speaks about a future salvation for believers when they will become absolutely sinless just as Jesus Christ is sinless. Romans 8:29 speaks of this: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." We are destined to become like Jesus Christ, in that we will be sinless.

Romans 13:11: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to wake out of sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed." Well are you saved now or not? How can your salvation come nearer than what it is now? That is in terms of phase three; in terms of future salvation; and, in terms of heaven. That is a salvation which is still ahead of us. You have salvation past. In eternity past, God reached out and He said, "You – I'm going to take you to heaven." There is no merit in you, and no reason for it – it is just the will of God. He chose you for that positional sanctification, to set you aside to eternal life. Then in phase two, you've walked upon this earth, and He has given you the capacity for experiential sanctification; for godliness in living; and, for divine good production. That is dependent upon edification of your personal life through the Word of God. Phase three is a salvation which is still ahead of you. This is something that is coming. This is something that every day comes nearer. With every breath we take, this salvation is nearer the time.

1 Peter 1:5 also speaks of this: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." This salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. This is a future kind of salvation.

1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Here is a future aspect of salvation.

This phase of salvation, like the first two, is, of course, entirely dependent upon the faithfulness of God. It is not dependent upon the faithfulness of man. Philippians 1:6 again: "Being confident of this very thing: that He, who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." All three phases of this salvation are going to be executed by God, and God alone. This leads to ultimate sanctification. Ultimate sanctification is the crown of the believer. Positional sanctification is his undergarment; experiential sanctification is his outer garment; and, ultimate sanctification is his crown. That's what glorification means: the completion of the royal attire, and a fitting attire it is for members of the royal family of God.

The Laodicean defect was simply this: that they had failed to carry their salvation in the present tense to the outer garments of experiential sanctification. This failure, of course, is related to the fact of their poverty in divine viewpoint – the gold from Bible doctrine which they should have been storing in their human spirit. Without that gold in your human spirit, your experiential sanctification will suffer greatly, because there are no divine guidelines in your human spirit for the Holy Spirit to use in guiding your mind. There is no divine viewpoint enlightenment in the mind to guide the emotions and the will in your soul. There is no capacity developed from the Word of God. So, these people fell into human viewpoint evils in their daily walk. They lacked experiential sanctification.

The royal family of God should be properly attired in Satan's world. You should have the undergarments of justification. You should have the outer garments of edification (experiential sanctification). You should have the crown of ultimate sanctification of your glorification.

There was one other problem that the Lord particularly pointed out about these people. There were not only poor, though they thought they were rich. They were not only naked, though they thought they were fashion plates. They were also one other terrible thing, and that is blind. In Revelation 3:18, the last part of the verse therefore says, "And." This is the Greek word "kai." This is a conjunction, and it is introducing the third thing which the Laodicean Christians are to buy from Jesus Christ. Remember that He has told them to buy all three of these things. They are to buy the gold of divine viewpoint from Him. They are to buy the outer garment of experience sanctification from Him. And now they are to buy something else to solve their spiritual blindness. The coin for purchasing these things, we have seen, is their faith. They are believing what God has said.

So, the word "and" introduces the third thing which they need to buy from Jesus Christ to solve the terrible condition that existed in that local congregation. They were to buy this in order to: "Anoint." The word "anoint" is the Greek word "egchrio." This word means "to rub in" or "to besmear." It is to be done to their spiritual eyes – their means of discerning spiritual reality. The Greek has this in the aorist tense, which means that, at some point, they are to make the decision to heal their spiritual blindness. It is in the active voice, which means that every individual Christian has to solve his own spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness causes a person a great deal of trouble just like physical blindness does. If you're in the wrong position with physical blindness, you can walk over the edge of a precipice to your death. In the case of spiritual blindness, you can do something about it, but only you can do something about it. No one can solve and heal your spiritual blindness. So, it's active voice to stress that this is a decision of a personal act on your part. It's infinitive in the mood, which indicates that this is the purpose of Jesus Christ for him. The Lord Jesus Christ did not intend for his people to walk around blind as bats to spiritual things.

They are to "Smear something on your." This is the word "su." It's a personal pronoun. It means the pastor-teacher and the individual members. They are individually (both alike) guilty of this blindness. They are to anoint (they are to rub something on) their eyes. The Greek word for "eyes" is "ophthalmos." "Ophthalmos" is the word for the physical organ of sight. Here, the word is used in terms of mental vision or mental insight in terms of spiritual things. We have this idea conveyed, for example, in Ephesians 1:17-18: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope with His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints. Verse 18 is a perfect definition of the problem that these people had: eyes which would have understanding because they have spiritual enlightenment. This is so that they know what it is to be called to be a Christian. They know what it is to have the riches of the glory of God attributed and imputed to them. They know what their inheritance is as saints.

That's the whole business of teaching the Word of God – alerting Christians to what their inheritance is. The average Christian is pathetically ignorant of what his spiritual inheritance is. He hasn't got the foggiest notion. When you get into amillennialism, and they confuse that heritage of the Jew in the Old Testament with the heritage of the believer in the church age, he is completely befuddled. He is completely at loss. He hasn't got the faintest idea then what his inheritance is as a Christian. A Christian in the church age is the most outstanding, unique believer of all the dispensations. And having eyes to understand that is the only way that you're going to be able to enter into the blessings of that in your life now, with all that that holds for you in eternity.

We have eyes for spiritual discernment. This word "ophthalmos" is used in this way in various passages. Let's look at a few. Matthew 13:15 is one example: "For this people's heart is become gross. Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart (that is, with the mind), and should be converted, and I should heal them." Eyes which cannot see spiritual things will result in a great loss to the individual.

John 12:40: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes (they should not see *spiritual* things with their spiritual eyes), nor understand with their heart (with the mind), and be converted, and I should heal them.

Then there is one more from Paul in Romans 11:8. Paul says, "According as it is written, God has given them the spirit of slumber: eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day."

This is the problem here in Romans 11 that is faced by the Jewish people today. The Jewish people today are under a divine curse. They are under the divine judgment that they have eyes which cannot see spiritual things. When they rejected Jesus Christ as Savior, and when they call for His blood to be upon them and their children, they brought down upon their eyes scales to prevent them from seeing Jesus Christ down through the centuries for who He really was. It was an enormously expensive decision for them to make when they shouted back to Pilate, "His blood be upon us and our children." Paul says that this is their problem – that God has taken away from their eyes the ability to see spiritual truth.

This was the condition in Laodicea. So, the Lord says to them, "Buy from me, to just rub on your eyes, an eye salve." The Greek word looks like this "kollourion." "Kollourion" is a noun. This word actually comes from another word, which is the word for the cylindrical shape of a bread roll. "Kollourion" is related to that cylindrical shape. This is speaking about some kind of medication that comes in the cylindrical shape. It's like what we call chapstick today, for example. It has that cylindrical shape. The background of this word, of course, is the fact that he's speaking to people who live in Laodicea.

As you've already found out, Laodicea was famous for the "tephra Phrygia." The "tephra Phrygia referred to an eye powder which was developed in the Laodicean medical school which was world famous, and which apparently was very effective in dealing with eye diseases. In the ancient world, disease of the eyes was very commonplace. Of course, this was a very serious thing. The "tephra Phrygia" powder developed in the medical school of Laodicea became world famous because it was an effective medication. It was made in the form of a powder, and then it was mixed with a grease base, or with an oil base, and rolled into a cylindrical shape, and then applied to the eyes.

The Lord Jesus Christ says, "I have a medication for the eyes of spiritual discernment, which you are having trouble with, so that you will not be blinded to spiritual things. The Laodiceans were blinded by their carnality. What was their problem? Their problem was spirituality. The Lord says, "I have a medication for you to rub on your eyes, and the result will be, "That." The word "that" is the Greek word "hina," which indicates the reason for this spiritual medication: "That you may see." The word is "blepo." "Blepo" is a word that refers to spiritual discernment. The problem was lack of personal spirituality. What does spirituality mean? It means to be controlled by God the Holy Spirit. When you are not controlled by God the Holy Spirit, you have cut yourself off from spiritual enlightenment. You cannot see spiritual truth. What these people suffered from was the lack of eyes to see spiritual truth. And the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ is for the Laodiceans to possess spiritual insight in order to discern their own true condition. It is in the present tense because He constantly wants these believers to be able to have eyes that discern spiritual things. It's active. It's a personal ability that He wants them to have. It is subjunctive. It is a potential condition. You have to take the steps to get your eyes open.

There are thousands of Christians who never want to get their eyes open. They do not take the steps to get their eyes open. They come up against the truth. They do not believe that the Word of God is alive and powerful, and they do not understand that the truth is in the Scriptures. It is no place else. It's not in my head. It's not in your head. It's not in the head of some famous speaker; some famous writer; or, some famous preacher. It's only one place. It's in the Scriptures. And that's the only place you're going to get it. Yet, we have tapes in our tape ministry which are geared to digging out of the Word of God (out of the Bible) divine viewpoint truth, and somebody comes up against a truth, and it contradicts and condemns something that he has always believed and something that he has always done, and they cut themselves off from further enlightenment.

How many charismatics have written us letters when they got hold of the first tape on some series, and they discovered that these tapes were raising the issue of serious doubt that the charismatic movement was of God; that what they were involved in was a satanic action; and, they were in a great delusion. And they don't say, "Now, wait a minute. If that's true, then I want to get out of this. I want to hear what you have to say." Instead, they cut themselves off, and they choose to be blind.

Don't be too quick to assume that you're an open-minded person; that you're a person who's willing to listen to the truth; and, that you're a person who is interested in finding out what God has to say, because it is very easy for the devil to take aspects of our sin nature; our prejudices; and, our built-in traditions to keep us from reaching out to enlightenment. Some of you sitting here today know very well how that works. You have come out of great darkness. Some of you have come out of borderline darkness. That was even worse. You were walking in a gray area. You couldn't say that you were in spiritual darkness. The problem was that you were not across the line in spiritual enlightenment. You sit here breathing a sigh of relief because, by the grace of God, you were pulled across the line, and suddenly your eyes were opened, so that you can see. This is a potential condition – subjunctive mood. But you can also choose to stay blind.

So, while the Laodicean congregation, in its social and intellectual arrogance, boasted of its spiritual insight, Jesus Christ declared them to be spiritually blind and totally in the dark. The most precious thing that you and I, as Christians, possess is eyes which are capable of spiritual illumination. Without eyes that can see spiritually, it's a cold, dark world of self-delusion and of self-injury. The Laodiceans did not walk by means of the Holy Spirit, so they had no teacher to give them the eyes of spiritual understanding that they needed.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul points out this fact – that: "The natural man (the unsaved man) doesn't receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. They are seen with spiritual eyes. The Laodiceans thought that they had it all, and Jesus Christ said that they had nothing.

One thing I do want to stress, so you don't get a misconception here, is that you will notice that in the correction which the Lord gives to these people, he never told them to get rid of their money. He never said to them, "The trouble with you people is that you've got too much money. You're too well-off materially. Get rid of what you have. Get rid of your material possessions." He didn't say that. Their material wealth was not incompatible with spirituality. What they lacked was a mastery of the details of life. What they lacked was a spirituality to be able to control that which they possessed.

**Spirituality**

So, that brings us to this very important subject of spirituality. This is what made them blind. Jesus Christ said, "I have a medication that will make you spiritual. When you are a spiritual Christian, then you have discerning eyes. When you are unspiritual, you are blind as a bat. The old sin nature in every believer constantly challenges the will of God the Holy Spirit who indwells every Christian. Remember that this is true of you. In the Old Testament, this was not the case. Every believer in the Old Testament was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Certain ones were. The Holy Spirit would come upon them, and then He would leave them. One of the distinctive features of the New Testament is that every believer, at the point of salvation, has his body converted into the temple of the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit dwells within you, and there is constant tension between Him and the evil sin nature that you inherited from your father, and which sets in the genetic structure of your physical body. The sin nature has had its total control over the believer broken at the cross. The volition of the Christian, however, can still switch over that control to the sin nature. We call that the state of carnality. The Bible calls it the state of being carnal.

There is a command, therefore, given to all believers in Ephesians 5:18, which says, "Be not drunk with wine, which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." This word "filled" looks like this in the Greek: "pleroo." This word is in the present tense. When a word is in the present tense in the Greek language, it means that this is to be constantly the case. The Greek present tense doesn't mean just now. It means that it is always to be the case. Furthermore, it is in the passive voice, which means that this is something that is done to you. You are filled with the Spirit. You don't fill yourself. This is not something that you do. Thus you become filled with the spirit. Furthermore, it is imperative in its mood, and imperative means a command.

So, here you have a command from God to every believer to be a spiritual Christian: "I command you to be a spiritual Christian." To be a spiritual Christian is to be in the status of what we call spirituality. This is what the Laodicean Christians did not have. They were blind because they had no spirituality. They lacked the status of spirituality. Spirituality meant to be controlled by God the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. It does not mean that you get more of the Holy Spirit as you're filled with Him. You have Him as a total person indwelling you. It means that you become possessed by Him. We use the word in English the same way. We say, "This boy is just full of football." It doesn't mean that he eats footballs. It means that he's obsessed with the game. He's just preoccupied with football. That's what's on his mind, and that's what holds his attention. It controls him. To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this control is to glorify Christ by developing spiritual maturity in our soul, which is reflecting the glory of Christ. You never judge whether you are filled with the Spirit or not by outward reactions. Outward reactions among Christians vary greatly between emotional and non-emotional type believers. There is not a standard norm for a Christian. You do not say, "Christians are this type or that type." Some Christians are very emotional; some Christians are very cool; and, some Christians fall in between. It doesn't matter what your particular temperament type is, but you do have a particular temperament type. The great tragedy is to try to squeeze you into one or the other. However, the normal expressions of godly living flowing from spirituality can be imitated by the old sin nature in both the Christian and the unbeliever.

So, even though a person acts in a certain way, that doesn't mean that he's spiritual, because you can imitate it. You can imitate spirituality just like you can imitate most anything else. You cannot secure a spiritual state through human efforts. It's something that God gives you: "Be filled with the Spirit." It is passive voice. It is something that God gives you on the basis of those who have met the requirements.

**The Holy Spirit**

So, the question is how to be a spiritual Christian. To begin with, we have to look now at the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit permanently and dwells each Christian at the point of salvation. This is taught to us in John 14:16, 1 Corinthians 3:16, and 1 Corinthians 6:19. All of these verses declare to us that, at the point of salvation, a Christian is permanently indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. He moves into your body, and He never leaves you again. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer for the specific purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ through that believer. This is taught us in John 16:12-14. The Lord said, "I'm going to send the Holy Spirit. He's going to come to you. His job is going to be to glorify Me through the way you live, and to glorify Me through the way you serve."

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by producing what the Bible calls "The fruit of the Spirit." Don't call it the *fruits* of the Spirit. It is a single cluster of fruit. You have them all, or you have none: "The fruit of the Spirit." Galatians 5:22-23 describe this 9-clustered fruit of the spirit. This is reflecting the character of Jesus Christ. This is what is produced in the believer by God the Holy Spirit. This is characteristic of the spiritual Christian. The indwelling Holy Spirit is able to glorify Christ through the life of the believer only when he controls that Christian. That is the status of being filled with the Spirit, or being a spiritual Christian – being in the status of spirituality.

**Two States of a Christian**

The Bible contrasts two states in which a Christian may live in his life. There are two states in which the Christian may live. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 3:1. Paul says, "And I, brethren, cannot speak to you as spiritual." This is status number one. You can be a spiritual Christian. To these people, he said, "I couldn't talk to you as spiritual Christians, but as carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." This is status number two. This is a carnal Christian. So, a Christian at any point is either spiritual or carnal. These are determined by who controls the life of the Christian. When God the Holy Spirit controls the life, it's a spiritual Christian. When the old sin nature controls the life, you're a carnal Christian. As we have indicated, the Spirit of God and the sin nature – both of them are within you as a believer.

Now, the Holy Spirit is absolute righteousness. He never shares control of the life with the evil of the sin nature. For that reason, we say that these are absolute statuses. You are not 60% spiritual and 40% carnal. You are controlled by the Holy Spirit in all facets of your life, or you are not controlled. You are controlled by the Holy Spirit, and then you are guilty of an act of evil (a sin or a human good). The Holy Spirit calls this to your attention. He brings conviction, and you respond with confession as per 1 John 1:9 (an admission), and the problem is solved. You back off from the evil. All that time you have been in fellowship. All that time you have been a spiritual Christian. God the Holy Spirit is dealing with you as one who is a child walking under the Father's fellowship – in favor. When the evil is brought to your attention, and you resist correction, then you slip out of the inner circle of temporal fellowship into the outer circle of only eternal fellowship.

The inner circle is temporal fellowship. You come into this inner circle at salvation. You leave this inner circle when you sin. You don't leave your salvation. When you confess, you come back in again. The inner circle is the area of spirituality. The area outside of the inner circle (but still inside the outer circle) is the area of carnality. You are in one state or the other. Learn this, and learn this well. Be aware that, with each breath you take, you are either making your life prosper in the inner circle, or you're wasting it outside of the inner circle (but still in the outer circle).

**The Law of Sin and Death**

These two possible controls are contrasted for us in Romans 8:1. We see that they are mutually exclusive: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation of them who are in Christ Jesus." From your study of the book of Romans, you know that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is designed to put you into Christ. That permanently associates you with the Son of God. So, this phrase "in Christ Jesus" refers to Christians only. In verses 2 through 4, we have two laws of the spiritual life mentioned: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." We have the law of sin and death. This refers to the law which was given by God to Moses for Israel. It's an expression of the absolute righteousness of God which is facing man. That's what Law of the Old Testament declared. Romans 7:12 tells us this. The old sin nature keeps man from obeying this standard of absolute righteousness, and it condemns man unto eternal death. For this reason, Romans 3:7-8 says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

So, you have, first of all, this law called the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death is controlled by the sin nature. It is a law which violates the righteous standards of God. Then you have the other law – in verse 2, the law of the Spirit of life. This enables the Christian to live a supernatural life free from evil. You cannot do this by keeping the Old Testament law (that law of sin and death). This is a grace operation. This law refers to being filled or controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit, which enables you then to be free of control of the old sin nature. So, you're either controlled by the sin nature, or you're control by the Spirit of God.

**The Law of the Spirit**

In Romans 8:3-4, the person in Christ, through regeneration, thus cannot live under control of the sin nature and of the Holy Spirit at the same time. Verse 3 says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." What you could not fulfill through trying to walk after the flesh (the old sin nature) you will fulfill through walking after the spirit; that is, the Spirit of God. The same mutually exclusive controls are indicated in Romans 8:5-6: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." Those who are under the control of the sin nature, think in terms of the sin nature, but they that are after the Spirit (that is, the Holy Spirit), think in terms of the things of the Spirit. They are under control of the Holy Spirit respond to the things of the Holy Spirit. Verse 5 is telling you that the two statuses are mutually exclusive. You're either spiritual, or you're carnal. Verse 6: "For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. There's the contrast. It is a very definite contrast.

**Spiritual Blindness**

So, very briefly, here is the sequence into spiritual blindness. You, as a Christian, are in a state of spirituality. God the Holy Spirit is controlling your life. You're in temporal fellowship with God the Father because all known sins have been confessed. You, as a Christian, are tempted to sin from some source: from the world; the flesh; or, the devil. You're tempted to perform an act of evil. Evil consists of two things: overt acts of sin (or mental attitude sins); or, acts of human good. Both are evil. The Christian goes negative to the Holy Spirit's guidance. He decides to respond to this appeal to evil, so he does the evil. Instantly, the sin nature rises in control over the life, and God the Holy Spirit throws out the warning. The Christian ignores the warning, and he goes with the evil. He is now in the status of carnality, and he is out of temporal fellowship. 1 John 1:6-7 describe this condition: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His son, cleanses us from all sins. If you walk in darkness of the sin nature, you are not doing the truth. And the people of Laodicea were lying to themselves and everybody else by pretending that they were walking under the direction of God.

Verse 7 says, "If you walk in the light as He is in the light (as the Lord is in the light; that is, that the light of Scripture gives us), then we have fellowship not only with God, but we can have fellowship with one another." You cannot have fellowship with Christians who are walking in the darkness.

So, here is a Christian who is in the state of carnality now. In this state, all his service is human good; all divine guidance has stopped; his prayer is useless; and, all accumulation of rewards in heaven ceases. It is a very serious thing how much time you log in carnality. It is a tremendous cost in terms of eternity, let alone in terms of your blessing and happiness right now. If a Christian dies in this state of carnality, he goes to heaven. He is poor spiritually, but he goes to heaven.

How does he turn this around? The Christian recognizes that he's out of temporal fellowship because of his sins or his human good. He decides to go positive to the Holy Spirit, so he confesses (as per 1 John 1:9) that evil of which the Spirit of God has condemned him. Sin is always against God, so it is only to Him that you make the confession. A Christian, then, who has confessed this sin, is immediately forgiven, and he is cleansed from all unrighteousness (meaning his unknown evils). Instantly, the Holy Spirit takes control of his life. Instantly, he comes back into the inner circle of temporal fellowship. He is now in a state of spirituality: his Christian service now becomes divine good; the Holy Spirit is guiding his life; his prayer life is heard; his rewards are being accumulated in heaven; and, his doctrine is being stored in his human spirit. If the Christian dies while in a state of spirituality, he goes to heaven.

Now the Bible lays out for us three distinct statements for establishing this very important status of "eyes which can see spiritual things." It's amazing how the Bible just puts this so clearly because this is so important. It says, "One; two; and, three." This establishes eyes which can see. In the next session, we shall take up those three conditions which give us eyes of capacity to see spiritual enlightenment instead of being the blind bats of Laodicea.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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