

Perfectly Perfected

Today on "It's a Good Life" I'd like for us to look at the believer's standing and state in Christ. In I John 3:1-3, it says, ¹*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* ²*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth 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.* ³*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Then, in Hebrews 10:14 it says: *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Every believer has a wonderful standing in grace. As the hymn says, "Born of the Spirit with life from above into God's family divine, justified fully through Calvary's love, oh, what a standing is mine."

A believer's standing has to do with his position, his status as a child of God, how God sees him in Christ. It has to do with all that is true of the believer because he is saved by grace. Now, every believer has a glorious standing in the grace of God; every believer has been promised in God's Son. First Corinthians 1:30 says, *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

Then we see that every believer is a child of God. Romans 8:16-17 says, ¹⁶*The Spirit itself... or Himself... beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:* ¹⁷*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Every believer is a saint of the most high God, and we'll read a verse a little later about that. Every believer has been seated in heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians 2:6 says, *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* It's as though we're already in Heaven.

And every believer has been called unto holiness. First Thessalonians 4:7 says, *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.* This is our most excellent standing and position in Christ Jesus.

The following that we're going to go through needs to be noted about a believer's standing in Christ. There's a difference in standing and position. We're going to see that in just a moment. The believer's standing is, first of all, the result of the work of Christ on the cross. First John 3:2 says this: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God...* and we read that just a few minutes ago, and that's Chapter 3 and Verse 2.

And then in I Corinthians 1:18 it says, *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.* So, the believer's standing is the result of the work of Christ on the cross.

And then we see that it's also by personal faith in Jesus Christ. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Galatians 3:26 says, *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* So, the believer's standing is not only the result of the work of Christ on the cross, it's also by personal faith in Jesus Christ and His work

on the cross. It is all the gift of God received by faith.

We also see that it's perfect. Colossians 2:10 says, *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.* Now, this standing in Christ will never improve or get better, and you'll see what I mean in just a moment. It's never going to improve or get better; it's perfect forgiveness. Perfect forgiveness cannot be improved. Colossians 2:10 says, once again, *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.* It's already the best it will ever be.

For example, as part of my standing, I have complete forgiveness of sins. This forgiveness is a perfect forgiveness. The forgiveness I have will never improve or get better. I had this perfect forgiveness the day I was saved and I will have this same forgiveness the day I die, and so will you if you've trusted Jesus as your Savior.

Well, a believer's standing is the result of the work of Christ on the cross; it's by personal faith in Jesus Christ. It's perfect; and we see that it's the same for every child of God. We share an equal standing, an equal position, an equal status. You find the most carnal, that's fleshly, believer you can find who lived during the past two thousand years and put him next to the Apostle Paul, one of the godliest saints who ever lived, Paul's standing is no better than the standing of this carnal believer. Both share an equal standing, but when it comes to the Judgment Seat of Christ, II Corinthians 5:10, there will be great differences between believers with respect to rewards and loss of rewards, but when it comes to our standing in Christ, there is no difference.

C.I. Scofield has written this: "The weakest person, if he be but a true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, has precisely the same title as the

most illustrious saint." First Corinthians 1:2 says, *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified... That's set apart... in Christ Jesus, called to be saints... That means we're saints... with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

In Joel 2:32, it says, *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered...* That means saved. Romans 10:13 says, *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved... or delivered, according to Joel 2:32.*

There is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek. Everybody is the same. *There is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus,* Galatians 3:28.

And we see the standing in Christ is based wholly on grace, as well. Romans 5:2 says, *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Ephesians 2:8-9, some familiar verses for us, *⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

So, we see that the standing in Christ is the result of the work of Christ on the cross, by personal faith in Jesus Christ. It's perfect. It's the same for every child of God, and it's based wholly on God's grace.

Note, the believer's standing in Christ is not gained by diligence, church attendance, or good works. Luke 18:11-13 talks about the Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself. In other words, God didn't hear him praying. He said this, *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* He was claiming to

be something when he was nothing. He was trying to do good works. He was trying to be diligent, but it was doing him no good with God.

And then, in that same section of Scripture, we read about the publican. It says, ¹³*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* The Bible goes ahead and tells us in Luke 18:14, *I tell you, this man... speaking of the publican... went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Titus 3:5 says, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

I don't deserve any of God's goodness. I'm not worthy of any of it. It is by God's grace that I stand perfect and complete in Christ Jesus. Romans 5:2 talks about that.

Now let's look at the believer's state. Ephesians 2:10 says, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

It's important to make a careful distinction between a believer's standing and a believer's state. Well, what is the believer's state? When we speak of a believer's state, we're referring to the actual spiritual condition or state that he is in at any given point of time. It has to do with the believer's walk, the way the believer lives and conducts himself. His state will depend upon many factors, such as whether he trusts the Lord or not, whether he abides in Christ or not, whether he obeys the Word of God or not, and so forth. It's not talking

about whether he's saved or not. It's talking about his state.

The believer's state falls short of perfection. James 3:2 says, *For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.* Well, what does this mean? First John 1:8 says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* We have not attained perfectness yet, perfection, but we're striving daily as Christians.

A believer's state... walk in Christ is also seen like this. It can improve or it can get worse. First Thessalonians 4:1 says, *Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.* Many verses speak of this.

And we also see the believer's state is not the same for every child of God. First Corinthians 3:1: *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal... or fleshly... even as unto babes in Christ.* First Corinthians 3:3 says, *For ye are yet carnal... that's fleshly...for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

Some believers are consistently walking in the Spirit, while others are often walking in the flesh. Some are carnal, that's fleshly, walking as unsaved; and others are spiritual. Some are trusting in God; others are trusting in self. As the old hymn says, "All the way from Earth to Glory, I would be like Jesus, telling o'er and o'er the story. I would be like Jesus. Be like Jesus, this my song. In the home and in the throng be like Jesus all day long. I would be like Jesus."

May our prayer be, dear Lord, control and empower me by the Spirit's assistance. Change me into the likeness of Christ through the Spirit's ministry. Help me to see Thy beauty and grace. Amen.

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.