



**Union with Christ:  
We Have Him and  
All the Covenant  
Blessings He Won**

# A Very Brief Review

1. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are our only infallible rule for Faith (what we believe) and Practice (how we live in light of what we believe).
2. There is ONE true God who exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He needs nothing. However, out of the overflow of His love, He created all things. He created Adam and Eve in His image and condescended to relate to them by a covenant – called the Covenant of Works/Creation – by which they, and all of their offspring, would inherit eternal blessing if they would obey the Triune God.

# A Very Brief Review

3. Adam, our Covenant head, did not obey God. Instead, he and Eve rebelled against God. Sin and all of its consequences entered creation. It corrupted Adam and Eve and all their descendants who were born by ordinary generation.
4. The Triune God then announces a new Covenant – A Covenant of Grace- *“wherein he freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ...”*
5. In the Fullness of time, the Eternal Son of God, actually took on our flesh in history and secured life and salvation for those whom the Triune chose in eternity. The Son did this by living an utterly holy life and dying an utterly sacrificial and atoning death for his chosen ones.

# A Very Brief Review

6. Those for whom Christ lived and died are united to Him by **saving faith** - a gift given to them by the Triune God.
7. This faith, which unites the believer to Christ, is not in any way a work that secures God's favor. Instead, it is the instrument by which believers receive Christ and all the covenant benefits that Christ has earned.
8. Therefore, with Christ comes "evangelical graces" – gifts that come to the Christian believer because of his or her "union with Christ." Some of those graces are primarily experiential (e.g., "repentance unto life") and some are primarily "forensic" or "declarative" (e.g., justification, adoption) and some accent both (e.g., sanctification, perseverance and glorification). We consider three of those evangelical graces today: Justification; Adoption; and Sanctification.

# Justification

## WCF Chapter 11

## Justification – WCF Chapter 11

**“The Wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom. 1:18).**

“This is our situation and it is our relation to God; how can we be right with Him?

The answer, of course, is that we cannot be right with him; we are all wrong with him . . . Because we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Far too frequently we fail to entertain the gravity of this fact. Hence the reality of our sin and the reality of the wrath of God upon us for our sin do not come into our reckoning. This is the reason why the grand article of justification does not ring the bells in the innermost depths of our spirit.” Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p. 123.

# Justification – WCF Chapter 11

## What is Justification?

A **judicial declaration** that, in Christ, (1) the believers sins ARE pardoned and their just condemnation is removed because Christ's sacrifice atoned for them – He provided "proper, real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf" (WCF 11.3); and (2) the believers ARE righteous before God because Christ's obedience (fulfilling all righteousness) has been imputed unto them (WCF 11:1). (Compare WLC, Q/A 70)

The Reformers captured this reality in the phrase the "marvelous/glorious exchange" – our sin and guilt being transferred to Christ; His righteousness being transferred to us.

# Justification – WCF Chapter 11

## Seven Crucial Points Regarding This Declaration:

1. This is entirely by God's free grace. The Triune God, in eternity, decreed to save sinners by the Son becoming like them, being righteous in every way, and yet bearing their sin for them and then giving to those sinners Christ's righteousness by uniting them to Himself through faith given to them by the Spirit. Those who belong to Christ receive this two-part declaration by grace alone. They in no way to contribute to it. **(WCF 11.1)**
2. This justification is declared at the **beginning** of the Christian's new life, **not at the end**. It is **NOT** a declaration that results from an infusion of grace that matures into actual and complete righteousness at death or purgatory (the error of Rome). **(WCF 11.1)**



## Justification – WCF Chapter 11

### Seven Crucial Points Regarding This Declaration:

3. The believer's righteousness before God is **NOT** the believer's faith, as if God accepts faith as a substitute for the righteousness that He demands (the error of J. Arminius). Rather, the believer's righteousness is an "alien righteousness" – the righteousness of another. The believer, in union with Christ by faith, receives Christ's perfect righteousness as a gift. It is the righteousness **from** God that matches perfectly the righteousness **of** God. **(WCF 11.1).**
4. The believer is not partially pardoned (pardoned for sins committed until he/she believes) and then independently secures pardon through obedience and personal repentance for sins committed after coming to Christ. **(WCF 11.5).**

# Justification – WCF Chapter 11

## Seven Crucial Points Regarding This Declaration:

5. While Justification is necessarily linked to God's decree and Christ's life, death and resurrection, the declaration of pardon and righteousness happens in **our** history, when the individual believer is united to Christ through faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. **(WCF 11.4)**.
6. There is only one method of Justification. All believers, those before Christ came into the world and those after His life, death, and resurrection, are declared to be pardoned and righteous in Christ alone. **(WCF 11.6)**.

# Justification – WCF Chapter 11

## Seven Crucial Points Regarding This Declaration:

7. The declaration of pardoned and righteous in Christ is final. Those united to Christ by saving faith will always be pardoned and seen by God as wholly righteous. But, their ongoing sin may result in God’s “Fatherly displeasure” in order that we would acknowledge and repent of our sins, seek his forgiveness, and be restored in fellowship with Him. **(WCF 11.5)**.

# Adoption

## WCF Chapter 12

## Adoption – WCF Chapter 12

1. All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth [*graciously grants*], in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him, as by a father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

## Adoption – WCF Chapter 12

- A. Other, earlier Reformed confessions/catechisms did not separately discuss Adoption. Instead, they treated adoption as an aspect of Justification. By the the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Scottish and English theologians were treating it as a distinct “evangelical grace” that was separate from, but always joined to, the other “evangelical graces.”
- B. Like justification, it is first judicial, and then experiential. We come more and more to rest in and live out of that our new judicially declared status.

## Adoption – WCF Chapter 12

- C. Its privileges: God’s name upon us; have the Spirit of adoption and access to the throne of grace with boldness, we cry, Abba, Father; we are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God, as by a father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.
- D. The Apex of Grace. “By adoption the redeemed become sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; they are introduced into and given the privileges of God’s family. . . as the term implies, [adoption] is an act of transfer from an alien family into the family of God Himself. This is surely the apex of grace and privilege. We would not dare to conceive of such grace, far less to claim it, apart from God’s own revelation and assurance [of it].” – J. Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p. 139 – 141.

# Sanctification

## WCF Chapter 13



## The *Nature* of Sanctification (WCF 13.1)

1. They, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them: the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

# The *Nature* of Sanctification (WCF 13.1)

## Key Points:

- A. Sanctification is **NOT** to be separated from God's work of calling and regenerating the believer. Rather, it is the Spirit's ongoing work of continuing to bring the Christian from death to life.
- B. Sanctification, like every other "evangelical grace" is found in our **union with Christ**. Our union with Christ in His life, death, and resurrection secures our sanctification (definitively) and **frees us from our bondage to sin** because, in Christ's death, we have been set free from sin's mastery over us and by His resurrection we have been raised in "newness of life," set apart (sanctified) for devotion "to God in Christ Jesus." Romans 6.

# The Nature of Sanctification (WCF 13.1)

## Key Points:

- C. The work of sanctification is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit. The principal means that the Spirit uses to accomplish this work is the Word.
- D. The work of sanctification is NOT a minor reclamation project, nor is it matter rearrangement, nor is it matter of transformation, as we often think of that word. Rather, it is a work of putting to death and bringing forth life – mortification and vivification.