

A STOLEN LIFE

If a child is repeatedly told they are stupid, bad, and worthless, they will often grow into a person who then acts stupid, bad, and worthless. This does not mean the person who put these things into their mind was correct. Instead, the lies they told this child were like the thief Jesus spoke of who came to *"kill, steal, and destroy."* John 10:10. Their words robbed this child of their human dignity and of the life they could have had.

The Apostle Paul is clear that the washing of sin from the heart of the believer is the central work of salvation. He says, *"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"*

II Thessalonians 2:13. The Greek word translated as *"sanctification"* means *"purification."* This is the work Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross where he died to *"take away the sin of the world."* John 1:29. This cleansing from sin becomes our reality when we believe the truth and are *"born again"* of the Spirit of God.

A person whose spirit, or heart, has been cleansed from sin, still has much to learn in this walk in Christ. They are not spiritual robots. They will make mistakes. They *must* *"...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour*

Jesus Christ." II Peter 3:18. Yet, because they have been washed from sin and born of God, they are no longer a sinful creation. Their very nature has been changed through the salvation brought to them by faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul describes the work of this great salvation in his letter to the believers at Rome. He tells them that everyone who is in Christ has been crucified in union with Christ so that *"the body of sin,"* or *"sin nature,"* would be destroyed. Romans 6:6. He goes further, saying, not only is the believer dead with Christ and *"free from sin"* Romans 6:22, but they are also risen with Christ *"to walk in newness of life."* Romans 6:4. This is the reason he then tells every believer to ***"...reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** Romans 6:11. The Greek word translated *"indeed"* in this passage means *"in fact."* It is a fact that those who know Christ are both dead unto sin and alive unto God. They are not sinners. They are not of this world. The work of Christ on the cross has made them to be new creatures. II Corinthians 5:17. They must recognize it and account it to be the truth that it is.

The continuous drumbeat from pulpits across America, which say, "We are still sinners and we sin every day," is akin to the person who tells a child they are "bad, stupid, and worthless." Those who say such things are destroying faith in Christ who promised he would make us free from sin. John 8:32-36. Those who believe their words, are like the child who accepts the lies told to them of their own worthlessness.

My dad tells of a man who came to him about his teenage daughter. The man was very harsh and rigid to his children, and accused his daughter of being a harlot because she wanted to wear a little blush on her cheeks. Soon his daughter began to sneak out at nights and meet up with older men. My dad was very straight with the man, saying, "You have made her think she is a harlot just because she wants to wear a little makeup. Then, when a man comes along pretending to love her, she already feels like a harlot, so in her mind she has nothing to lose by sleeping with him."

The child of God who has been convinced they are still a sinner is already half-defeated when Satan comes calling. The things he offers them "won't make any difference" because it is already what they think they are. The pastors who assured them they would sin everyday have done Satan's job for him. Someone must tell them, "No! You are not a sinner. Jesus Christ has made you a new creature! His blood has made you free!" Don't let anyone rob you of the glorious victory and freedom God has given you in Christ Jesus!