



GRACE COMMUNION  
INTERNATIONAL

*Living and Sharing the Gospel*

**Weekly bulletin**

MAY 27, 2018 Trinity Sunday

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:** that the three distinct Persons in the Trinity, the one God ministers to us believers in such an amazing way. **To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

**Open Hand Food Bank – Moncton** - is in need of grocery plastic bags to give out food to those in need. If you are interested in donating your unused grocery bags, you can bring them to church and someone will collect them and bring them over. Those who want to bring food to give to the **Open Food Bank** may do so by bringing to church and giving it to **Michael M.** of the Moncton congregation.

---

#### **ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2018**

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday **except for June 17 services will be cancelled..**

**In Saint John** , worship services will be June 10 and 24 at 2:30 PM

**Communion-** on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

**Address: Moncton**—70 King St. —Sage building;

**Saint John**—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

**Moncton: End of season discipleship group either on Tuesday June 5 or Thursday June 7 at 7:30 home of Mr. and Mrs Vautour.** The purpose will be to debrief, since the last few months have been difficult with many losses and other, and to pray and discuss about where God is leading us.

---

#### **Reminder: Change of location of GCI Canada and new address for GCI Canada: The new office will be operational on June 1, 2018**

Grace Communion International Canada

Suite 203A

2121 Airport Ave.

Saskatoon SK S7L 6W5

**New phone number will be: 306-653-2705**

**Please pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters who live in various parts of the world and who are suffering because they identify with Jesus and Christianity. May God continue to give them strength to stay strong in the faith.**

**Pray that we will see the good works that God has prepared for us in advance** so that we can enthusiastically participate in the on-going work He is doing now on this earth in bringing people in relationship with him in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

**Please pray, as per Jesus instructions, the disciples prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10)** as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

**Pray for the world and for all people:** we live in a world that does not know the way to peace. Important to pray as we are instructed by the apostle Paul — **"1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions,**

**and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,** (1Ti 2:1-3 ESV)

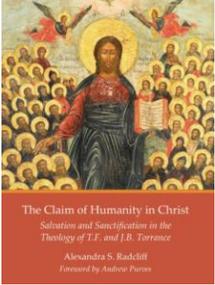
**Please pray, as per Jesus instructions, the disciples prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10)** as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

## **SANCTIFICATION: RELATIONAL, NOT LEGAL**

Posted by GCI Weekly Update on May 23, 2018 under [From the President](#) |  
Dear GCI Preachers,



Joseph and Tammy Tkach



When we preach, we must always make it our aim to proclaim the biblical gospel—the good news about Jesus and his saving work. This Christ-centered approach to preaching focuses much more on the grace of God than on human works. Though our sermons should address sin (the pain and hurt sin causes, and thus why God hates it), in doing so we must not imply that we are to rely upon ourselves for salvation. As James B. Torrance often said, we must not “throw people back upon themselves.” Gospel-focused preaching turns people away from themselves and towards Christ where, by the Holy Spirit, they can participate in Christ’s good and right relationship with the Father.

In *The Claim of Humanity in Christ*, Alexandra Radcliff points out that in their writings, James B. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance emphasize the relational nature of all aspects of Jesus’ atoning work on our behalf. They note that God, in love, created us for sonship—a filial relationship in which we find our true being in communion with God, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. This means that our *justification* (right standing) with God is relational, not legal. It also means that our *sanctification* (our growth in Christ) is relational, not legal. Instead of merely imitating Jesus’ example (his life of obedience), we actually participate in our Lord’s relationship with the Father in the Spirit.

Because human nature tends to prioritize law over relationship, a relational view of sanctification is not easy to grasp. As a good friend of mine likes to point out, it’s easier to keep the law living alone in a cave than to sustain a dynamic, loving relationship. Why? Because relationship requires proximity, which brings with it the risk of sinning against the other person. Though living alone may be easier, a life devoid of relationship would be relatively meaningless. When it comes to sanctification, relationship trumps legalism.

Just as our standing with God is relational, not legal, our standing with each other as Christians should be based on the relationship we share together with God, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. When we view the church for what it truly is—people-in-community being transformed together in Christ—the church becomes far more than a social club that shares certain moral principles. While moral principles are good, they cannot transform us. Our transformation, which is the fruit of our sanctification, comes only in Christ as he, by the Spirit, leads us into personal, interactive relationship with the Father. In and through that relationship, we receive and respond to all that God has for us, including all that Jesus has accomplished on our behalf. Our transforming interaction with God occurs as we read and hear the Word of God, pray, worship and otherwise live out our lives in communion with the Father, Son and Spirit.

Those who view sanctification as primarily legal tend to be burdened by a fear of being condemned by God for not “measuring up.” Though they likely understand that we are justified by grace, they think that we are sanctified by our works (obedience to law). However, knowing that none of us exhibit full sanctification (we are not perfect), they carry this fear of God’s rejection. Though they surely know what is said in [John 3:16](#)—*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*—it seems they are unaware of [John 3:17](#)—*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*. This fear of God’s condemnation-rejection tends to arise from a common misunderstanding where justification is equated with the gospel and sanctification is equated with Christian living, as though the two are separate or sequential. According to this misunderstanding, God justifies us by grace, but then we must sanctify ourselves through our own works. In contrast, the apostle Paul teaches that justification and sanctification are both complete in Christ, and are to be received from him as we trust him to give them to us as gifts of grace ([1 Cor. 1:30, NASB](#)).

Sanctification is also sometimes misunderstood as involving our independent response to Christ’s saving work, which “maintains” our salvation. The truth is that sanctification is a gift that comes from our new life in Christ. The only responses God is interested in are those enabled by the ministry of the Spirit who frees us to receive and share in Christ’s own responses made for us. So, while we do respond, we never respond alone. Our responses are the fruit of our fellowship with Christ by the Spirit. Our primary response is one of trusting in the ministry of the Spirit to provide us a share in Christ’s own sanctification—and even that trust is a gift of God’s grace!

Though gratitude is a primary way we show our thanks for God’s redeeming work, it can easily collapse into a work (an effort we work up) to maintain God’s grace (to keep us on God’s “good side”). Certainly we are grateful, and we should show gratitude, but not as a work of sanctification that we generate in response to the gift of our justification.

Sanctification, and the gratitude that goes with it, is the fruit of our participatory relationship with God, in Christ, by the Spirit.

The New Testament uses various metaphors, images and parables to describe our relationship with God as being relational rather than legal. For example, we are branches nourished by Christ, who is the vine (see the picture at right); we are stones being built into a holy temple; we are the body of Christ. These illustrations show that as we grow and share in relationship with God, the working of our sanctification follows spontaneously and organically.

Perhaps you had a teacher with the gift of bringing out the best in her students. Through your tutoring relationship with her, you flourished and blossomed. I had a teacher like that who taught me math in elementary school. Going to a new level of understanding in algebra was the by-product of the respectful relationship I had with that teacher. I worked hard, not merely for a good grade, but because, with that teacher's help, I was able to solve more problems and thus no longer feared taking formerly-dreaded math tests.

This example from my life shows what it means to "fix our eyes on Jesus" rather than on the law and our works. We join in with Jesus, so to speak, not because we have to (legalism) but because we want to (loving relationship). As Paul notes, the law was not given to save us—it was given to show that we don't measure up. It is Jesus, not the law, who offers us life-giving fellowship with God. This communion, which is a gift from God, comes to us through the Holy Spirit's ongoing ministry. By the Spirit, we trust Christ to give us a share of his new (resurrection) life, which means our participation in Jesus' own righteousness—his perfect, good and right relationship with God and with all people. This participation involves obedience "from the heart" (Romans 6:17), which Paul calls "the obedience that comes from faith" (Romans 1:5, 16:26).

Let me put it this way: ethical behavior is a matter of following God's will as we trust in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable and empower us to daily receive the gift of our new life in Christ and then, living it out, having fellowship with Christ by the Spirit. In other words, sanctification is not about self-motivated will—it's not about trying hard to meet the demands of God's law. Rather, sanctification is a gift of grace that we trust God to give us—the gift of participating in Jesus' own obedience, which flows from his loving and faithful relationship with the Father by the Spirit.

As Paul tells us, our response to this gift of grace is to "work out" our salvation (Phil. 2:12). We do so by placing our faith and trust in God's Word and Spirit to transform us, with the result being the fruit of Christ's own righteousness being born in our lives. We can count on this happening, for as Paul also tells us, "it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Phil. 2:13).

Sanctification provides us the benefit of our union with Jesus in which God, through the power and presence of the Spirit, delivers us from our broken, sinful natures, transforming us into the holy image of Jesus through our participation in his life, death, resurrection and ascension. This is how we become transformed and thus conformed to Christ. This is our sanctification.

Rejoicing that the gift of our sanctification is making us closer to God,  
Joseph Tkach

---

PS: Looking for additional insights from the Torrances concerning our sanctification in Christ? See <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2017/12/god-has-saved-you-therefore-respond.html> for a series of *Surprising God* posts on Dr. Radcliff's book from *GCI Update* Editor, Ted Johnston.

**GCI principle** website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca), [www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. *Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email—[evautour47@outlook.com](mailto:evautour47@outlook.com)*