

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 28 November 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

## “Sweet Will of God”

### Hebrews 10:10-18

In last week’s message from **Hebrews 10**, we talked about how the Son of God submitted Himself to do His Father’s will when He came down into this world. We looked at King David’s prophecy of the Messiah in **Psalm 40**: and as we examined that passage, we saw that the real Speaker in **Psalm 40** is Christ himself, speaking through the pen of King David. As Christ prophesied of His future coming to earth, He compared Himself to an **indentured Servant**. Just like an indentured servant, Christ willingly, lovingly, voluntarily submitted Himself to do His Father’s will.

As we moved on through **Hebrews 10**, we also saw what Christ’s submission to His Father required of Him. It required that he be willing to leave Heaven, come into this world, and **take on a human body**. His Father prepared a body for His Son, so that He could offer up that body as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

In this morning’s message, we shall see what the Father’s will, as carried out by His Son, has *accomplished for us*. We will also see what the Father’s *will for us* is.

There are *many* things that God desires to accomplish in our lives; and all these things are the direct result of Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross. In this message, I shall point out two things that God desires to accomplish in every person’s life as the result of His Son’s sacrifice on the cross. The title of this message is ***Sweet Will of God***.

### Hebrews 10:10-13

What is God’s will for us? What does God want to do in our lives? First of all, God’s will for us is...

#### I. Positional sanctification (vv. 10-13)

Let’s read **verse 10** again. (**Read verse 10.**) In this verse, Paul is telling us, very plainly, what God’s will for us is. His will is that we be **sanctified**. God’s desire is that every soul would *receive* the “sanctification” that Christ, through His obedience to His Father, has made possible for us.

Now, what does “sanctified” mean? It simply means “set apart.” Christians are people who are “set apart.” By the way, the Greek word for “**sanctified**” comes from the same root word from which we get our word “**saint**.” The words “saint,” “sanctified,” “sanctification,” and “holy” are all based upon the word *hagios*, which means “set apart.” Every true child of God is a “saint”--a sanctified one (one who is “set apart”). Yet, in what sense are Christians “set apart”? And when does this “setting apart” happen?

Well, this is one of those times when it helps to look at the original language. In Greek, the word “sanctified” is in the **perfect** tense here in **verse 10**. The perfect tense indicates that an action was accomplished at a *specific* point in time. There is no ongoing process involved.

For example, “I **kicked** the ball” would be perfect tense. The perfect tense implies that “I kicked the ball once, *and then stopped.*” It does *not* mean, “I was kicking the ball around for awhile.”

So, what’s the point? **The point is that our sanctification is done.** It’s accomplished. It is not continuing; *and* it cannot be *undone*. It has been completely finished, and is not going to be repeated.

When Paul talks about this finished, one-time “setting apart” of believers, **he is talking about *salvation*.** That is why we call it *positional* sanctification. At the moment a person believes on Christ and is saved, he is instantly removed from his *original* position (which was spiritual death and separation from God), and he is “set apart” to a new position—the position of eternal life (a relationship with God). Though that believer is still a sinner, his judicial standing before God is that he has been declared “Not guilty.” Why? Because Christ’s perfect righteousness has been imputed to him, as though it were his own. In **John 5:24** Jesus said, ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*** How much clearer can you get? The moment you truly believe on Christ, you instantly pass from “death” (separation from God) to “life” (a relationship with God). The new believer is “set apart” from sin, death, and condemnation to righteousness, life, and acceptance with God. Let’s see how Paul described it when he was giving his defence before King Agrippa.

### **Acts 26:16-18**

Once again, we see the stark contrast between being lost and being sanctified. Before salvation, a person is in darkness, and is under the ***“power of Satan.”*** However, the instant a person believes, he is ***“translated”*** from to the realm of darkness to the realm of light, and from the ***“power of Satan”*** unto ***“God.”*** He is made a “saint”—a “set apart one.”

Throughout the New Testament, the Apostles addressed the believers to whom they were writing as “saints.” Saints are *not* people who lived in a remote cloister on a mountaintop, did miracles, accomplished incredible deeds of mercy and benevolence, and were finally declared to be “saints” by a church body centuries after their death. If this is what you think of when you hear the word “saint,” please get that notion out of your head! If you are saved, *you are*, at this very moment, a “saint.” You are a “saint” not because you have lived an exceptionally holy life, and have thus “earned” your salvation: you are a “saint” because you are a forgiven sinner who has been “set apart” from Satan’s kingdom to God’s kingdom! Christ earned your salvation *for* you; and the moment you received His gift by simple faith and repentance of heart, you were ***“sanctified.”***

Make no mistake about it: Christians still have a sin nature, and they still often sin and grieve the Lord. Yet, their sanctified position does not change one *iota*. We who are saved are eternally secure in our salvation; and we need not be ashamed to say so. The Bible says, ***“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so” (Psalm 107:2).*** Charismatic preachers may denounce eternal security as a “damnable doctrine”; but we will not be moved. The **Catholic church** may call it a “sin of presumption” to say that you are 100% sure that you are justified before God; but we will not be moved. We are simply resting on the promises in God’s Word.

According to **Hebrews 10:10**, Jesus Christ offered His body as a sacrifice for our sins “*once for all*.” The phrase “*once for all*” means “one time in history, never to be repeated.”

It is *because* Jesus died “*once for all*” that those who are saved are *set apart unto God* “*once for all*.” Christian, if you ever begin to wonder whether you might have lost your salvation, just ask yourself this question: “**Did not Jesus do the will of His Father flawlessly?**”

Obviously, He did. If Christ had ever once, in His life, deviated from His Father’s will by even a hair’s breadth, He Himself would have been a sinner; and His substitutionary death on our behalf would have accomplished absolutely nothing. However, thank God, this is not the case! Because Christ lived a sinless, perfect life, He was able to offer up His life to God in substitution for ours. Because the Father accepts His Son’s perfect life, and because His Son paid our sin debt in full with His own blood, God can fully accept, and never turn away, all who have been placed *in His Son*.

Now, let’s read **verses 11-13** again. (Read **Hebrews 10:11-13**.) Once again, Paul is reminding us that the sacrifice of animals in Old Testament times could never actually take away sin. Once again, he contrasts the powerless sacrifices of animals to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which *really* has the power to take away sin, and which was accomplished “*one time forever*.”

Christian, think about that for a moment. If every single sin you’ve ever committed, or ever will commit, was paid in full on the cross 2,000 years ago, and if you, by faith, have received that gift of salvation, then how could any sin that you’ll ever commit separate you from God again? It’s impossible! This is good news, brethren!

Yet, there’s even more good news. Paul also reminds us that the Old Testament priests were always *standing* to offer the animal sacrifices. In contrast, **Christ, our true High Priest, is now seated**. Let’s read **verses 11 and 12** again. (Read **Hebrews 10:11-12**.)

There is a *reason* why Paul says that every priest “*standeth daily*” to offer sacrifices. The reason the priests “stood” is that there were no chairs! God didn’t make any provision for chairs in the Temple. The priests were always standing as they offered sacrifices. Why didn’t God make any provision for chairs? Because He was making a point. The “chairlessness” of the Temple shows that the sacrificial work of the Old Testament priests was never done!

Christ, on the other hand, *did* “stand” as He carried out His role as our High Priest: but He stood only once! When did this happen? Let’s take a look.

### **Matthew 27:11-14**

On that fateful Passover morning 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ *stood* before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate; and as He did so, He did not open His mouth in self-defence. Just as Isaiah prophesied 700 years earlier, He was “*brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*” (**Isaiah 53:7**). Jesus stood silently in His role as High Priest, and allowed Himself to be condemned by a corrupt Roman official, so that He might offer up His life to God in payment for our sins. He stood as He was presented to the angry mob; and He stood as He carried His cross to Calvary. However, He

will never do so again. Unlike the Old Testament priests, who were always standing because their work was never done, Jesus Christ has *sat down* at the right hand of His Father in Heaven. Why? Because His work for our salvation is done!

The position of sanctification is unchanging, because the work of salvation is done. *If you have received* that positional sanctification, then your salvation is secure. If you have *not* received positional sanctification, then you *must* receive it! If you wish to see the Kingdom of God, you *must* receive the “once-for-all” sanctification that Christ is offering you. Won’t you receive it today? Receiving positional sanctification and receiving Christ are the same thing! The Bible says, ***“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”***

Now, there is one more truth to consider in regard to our positional sanctification. Let’s read **verse 13** again. **(Read verse 13.)**

Since Christ sat down on His throne 2,000 years ago, there has been one time (that we know of) when Christ briefly stood up from His throne. On the day when Stephen was martyred, the Lord Jesus stood to honour him, and to receive him into glory. There are also some *future* occasions when we know, for a fact, that Christ will stand up from His throne. We know that Christ will stand on the day when He appears in the clouds, to catch up New Testament age believers to Heaven in the Rapture. During the Tribulation period, Christ will stand to receive the title deed to the earth, and to open the seals of judgment upon the world. Jesus Christ is also awaiting the hour when He will stand up from His throne, mount His white horse, and return to earth to destroy the Antichrist, and to set up His own Kingdom. That is why Paul says that Christ is ***“henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”***

**Psalm 110:1**

**Mark 14:60-62**

I am so glad that I am in the position of a “saint”—a “set apart” one! Never again will my sin be judicially brought against me, or the possibility of condemnation be raised. Paul wrote, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”*** Christ has made a “once for all” Sacrifice for me! Do *you* have this assurance of salvation? If not, please get the matter settled today! If you do know that you are saved, are you *thanking* the Lord for your salvation every day?

Every true believer has *positional* sanctification before God; and that position is unchanging. However, there is another kind of sanctification that believers possess. It is called...

## **II. Practical sanctification (vv. 14-18)**

**(Read verses 14-18.)** In **verse 14**, Paul once again emphasises the eternally secure *position* of the believer. He says that believers are ***“perfected”*** (or “completed”) ***“forever.”*** Yet, what does this entail? Plenty! Since Christians are now in the secure *position* of sanctification (being set apart to God in salvation), they are now able to experience *another* kind of sanctification. Let’s see what Christ Himself said about it.

## John 17:6-17

As Jesus was praying to His Father, He said that He had taken His disciples from “*out of the world,*” and had “*kept*” them in His Father’s name (with the exception of Judas, who was never truly saved). Jesus was talking about *positional* sanctification, here. The Father had taken the eleven *believing* disciples from out of the world, and had “set them apart” to Himself; and He had given their souls to His Son for safekeeping.

However, there is, clearly, another kind of sanctification that Jesus is speaking about in this passage. In **verse 17**, Jesus asked His Father to “*sanctify them through thy truth.*” Now, stop and think about that. If the eleven believing disciples were *already* set apart, or sanctified, in *position*, then why did Jesus need to ask the Father to “*sanctify*” them?

To answer that question, let’s look at another Scripture.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

Is Paul talking about *positional* sanctification when he says, “*This is the will of God, even your sanctification*”? Clearly, he is not. The believers in the church of Thessalonica were *already* sanctified in position. What Paul is talking about here is *progressive* sanctification. Progressive separation is the **actual separation from sin** that God desires for every Christian to experience in his daily life. Because a Christian has the judicial *position* of sanctification, he is now able, through the Holy Spirit, to *practice* a holy, sanctified life.

It is important to realise that progressive sanctification is a process. If you are saved, this process of “progressive sanctification” began on the day you were saved; and it will continue to the day you depart this life. Every day, you should be allowing your Saviour to change you even more into His likeness. No Christian has the right to tell the Lord, “Well, Lord, I surely am grateful for putting me in the *position* of sanctification. I do thank you for saving me. But, I think I’ll opt out of that *practical* sanctification. It’ll cramp my style too much. After all, I’ve been this way, and have done these things, for a long time; and I don’t like change.” The whole reason that God saves a sinner so that He might *change* him!

## 2 Corinthians 3:18

In this verse, Paul is giving us a beautiful description of sanctification. When Paul talks about the “*glass*” (or “mirror”), he is talking about God’s Word. Several times in Scripture, the God’s Word is compared to a “*glass*.” Why? Because a mirror shows you an image. It shows you your *own* image (it shows you what you *really* look like); and it shows you *other* people’s images. It’s the same way with Scripture. As you look into the “*glass*” of God’s Word, you see yourself for what you *really* look like (with all your sinfulness); but at the same time, you see *Christ’s* image. The more you look at Christ’s image in Scripture (the more you behold His holy character), the more you are *changed* into His image (the more you become like Him). And *how* does this take place? Paul says that it is “*by the Spirit of the Lord.*” The Holy Spirit of God is the one who changes you more into Christ’s image. But does this happen all at once? No. Paul says that we are changed into Christ’s image “*from glory to*

*glory.*” In other words, it doesn’t happen all at once. Day by day, the believer is changed from one level of glory to another. It is a *process*. It’s called “sanctification.”

Now, let’s get back to **Hebrews 10**, and read **verse 14** again. (**Read Hebrews 10:14.**) Once again, it is helpful to know the Greek verb tense that is being used. In **verse 10**, Paul used the **perfect tense**. This means that our sanctification happened at a specific point in time. It is not still in progress, because it is done. However, here in **verse 14**, Paul uses the **present passive tense**. This means that in another sense, sanctification is an *ongoing* thing. Another way you might say this verse is, “*For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified.*”

See the difference between **verse 10** and **verse 14**? **Verse 10** is *positional* sanctification. That kind of sanctification is judicial. It is a one-time thing; and it is finished. However, **verse 14** is *progressive* sanctification. This kind of sanctification is ongoing. It must be carried out every day, as the believer allows the Lord to change him, and mould him.

Brethren, never forget that practical sanctification is impossible to carry out *on your own*. You are no more able to conform yourself to Christ’s likeness than you were able to save yourself in the first place. Christ is the one who carries out positional sanctification *and* progressive sanctification. Christ is the one who sets you apart *to salvation*; and He is the one who *sets you apart from sin* every day. We do not have the ability to change ourselves, because there is “*no good thing*” in us. However, as we submit to Christ daily, and trust *Him* to produce His righteousness in us, we *can* experience progressive sanctification.

Now, Paul lists two things that are necessary in order for the progressive sanctification process to take place. First of all, you must have **a new nature**. (**Read verses 15-16.**)

In these verses, Paul is quoting from **Jeremiah 31:33-34**. Paul has already quoted this passage several times in the book of **Hebrews**; and now he is quoting it again. (I get the impression that this is an important Scripture, don’t you?) Let’s take a look at this passage.

### **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

Believers who lived under the Old Covenant had the Holy Spirit *near* them, to guide them and give them wisdom. However, the Holy Spirit did not dwell *within* them. Only a select few men of God (mostly prophets and kings) were given this privilege; and even then, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit wasn’t permanent. The Holy Spirit indwelt them *temporarily*, in order to give them wisdom, or to empower them to prophesy, or to do miracles, or to fight battles, or to carry out feats of superhuman strength; but when the job was done, the Spirit left them. He was still *near* them, and *beside* them; but not *in* them. They were still *saved*, regardless of whether the Spirit was in them or not; but when the Spirit *was* in them, they were very different people. They had courage, faith, and the ability to think like God, and to do mighty deeds; and it was at a whole new level. Take what Samuel told Saul, for example. He told Saul that when he would come to the city of Beth-el, the Spirit of God would come into him, to empower him to carry out his duty as king; and he said that when the Spirit was come upon him, he would “*be turned into another man.*” This sounds very much like the description of Christians in this New Testament age. In **2 Corinthians 5:17** Paul said,

***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”***

The new nature that the Holy Spirit imparts to Christians is one of the greatest blessings of the New Covenant. Not only do we have forgiveness of sins, but we have something that the Old Testament saints didn't fully have—and that is a *new heart*. The Law could tell the Old Testament saints what God expected of them; but it couldn't give them the *heart* to *want* to obey and keep it. We, on the other hand, *have* this awesome privilege, through the indwelling Holy Spirit!

Now, there is one more thing that is needed in order for progressive sanctification to take place. The believer must have **the absolute assurance that his sins are forgiven. (Read Hebrews 10:17-18.)**

As the believer grows in progressive, daily sanctification, he must have the constant *assurance* that his sins are forgiven. If we are not standing on the foundation of assurance that our sins are forgiven, there is no way that we can experience practical sanctification in our lives. If we aren't fully trusting Christ's promise that our sins were *all* forgiven at the cross, how can we trust Him to bring about practical righteousness in our lives? We can't! Both positional sanctification and progressive sanctification are *entirely* the work of God; and we *must* trust Him for both!

God promised Israel that under the New Covenant, our sins and iniquities would be remembered ***“no more.”*** You wouldn't think the Lord could state it more clearly than that; yet, He does! God goes on to say that ***“where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”*** The very fact that there is no more offering being made for sins tells us that *all* the Christian's sins are paid for, and forgiven! *That* is assurance!

Remember what Paul said in **verse 14**? He said that those who are saved are ***“perfected for ever.”*** ***“Perfected”*** means “completed.” That applies both to salvation, and to Christian living. Those who are saved have received complete forgiveness of sins; and they have been completely equipped with everything they need to live a life that is pleasing to God. Why? Because they have been imparted with a new nature, which is generated by the Holy Spirit.

**Conclusion:** Christian, this is God's will for your life. This is what Christ gave up His life in order to provide for you. You've already been provided with *positional* sanctification, in that you are saved. That position will never change. Yet, how are you doing in your *progressive* sanctification? Are you allowing Christ to set you apart from sin more and more every day, and to change you into His image?

Perhaps you are realising, for the first time, that you are not sure that you are on your way to Heaven. Perhaps you are thinking about this idea of being “set apart” from Satan's family to God's family; and as you look back over your life to reckon whether there was ever a time when you passed from spiritual death to spiritual life, you can't say that that has ever happened. If you are not sure which of those two positions you are in, please don't put it off! We'd love to show you how you can be sure that you are among the “sanctified”--“set apart” to God!