

Overcoming Sin and Temptation 7 (SS)

(study in JO Vol VI, Mortification of Sin, Chapter 8-14)

In our last lesson in this two-part study of “The Mortification (putting to death) of Sin in Believers” in Vol VI of JO, we opened our time with a very basic and brief exposition from our key text.

(Rom 8:13)

We then (under our first main heading), I. Necessity of Mortification.

Consider six reasons why mortification is necessary:

1. Spiritual life depends on it
2. Always there
3. Always acting
4. Called to holiness
5. Keep sin from full expression
6. One of the reasons we have the HS in the first place

This AM I would like to begin our time considering:

II. The Nature of Mortification

What kind of picture does the Bible paint for us as to what mortification is. If I am clearly called to any duty by the Bible, I need to know what it is I am to do. I need to have some confidence that I am engaged in the killing of sin and not some substitute that is devised in my own mind drawn from some humanistic reasoning.

We will approach this section by asking two elementary questions.

1. What is not mortification {negative}
2. What is mortification {positive}

What is not mortification

1. It is Not the total eradication of any remaining sin.

Owen: “To mortify a sin is not utterly to kill, root it out, and destroy it, that it should have no more role at all nor residence in our hearts. It is true this is that which is aimed at, but this is not in this life to be accomplished.”

Now we already pointed this out in our exposition of (Rom 8:13) but it is worthy of repeating because it will help you keep from losing your mind/losing any sense of

assurance you may have attained, and it will keep you from any subtle strain of holiness teaching that is designed to get you out of (Rom 7).

Listen, if the apostle Paul (who received revelation from Christ and had a relationship with Christ that none of us have experienced) could say toward the end of his ministry, (1 Tim 1:15) "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance...etc. I am (present tense) foremost/chief/the worst."

Then I believe our point rests on solid ground.

2. Adherence (to man (self) made) Rules and Regulations

Self-imposed rules and restraints are an important part of the discipline required to live the Christian life. We need them as we war with the world/flesh/devil.

But the problem lies in resting our hope of success against a peculiar lust by adherence to a self-imposed rule.

IE: Problem with sensuality and lust/get rid of the tv/computer. Problems with covetousness/materialism no Christmas. Problem with pride, self-deprecate.

**The apostle Paul deals with a similar issue in (Col 2).

*A strain of heresy with elements of humanistic philosophy/mysticism/asceticism had infected the church.

Note (vs 8) He then launches into a glorious Christological statement as to the centrality of the redemptive work of the ?? (vs 9-15). It is in Him that you are complete/in Him you have forgiveness/in Him your bad record is cleansed/in Him your enemies are defeated.

Therefore (vs 20f)

Listen, here is the message. Your only hope in making progress against "fleshly indulgence" is resting in/trusting in the finished work of the LJC.

3. Occasional Conquest Over a Sin

From time to time we can have an embarrassing outbreak of sin that shames us/or we can be in a time of pressing affliction and with it a heightened desire to be done with a particular sin.

Mortification of sin does not consist of momentary heightened desire to slay it, for once that ??, it will return!! *Much like the Israelites in (Ps 78:30-37).

Owen: "These events awakens and stirs up all that is in the man, fills him with abhorrence of sin, and himself for it; sends him to God, makes him cry out for life; to ?? his sin as hell, and set himself against it. The whole man, spiritual and natural, being now awakened, sin shrinks in its head, appears not, but lies as dead before him."

"And so it is that carefulness, indignation, desire, fear, revenge are all set against it, and lust is quiet for a season, being run down before them. But when the hurry is over and the conquest past, the thief appears again alive, and is as busy as ever at his work."

Perhaps that is enough of what mortification is not. Let's move to the positive.

What mortification is

1. Consistent Weakening of Sin at its Root.

Draining the life and vigor from sin can be likened unto crucifixion.

(Gal 5:24) "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have circumcised the flesh with its passions and desire."

Already mentioned that but I want to quote Owen on that imagery and further consider the emphasis on the root of sin.

Owen: "As a man nailed to the cross; he first struggles, and strives, and cries out with great strength and might. But as his blood and spirits waste, his striving grows faint and seldom, his cries low and hoarse, scarce to be heard. Likewise when a man first sets on a lust or distemper to deal with it, it struggles with great violence to break loose; it cries with earnestness and impatience to be satisfied and relieved. But, when by mortification the blood and spirits of it are let out, it moves seldom and faintly, cries sparingly, and is scarce heard in the heart. It may have sometimes a dying pang, that makes an appearance of great vigor and strength, but it is quickly over.

But listen to this brief ?? as well and this is the emphasis:

Want you to understand:

Owen: "A man may beat down the bitter fruit from an evil tree until he is weary; while the root abides in strength and vigor, the beating down of the present fruit will not hinder it from bringing forth more. This is the folly of some men; they set themselves with all earnestness and diligence against the appearing eruption of lust, but leaving the principle and root untouched, perhaps unsearched out, they make but little or no progress in this work of mortification."

2. Consistent Fighting Against an Enemy {that is how you must view your remaining corruption}

This incessant warfare demands that you know the enemy/know his strategies or you will never know success. ** You must know your own heart.

**You must labor to maintain an open transparent relationship with God in regards to the evils of your own heart.

It is His prerogative to know and search the heart.

(James 17:9) "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can understand it?"

**God will help you to track down and learn the ways of your enemy. Learn its movements/learn its strategies.

Owen: "One of the choicest and most eminent parts of practical spiritual wisdom consists in finding out the subtleties, policies, plans, and depths of any IS. To consider and know wherein its greatest strengths lies. The advantage it uses to make of occasions, opportunities, temptations. What are its pleas, pretenses, reasonings, its strategies, colors, excuses!! It is to set the wisdom of the Spirit against the craft of the enemy, to trace the sergeant in all its turnings and windings and be able to say, this is your way and course. Know what you aim at.

**What Owen is describing here requires of you to have a (Ps 51) honesty and transparency with God.

Read (Ps 51:1-4)

**Can't play games/rationalize/make excuses/shift blame. {Open your heart to God. Ask Him to search it a reveal to you its deepest inner workings. Bring light into the corners.}

3. Mortification is Progress (Success)

I won't spend much time on this. I just want to warn you against hiding in (Rom 7). Must live in the light of (Rom 8).

III. Means of Mortification

It is the exercise of faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ in and through the powerful ministry of the HS dwelling in your heart.

Owen: "There is no death of sin without the death of Christ."

For you see it is there on the cross that our Lord defeated/even destroyed our great enemy, sin/death/the devil.

(Heb 2:14) "Through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil."

(1 John 4:8) "The son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

**You know that/you believe that/you have staked your never dying soul upon that truth, but you can lose focus on what you know. That is what happened back in (Col 2).

You can go to (Col 3), first 4 verses. (vs 5) "Therefore put to death deeds of flesh." Get a fresh glimpse of Jesus Christ crucified/resurrected/exalted. Then and only then get to work killing sin.

Let me suggest to you two ways in which the exercise of faith in the crosswork of the LJ will help you in killing sin.

First: It will remind you of the provision afforded you for this very purpose!! If by virtue of His death He delivered you from condemning/reigning sin, surely He will provide help for the lesser.

So that you can say with the apostle Paul:

(Phil 4:13) "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Owen: "I am a poor weak creature, unstable as water. I have made promises and broken them, vows and resolutions have come to naught. Many times I have been persuaded I had the victory and would be delivered. But I am deceived!! Without some eminent assistance I shall be prevailed upon to the utter relinquishment of God."

"Though this may be your state and condition, let the hands that hang down be lifted up and the feeble knees strengthened. Behold the Lord Christ, that has all the fullness of grace in His heart, all fullness of power in His hand. He is able to slay all these His enemies."

Though our troubles/struggles may not dissolve, this truth will keep you in the battle. (2 Cor 12)

Second: Will give to you a firm Biblically based expectation of relief.

(Rom 8:32) "He who did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all."

**His designated role as high priest is not only to sympathize, but to help us (Heb 2:14f) (Heb 4:14f). Live in those two texts.

Owen: "Set faith at work for the killing of thy sin. His blood is the great sovereign remedy for sin-sick souls! Live in this, and you will die a conqueror; yea, you will, through the good providence of God, live to see they lust dead at your feet. The efficacy of faith will be found only in the practice."