

Sunday School
Mortification of Sin
Lesson 3

Truth 2:

He (the Spirit) only is sufficient for this work; all ways and means without him are as a thing of nought; and he is the great efficient of it,—he works in us as he pleases.¹

The religious make the following mistakes:

- I. God never intended for them to use certain ways and means for mortification.
 - A. Garments, Vows, Penance, Monastic life
 - B. Mark 7:1-23
 1. What is the climax of this scene?
 2. Which topic does Jesus develop the most?
 3. What were the religious leaders seeking to accomplish?
 4. What mistake was made?
 - C. Timeless truth= Now, there is nothing in religion that hath any efficacy for compassing (attaining) an end, but it hath it from God's appointment of it to that purpose.²
 1. 2 Kings 5:9-15
- II. Misunderstanding of the correct means and ways.
 - A. Prayer, diligent watching and hearing, meditation, fasting, fellowship, worship
 - B. "...but whereas they are all to be looked on as streams, they look on them as the fountain.³
 1. Hebrews 5:11
 2. Turning the means of grace into superstitious magic
- III. None of these are sufficient if you consider the work that needs to be done.
 - A. What does sufficient mean relative to causation?

¹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.), 16.

² Ibid. 17.

³ Ibid.

Proofs that mortification is the work of the Spirit

- I. He is *promised* of God to be given unto us to do this work.⁴
 - A. Ezek. 11:19; 36:26;
 - B. Isa. 57:17
- II. We have all our mortification from the *gift* of Christ, and all the gifts of Christ are communicated to us and given us by the Spirit of Christ:⁵
 - A. All gifts are from Christ by the Spirit
 1. Who does it? John 15:5
 2. What does he do? Acts 5:31
 3. By whom does he do this? Acts 2:33
 - B. Several Questions Answered:
 1. How does the Spirit mortify sin?
 - a. By causing our hearts to abound in *grace* and the fruits that are contrary to the flesh, and the fruits thereof and principles of them. So the apostle opposes the fruits of the flesh and of the Spirit: “The fruits of the flesh,” says he, “are so and so,” Gal. 5:19–21; ⁶ This “renewing of us by the Holy Ghost,” as it is called, Tit. 3:5, is one great way of mortification; he causes us to grow, thrive, flourish, and abound in those graces which are contrary, opposite, and destructive to all the fruits of the flesh, and to the quiet or thriving of indwelling sin itself.⁷
 - 1) Old counseling strategy called the replacement principle or put off/ put on.

⁴ Ibid, 18.

⁵ Ibid, 19.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

b. By a *real physical efficiency* on the root and habit of sin, for the weakening, destroying, and taking it away. Hence he is called a “Spirit of judgment and burning,” Isa. 4:4, really consuming and destroying our lusts. He takes away the stony heart by an almighty efficiency; for as he begins the work as to its kind, so he carries it on as to its degrees. He is the fire which burns up the very root of lust.⁸

1) Illustration of Lavender taking over whole office

c. He brings the *cross of Christ* into the heart of a sinner by faith, and gives us communion with Christ in his death, and fellowship in his sufferings: of the manner whereof more afterward.⁹

2. If this be the work of the Spirit alone, how is it that we are exhorted to it?

a. It is no otherwise the work of the Spirit but as all graces and good works which are in us are his. He “works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” Phil. 2:13; he works “all our works in us,” Isa. 26:12,—“the work of faith with power,” 2 Thess. 1:11; Col. 2:12; he causes us to pray, and is a “Spirit of supplication,” Rom. 8:26, Zech. 12:10; and yet we are exhorted, and are to be exhorted, to all these.¹⁰

1) What are the graces the Spirit gives?

2) What are the good works he gives?

3) Does the Spirit give these?

4) Are we exhorted to all these?

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

- b. The Holy Ghost works in us and upon us, as we are fit to be wrought in and upon; that is, so as to preserve our own liberty and free obedience.¹¹

“This is the saddest warfare that any poor creature can be engaged in. A soul under the power of conviction from the law is pressed to fight against sin, but hath no strength for the combat. They cannot but fight, and they can never conquer;”¹²

“Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word;^a nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.^c And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.”¹³

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Edinburgh Edition* (Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1851), 87–88.