

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## SAVED BUT A SINNER?

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20TH JULY 2021

We are almost at the end of the school term. It is very close and all teachers and students can smell the freedom after a very difficult year. It will be good to have summer but it will also be good to come back to a fresh start. All new classes and all new impressions to make.

However, at this end of the term I am very tired and that makes me more prone to forget things. I've forgotten to lock my car or what I'm doing when I get places. I have been forgetting to take medication and do things that are normally in my routine. I also begin do more things wrong, to sin.

For example, recently I have been much quicker to get angry. I have been angry or more angry at things that wouldn't normally bother me. It's not nice for me or anyone around me and it's not what I should be doing.

So here's the conundrum. If I'm truly saved and Jesus has set me free from my sin, why do I still do it? Why do I still fall into the same traps time after time?

Well firstly, we shouldn't deny it and pretend we are perfect. 1 John 1:8-10 says: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us." We are not alone. This is a problem that we all struggle with.

But the bible is quite clear that we are saved anyway. Romans 10:13 says: "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." So we know that we're not counted out of the promises that God has and that we are saved from our sin.

The key to this is two words that might seem fancy dancy but are important to know and understand. These two words are justification and sanctification. Justification is the moment we are saved. We are made righteous and justified instantly. If we die at any moment after this we will go to be with God. We will be completely forgiven of all our sins at that moment.

There are also some sins that can miraculously disappear at this point. There are people that tell stories of being healed of drug addictions or never going back to stealing or whatever it was they were doing wrong at that point.

However, for most of us this process will be much much slower. This is what sanctification is. It is the process we all need to engage in of being made perfect. God wants us to take a journey through life and learn how to do this in different situations day by day. Taking a shortcut will not be good for us. This is often the case in life too. Things that are at first advertised as a miracle treatment or, like vaping, have no side effects, are often too good to be true. Shortcuts will not be as good for us as the slow process of having our characters changed. There are things that are better done over time, through trial and adversity, as hard as that is for us.

Let's have a look at a story in John 11 that can help us picture what is happening in this process. "Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

This is like when we have sinned. We are sick with it. We can't do anything to overcome it. We are dead in it. It overtakes us.

Let's have a look at what happens when Jesus arrives later in John 11 from verse 38.

"Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Justification is the moment we come alive. It's the moment Jesus said to Lazarus "Come out". It's the moment that we celebrate and is very much worth celebrating.

The sanctification part is the process of taking off the grave clothes. Lazarus has been made alive but was still bound by his grave clothes. He wasn't entirely free of death yet. He had to go through the slow, maybe uncomfortable, process of having these removed. And so do we. We celebrate when someone comes alive but it is still a process for all of us to become the people we were made to be.

For Lazarus, taking the grave clothes off only took a few minutes. For us it will take the rest of our lives. But when we reach eternity, both will pale into insignificance compared to the wonder of being with God. We will be made whole and perfect then, but for now let's peel off those grave clothes and get as close as we can now.



## Coach House Church

222 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2QN  
leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604  
Registered charity in England and Wales - 1194822



**Bekah Baker**

*Evenings Coordinator // Trustee  
bekahb@coachhousechurch.org*