

**THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN**  
**Fall, 2022**  
**Class 2 – Chapters 3 and 4**

**REVIEW**

**CHAPTER 3 – THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN MORTIFICATION**

- 1. Principle 2: The Holy Spirit is the only means for the true work of mortification sin.**
2. False means of mortifying sin.
  - a. Mechanical exercises in disciplines not prescribed by God.
  - b. Mechanical exercises in disciplines prescribed by God, but as “means only.”
- 3. Why mortification of sin by the Holy Spirit is the only effective means.**
- 4. How does the Spirit mortify sin? Three ways:**
  - a. Planting spiritual graces in the heart. Ezek. 36:22-38; Gal. 5:19-21; Titus 3:4-7.
  - b. Effectively destroying the root of sin. Isaiah 4:4.
  - c. Bringing the cross of Christ and communion with Him into the heart.
- 5. The work of the Holy Spirit in mortification and our responsibility.**
  - a. The Holy Spirit works with us, not without us. 1 Cor. 12-16; Eph. 2:8-10.
  - b. Other graces and good works which are in us are the Spirit’s working also. Phil. 2:12-13. Is. 26:12.
  - c. The Spirit works in us by enabling our obedience to the Word of God under the terms of the Covenant of Grace, but preserves our liberty and free obedience. (Micah 6:8; Deut. 4:2).
  - d. The Spirit works in the minds and souls of believers a supernatural work of grace and holiness, which makes us (A) acceptable to God, and (B) enables us to live for God.
  - e. Every act of Christian obedience, internal or external is a direct work of grace by the Holy Spirit. For more, see Owen, *Pneumatology A Discourse on the Holy Spirit* [1682]).

**CHAPTER 4 - HOW LIFE AND COMFORT DEPEND ON MORTIFICATION**

- 1. Principle 3: Christian joy, strength, and peace with God depend upon mortification of sin.**

- a. Exception: joy and comfort not always tied to mortification of sin. Ps. 88.
- b. Mortification of sin not the only means God uses to give joy and comfort.
  - i. Role of adoption as God's children Rom. 8:16.
  - ii. Role of justification at our conversion. Rom. 5:1-5
- c. General Rule: vigorous spiritual life in Christ impossible without mortification of sin.

**2. Two effects of unmortified sin:**

- a. Weakens the soul and deprives it of vigor. Psalm 38:3-4; 9-11, Psalm 40:12. How?
  - i. Entangles the affections and diverts the soul from communion with God.
  - ii. Causes sinful affections so powerful they expel love of God from the heart. 1 John 2:15, 3:17.
  - iii. Can God truly be your greatest love when your affections are captured by a secret sin?
- b. Captures the mind and ultimately seeks to fulfill its objects.
  - i. Indwelling sin blinds us from knowing what is right. 2 Pet. 1:3-10
  - ii. Indwelling sin weakens us from doing what is right. Rom. 7:13-20
  - iii. Indwelling sin darkens the soul and deprives it of comfort and peace.

**3. Mortification of sin gives the gifts and graces of God room to grow in our hearts.**

- a. The soul as a well-cultivated garden. Cf. Mt. 13:1-8
- b. The soul as a poorly-cultivated garden. Rev. 3:2
- c. The Christian soul must be a fertile field where sin has no place to grow, and "shoots of grace" [Owen] from God find fertile, open soil to flourish.

**4. Summary: Three Great Principles of Mortification of Sin**

- a. Indwelling sin must be mortified.
- b. Mortification of indwelling sin cannot be accomplished without the Holy Spirit.
- c. Our lives and comfort as Christians depend on mortification of indwelling sin.

### Discussion Questions – Chapters 3 and 4

1. Westminster Confession of Faith 6.5 states as follows: “This corruption of nature [i.e., original sin], during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin” (citing Gal. 5:17).

What does WCF 6.5 mean? Is WCF 6.5, which says that sin is both pardoned and mortified by Christ Jesus, consistent with the fact the Bible asserts that mortification of sin is also a work of the Spirit, and a work for which we ourselves are also responsible? Why is it important for Christians to know these things?

2. Why is the work of the Spirit in bringing the cross of Christ and communion with Christ into the heart so important in the mortification of indwelling sin in Christians? What part does it play in your own ongoing battles with indwelling sin? Should it play a bigger role?
3. Owen asserts that mortification of sin is to the soul like cultivation is to a well-maintained garden. By what means do Christians cultivate that garden? What causes it to flourish? What are the pests and toxins that cause it to decline? How do you cultivate the garden of your own soul?