

# The Bronze Laver

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well if we could, for a short while, turn back to the first portion of scripture that we read, the book of Exodus and chapter 30.

The book of Exodus, chapter 30, and if we read again at verse 17, where it speaks there about the bronze basin or the bronze laver.

Exodus 30, sorry, and verse 17. The Lord said to Moses, you shall also make a basin of bronze with its stand of bronze for washing.

You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die.

They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.

[ 1 : 17 ] So as you know, this evening we're continuing our study on the tabernacle and its importance for us as the Lord's people. Because everything, as we've said before, everything we're doing in relation to the tabernacle, everything we're looking at, it's pointing us forward to Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus, as John reminds us in his gospel, Jesus is the word who became flesh. He's the one who dwelt among us. He tabernacled among us, so that we might behold his glory.

The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And so the tabernacle in the Old Testament, which you can see there, the tabernacle, it always points us to Jesus, our tabernacle.

And as we said before, when we approach the tabernacle, I want us to approach, as we are, as sinners approaching our holy God.

I'd like us to come just as we are, because we're sinners who are seeking God's favour, forgiveness and fellowship. We're sinners seeking God's favour, forgiveness and fellowship.

[ 2 : 24 ] And as sinners who are seeking to approach our holy God, as you know, the first area that we would come to is the perimeter. This perimeter of the white fine linen cloth surrounding the tabernacle.

And this white cloth would have been supported, as you can see, by all the pillars on it, on the north side, the south side and the west sides of the courtyard. And the purpose of that perimeter was to lead us all the way round to the east side of the courtyard, to the outer gate.

Because if we approach from the north side, the south side or even the west side, this white cloth is saying to us, not this way, not this way, not this way.

Because as sinners, we can't approach God any other way except through the outer gate in the east. And as we mentioned before, the reason the outer gate was on the east side of the courtyard was because when Adam and Eve fell into that estate of sin and misery, by breaking their favour and fellowship with the Lord, Adam and Eve, they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.

They were driven out through the gate in the east. And so in order to have that renewed experience of favour, forgiveness and fellowship with the Lord, sinners can only do so by entering through the tabernacle courtyard with their sacrifice through the outer gate that's in the east.

[ 3 : 52 ] And if you remember, as you can see there, the outer gate of the tabernacle courtyard, it was woven together using three different colours, blue, purple and scarlet.

And they're all royal colours. And these three colours, they're there to remind sinners who are approaching that the one whom they're approaching, the one whom they're seeking favour, forgiveness and fellowship with, he's a king.

He's the king of kings. He's the Lord of lords. He's the covenant king of his people. And he's the covenant king before whom a sinner was only allowed to approach and to present themselves if they came with an acceptable sacrifice.

Because a sinner was only permitted to enter through the outer gate into the tabernacle courtyard, so long as they were bringing with them a sacrifice. And then on entering through the outer gate, a sinner, they were confronted immediately and even intimidated by this large bronze altar right in front of them.

The first thing you would see is where your substitute was going to be placed and where your sin was going to be dealt with. It was to be a reminder to us as sinners that God is holy and sin must be punished either in the life of the sinner or in the life of a substitute.

[ 5 : 22 ] And of course the substitutionary sacrifice offered on the altar of sacrifice, it pointed forward towards the New Testament and the greatest substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But you know, as we consider Jesus our tabernacle this evening, we have to remember that coming to the altar of sacrifice was only the first step in the Christian life.

Because it's from the altar of sacrifice that we move forward to the bronze labor, which is what I want us to consider this evening. And I just want us to consider the bronze labor under three headings.

The location, the labor and the Lord. The location, the labor and the Lord. So if we look first of all at the location.

The location of this labor or the bronze basin. Look at verse 17. The Lord said to Moses, You shall also make a basin of bronze with its stand of bronze for washing.

[ 6 : 31 ] You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet.

Now the location of the bronze labor in the tabernacle courtyard. It's significant because it was located, as you can see, it was located between the altar of sacrifice and the entrance of the tabernacle.

The bronze labor had stood independently as this symbol. A symbol of daily cleansing and sanctification. But as we said before, on entering through the outer gate, it was the altar of sacrifice which would have been most visible to your eyes when you walked through the outer gate into the tabernacle courtyard.

You could miss the altar of sacrifice. It was right there in front of you. As soon as you entered through the outer gate with your substitutionary sacrifice walking beside you, it's still alive.

And as soon as you walk through the outer gate, you're confronted by this large bronze altar. And it's the first thing you would see is where your substitute is going to be placed and where your sin is going to be dealt with.

[ 7 : 45 ] Because as we said, sin must be punished either in the life of the sinner or in the life of the substitute. And so when you would bring your sacrifice through the outer gate, you would be instructed by the priests to lay your hands on the sacrifice which was still alive.

And you'd have to confess your sin onto the substitute. You'd then hand your substitutionary sacrifice over to the priest. And it's at that point that the priest would take over.

He would become your intermediary between the sinner and the Lord. Because as a sinner, you were permitted only into the tabernacle courtyard with your sacrifice, but no further.

The priest would then kill your substitutionary sacrifice right in front of your eyes. He would slit its throat, catch the blood draining out of it, and it would catch in one of those little bronze basins that Bezalel had made.

And the priest would then sprinkle the blood off the sacrifice. He would sprinkle it against the sides of the altar of sacrifice. And then he would cut the animal into pieces and place it upon the altar of sacrifice.

[ 9 : 00 ] And it would be consumed in the fires of the altar as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. It was a solemn reminder to every sinner that came of what you should receive because of your sin.

Now, as we said, coming to the altar of sacrifice was only the first step in the Christian life. Because the first step in the Christian life is justification.

The first step in the Christian life is justification. In our justification, we are made righteous. We're made acceptable in the sight of our holy God through the shed blood and death of our

substitutionary sacrifice.

And this is what our catechism teaches us about the Christian life. That we're justified by faith through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

I'm sure you know the catechism. Justification is an act of God's free grace. Wherein he pardons all our sins and he accepts us as righteous in his sight.

[10:09] Only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. As sinners, we're made righteous. We're justified.

We're made acceptable in the sight of our holy God through faith in our substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus Christ. But these two items of furniture in the tabernacle courtyard.

They're the only two items of furniture there. The bronze altar or the altar of sacrifice and the bronze laver. These two items of furniture. They ought to remind us about two key doctrines in the Christian life.

Because if the altar of sacrifice reminds us about the doctrine of justification. Then the brazen laver should remind us about the doctrine of sanctification.

Because justification, as the catechism teaches us, it's a one-time act of God's free grace. Where the sinner is declared righteous before God.

[11:12] But sanctification, as you know, it's an ongoing work of God's free grace. So justification is positional. Sanctification is progressive.

Justification is positional. You're made righteous. But sanctification is progressive. Justification is positional because you're made righteous.

You're justified. It's a one-time act. And the wonderful thing about your justification tonight. And my justification is that it doesn't change. It doesn't fluctuate.

It doesn't ebb and flow. It doesn't change with our feelings. Because we are as justified in God's sight tonight. As we will be when we stand face to face with Jesus in heaven.

You are as righteous tonight as you will be. And as the saints are in heaven. Justification is positional. But sanctification is progressive.

[12:17] Because in sanctification, as you know, you're being made more holy. You're being progressively conformed. You're being renewed and restored into the image and likeness of who?

Your substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus Christ. And again, that's what our catechism teaches us. I'm only teaching us what we already know. But it's good to be reminded.

The catechism teaches us about sanctification. Sanctification is not an act, but a work. A work of God's free grace. Whereby we're renewed in the whole man after the image of God.

And we're enabled more and more to die unto sin. And to live unto righteousness. But you know what's key to understanding the difference between these two doctrines?

Is the location of the bronze laver. The key to understanding the difference between these two doctrines is the location of the bronze laver.

[13:17] Because sanctification can't take place without first experiencing justification.

Sanctification in the life of the sinner can't begin without first coming to the altar of sacrifice by faith.

And offering our substitutionary sacrifice. Sanctification in the life of the sacrifice. Sanctification in the life of a sinner can't take place without first being justified and made righteous through the finished work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

That's what the location of the bronze laver is reminding us. It's reminding us that justification is positional. That's what comes first.

But then sanctification is second. And that's progressive. Justification is positional. Sanctification is progressive. But as we said, the bronze laver stood as a symbol of daily cleansing and sanctification.

That's what I want us to consider secondly. The laver. So the location. And then the laver. The laver itself. So the laver. Look again at verses 17 to 19.

[14:30] The Lord said to Moses, You shall also make a basin of bronze. With its stand of bronze for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar.

And you shall put water in it. With which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. Now what we ought to notice about the Lord's instructions regarding this bronze laver.

Or the bronze laver. Or the bronze basin. Is that they're not specific. The only thing that the Lord was specific about in these instructions. Was the location of the laver.

And the fact that it had to have water inside it. But you know when it comes to the shape, the size and the structure of the laver. The Lord doesn't say anything. The Lord isn't specific.

Which is in complete contrast to the rest of the tabernacle. Because as we've seen already in our study and even in the weeks to come. The Lord gave specific instructions.

[ 15 : 29 ] That the tabernacle was to be built in a specific shape. According to specific measurements using specific materials. Nothing was to be done according to the desire or design of man.

Everything. The size, the structure, the shape. It was all to be done according to the specific command of the Lord. But when it comes to this laver.

Sitting between the altar of sacrifice. And the tabernacle. You know why was the Lord not specific? Why did the Lord not give detail as to the size and the structure and the shape of the bronze laver? Why did he just leave this item of furniture to the desire and design of man? Well I want to suggest that the reason for this was because.

As we said earlier. The altar of sacrifice speaks of justification. The bronze laver speaks of sanctification. And in our justification.

[ 16 : 31 ] We're passive. We're passive. We have nothing to do with our justification. Because it's an act as the catechism says. It's an act of God's free grace.

But in our sanctification. We are active. We're not passive. We have an active participation in our sanctification. Our sanctification. It may be progressive.

And it may be a work of God's free grace in our life. But we also have a role and a responsibility. In sanctification. We have a role and a responsibility.

In the progression. Of our sanctification. We have a role and a responsibility. In our sanctification. Of dying unto sin. And living unto righteousness.

And how we achieve that. Like the bronze laver. The Lord isn't specific. We have to do it. But the Lord doesn't tell us exactly how.

[ 17 : 32 ] But you know. What I like about this is that. Even though the Lord isn't specific. By giving the cubits. Of how big this basin was to be. The Lord isn't specific. But even though he wasn't specific.

He gives us guidance. He gives us guidance here. On how we can take our role. And our responsibility of sanctification. Seriously. The Lord gives us guidance.

On how we can be enabled. More and more. To die unto sin. And live unto righteousness. Because what we read in Exodus 38. The only verse.

That's mentioned. When Bezalel puts the. The brazen labour together. What we read in that verse. Exodus 38. Was.

We read. Bezalel made the basin of bronze. And its stand of bronze. From the mirrors. Of the ministering woman. Who ministered. In the entrance.

[ 18 : 28 ] Of the tent of meeting. Bezalel made the basin of bronze. And its stand of bronze. From the mirrors. Of the ministering woman. Who ministered. In the entrance.

Of the tent of meeting. The bronze labour. Was made from the free will offerings. Of the ministering woman. the servant-hearted woman who gave their contribution of bronze mirrors to the tabernacle. You know, this is important for us to highlight that the bronze labour was made from mirrors. The bronze labour, it may have been unspecific in its size and structure and its shape, but the Lord gave guidance that the bronze labour be made from bronze mirrors.

And it was the freewill offering of these women. They gave their bronze mirrors. And as you know, the purpose of a mirror is to reflect.

The purpose of a mirror is to reflect what's standing in front of it. And these women who contributed their bronze mirrors, they would have, well, they would have used, like most women, they used their mirrors to improve the outward appearance and make themselves look good before others.

[ 19 : 43 ] That's what we all do. Some of us take a lot longer than others. But we all stand in the mirror in order to improve our outward appearance and make ourselves look good and presentable before others.

But, you know, when these bronze mirrors were given and contributed to the Lord, when the mirror became the Lord's mirror, its purpose was only to reflect the glory and holiness of the Lord.

And, you know, when we stand in the Lord's mirror, you know, we're made to see what we're really like. Because, my friend, when we look in the mirror at home, well, we stand there to try and make

ourselves look good to other people.

But when we look into the mirror of God's word, we realise that we can't make ourselves look good at all. And we're left, you know, we're left saying with Isaiah, O is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, but mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

You know, when we look into the mirror of God's word, we're made to realise that we're undone and we need cleansing, we need washing, we need renewing and we need restoring. When we look into the mirror of God's word, we realise that we need to die more and more unto sin and live more and more unto righteousness.

[ 21 : 13 ] When we look into the mirror of God's word, we realise that we need to take our role and responsibility of sanctification seriously. And how are we sanctified?

We're sanctified by standing in the mirror of God's word. We're sanctified by standing in the mirror of God's word.

Was it not Jesus who prayed, sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth. Therefore, once we've received justification at the altar of sacrifice, we must take our role and responsibility seriously and come to the bronze labour in order to be sanctified.

We need to look into the mirror of God's word and be doers of the word, not hearers only. Because as James reminds us in his letter, wonderful New Testament letter, James says that if we're only hearers of the word and not doers, if we're not making the application of all the information we've been given, and if we're not putting into practice what we hear and what we read, then James says, we're deceiving ourselves.

We're deceiving ourselves. James says in his letter, if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man observing his natural face in a mirror. For he observes himself, he goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

[ 22 : 44 ] But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, the Bible, and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this one, he says, will be blessed in what he does.

You know, my friend, the bronze labour is reminding us this evening that we need to take our role and responsibility of sanctification seriously. Because we're sanctified not by improving our outward appearance, and not by making ourselves look good and presentable to other people.

And sadly, that's the trend of the Christian in our day and generation, where the Christian is more interested in keeping their outward appearance before others, rather than attending to their inward appearance before the Lord.

And you know, we so quickly forget what was it that Samuel said to Jesse about his sons? Man looks on the outward appearance.

The Lord looks on the heart. And you know, my friend, we need to take our role and responsibility of sanctification seriously. And we need to do it by coming to the bronze labour and looking into the mirror of God's word.

[ 24 : 04 ] We need to look into the mirror of God's word. And you know, our role and responsibility of sanctification, it's so important. You know, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, he says that our mirror, in 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says that our mirror will remind us day by day that the outward man is wasting away.

But it's when we come and stand in the mirror of God's word, Paul says that mirror will remind you you are being renewed day by day. You're being renewed and restored day by day.

And you know, in many ways, those closing words, I love them. The end of 2 Corinthians 4, those words should be written above our mirrors at home. Paul says, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man has been renewed day by day.

Then he goes on to say, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For while we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen, they are eternal. And you know, my friend, it's when we come to the mirror of God's word day by day that we'll seek to walk closer and closer with the Lord.

[ 25 : 31 ] And that's who I want us to consider lastly and briefly. The Lord. The location, the labor, and the Lord. The Lord.

Look at verse 20. The Lord says, when they go into the tent of meeting, but when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water so that they may

not die.

They shall wash their hands and their feet so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.

Now I mentioned to you before a book by C.W. Slemming on the tabernacle. It's called Made According to Pattern. And in his book he says with regard to the bronze labor, Slemming says, at the altar of Calvary the sinner was bathed, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. But at the labor the sinner finds his daily cleansing from the defilements of life, enabling the sinner to live a sanctified life. life.

[ 26 : 46 ] And that's the emphasis that's made here with the instructions given to the priests in verses 20 and 21. The priests were to wash themselves. They were to wash, as we read, their hands and their feet.

And they were to wash their hands and their feet every time they offered a sacrifice on behalf of a sinner and every time they entered into the tabernacle. And of course the priests offered sacrifices on the altar of sacrifice and they entered into the tabernacle.

They did it daily. So the priests they had to go undergo daily cleansing. They had to undergo daily cleansing at the bronze labor in order to provide favor, forgiveness and fellowship with the Lord.

And this is what we need to do in order to take a role and responsibility of sanctification seriously. we need to come to the mirror of God's word day by day.

And you know it might seem like basic Christianity but that's what we often miss out on is the basic necessity. The basic necessity of coming to the mirror of God's word day by day so that we'll have a closer walk with the Lord.

[ 28 : 03 ] And we need to be reminded of that and we need to seek to do it. That's why Jesus told his disciples and that's what he was talking about in John 13. As we read earlier Jesus we read that Jesus washed his disciples' feet and he emphasized the need to come to the mirror of God's word for daily cleansing.

And you know as we read even though Peter questioned Jesus in John 13 he questioned Jesus about washing his feet. Lord you'll never wash my feet he said. But Jesus responded by saying to Peter he who is bathed needs only to wash his feet to be completely clean.

He who is bathed only needs to wash his feet to be completely clean. And what Jesus taught his disciples in the upper room is what the tabernacle furniture is teaching us this evening.

because Jesus says that those who are bathed those who have been washed all over only need to wash their feet daily. Those who have come to the altar of sacrifice for justification and cleansing from all sin they only need to come to the bronze laver daily and look into the mirror of God's word in order to experience sanctification.

And that's what Slemming was highlighting in his quote. He said at the altar of Calvary the sinner was bathed. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

[ 29 : 36 ] But at the laver the sinner finds his daily cleansing from the defilements of life enabling the sinner to live a sanctified life or to come daily.

And you know the Bible has this beautiful emphasis upon coming to the mirror of God's word for daily cleansing. Because you know we need daily reading for daily cleansing.

We need daily reading for daily cleansing. It's Jesus who says to us, he taught us to pray, give us this day our daily bread. It was Jesus who taught us what discipleship is.

He said whosoever wants to be my disciple must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. And when you come to the New Testament church, the people of Berea, they became disciples of Jesus because they searched the scriptures daily to see if what Paul and Silas were preaching to them was actually true.

They searched the scriptures daily. My friend, the Bible has this beautiful emphasis upon coming to the mirror of God's word for daily cleansing. because we need daily reading for daily cleansing.

[ 30 : 55 ] And you know, it's basic Christianity, but it's the things that we neglect so frequently and so easily. And so we're being encouraged this evening by God's word to come and to keep coming to the mirror of God's word.

The location, the labor and the Lord. The location of the labor in the tabernacle courtyard is there to remind us that in order to have a closer walk with the Lord, we need to take a role and a responsibility of sanctification seriously.

We need to come to the mirror of God's word daily for daily cleansing. Why? Because our walk with the Lord is important and it should be important to us.

And our walk with the Lord, it's not dependent upon our outward appearance before others. Our walk with the Lord is dependent upon our inward appearance before the Lord.

And it's also that we will experience as sinners, favour, forgiveness and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus, our tabernacle.

[ 32 : 04 ] So the location, the labor and the Lord. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, Lord, we give thanks to thee for the reminder this evening that we need to keep coming to thee.

Lord, thy word reminds us that without thee we can do nothing, but that with thee all things are possible. And that thou are the one who has begun that good work in us and will bring it on to completion.

And Lord, we bless and we praise thee tonight that we are those who have been justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But Lord, help us day by day to walk the Christian life, to seek that daily cleansing, to eat that daily bread, to be built up in that most holy faith, that we would be built up as a spiritual house, holy and acceptable unto thee.

And Lord, forgive us when we faint and fail. Forgive us, Lord, when we don't make the time when we should. Forgive us, Lord, we pray, when we seek after the things of this world and neglect the precious word of God.

Oh, Lord, help us, we plead, to keep washing our feet and always walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Lord, guide our path, lead us in the paths of righteousness.

[ 33 : 28 ] For thine own name's sake, for the sake and glory of thy name. Bless us then, we pray. Bless us in our being together. Remember, Lord, those who are not with us this evening and those, Lord, whom we have a burden for, that thou wouldst hear us and answer us.

In accordance with thy will, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We're going to bring our time to a conclusion by singing in Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 in the Sing Psalms version on page 157. Psalm 119.

And we're singing from verse 9 down to the verse marked 16. As you know, Psalm 119, it's a psalm that focuses upon God's word.

It holds up before us the mirror, the mirror of God's word. And these verses in particular, they remind us about walking that daily Christian walk and seeking cleansing from the Lord.

[ 34 : 39 ] how do we keep our life pure? We hide God's word within our heart. Psalm 119 at verse 9. How can the young keep their life pure? By doing what your word demands.

I seek you with my heart and soul. Let me not stray from your commands. Your word I've hidden in my heart to keep me from offending you. Praise be to you, O Lord my God.

Teach me your statutes, firm and true. So Psalm 119 from verse 9 down to the verse Mark 16 to God's praise. How can the young keep their life pure?

By doing what your word demands, I seek you with my heart and soul.

Let me not sleep from your commands. Your word I've hidden in my heart to keep me from offending you.

[ 36 : 10 ] Praise be to you, O Lord my God. Teach me your statutes, firm and true.

His love, O sitting from your mouth.

I gladly wave, my lips have told. I love to follow your commands.

as others love to count their gold.

I meditate upon your ways, and on your precepts I reflect.

[ 37 : 24 ] I take delight in your decrees.

Your word I never will regret. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.