

Sanctification: Are You a Saint or a Sinner?

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... sanctification.”
I Corinthians 1:30

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”
I Thessalonians 4:3

Introduction:

1. Having studied Daniel, who were the “saints” Rome’s little horn would persecute (Dan 7:18,21,22,25,27)?
2. They were the sanctified believers that have the Word of God and keep its commandments (Rev 12:17).
3. This is no “dry, dusty, moldy, stuffy doctrine.” It should be a glorious matter of thanksgiving and service.
4. No contemporary or carnal churches will be teaching this subject this morning. It is too old fashioned.
5. We began three years ago with a renewed focus on holy living, and we want to continue in that course.
6. It is the nature of our old man to pull us down and away from the holy lives that God has called us to live.

I. The DEFINITION OF SANCTIFICATION

- A. **Sanctify.** To consecrate; to set apart as holy or sacred. To make holy, to purify or free from sin; to cause to undergo sanctification.
- B. **Consecrate.** To set apart as sacred to the Deity; to dedicate solemnly to some sacred or religious purpose, and so give the object itself a character of holiness; to make sacred or holy and so fit for a religious use.
- C. We shall define it as making a person or thing holy for God’s useful pleasure and purpose.
 1. A thorough study of holiness is definitely related to the proper study of sanctification.
 2. See the sermon and/or its outline entitled, “Holiness,” dated February 27, 2000.
- D. Consider some related words: a *saint* is a holy person or angel; a *sanctuary* is a holy place.
- E. Consider the following uses of sanctification, consecration, and holiness in the Word of God.
 1. Sanctify may be ... designated to holy use (Gen 2:3; Exodus 13:2; II Chron 7:16; Jer 1:5).
 2. Sanctify may be a synonym to consecrate (Ex 28:41; Ex 30:30 cp Ex 40:13; Matt 23:17).
 3. Sanctify may be ... to make holy (Ex 20:8 cp Deuteronomy 5:12; I Corinthians 7:14).
 4. Sanctify may be ... to show holiness (Num 20:12-13; Ezekiel 28:22; 36:23; 38:16,23).
 5. Sanctify may be ... the removal of sin (Joshua 7:13; Ezekiel 36:23; II Timothy 2:21).
- F. If we distinguish sanctification from other aspects of our salvation, it may shed more light.
 1. *Justification* is a forensic term describing our legal standing before God as the Judge.
 2. *Redemption* is an economic term describing our purchase from the Creditor’s claims.
 3. *Reconciliation* is a relational term describing our friendship with God as former Enemy.
 4. *Propitiation* is a mediatorial term describing a purchase of peace with God as Antagonist.
 5. *Adoption* is a familial term describing the affectionate recovery work of God as Father.
 6. *Regeneration* is a creative term describing formation of a new nature by God the Creator.
 7. *Sanctification* is a religious term describing consecration in holiness for God as Deity.
- G. Let us consider sanctification and other aspects of our salvation in their relationship to sin.
 1. Election saves us from the *plan of sin*, but election had to include a plan to make us holy.
 2. Justification saves us from the *penalty of sin*, but removal of guilt is not nearly enough.
 3. Regeneration saves us from the *power of sin*, but we need a holy nature and principles.
 4. Conversion saves us from the *practice of sin*, but we want to practice holiness instead.
 5. Glorification saves us from the *presence of sin*, and this is sanctification in the full sense.

II. The NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION

- A. God is holy, holy, holy, which is the most glorified of His attributes in the Holy Scriptures.
 - 1. Holiness is no light matter. It is God's beauty and required for His worship (Ps 96:9).
 - 2. Aaron's mitre had a gold plate on blue lace – HOLINESS TO THE LORD (Ex 28:36-38).
 - 3. He is referred to as the "Holy One" at least thirty times in Isaiah alone (Is 1:4; 5:19,24).
 - 4. God takes this characteristic as His own name (Is 57:15; John 17:11; Dan 9:24; I Jn 5:7).
 - 5. Holiness is heaven's theme, as the four glorious beasts constantly testify (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8).
 - 6. When devils encountered our Lord, they praised His holiness (Luke 4:34; Mark 1:23).
 - 7. When God swears by Himself, He chooses to swear by His holiness (Psalm 89:35).
 - 8. Our Bible, called Holy, with His words, is the Holy Scriptures (Rom 1:2; II Tim 3:15).
- B. God is holy, and we should understand exactly what He means by this unpopular word.
 - 1. **Holiness.** Spiritual perfection or purity. 1. Kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use; set apart for religious use or observance; consecrated, dedicated, sacred. 2. Free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect and unsullied, possessing infinite moral perfection as found in God. 4. Conformed to the will of God, entirely devoted to God. Morally and spiritually unstained; free from sinful affection; of godly character and life; sanctified; saintly; sinless.
 - 2. What is it? It is His infinite and absolute purity, perfection, and freedom of character and nature from all evil acts, motives, or thoughts and His absolute intolerance of such acts, motives, or thoughts in any creature.
 - 3. Consider righteousness as legal perfection; consider holiness as moral perfection.
 - 4. Holiness is extreme! It hates any and all evil or any moral imperfection whatsoever.
 - 5. Holiness is intolerant! It cannot consider sin or allow any spot from it no matter what.
- C. God is holy, and one must be holy to be loved by God and be allowed access to His Presence.
 - 1. Both Moses and Joshua learned that even the ground becomes holy (Ex 3:5; Josh 5:15).
 - 2. Everyone and everything under Moses' law had to be sanctified for God (Ex 19:10,22).
 - 3. Isaiah and Peter both cringed in their sinfulness in the Lord's presence (Is 6:5; Luke 5:8).
 - 4. Holiness is essential for entrance into heaven, as nothing defiled will enter (Rev 21:27).
 - 5. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Heb 12:14). Tremble before this warning!
 - 6. He hates sin and sinners; He only loves holy things (Ha 1:13; Ps 5:4-6; 11:4-7; Mat 7:23).
 - 7. Unconditional love is absurd; it is last century's invention. God only loves us in Christ!
 - 8. Romans 5:8 does not contradict us, for God loved us eternally and legally, while we hated Him practically, which commends His glorious grace in choosing to love His enemies.
 - 9. God did not elect us because He loved us; He loved us because He elected us (Rom 9:15).
 - 10. Children should be taught Psalm 5:5 before John 3:16, and I John 1:5 before I John 4:8.
 - 11. He is first served in reverence and godly fear, even as Father (Heb 12:28-29; Rev 15:4).
 - 12. No one will enter heaven and see the Lord without a holy nature and standing before God.
- D. Therefore, we learn the necessity of sanctification – we must be made holy to see God!

III. The PHASES OF SANCTIFICATION

- A. The eternal phase is God's plan and purpose in eternity past to make His elect holy from sin.
 - 1. God planned salvation, to reveal His glorious perfections to the universe, before creating.
 - 2. Salvation was not remedial, but rather revelatory. He planned sin and the solution of it.
 - 3. His holy nature cannot accept or approve defiled objects, so He planned to make us holy.
 - 4. He chose Jesus for our sanctification, and He chose us in Him, by grace (I Cor 1:30-31).
 - 5. God elected us in Christ before time to receive the blessing of holiness (Ephesians 1:3-6).
 - 6. It is this sense of eternal sanctification that Jude applied to God the Father (Jude 1:1).

- B. The legal phase is the purchase of holiness in the sight of God by the death of Jesus Christ.
 1. God is perfectly holy; He can only accept persons and things that have been made holy.
 2. An infinite price must be paid to consecrate the elect sufficiently for God's holy pleasure.
 3. Everything in Moses' law was sanctified, often by blood, to picture Christ (Heb 9:13).
 4. Christ secured perfect sanctification for the elect by His bloody death (Hebrews 10:4-14).
 - a. He secured it according to the will of God (Heb 10:10 cp John 6:38 cp Eph 1:5).
 - b. Legal sanctification is once for all (10:10), forever (10:12), and perfected (10:14).
 5. Our practical entering into the worship of God is based on Christ's blood (Heb 10:19-22).
 6. The sanctification of God's people is by the bloody suffering of Christ (Heb 13:12).
 7. The sanctification of Christ's brethren is already complete by Christ's word (Heb 2:11).
 8. The new covenant sees the sanctifying affect of Christ's blood (Heb 10:29; Col 1:20-22).
 9. Observe that even the carnal Corinthians were referred to as being sanctified (I Cor 1:2).
- C. The vital phase is the creation of a new nature for the elect saint with the holiness of God.
 1. The elect, though sanctified in God's mind by Christ, still have defiled and vile natures.
 2. They need a new, holy nature created by the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration.
 3. Christ's death and the Holy Spirit's sanctification are related (I Pet 1:2; Eph 5:25-27).
 4. The new man created in us is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24).
 5. This creative change made by God is ascribed to the Spirit (I Cor 6:11; II Thess 2:13).
 6. Sanctification at this stage is not a process, nor imperfect, nor unequal among the elect.
- D. The practical phase is working out the holiness of the new man into a holy life without sin.
 1. Chosen to holiness, purchased as holy, and with a holy nature, we still have an old man.
 2. After spending eleven chapters describing grace, Paul exhorts to holiness (Rom 12:1-2).
 3. We sanctify ourselves to the Lord by choosing to be holy for the Lord (Leviticus 20:7).
 4. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to do God's will and sanctify themselves (I Thess 4:1-7).
 5. We are called to be holy, since God our Father is holy; this is our duty (I Pet 1:15-16).
 6. In light of the promises He has offered, we are to perfect holiness in His fear (II Cor 7:1).
 7. Christ's blood (Heb 9:13-14) and God's chastening (12:10-14) constrain us to holiness.
 8. Practical sanctification is man's duty (I Pet 1:22; Jas 4:8; I John 3:2; Luk 22:32; Rev 3:2).
- E. The final phase is when we are made completely holy for the holy presence of the holy God.
 1. The sanctification we yet need is for our vile bodies to be changed and our old man killed.
 2. Beyond practical sanctification, Paul prayed for God to sanctify wholly (I Thess 5:23-24).
 3. Freedom from bodily corruption, or glorification, is God's final work (Rom 8:21-23,30).

IV. The APPLICATION OF SANCTIFICATION

- A. We live in a profane world where sin is no longer punished, is allowed, and is even promoted.
- B. Living a holy life is a despised concept for this liberal, pleasure-addicted, carnal generation.
- C. It is a hard subject, for it demands a life of self-denial and isolation from worldly activities.
- D. Others will think you strange for no longer running to their degree of excess (I Peter 4:1-5).
- E. Paul's prophesied perilous times for Christianity in the last days are now here (II Tim 3:1-9).
 1. The character of our generation, as Paul foretold it plainly, is one of being **unholy** (3:2).
 2. This character includes a personal animosity and **despising of those that are good** (3:3).
 3. They **love pleasures more than they love God**, even if they assemble on Sundays (3:4).
 4. They have **a form of godliness, but they do not change their lives** because of it (3:5).
- F. Most ministers and churches compromise almost anything to keep their people coming, when it is the duty of God's ministers to make a difference between holy and profane (Ezek 44:23).
- G. The flesh and Satan will attend a church for a pleasant service and then live without holy fear.
- H. Compromise has been so great in society and Christianity that holiness is hard to recognize.
- I. Our privilege to complete the practical phase of sanctification is the most important doctrine.

- J. The true fear of the Lord is to hate evil – which is holiness in a pure form (Pr 8:13; 6:16-19).
- K. How spotted are you? How conformed? How separated from the world? How holy?
- L. God’s sanctification affects the basics of sex, relationships, and employment (I Thes 4:1-12).
- M. We should strive for God’s holiness in every area of our lives (I Peter 1:15-16; II Peter 3:11).
- N. Women are to strive carefully to be holy in thought, word, and deed (I Tim 2:15; Titus 2:3).
- O. The more care you have the more difficult it is to be holy in body and spirit (I Cor 7:32-35).
- P. Is your separation from the world such that perfects holiness (II Cor 7:1 cp I Cor 15:33)?
- Q. Pure religion is being unspotted from the world without any friendship (James 1:27; 4:4; Jude 1:23).
- R. It is Bible separation from the unclean things of sin and sinners that unites us to God (II Cor 6:14-18).
- S. Compromising God’s holiness is not allowed, as Joshua told Israel (Joshua 24:19; Ezekiel 20:39).
- T. Prayers are only heard, if you are holy, so here we see another motive (I Tim 2:8; Ps 66:18; Is 59:1-8).
- U. A fervent view of Christ’s coming will cause us to seek holiness (I John 3:3; II Peter 3:9-14).

Conclusion:

1. A “dry, dusty, moldy, boring doctrine” is actually a great story of love and opportunity for pleasing God.
2. Every thought, word, action, day, possession, opportunity is the Lord’s. Sanctify yourself! Be holy!
3. This matter is the greatest threat to the safety and success of your family and this church. Lord, help us!
4. If you have a heart that fears the Lord, then repent and review this sermon and those that came before it.

For further study:

1. “Holiness”: <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/Sermons/pdf/Holiness.pdf>
2. “Take Up Your Cross Daily”: <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/Sermons/pdf/TakeUpYourCrossDaily.pdf>
3. “Perfecting Holiness”: <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/Sermons/pdf/PerfectingHoliness.pdf>