

YOU HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED – YOU ARE BEING SANCTIFIED – SANCTIFY YOURSELVES

To better understand this study we will first examine the meaning of the words ‘holy,’ and ‘sanctification.’

Holy

God alone is Holy, with an absolute perfection and completeness in purity and righteousness that opposes and judges any form of evil. In John’s vision of God’s throne in Revelation, it is surrounded by a crystal clear sea of glass, showing us that God’s holiness separates Him from all created beings. God’s holiness emits power so awesome that the Children of Israel could not look upon the face of Moses after God had spoken to Him.

A further aspect of God’s holiness is His perfect love and goodwill towards man, desiring what is supremely virtuous and good in His creatures, and making every effort to bestow it upon them. This was made evident in His love for us that demanded that His only Son become a sacrificial offering to redeem mankind. God’s nature is the perfect representation of holiness. Only God is holy, and the only holiness we have is by His presence (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in us.

Sanctify -- The word ‘sanct’ means holy, and to sanctify is to make holy.

Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which something is made holy. The first and simplest meaning of the word sanctification is ‘separation,’ in this case meaning separation from everything in a person’s life that hinders his complete consecration to God. It is our sanctification and separation to God that enables Him to dwell in us, and impart His holiness to us.

The Law of Holiness

God told Haggai to ask the priests to explain the law of holiness.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" Then the priests answered and said, ‘No’. And Haggai said, ‘If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?’ So the priests answered and said, ‘It shall be unclean.” Hag 2:1-13.

This is saying that if anything that is holy comes in contact with something that is unclean, then the holy thing is made unclean. This has been a stumbling block for some people who say, ‘How can a holy God dwell within unclean mankind’? This is a pertinent question, for mankind had to be made holy before salvation so that he could receive Christ and the Holy Spirit.

WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED

How Jesus has sanctified us

Before Jesus could sanctify us, He had to sanctify Himself, and so before He departed from this earth, He prayed thus to the Father: Note that He was sanctifying Himself so that we might be sanctified by the truth of what His sanctification meant to us.

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” John 17:18-19.

How did Christ sanctify Himself? Christ forsook everything He was entitled to - His divinity, all that He possessed, even His very life, to the end that He hung naked on the cross separated from God His Father because He represented the sin of mankind. His total sanctification was due to His willing obedience to the will of God, so that mankind might be redeemed by accepting the truth that because we were one with Jesus, we shared in His sanctification.

We are united with Christ in His sanctification

In the reading below, the writer of Hebrews reveals the ways in which we are united with Jesus in His sanctification.

Jesus declare His oneness with us, calling us brethren.

“For both He who sanctifies [Jesus Christ] **and those who are being sanctified [members of His body] **are all of one... for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren...**”** Heb 2:11.

During His time on earth, Jesus had two titles, the first being ‘**The Son of God,**’ that reflected His relationship with God the Father, and the second, ‘**The Son of Man,**’ His relationship to His brethren. Of the two, Jesus referred to Himself mostly as ‘The Son of man.’

“For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” Matt 12:8.

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matt 12:40-41.

It was other people who called Him ‘The Son of God.’

“Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” Matt 14:33.

In this conversation with Peter, both titles are used.

“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” Matt 16:13.

“Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Matt 16:16.

His title, ‘Son of God,’ signified that Jesus was representing God to mankind on earth. His title ‘Son of Man,’ tells us that He was the representative of man towards God, so much so that Christ

represented mankind on the cross, bearing the punishment for their sins in their stead. Jesus was mankind on the cross, but more than that, He became the sin of mankind so that it might be faced with God's judgment, with its penalty of death. Paul said, **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** 2 Cor 5:21.

The Body and Blood of Jesus taken by the Spirit to the Mercy Seat in the Heavenly Sanctuary

Jesus' work of redeeming mankind was not completed on the cross, for He had to present His body and blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary to complete our atonement and sanctification.

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Heb 9:11-13.

"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer [representing the body], sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Heb 9:13-15.

Because He was our representative, we are incorporated in his justification and sanctification, cleansed from all iniquity - **"we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."** Heb 10:10.

WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED

The cross has already sanctified us, and there is no more needed except for man to believe the truth. The following readings show that when we believe in the power of the blood of Jesus to remove every trace of sin from us, so that we are no longer separated from God. We are sanctified to God that we may receive His abiding presence and holiness.

"... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb 10:10.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate." Heb 13:12-13.

Jesus said, **I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth,** so what is that truth, and how do we use it? The most relevant truth concerning Christ's sanctifying death is that we have been sanctified by His blood.

The word says that Christ's blood was transported from the cross to the heavenly altar by the Holy Spirit, where it proclaims righteousness for us. The life of Jesus was in His blood, and His blood has spiritual power beyond our comprehension in its efficacy to pay the cost of our redemption, negating the power of sin and cleansing us from all unrighteousness, so that we are holy and blameless

before the throne of God. This is a spiritual truth, an historical happening that sanctifies us when we receive it by faith.

Before proceeding, we should understand that there are two kinds of truth - spiritual truth that is eternal, and physical truth that is temporary, or ever changing. When Paul described his experience on the path of sanctification (sometimes referred to as the 'path of the cross'), he said that he kept his eyes on spiritual reality rather than physical reality.

“...we do not look at the things which are seen [physical things], but at the things which are not seen [spiritual things]. For the things [truths] which are seen are temporary, but the things [spiritual truths] which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor 4:18.

The things that are seen or physical truths are what we are as a work in progress.

Spiritual truths are all the things that Jesus acquired for us by His sacrificial death and resurrection, of course including eternal salvation. They are laid up for us in 'heavenly places,' for us to appropriate by faith. Paul told the Ephesian Church, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...”** Eph 1:3. Our sanctification through the blood of Jesus making us holy and blameless before the throne of God, is one of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places that we may appropriate. Of course Satan contests this truth by proclaiming that we are sinful beings, and that Christ cannot dwell within such a contaminated vessel. But Jesus said that He would sanctify Himself that we might be sanctified through the word, and all that we need to do is stand on the word that we have been sanctified and made holy by His blood.

Our baptism provides us with another confirmation of our being sanctified, for it is a physical demonstration of the process of our sanctification. Paul stated,

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Rom 6:3-10.

When we were baptised our 'old man' with its carnal nature was baptised into Christ's death, our past life with all of its sins, was buried in the waters of baptism. We were raised out of the water as new creations, righteous and holy before God.

Another Scripture expressing this truth is the statement by Paul, **“I [my old man with its carnal nature] am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”** Gal 2:20. **KJV.**

WE ARE BEING SANCTIFIED

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one...” Heb 2:11.

He who sanctifies: This speaks of Jesus in the continuous tense. He is continually sanctifying us as our High Priest presenting our testimonies before the throne of God. Those who are being sanctified by Jesus are growing in the knowledge of more and more of the blessings of His atoning sacrifice.

Those who are being sanctified: We are being continually sanctified by God, as He undertakes a work of separating us from the things of the flesh and the world that captivate us and turn our hearts away from Him.

God’s Part in Sanctification

Sanctification is a work of God. He knows our hearts, and is aware of those things that are stopping our total commitment to Him. He knows in what order they should be dealt with, and deals with them one at a time. He makes us aware of each part He wants to deal with, and motivates us to utterly reject it by laying it on the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. This is what Paul meant when he said, “**For if you live according to the flesh you will die [spiritually]; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**” Rom 8:13-14. Unfortunately this may not produce a permanent result straight away, and the trait in our nature usually returns. God then withdraws His ‘hedge’ of protection from around us, allowing a spirit to emphasise the trait, causing contrition and repentance. This process may be repeated over and over again until the trait is completely rejected and departs. This is the process described by the writer of Hebrews. “**For they [our fathers] indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Heb 12:10-11**

This ongoing refining procedure, sometimes called ‘the path of the cross,’ or ‘the path of holiness,’ is repeated as item after item is revealed and dealt with.

Our part in the process of sanctification

In this reading Paul pleads with us to separate ourselves from all that is against the will of God.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.’

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor 6:14-7:2

SANCTIFY YOURSELVES

For us to sanctify ourselves is to step on the path of the cross. God never deals with the flaws in our nature unless there is repentance when they are brought to light, and there is willingness to forsake them, for God never violates our free will. Our obligation is to be obedient to Christ’s command. **“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”** Matt 10:38-39. To take up one’s cross is to consign our ‘old man,’ or carnal nature daily to the cross to be put to death by the Spirit, so that it can be replaced by Christ’s own nature in us.

This process of dying to self so that the life of Jesus can be manifested through us is described by Paul in this passage from 2 Corinthians 4.

“But we have this treasure [the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus] in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

Paul goes on to inform us that this path involves suffering. **“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...”** He then describes the continual death of his carnal nature, and the nature of Christ being formed in him. **“... always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus [the dying of our carnal nature], that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.”** 2 Cor 4:7-12.

It is important to see that it is the indwelling Jesus Christ, in the power of His Spirit, who ministers life and truth to His body. As Paul said, we are earthenware vessels used by the Lord, fully aware that without the Lord, we can do nothing. Peter and John took pains to tell those who had seen the miracle of the healing of the lame man that it was not by their power, but by faith in the name of Jesus Christ.

“Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” Acts 3:11-13.

