

The Purpose and Need of Sanctification
Old Union Ministers School 2024
Rodney Carter

Text: 2 Thessalonians 5:23

Sanctification (Webster's Dictionary, 1828): (1) The act of making holy. In an evangelical sense, the act of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world and exalted to a supreme love to God (2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Peter 1). (2) The act of consecrating or of setting apart for a sacred purpose; consecration.

Consecration (Webster's Dictionary, 1828): The act or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use; or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service and worship of God by certain rites or solemnities. Consecration does not make a person or thing really holy, but declares it to be sacred, that is devoted to God or to divine service, as the consecration of the priests among the Israelites; the consecration of the vessels used in the temple; the consecration of a Bishop.

The London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689
Chapter 13

[1] They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, ⁽¹⁾Acts 20:23, Romans 6:5-6; through the same virtue, by his word and spirit dwelling in them, ⁽²⁾John 17:17, Ephesians 3:16-19, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, ⁽³⁾Romans 6:14; and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, ⁽⁴⁾Galatians 5:24; and they are more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, ⁽⁵⁾Colossians 1:11; to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. ⁽⁶⁾2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 12:14.

[2] This sanctification is throughout the whole man, ⁽⁷⁾1 Thessalonians 5:23; yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, ⁽⁸⁾Romans 7:18, 23; when arises a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, ⁽⁹⁾Galatians 5:17, 1 Peter 2:11.

[3] In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, ⁽¹⁰⁾Romans 7:23; yet, through the continued supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome, ⁽¹¹⁾Romans 6:14; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King in his Word hath prescribed to them, ⁽¹²⁾Ephesians 4:15-16, 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1.

New Hampshire Declaration of Faith, 1833

X. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

~~~

The definition for *sanctification* basically means,

(1) To set apart for sacred use:

- a. Exodus 13:2, “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.” In verse 12, it says, “That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD’S.” We see that “sanctify” in verse 12 and “set apart” in verse 12 are used interchangeably, pointing to the deliverance of the firstborn son spared by the death angel on the night of the Passover.
- b. Genesis 2:3 says, “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” In Exodus 20:11, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” As for as, the other six days there was no difference, the evening and the morning created the day, but God chose to sanctify the seventh (sabbath) to be used for rest and worship.
- c. Exodus 19:23 says, And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.” Mount Sinai differed very little if any from all the other mountains, but God set it aside for sacred use in delivering the law to the Israelite nation.
- d. Also mentioned as sanctified are:
  - i. Tabernacle – Exodus 29:44
  - ii. Altar – Exodus 29:37
  - iii. Priests’ garments – Leviticus 8:30
  - iv. Instruments and vessels – Numbers 7:1
  - v. Congregation – Joel 2:16
- e. When something, either people or things, is sanctified, they are recognized as set apart by the good Lord as well as by mankind. Sanctification does not necessarily require an inward change but did require a ceremonial ritual of the law. Paul said in Hebrews 9:18-21, “Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament

which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry." This ceremonial ritual sanctified or set apart these from common use to special purposes.

(2) To make morally holy.

- a. Leviticus 19:1-2, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy." Israel was a holy people in a national sense; they were ceremonially separated from other nations, and set apart as the peculiar people of God. While many were no doubt redeemed and circumcised in the heart, the majority manifested only a ritual, formal saintship.
- b. Day of Atonement – Leviticus 16:29-34, "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses." While this symbolically cleansed them and sanctified them to be used in the service of God each year, the annual repetition served as a reminder that the perfect atonement was yet to come. The Apostle Paul made it very clear in Hebrews 9:11-12 that this offering could only effect the cleansing of the flesh, but could not bring about the inward cleansing required to have fellowship with God and purity of heart.

(3) Inward holiness.

- a. Inward holiness or holiness of the heart begins in regeneration or being born from above. Jesus taught the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes the necessity of first being regenerated and born from above, before you can clean up the outward man. They tried by their traditions to clean the sins outwardly up, hoping it would be sufficient to clean the sins inwardly. Jesus taught them that tried to justify themselves before God by their vain traditions, that sanctification begins in regeneration, and holiness of the heart leads to holiness of life. Matthew 23:25-26, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first

that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

The Pharisees and Sadducees observed and kept the moral laws and ordinances that governed the sanctifying of the flesh but it was never sufficient to purify the soul.

- b. Paul explained in Romans 2:28-29 this issue, “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Paul was basically saying, clean up the inward man so the outward man can be clean.
- c. King David teaches in Psalm 51 concerning this issue of inward and outward sanctification. He refers to the sprinkling of the water of separation for the purification of sin found in Numbers 19; Paul refers to the same example in Hebrews 9:12, Titus 3:5.

David said in Psalm 51, “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” David teaches that holiness of heart produces holiness of life.

- (4) Jesus taught Nicodemus about this doctrine of regeneration in John 3:1-8, “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Jesus is teaching Nicodemus the very same doctrine on regeneration and sanctification as David taught in Psalm 51. Jesus refers to the process as being one birth – the outward, carnal, fleshly man – as being sanctified (set apart) and the inward, spiritual soul as being regenerated or born into the family of God.

#### (5) New Man

- a. Regeneration or being born again changes the state of man from being lost to being saved, from being evil to being holy, from being a child of the devil to being a child of God. The analogy of this doctrine refers to first being born from above, compares this birth as being created in Christ Jesus, Ephesians

2:10; as a birth not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God, as being born again, not of a corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; 1 Peter 1:23, As being new born babes, 1 Peter 2:2; babes in Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:1; children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, Ephesians 4:14 and unto a perfect man, Ephesians 4:13.

- b. Comparing the physical birth to a spiritual birth we can conclude that as a baby is born into this life it is in possession of all the members of the body, though these parts are weak and feeble, they will mature with proper diet, exercise, strength and development. They first start with milk, soft foods, and as they develop into children, fruits, vegetable, meats, etc., and finally they develop into the perfect man, mature adult. So also is a babe that is born into the family of God. At birth they possess all the parts of the “new man” and needing spiritual diet, exercise, and development. Sanctification is the process that enables the newborn babe to mature and be restored to the image of God. Sanctification nourishes the babe and promotes its growth to spiritual maturity. It is progressive until finally accomplished.

#### (6) Spiritual Warfare

Though regeneration breaks the power of sin and destroys the love of sin, it does not completely free the person from the presence and the pollution of sin.

Ecclesiastes 7:20, “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;”; 1 Kings 8:46 “(for there is no man that sinneth not,)”; Psalm 53:3, “Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Proverbs 20:9, “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” Isaiah 64:6, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”; 1 John 1:8, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”; Romans 7:18, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing;”; yet, 1 John 3:9 says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” How can that be? Paul explains this in Romans 7:15-25, “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus

Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Paul is teaching the church at Rome concerning the daily warfare that Christians fight each day of their lives. A regenerated man sanctified in part can say, "I consent unto the law that it is good," "To will is present with me," "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man," "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God." Only a regenerated man sanctified in part can truly say, "For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would that do I not; but what I hate, that I do; For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I." But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Paul is teaching it is through the sanctification by the Holy Spirit that the regenerated man finally wins this warfare. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Peter said in 1 Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" Paul also said in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ."

These scriptures are self-evident and cannot be controverted that it is the Holy Spirit which separates the believer from the world and sets him apart as belonging to God. That the believer is chose of God to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth and that it is the Holy Spirit that begins the work in the soul of man that He will also perform and finally complete at the day of Jesus Christ. That the believer's sanctification is complete, absolute, and eternal by the Holy Spirit applying Jesus' precious blood to the soul of man. Hebrews 10:10: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" Hebrews 13:12: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate;" Hebrews 10:14: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And it is through Jesus that Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

#### (7) Battles of Life

Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Sanctification teaches us that we must destroy even the impure thought that pass through our minds as well the temptations outward sins. That our warfare against sin must be impartial. That we can have no favorite sins. We must exterminate them all. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13)

Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:19-21, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.” Peter said in 1 Peter 2:11, “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

#### (8) Growth In Graces

According to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that God has provided faith, hope, charity, to formulate our Christian character. We are to cultivate them and let them grow that we might be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

- a. 2 Thessalonians 1:3: “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.” It is by faith that our hearts are purified. Acts 15:9. It is by faith that we receive sanctification as well as forgiveness of sins. It is by faith that we achieve victory over the world. 1 John 5:1.
- b. Hope also may be increased. Romans 15:13: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”
- c. Charity or love  
The Bible teaches that God is love. In 1 John 4:16: “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13: “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”
- d. Causes a deep sense of unworthiness
  - i. Job 40:1-6
  - ii. Isaiah 6:1-8
  - iii. Paul – 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- e. Cause a hatred for sin
  - i. Romans 7:15
  - ii. Psalm 101:3
- f. Causes a love for heavenly things
  - i. Colossians 3:1-4