

II.XIII SANCTIFICATION IS A WORK OF GOD'S FREE GRACE: Philippians 2:12-13 - Shepherd School

I. OPENING PRAYER: All.

II. SERMON:

SANCTIFICATION IS A WORK OF GOD'S FREE GRACE: Philippians 2:12-13

INTRODUCTION. Sanctification means "to set apart as holy," and it is a word used for many different purposes in the Scriptures:

I) God requires His people to *sanctify Him* in holy worship of Him (Lev. 10:3).

II) God demands His people to *consecrate* (i.e. *sanctify*) themselves for holy service to Him (Josh. 3:5).

III) God says *He sanctifies certain places* for specific purposes (Ex. 29:43).

IV) God says *He performs an ACT of sanctification* when He converts a sinner, transferring them from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son (1 Cor. 1:2; Col. 1:13).

V) God says *He performs a WORK of sanctification*, renewing His people in the whole man, as He enables them more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 4:3).

- **WILLIAM AMES, in his masterful book, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, says, concerning progressive sanctification:**

"Sanctification is a real change of a man from the filthiness of sin to the purity of God's image."

The type of sanctification we are dealing with this evening is what we should call *Progressive Sanctification*. This type of Sanctification is what Q.39 in the Baptist Catechism is dealing with, as well as our text tonight in Philippians 2:12-13.

DOCTRINE. Sanctification is a *work* of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (**Q.39**)

CONTEXT. Philippians 2:12a "Therefore (because Christ has been humbled and exalted), my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence. . ."

OUTLINE. As we study these verses, I want you to consider two main things:

- I. The work of God in sanctification.
- II. The duty of those whom the Lord sanctifies.

I. THE WORK OF GOD IN SANCTIFICATION (Phil. 2:13).

I) Sanctification is a work of God's free grace (Phil. 2:13a).

Philippians 2:13a "for it is God who works in you,"

- Sanctification is a work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (Q.39)

USES FOR INSTRUCTION

(i) Justification is an ACT of God's free grace, Adoption is an ACT of God's free grace, but sanctification is a WORK of God's free grace.

- **THOMAS VINCENT:** "Sanctification doth differ from justification and adoption in that justification and adoption are acts of God without us: sanctification is a work of God within us. Justification and adoption do make only a relative change; sanctification doth make in us a real change. Justification and adoption are perfect at first; sanctification is carried on by degrees unto perfection." — *Thomas Vincent, Explicatory Catechism, 91*
- Justification and adoption are instantaneous. Sanctification is progressive.

WATCH OUT AND BE CAREFUL

that you do not base your justification or adoption on your sanctification.

Your progressive sanctification will ebb and flow, but your justification by Christ's blood and adoption by the Father's mercy are stable and steadfast.

REMEMBER

that saints grow in sanctification more like Oak Trees than weeds. Weeds sprout quickly but are trampled and plucked out with ease. Oak Trees, on the other hand, grow slower than you would like but can withstand the storms of this life for the glory of God.

- **Psalm 1:3**
"He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither."

(ii) Sanctification is monergistic, not synergistic.

- Sanctification is the process by which God the Holy Spirit makes us less like Adam and more like Jesus.
 - Do not rob God of His glory by talking about progressively sanctifying yourself. Progressive sanctification is a free work of grace!

(iii) Though sanctification is monergistic, it does not follow that the Christian life is one of idleness or passivity.

- **God is the one who sanctifies, and He commands duties to be performed by His people who are being sanctified.** That is not the same thing as saying Sanctification is synergistic or a cooperation.
 - **The duties God commands of those He is sanctifying does not reveal that sanctification is a cooperation with God;** rather, it reveals to the believer that God is in fact sanctifying them when they are enabled to do what He requires.

II) Sanctification is a work wherein God renews believers in the will, mind, and affections (Phil. 2:13b).

- **Philippians 2:13b** "both to will (*internal*). . . for his good pleasure"
- **(i) In sanctification, God renews the believer's WILL:** Resolve/Choice.
- **(ii) In sanctification, God renews the believer's MIND:** Thoughts.
- **(iii) In sanctification, God renews the believer's AFFECTIONS:** Loves/Hates.
 - **THOMAS WATSON:** "Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet." — *Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 63*
 - *Praise God with me, men, that He so renews our loves and hates that we grow in our hatred for sin and love for Christ!*

USE FOR EXAMINATION.

- **Q1.** Do you hate sin more than you did a few years ago?
- **Q2.** Do you love Christ more than you did a few years ago?
- *Praise the Lord!*

Now, the will (what you choose) **is intricately connected to the mind** (what you think) **and the affections** (what you love and hate).

The will chooses what the mind finds reasonable and the affections find lovely. Or, on the other hand, the will refuses what the mind finds unreasonable and the affections find unlovely.

- Sanctification is a *work* of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (**Q.39**)

See how amazing our triune God is! He not only frees us from the penalty of our sins and adopts us into His family; He also labors diligently to renew our minds, our wills, and our affections so that we Choose what is holy, we Think what is holy, and we Delight in what is holy—God Himself, Father, Son, and Spirit!

III) Sanctification is a work wherein God enables believers to die to sin and live unto righteousness (Phil. 2:13c).

Philippians 2:13c "and to work (external) for his good pleasure."

- Sanctification is a work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (Q.39)

The work of sanctification will be gloriously completed in glorification, as He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ!

- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS:** "Sanctification is nothing else but glorification begun. Glorification is nothing else but the perfecting of sanctification."

II. THE DUTY OF THOSE WHOM THE LORD SANCTIFIES (Phil. 2:12).

I) As God sanctifies you, you must labor diligently (Phil. 2:12b).

Philippians 2:12b "work out"

- **Leviticus 22:31-33** "31 "So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the Lord. 32 And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you, 33 who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord.""
 - **Leviticus 20:8** "Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

Paul says "Work out" in Philippians 2:12, but this idea is found many places in Scripture.

(I) Sometimes "working out your own salvation" is called *Striving*.

Luke 13:24 "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

- **WATSON:** "Strive as in an agony, or bloody sweat."

(ii) Sometimes "working out your own salvation" is called *Seeking*.

Matthew 6:33 "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

- **WATSON:** As a man that has lost a treasure, seeks diligently for it. We have lost salvation. *Adam* by eating the tree of knowledge, lost the tree of life. Now seek, take *David's* candle and lantern, and search for salvation. The word seek, (as a learned writer notes) signifies to pursue a thing with inflamed desires, as a condemned man desires a pardon."

(iii) Sometimes "working out your own salvation" is called *Running*.

1 Corinthians 9:24 "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it."

- **WATSON:** The Apostle seems to allude to the games of *Olympus*, which were celebrated every fifth year in the honor of *Jupiter*; in those games they did put forth all their strength. Whence that phrase, 'Tis along race from earth to Heaven; lay aside all weights of sin which will hinder you in the race, and reach forward with a winged swiftness to lay hold upon the mark.

(iv) Sometimes "working out your own salvation" is called *Offering Violence to Heaven*.

Matthew 11:12 "the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force."

- **WATSON:** There must not only be *diligence*, but *violence*; we must not only pray, but pray *fervently*, *Jam. 5:16*. not only repent, but be *Zealous and repent*, *Rev. 3:19*. not only love, but be *sick of love*, [*Song of Solomon*] 2:5.

This is offering violence; the Greek word is a Metaphor taken from a Castle that holds out in a siege, and will not be taken but by storm: So the Kingdom of Heaven holds out against a supine lazy Christian, and will not be taken but by storm."

— **Thomas Watson, The Fight of Faith Crowned, pg. 155-156**

II) As God sanctifies you, you must primarily labor in the things necessary to your own salvation (Phil. 2:12c).

Philippians 2:12c "your own salvation"

- **NOTE, you cannot work out someone else's salvation.**
 - You can aid others, but you cannot work out their salvation.
 - You and I must do our duty, not always looking outward to others rather than inward to our own stewardship.
 - This would surely be a diligent use of the ordinary means of

grace: Prayer; Scripture reading and Scripture hearing; private, family, and public Worship; self-Examination; Active Obedience; Christian Meditation; the Lord's Supper; and Christian fellowship.

III) As God sanctifies you, you must labor with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12d).

Philippians 2:13c "with fear and trembling,"

- **MATTHEW POOLE:** "'With fear and trembling' means with a holy care to do all acceptably: he doth by these two words mean not any servile fear and slavish despondency, arising from doubting, Philippians 4:4, but only a serious, filial fear, implying a deep humility and submissiveness of mind, with a reverential awe of the Divine Majesty, and a solicitude to avoid that evil which is offensive to him and separates from him."
- **WATSON:** "If there is anything excellent, it is salvation. If there is anything necessary, it is working out salvation. If there is any tool to work with, it is holy fear: "work out your salvation with fear."
- **Thomas Watson, The Fight of Faith Crowned, pg. 153**
 - **WATSON:** "CAUTION. Though we shall not be saved without working, yet not *for our* working. We do not work out salvation by way of merit. No, though we are saved in the use of means, yet *by grace* too, *Ephesians 2:5*. There must be ploughing and sowing the ground, but yet no crop can be expected without the influence of the Sun: So there must be *working*, but no crop of salvation can be hoped for without the Sun-shine of free grace: '*Tis your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom*, Luke 12:32. Give? why might some say, we have wrought hard for it? I, but Heaven is a donation; though you work for it, yet it is *the good pleasure of God to bestow it*. Still look up to Christs merit; it is not your *sweat*, but his *blood that saves*.
That your working cannot merit salvation, is clear: '*Tis God that works in you to will, and to do, Philippians 2:13*. 'Tis not your working, but Gods co-working. For as the [Scribe] guides the child's hand, or he cannot write; so the spirit of God must afford his auxiliary concurrence, or our work stands still; how then can any man merit by working, when it is God that helps him to work?"
- **Thomas Watson, The Fight of Faith Crowned, pg. 175**

CONCLUSION.

May God continue to work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure as you labor to make use of the ordinary means of grace.

He is worthy of your labor, men, and as you labor He will enable you all the way to glory. SDG.

III. SONG:

B r e a k (start back at 7:10pm)

IV. 1689 Confession: Ch 25. Par 1-4 (finish by 7:35pm)

V. DISCUSSION (finish by 8pm)

A Body of Divinity

The Ten Commandments

Closing Prayer

SYLLABUS

📖 SHEPHERD SCHOOL - SEASON TWO (2026) - THE WORD, THE GOSPEL, & THE LAW 📖

WEEK	Scripture	Book I <i>(read before)</i>	Book II <i>(read before)</i>	1689 Confession	Certificate Essays	Certificate Exposition
1. 2/12	2 Timothy 2:1-7	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO
2. 2/19	1 Thessalonians 2:13	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)	The Ten Commandments Obedience & Love by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 1-3		
3. 2/26	Isaiah 8:19-20	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 2: Necessity, Unity, Efficacy <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 352-370)	The Ten Commandments The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 12-29) by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 4-5		
4. 3/5	Psalms 19:7-11	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 3: Inerrant Veracity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 371-382)	The Ten Commandments The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 29-43) by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 6-8		First Draft Exposition Due *Certificate path will meet an extra night this week
5. 3/12	2 Timothy 3:15-17	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 5: Sufficiency <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 395-408)	The Ten Commandments The Right Understanding of the Law by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 9-10		
6. 3/19	Matthew 19:17 + Romans 2:14-15	Introduction + The Essence of God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 1-24)	The Ten Commandments The First Commandment by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 1-2		
7. 3/26	Matthew 5:17-20	Christ and God's Law + The New Testament and God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 25-46)	The Ten Commandments The Second Commandment by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 3-5	Short Essay on the Sufficiency of the Scriptures *1,000-1,200 words	

