

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 service to 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.

- I. The work of God in sanctification.
- II. The duty of those whom the Lord sanctifies.
- III. Directions concerning working out your own salvation as He sanctifies you.

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)

(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."

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"

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."

DIRECTIONS CONCERNING WORKING OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION AS GOD SANCTIFIES YOU.

Mortification, Vivification, Obedience, Spiritual Disciplines, and Vocational Duties.

I) If you are going to workout your own salvation with fear and trembling you need to labor in MORTIFICATION (Rom. 8:13, Col. 3:5, Gal. 5:24, Matt. 5:29-31)

Mortification is when a Christian, by the power of the Holy Spirit, puts to death the sins that tempt them or indwell them by the Sword of the Spirit.

- **(i) You must mortify. Colossians 3:5** "Put to death...what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - **Q. Why? Because Paul knew what Peter knew in 1 Peter 2:11**
"Beloved, I urge you...to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."
- **(ii) You must continually mortify. Galatians 5:24** "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified (*active. i.e. "are crucifying"*) the flesh with its passions and desires."
- **(iii) You must viciously mortify. Matthew 5:29-31** "**29** If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. **30** And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."
 - **WATSON:** "Withdraw the fuel that may make lust burn. Avoid all temptations. Take heed of that which nourishes sin. He who would suppress the gout or stone, avoids those meats which are noxious. Those who pray that they may not be led into temptation, must not lead themselves into temptation."
- **(iv) You must Spiritually mortify; that is, with the Sword of the Spirit and by the strength of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:13** "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

II) If you are going to workout your own salvation with fear and trembling you need to labor in VIVIFICATION (1 Samuel 7:3, Colossians 3:1-2, 2 Cor. 3:18, Psalm 16:7-9).

Vivification is when a Christian, by the power of the Holy Spirit, keeps

the eyes of their heart fixed on our triune God, meditating on His glories and mercies in Christ.

Mortification of sin without vivification on Christ is simply morbid introspection that will lead you to be a self-focused navel gazer more concerned with himself than the glory of God.

This is what Samuel tells God's backslidden people to do in 1 Samuel 7:3:

"Direct your heart to the LORD."

- **Colossians 3:1-2** "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."
 - **Psalm 16:7-9**

"I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure."
- **OWEN:** "On Christ's glory I would fix all my thoughts and desires, and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes and I will be more and more crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy."

The Christian life is a life lived through faith and delight in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ***Not only do Christians hate sin below all evils, Christians love Christ above treasures!*** He has fully paid for His people's sins; He has counted believers righteous; He is protecting and providing for us from heaven even now; He will one day come again to the earth to judge His enemies and make everything sad come untrue.

III) If you are going to workout your own salvation with fear and trembling you need to labor in *RIGHTEOUS OBEDIENCE* (John 14:15).

- **John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
 - Pick up Thomas Watson's book *The Ten Commandments*, and use that as a guide to righteous obedience.
 - **Psalm 1:1-2**

"1 Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,

nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

IV) If you are going to workout your own salvation with fear and trembling you need to labor in SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (Rom. 8:13, Col. 3:5, Gal. 5:24, Matt. 5:29-31).

Spiritually disciplines are those ordinary means of grace God uses to sustain and strengthen us as we labor to glorify and enjoy Him in this life.

- **(i) You need to work out your own salvation by reading the Word.** **Psalm 119:5** says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." **Q.** How can you have the light of the lamp if you never pick it up?
- **(ii) You need to work out your own salvation by hearing the Word.** **Luke 19:48** "all the people were hanging on [Christ's] words." **Jesus commands ministers to "preach the word" in 2 Timothy 4:2,** therefore by implication you are commanded to listen to it.
- **(iii) You need to work out your own salvation by prayer.** **Psalm 88:1** "O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!"
- **(iv) You need to work out your own salvation by meditating on the Word.** **Psalm 119:97** "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day."
 - **WATSON: "I) Meditate seriously upon the CORRUPTION of your nature. II) Meditate seriously upon THE DEATH AND PASSION OF CHRIST. III) Meditate on your EVIDENCES for heaven. IV) Meditate upon THE UNCERTAINTY OF ALL EARTHLY COMFORTS. V) Meditate on GOD'S SEVERITY AGAINST SIN. VI) Meditate on ETERNAL LIFE."** And I would add **VIII) Meditate seriously on THE LAW OF GOD AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. IX) Meditate seriously on the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**
- **(v) You need to work out your own salvation by self-examination. 1 Corinthians 11:28** "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."
- **(vi) You need to work out your own salvation by sanctifying the LORD's day.** **Hebrews 10:24-25 "24** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."
- **(vii) You need to work out your own salvation by holy fellowship and conversation.** **Psalm 1:1** "Blessed is the man who walks not in the

counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers..." **Colossians 3:16** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom..."

V) If you are going to workout your own salvation with fear and trembling you need to labor in YOUR SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL DUTIES.

Vocational duties are those tasks the Lord has assigned to each of us whereby we most frequently glorify and enjoy Him in our everyday lives.

- **Colossians 3:23-24** "23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

CONCLUSION.

May God continue to work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure as you labor in Mortification, Vivification, Obedience, Spiritual Disciplines, and Vocational Duties.

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