

What Holiness and Sanctification Really Is - 1 Corinthians 1:2 - January 19th, 2014

- You'll forgive me for taking and tackling, playoff pun intended only one verse again this week, but I'm deeming it necessary that we do so.
- Here's why, what the Apostle Paul writes in the beginning of this letter, will be germane to our understanding of the entirety of this letter.
- Perhaps better said, by not understanding why Paul says what he says here at the start, there's likely to be a misunderstanding by the end.

- The reason I say this is that absent understanding the problems in this church there will be a misunderstanding of the rebuke to this church.
- In other words, it we'll be misunderstood as being too harsh and even disproportionate, such that it may appear to be unfair or unloving.
- The question becomes, what then were these problems in that church, and why is it that they would rise to the level of deserving rebuke?

- The answer is woven into the fabric of our text in verse two, by virtue of how Paul zero's in on the problem, as opposed to the symptoms.
- The problem with this church was that it was riddled with carnality, and the symptoms, which led to this problem of carnality, were many.
- Enter verse two, where Paul, by the Holy Spirit, cuts through all of that and in so doing, reveals the solutions to the problems in the church.

- Here in the first part of verse two, Paul makes a distinction saying that he's writing to the church of God in Corinth not the church of Corinth.
- He then goes on to say it's to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called holy not to be holy. Some translations render it called saints.
- Then the last part of the verse, he says they're together with all those everywhere who call on the name of their and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Henry Morris - "As the further development of his letter makes evident, Paul knew that these Corinthian believers were not 'called saints' because of their saintly behavior. Rather, they were 'sanctified in Christ Jesus' - that is, 'set apart' to God through faith in Christ Jesus."

- I found a total of three solutions here in this verse as it relates to the problems that were pronounced in this, God's church, there in Corinth.
- Lest you think this applies only to the church and not the believer in the church let me hasten to individualize and even personalize it for us.
- This because, the church of God is not the building, rather, it's the individual believer, which is why our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

- Be that as it may, I hope you'll indulge me for the remainder of our time together in 1st Corinthians as I briefly expound on these solutions.

1. Be an influence rather than being influenced

- For Paul to distinguish between being the church of God in Corinth infers that Corinth had influenced and infiltrated the Church of God.
- The problem with this undue influence is, instead of the church influencing the culture the carnal Corinthian culture influenced the church.
- The solution to this problem is to counter, and even correct the culture vis-à-vis our influence as a body of believers in that corrupt culture.

G. Campbell Morgan said it best in his commentary writing - "The measure of failure on the part of the Church is the measure in which she has allowed herself to be influenced by the spirit of the age . . . We are sometimes told to-day that what the Church supremely needs is that she should catch the spirit of the age. A thousand times no. What the Church supremely needs is to correct the spirit of the age."

2. Know what holiness is and what it's not

- For Paul to tell them those sanctified in Christ are called holy implies that the church in Corinth did not understand what holiness really was.
- The problem in not knowing what holiness is; we open ourselves up to those who're more than willing to impose what they think holiness is.
- When that happens, we're misled and think holiness is defined by things we don't do like drink smoke and chew or go out with girls who do.

- That is what holiness is not. Holiness is not defined by what we do not do rather; holiness is defined by who we become and how we live.
- Holiness is not something I do or don't do. Sadly, this is the problem that's led to the very legalism that many unbelievers are repulsed by.
- True holiness is different and as such I'll make a difference in the world under the banner of relationship, which unbelievers are attracted to.

3. Live a life that's different from the world

- For Paul to say that only those sanctified are called saints indicates that the church in Corinth did not take their sanctification very seriously.
- I suppose we should first know what sanctification is before we discuss the solution to this problem. Simply put, it means to be "set apart."
- By way of illustration, our finest silver is set apart or sanctified if you will for a special purpose it that it's different from our everyday utensils.

- So too is this true for us as believers, in that we're set apart called according to His purpose, which is different from that of this fallen world.
- The problem is, the church today has bought into the lie of the Devil that the church has to become like the world, in order to win the world.
- The fact of the matter is nothing could be further from the truth. It's the opposite that's true, in that the world is not looking for more world.

- Personally, when I came to Christ, and first stepped foot in a church, I wasn't looking for or attracted to the worldliness that I'd come out of.
- I'd had my fill of the world, and desperately needed for the church to be different. Had the church been like the world, then why even go?
- The solution to this problem for believers, and especially pastors, is to stop acquiescing to the peer pressure so as to fit in with the crowd.

- This may explain why we need look no further than to churches being personality driven, and excitement driven, rather than Word driven.
- These man centered sermons and church services are designed around not making the world too uncomfortable with how different we are.
- Here's the bottom line, we can't be sanctified and holy without making unholy people uncomfortable around our stinging saltiness and light.

Matthew 5:13-16 NIV "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. (14) "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.