***Holiness

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-176***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth."

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

This morning, I direct your attention once more to Colossians 1:21-23. Our topic is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number 21.

We have found that because the Colossians Christians have believed the gospel of the grace of God, they have been forgiven their sins, and have had God's absolute righteousness imputed to them." The payment of death by Jesus Christ on the cross for the Colossian sinners has brought them into a relationship of peace with God. They no longer fear what is going to happen to them after they die. The terror of death has been taken out of the hands of Satan. The Colossians saints are no longer alienated from God as enemies. They are no longer hostile to God's mind as expressed in Scripture. And they no longer choose to do the evil things which the Word of God forbids. They don't just say "No" to sin, but they have the capacity to say "No" to the temptations of evil, because there is now the power of God, in the person of the Spirit of God within them, and the knowledge of the doctrinal guidelines that they have been taught.

Now, this is great for them, but it is also true of us today. This is the condition of everyone today who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation received as a gift from God. Through the spiritual and physical deaths of Jesus Christ on the cross, while bearing the moral guilt of all mankind, believers are reconciled to God's standard of absolute righteousness. That is the basis, and that is the standard upon which we are able, and are required to function. This absolute righteousness is the prerequisite for entrance into heaven for an eternity with God the Father. Jesus Christ was able to die for the sin of mankind because He Himself was not only God, but true humanity, along with undiminished deity. Since Christ had no sin guilt of his own, and since He was genuine humanity, He could die for the sin of this world, and to satisfy the demands of God's justice.

Anyone who has not been adjusted to God's glorious standard of absolute righteousness will spend eternity in the lake of fire with their father, Satan. Most people born into the human race since Adam will not spend eternity in heaven with God, their Maker. Most of mankind rejects Jesus Christ as the only way into heaven. Most of mankind rejects receiving salvation as a gift, by God's grace alone, apart from any human good works, or religious rituals on their part. Most of mankind is trapped by Satan in false churches and religious cults. So, they are totally ignorant of the revelation of the Bible about God's basis, and his way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Consider yourself, indeed, chosen of God, that you know this. Most people muddle around in religious ignorance, totally devoid of any true knowledge that will take them from the disaster of the lake of fire to the glories of the New Jerusalem. You and I know it because he decided to take us in, and to inform us, and to make us part of that family.

Following sincerely a human plan of salvation devised by Satan's religions will not excuse the deceived from the lake of fire. Many people believe that if they're sincere, that will carry them through. You have seen on television an enormous outburst of sincerity in Cuba, in the devotion of the Cuban Catholics to the pope on his visit there. Their zeal is for this man who claims to be the vicar of Christ, the representative of Christ here on this earth – the one who speaks for the living God. So, their adulation is for him, not for Jesus Christ. Christ the Lord is some distant figure. They know about Him, but they are not personally related to Him. They don't walk their days in the conscious presence of the Savior.

The reconciling work of Jesus Christ on our behalf is the only way for going into heaven. The Bible makes no apologies for that, and makes it very clear that that is the only way. So, while we may get tired of hearing it, I remind you again that John 14:6: "As Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me"

You can't come through a church. You can't come through a religious system. You can't come through the virgin Mary. You can't come through an ecclesiastical hierarchy. You can't come through any church that tells you that they are the dispensers of salvation. There's only one man between you and God. And that's the God-Man. Jesus Christ.

**Reconciliation**

1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is One God, and One Mediator also between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." Now, that's the significance of what has happened to the Colossians Christians. And that's behind the passage that we have been looking at now, in Colossians 1:20: "And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death."

**Presentation**

The purpose of the Colossian reconciliation is then presented in the end of verse 22 with three magnificent words. The purpose of the Colossian reconciliation: First of all, in order (the purpose) to *present* you. The word "present" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "paristemi." "Paristemi" is a word which is used in classical Greek, meaning to bring somebody into a court of law. It is a legal term, and it is, in fact, so used in Scripture.

For example, in 2 Corinthians 4:14: "Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will present us with you." Paul is here speaking about their leaving that old life, and believing in Christ. And the result is that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to present us, along with Paul, and all the other saints into heaven. Christ Himself is going to present us to the King of Kings.

Now, on the human level, people get very excited about having an audience with royalty. The Roman Catholic pope considers himself royalty, because he is supposedly the replacement of the Roman emperors, as we learned last Sunday night. But people come for an audience with him, and they are very excited about that. Or if you come to an earthly king, to have an audience with that king is a great thing. Well, you will have an audience someday with the King of Kings, God Himself in heaven. And Who should be the one to present you but Jesus Christ Himself?

In Acts 23:33, we have the same idea: "And when they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him." Paul is transferred to Caesarea on his way to Rome. They bring him into the legal court, and they present him. This is the same idea here of what is going to happen to the Christian – of being presented Sunday in heaven. The reconciled believer is brought into God's court in heaven.

That's pointed out to us just a few verses later here in Colossians 1:28: "And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man, and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. The apostle Paul says, "We are teaching the Word of God. And we're telling it to everybody who will listen to us, because we want them to know salvation, and we want them to know the full counsel of the Word of God, so that they may enjoy the full benefits of storing treasures in heaven, and the rewards that come from that, through their Christian service.

Paul says, "The purpose of this is to "paristemi" (to present you) into the royal court someday. This word connotes, then, a certain nearness to God the Father. It takes place at the point of one's death or at the rapture. It is done by Jesus Christ Himself for us. And in the Greek grammar, it's infinitive, which indicates that this is the purpose of reconciliation. Why did God reconcile you? So that He could walk into heaven, and present you to the King? The word is "before" – to present you before Him (before God the Father). The word "before" looks like this: "katenopion." "Katenopion" means "in the very presence of." In fact, this word connotes face-to-face. You're going to stand there, face-to-face with the Almighty. Now, you are either going to do it in heaven, at that throne, as a human being, or you going to do it at the Great White Throne, where you face Him as a judge. You will face Him in heaven as your Great Savior, or you will face him at the Great White Throne as the judge, ready to condemn you to the lake of fire. But you will face Him.

This word literally means "to look down in." So, it connotes a penetrating gaze. It's like a teacher who is now ready to discipline a student, and who looks at him with those cold, steely eyes that Berean Christian Academy teachers are trained to have when they are about to exercise discipline on culprits. This is what this word means: cool, looking-at-you analysis. "Him" refers to God the Father, the judge, in Whose presence the believer stands, and by Whom he is scrutinized.

**Holy**

Now, only the Lord Jesus Christ can bring a lost sinner into God's presence in heaven. And not only does He bring them in there, but He brings them in fully qualified – in three ways. The first way is that you are brought in there, presented before Him holy. This is a magnificent word: "hagios." This adjective connotes one basic idea. It means "separation." It means a cut. It's a break – this from this. At the heart of "holy" is separation. You must get that first. Otherwise, you'll put a lot of emotional misconception in this. This connotes a separation from one thing to something else. In classical Greek, this word was used about separating something to the gods: an offering separate to the gods; a service separated to the gods; or, a mission separated to the gods in some way. In Scripture, this carries over to connote separation from Satan's evil to God's righteousness. Holy is a two-way street. It is from something and to something.

**Righteousness and Justice**

This is what Christ first of all does so that he can present us in heaven before the royal majesty of the Creator. We have been made holy. God Himself is holy in the sense that He is set apart into absolute righteousness and perfect justice. So, when we speak about being holy, it denotes two things. It connotes that absolute righteousness of God plus his perfect justice. Those two factors is what separates God from all the fake gods, and all evil. God is absolute righteousness. Secondly, he is perfect justice. He's always fair. He's not going to wink at evil. If you said you will die. If you sin, you will be disciplined as a Christian. God is absolutely fair. And because he is these two things, and He cannot be anything else, that constitutes His Holiness.

Now, are you telling me that the Christian is put into this same kind of a position, such that he possesses absolute righteousness, and that he is covered by perfect justice, so that he is holy, capable of standing before Almighty God in heaven? That's absolutely right. That's the point here – that God has separated us unto absolute righteousness which He imputes to us at our salvation, and has placed us under the protective custody of the satisfaction of God's justice by the penalty of death, having been paid for us by Jesus Christ.

**35 Things that Happen to you at Salvation**

So, because we are the beneficiaries of absolute justice and God is propitiated (satisfied) in His justice toward our sin, we are set apart – set apart to what? Well, we Christians are set apart to something more magnificent than the Old Testament Jew ever dreamed of being set apart to. I cannot take time (we'd be several sessions if I did) to run through the 35 things at least that happened to you, and that you were set apart to, the moment you were saved – 35 magnificent things, most of which the Jews never experience under the Old Testament system. The details of this are in the Philippian series of advanced Bible study tapes that go into details. So, I'm just going to run through them. What does it mean to be set apart – to be a holy person, when I stand in God's presence?

1. **In the Eternal Plan of God for Salvation**

What God has set us apart to, first of all, is that we are in the eternal plan of God for salvation from the lake of fire. We're in the plan.

1. **Redemption**

We're redeemed from the slave market of sin. We don't have to act like barnyard animals anymore, subject to what the sin nature brings upon us. We're free of that enslavement.

1. **Reconciliation**

We are reconciled to God's absolute righteousness. We've been adjusted to the very character of God as the standard by which we are to live.

1. **Propitiation**

God is propitiated toward the Christian's moral guilt. He is satisfied that the penalty of death has been paid in our behalf.

1. **Forgiveness**

We have forgiven all of our trespasses: past; present; and, future. And that forgiveness is constantly made operational in time by our confession of known sins.

1. **The Neutralization of the Sin Nature's Power**

The sin nature's power has been neutralized. We're no longer under its domination, unless we choose to be.

1. **Regeneration**

We have experienced regeneration, so that now we are again spiritually alive.

1. **Adoption**

We have been adopted into God's family with full adult privileges. We have all the privileges of an adult child in the family of God. Nothing is cut back from us of the good things of God. We're not waiting to grow up to get anything like we do in normal human life.

1. **Acceptance**

We're acceptable to God for entrance into heaven – acceptable in the beloved.

1. **Justified**

We're justified with absolute righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

1. **Made Near to God**

We're made near to God, where once we were far off and estranged.

1. **Delivered from the Power of Darkness**

We have been delivered from the power of darkness. The Satanic world has no control over us unless we play games with it. The unsaved are always under the darkness of the power of Satan.

1. **Transferred into God's Kingdom**

We've been transferred into God's Kingdom from the kingdom of Satan.

1. **Placed of the Sure Foundation of Jesus Christ**

We've been placed on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ in our relationship to God.

1. **A Love Gift**

The Christian is a love gift from God the Father to God the Son.

1. **Spiritual Circumcision**

We have experienced the spiritual circumcision of the sin nature in Christ, separated from its control and power.

1. **Priests**

We have been we have been appointed priests unto God.

1. **Part of the Church**

We are part of a special category of saved humanity – the church, the body of Christ.

1. **Heavenly Citizenship**

We possess heavenly citizenship.

1. **Members of God's Royal Family**

We are members of God's royal family, and of the household of God.

1. **Fellowship**

We're in fellowship in the unity of the saints.

1. **A New Partnership in Christ**

We're in a new partnership with Christ. Believers are in Christ, and Christ is in us.

1. **Direct Access to God in Prayer**

We are given direct access to God's throne of grace in prayer.

1. **The Much More Care of God**

We're within the much more care of God the Father.

1. **We are God's Inheritance**

We are God the Father's inheritance.

1. **God is our Inheritance**

God, the Father is the inheritance of the saints.

1. **Light**

We are light in the Lord God.

1. **We are Related to the Trinity**

We are personally united to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

1. **The Ministries and the Power of the Holy Spirit**

We are the recipient of the ministries and the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. **Glorification**

We are going to be glorified in the future in heaven.

1. **We are Positionally Perfect**

We are complete in Christ. So, we are positionally perfect.

1. **Spiritual Grace Blessings**

We possess every spiritual grace blessing of God.

1. **All Sins have been Judged**

All sins have been judged by the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross: past; present; and, future.

1. **Eternal Life**

We are the recipient of eternal life.

1. **Spiritual Callouses Removed**

All spiritual callouses have been removed from the facets of the soul at the point of salvation.

Undoubtedly you could probably come up with more. But certainly this is an imposing list of what separation, or sanctification, or holiness means that we have received from God. It's a terrific gift that we Christians have, and this is probably only part of the list.

**Holy (Set Apart – Separation)**

So, the believer is holy because he is set apart the God's absolute righteousness by imputation to God's perfect justice, by propitiation through Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has made the Colossians believers holy before the Father. The pope, as I've pointed out to you, cannot promise his flock, as enthusiastic as they are for him, and as much as they look to him, and as much as they depend upon him – the Pope can never tell these people, "You are holy enough to enter into heaven. But I can tell you that. On the basis of the Word of God, and what Christ has done for you, He has made you holy, so that you are ready to be introduced to an audience with God Himself in heaven. No Catholic would dream of claiming such a thing. And the fact that the pope goes around conducting his Masses, which are designed to help you to become more holy, and more acceptable to God, shows that he is not telling people that they are ready to meet God in the happiness of heaven. He can't even promise them that. All he can promise is that the church is going to do the best they can to get you in.

The pope conducts these Masses. They are the declaration to his flock that they have to constantly struggle to get to be holy so that God the Father will accept them. And the sad thing about it is that that kind of a works system will never work. It will never make anybody.

Christ's work of reconciliation for the believer has as its goal the preparation of that person for the rapture entrance into God's presence in heaven – to go there with absolute righteousness, and to go there with divine justice satisfied.

There's one other thing that the apostle Paul, in and using this analogy of speaking about the believer being presented holy – absolutely perfect. It may also have in the back of his mind the Old Testament sacrificial system, because the believer is viewed as a sacrifice to God. And in the Old Testament, an animal had to be inspected very carefully to see that there was no flaw or blemish in that animal that was going to be offered. It was going to be set apart to be a symbolic act of worship of God, and it had to be perfect. And this is the idea that we really have in Romans 12:1-2, where Paul says, "I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies, a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Verse 2 says, "To conform yourself not to this world, but to the mind of God, so that you will do that which is good, and acceptable, and perfect." This is separation of yourself – viewing yourself as a sacrifice that you present God. What is the sacrifice? Your body is a living and a holy sacrifice. And the word "holy" means "set apart to God."

Now, that puts a whole new picture on what we should do with our bodies, and how we should conduct ourselves, if we are going to be a holy sacrifice unto God. This is what Satan constantly wants to do – to make us, in our experience, as unholy as we can be. All of the world system works against us to make us unholy. The Berean Your Clubs (the older junior- and senior-high clubs) are getting ready for our spring campout in March. We're going to take the kids through the magnificent Santa Elena Canyon on rubber rafts, and through that exciting and magnificent rock slide. About halfway through the mountain on the Mexican side has fallen down huge rocks (boulders the size of houses). Naturally, the Rio Grande is constricted there, and it goes shooting through. And there's always a lot of fun. And at the final shootout, my eye is always open. My eye is always looking carefully toward the left, because out of that chute, right at the left is this whirlpool. And I'm always heaving over to the right to stay out of that. So, this is what we're going to do as part of the program. We hope that all of you junior-high and senior-high kids are on deck in the clubs now, getting yourselves signed up for this.

One of the things I'm going to do in the Bible study with them is fight one of the things that the world has designed to make them unholy – the practice of dating. Now, they all hate it already, just having heard me say that. But they're going to get something that's going to blow them out of their spiritual bananas, because they're going to be introduced to something that is absolutely the way it is in the Word of God. But nobody has ever taken them and said, "I want to show you how this corrosive practice of dating is one of the devices of Satan to separate you from your holiness – from your relationship with God. Hopefully, we'll give these kids a chance, if they're positive, to say, "Whoa, wait a minute. When I get to this stage of relationships, I'm going to do it a little different way, and the result is that it's going to be just as much fun, and just as much opportunity, eventually, in life," because I'm not only interested in them as teenagers. I'm talking about the fact that they're going to be young adults soon – also faced with this system of relating themselves to some man or some woman. And dating is not the way to do it. Dating is a corrosive way, and God's way is much better; safer; and, a lot more fun.

So, we're going to get very serious about that. Just that one little factor in our society is filled with these things to design us to be a holy people. The purpose of this for us is going to be that we want to keep their bodies as a sacrifice acceptable to God. We don't want them to give their bodies as a sacrifice to Satan. We want them to be what holy means – separated from Satan's evil, unto God's righteousness.

**Saints**

Now, the word "holy" in Scripture is also related to another important word that I want to lead you through, and that is that it has to do with the word "sanctification." We've seen the word "holy." That's the word "hagios." This means "separation." Sometimes this word is translated as "saints" – holy ones, or separated ones. These are people separated onto God, particularly church-age believers.

In Romans 1:7, the word is used in this way. Paul says, "To all who are beloved of God in Rome called saints (called "hagios" – the Holy Ones), grace to you, and peace from God our Father the Lord Jesus Christ." They are called to be separated unto God.

**Sanctification**

A related word is "sanctification." "Sanctification" is off of this same word "hagios." It's "hagiasmos." This word is often translated as "holiness" or "sanctification." It's the same concept of separation. For example, in Romans 6:19, it is used in this way: "I am speaking in human terms, because of the weakness of your flesh (your sin nature). For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity, and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification (resulting in "hagiasmos"). This is the result of a separation unto the will of God.

**Sanctify**

The third use of this word is to sanctify. And to sanctify looks like this (again related to this word "hagios"): "hagiazo." "Hagiazo" means "to hallow," or "to sanctify." Again, the concept is "to set apart."

1 Corinthians 6:11-12 use this word – two verses denoting several moral abominations in their unsaved days: "And such were some of you. But you were washed (but you were 'hagiazo' – sanctified). You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God." You used to be barnyard animals in your morality. Not now. Now you've been set apart. You've been sanctified. You've been placed into a special, separated relationship to God.

The basic meaning of "sanctification," just like the word "holy," is separation from evil things and the ways of Satan to the righteous things in the ways of God. We are set apart in sanctification from a secular to a sacred use – from the will of Satan to the will of God. This includes living things, as well as material things. They are sanctified in Scripture. The temple is sanctified – set apart to holy use. Animals were sanctified. Money was sanctified – set apart to sacred use. Sanctification is the will of God for every believer, and it is the object of salvation (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Why was I saved? I would be a sanctified person – set apart from this world system, and from Satan's ways and Satan thinking.

We have become very sloppy in Christendom (in the Christian community) on that. Even parents can't control their older children, so that they can keep them on the road to sanctification. They can't control them because the world is so much upon those children that the parents have to have a lot of courage, and a lot of understanding, such that they are responsible for what happens to those children in their holiness – in their sanctification. Instead, they allow the kids to do everything that the world does, and to see the things that the world sees, and to engage in the things that the world is engaged in. And then they wonder why the children love to live like the devil.

We have trained them to do that, and we have put them in that surrounding. We are finding now that we have a whole nation who does not care about moral improprieties, as long as there's a good paycheck coming in from a good economy. That's a nation that has lost its sense of sanctification – of separation to the living God and to His standards.

**Parents and their Children's Sanctification**

A daughter is under the authority of her father. She is under the authority of her father for all of her life. She's treated differently when she's an adult, but she is still under his care and supervision. When she marries, that father answers that question: "Who gives this woman in marriage?" "I do – her father." He is handing off now the authority over her to this man that she marries. She is never in her life, because of God's ordained relationship, and I don't want to get too much into this, but she is never without the authority of the man over her who is responsible for her sanctification. A son is always under the authority of his father until he is in a relationship where he is on his own in life. And even then, he is to honor his father, and his father bears an authority of responsibility for the sanctification of that son – to set him apart to godliness.

Now, if he has a bummer father, where is the kid going to go even if he has a godly mother. If she has got a bummer husband, where is that woman going to go? It's a tragedy to have to hand-off, because we don't understand how important holiness is (the principle sanctification) – we have to hand our children off to an agent of Satan.

So, don't get your back up, and start hyperventilating, when I tell you that the world system is our enemy, and all of these things that are in the public school system, and all these things that surround you, are satanically designed to keep you out of God's activities and services and relationships. The devil is no fool. And he is smarter than all of us, unless we operate on the Word of God. Sanctification is the will of God for you, and it is a great burden and responsibility upon parents. And the father is the one who bears that burden.

Now, sanctification does not connote senselessness. Let's get that straight right off the bat, before we go more deeply into this. 1 Corinthians 1:2: "To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who, in every place, call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." The apostle Paul said that the people in the congregation of the churches in Corinth were saints.

1 Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the spirit of our God. What was the difference? 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" He is speaking to Christians, not to unbelievers here: "Do you Christians not know that you will not have a position of authority to reign in the Kingdom of the Millennium, (if you act as those who are unrighteous; if you act as those who are unsanctified; or, if you do not maintain your holiness)? Do not be deceived. Neither Christian fornicators, nor Christian idolaters, nor Christian adulterers, nor Christian effeminate, nor Christian homosexuals, nor Christian thieves, nor Christian covetous, nor Christian drunkards, nor Christian revilers, nor Christian swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God is not salvation. It is ruling authority in the Kingdom of God.

So, when we blow holiness, are we ever blowing it? Now, why is he telling them this? Because this is what they were doing. This was a horribly carnal group of believers in the city of Corinth.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2: "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, an immorality of such kind that does not exist even among the gentiles – that someone has his father's wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who has done this deed might be removed from your midst." There was a gross act of immorality (of incest) right in your congregation. And you all go around smiling, and greeting one another, and being cordial, and do not take action against it.

Yet, he writes this book, and what does he call these people? Saints. So, it does not mean sinlessness. It means a separation unto eternal life and salvation through Jesus Christ. And you and I, as Christians, have it within our capacity, through the Word of God, and the Spirit of God who indwells us and empowers us, to be able to sanctify ourselves by separating ourselves from sinful thoughts and sinful practices. It's just a matter of whether you want to do it. It is not that you can't help yourself. It's whether you want to do it.

2 Timothy 2:21: "Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared for every good work." He will be a holy person. He will be cleansed from these things (again, the things that are described in the context).

2 Corinthians 6:17: "Therefore, 'Come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean, and I will welcome you." You separate (you sanctify yourself) as a believer from the evil things of the world system.

Isn't it amazing how many people are actively engaged in things of the world system, but they can't come over and do the same things in the Lord's work? They don't have time. They're separated unto the world. They're not separated unto Christ and the things of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, and the fear of God." There's the word "sanctification" again, translated as "holiness."

So, Christians are to practice the holiness of heaven now. And one of the primary things repeatedly the Scripture comes down on is the place that you practice that holiness is sanctification in terms of your obedience to God in sexual matters. Christians are to practice the holiness of heaven now, in sexual sanctification, by obedience to God's moral laws, and not to the world's immoral laws.

Now, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 is a blockbuster on the principle of sexual sanctification. This is so important today. Our young people, and all the rest of us, are constantly being bombarded with justification for the worst, most abominable, moral evils. And we think it's just OK, and we can do it, and there aren't going to be any problems. As long as everybody agrees that it's OK, then we will do it. In this passage first, sexual sanctification is required by God, and what specifically is required is introduced by the word "that" that appears three times in this passage, And after each "that," there comes a very clearcut call; a very specific explanation; and, a very clear declaration of what God expects in mental and overt sanctification in that particular way. And those three "thats" we shall look at next time.

Our Father, we want to thank You for the Word of God. It's alive, and it certainly is clear. We do ask You to help us to rise to the call that the Scriptures give us to our personal sanctification, and that we let nothing stand in the way. Help us to know that being like Jesus is the only way to go. And He was wholly sanctified and wholly dedicated to the character and the will of God. We pray that He will be our role model, and nothing that is glamorous, or important, or famous, or notorious in the world will, in any way, catch our attention. Help us to be the noble people that we are in the royal family of God – the church of the living God. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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