***Positional and Experiential Sanctification

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-179***

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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."

Mark 7:6-8: "And Jesus said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the precepts of men, neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.''"

Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what and do not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it."

This morning, we direct your attention once more to Colossians 1:21-23. Our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," number 24.

We are dealing, as always, with the Word of God, and we are dealing, therefore, with that which is true – really true truth. We must, however, be aware of the fact that Satan always wants us to suspect that the Word of God is not true. There are people who once sat in this auditorium, who no longer sit here because they believed we were not telling the truth.

It has not been uncommon for me to be told by someone: "You're just reading that into the text. That's just the way you are looking at it." That's pretty hard to say in a ministry that focuses in on the original languages from which the Word of God came, and spends its time in the service doing nothing but a classroom explanation of those words, that anybody with half a brain tied behind his back, or even without it, can see that that is what the Word of God is saying.

So, do not be sure that your heart is all that receptive. We grieve for people who once were like a great Demas among us – great servants of God, as Demas was with Paul, but who fell in love with themselves in the world system, and especially the religious system. So, they said, "You're lying. You're not telling the truth."

So, as always, you must be aware of the fact that it is your responsibility to listen; to look in the Scriptures; and, to see whether we are lying or whether we are telling you that which is actually there.

Now, one of the 35 things that God does for a believer at the point of salvation, we have pointed out, is to reconcile that believer to God's character of absolute righteousness – to adjust you from Satan's standard to God's standard. This reconciliation was made possible by the death of God's son, Jesus Christ on the cross as a sacrificial Lamb for the sins of mankind. When it says that we are saved by the shedding of His blood, it is tying the death of Christ back to all those Old Testament animal sacrifices that experienced a violent death in which their blood was shed, and their life, which is in the blood, was taken from them. What it is speaking about in the blood of Christ, of course, is that representative analogy as those animals gave their lives for the sins of the people. So, Christ, the lamb of God, once and for all, said His blood in terms of giving His life in behalf of our sins, thereby satisfying what God's justice demanded for sin: death. He paid the price for us.

So, we look upon Him as what He was, the sacrificial Lamb of God for the sins of mankind, and his sacrifice, because it was perfect. Unlike the animal sacrifices which had to keep repeating the picture, His is once for all. That's why, all over this land, and all over this world, a billion Roman Catholics are engaging in an enormous blasphemy, in going to church and seeing their priest supposedly change wine into the blood of Christ, and bread into the body of Christ, so that He may be re-sacrificed in their presence, so that they may gain merit for a little more justification toward salvation. We could not be reconciled to absolute righteousness, and no Roman Catholic thinks that he is, if he understands what this word means. But we have been adjusted to the absolute standard of perfection, which is God Himself. And it was through the death of Christ (that violent death upon the cross) that that was made possible.

One of the purposes of the believer's reconciliation to God's standard of righteousness is that He might stand, we are told here in Colossians, before God in heaven, in a position of holiness. What a wonderful word – the word "holy." It means "to set apart." The believers set apart from Satan; evil; and, the lake of fire, unto God, righteousness, and heaven. What a wonderful position – standing in heaven, holy. And what a terrible condition that Christians live in when they are taught the principles of the Word of God and the principles of holiness. And then they go out into the world, and they practice all the vileness of the world system, and all of the holiness that the world is saying, "Here it is. This is where the fun is."

Those are the people who are saying, "You're a bunch of liars down there at Berean Memorial Church. You have told us that this is God's call to us for holiness. We must do this. We must not do that. But out here in the world are all these intelligent, cultured, refined, glamorous people. And they say the sexual immorality is *not* that bad. It's OK. You're telling us that the Word of God says that our sanctification is to be vessels – our bodies as channels of God's blessing, and that sexual morality is out of line. You're lying!" Or is it God who is lying? After all, we're only quoting Him.

I'm not talking about unbelievers. I'm talking about Christians. They go out into the world. All of the things that the world does, and all of the self-destructive things to God's holy temple (their bodies), and Christians say, "Those characters down at Berean Church have been lying to me.

I once had a young man who grew up here, through our clubs, and his family was active. And when he got off on his own, he said, "Berean Church ruined my life. They kept me from having all the enjoyable things that are out there in life for me." And he was up to immorality, and sexual immorality, and everything up to his eyebrows. That's what we had kept him from. He was into the whole scene of the evil system of Satan. And we had ruined his life, because we had taught him righteousness; because we had taught him godliness; and, because we had taught him what it was in his experience to be holy as God in Christ has made him, and as he will be able to stand before God someday in that kind of holiness.

The believer who is thus set apart is declared in Scripture to be sanctified, and a saint of God. What a magnificent grace of our loving Father: sanctified (set apart) to our God. We, who have had a terrible background, have been set aside.

One of the greatest expressions of this is in Ephesians 2:1-10. Paul says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked, according to the course of this world; according to the prince of the power of the air; and, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh (that is, the sin nature), and of the mind, and were, by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest." That's our unsaved condition: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of His grace, in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And that (that is, salvation by grace) is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Now, that's what it means to be holy. That's what it means to be sanctified. That's what it means to come over from the dark side of sin, and moral corruption, and degradation, into the light of the integrity of a royal member of the family of God, with manhood in the tradition of the person of Christ, and womanhood elevated as was the person of Jesus Christ. So, now the richness of His grace have actually already places in heavenly places. We're up there. Our holiness is intact. Our integrity is there.

And we're left behind, verse 10 says: "So that we may now fulfill our mission in life:" a mission of specific good works which have already been laid out (preordained, beforehand) that we should walk in them. This is not just anything that's good and that comes along, but according to what my spiritual gift is. And if you cannot say, at this moment, my spiritual gift is: one; two; and, maybe three (everybody's has at least one), then you have a problem. That is the first clue as to how you should use your life. And we've gone extensively into explaining these nine spiritual gifts that are in operation today. This is how the work of God is done. This is how a Christian finds himself standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and hears: "Well done, thy good and faithful servant. You identified your gift, and you let nothing stand in the way of performing it. That's what it means to be a sanctified person.

Another passage is Titus 3:1-8. Sanctification: this awesome work of God for us, and how easily Christians forget it. Paul says to Titus: "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves: disobedient; deceived; and enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." You have to remember from whence we have all come with our sin nature. So, when we are so disgusted with what people do, and the sin that is in American society, from one end to the other, that we have to remember to be tender-hearted, and to pity those who are pawns of Satan, and to pity those who do not have sanctification, or who are degrading the sanctification if they are believers. This is what Paul means: take it easy on the stupidity of the carnal Christian, as well as the unbeliever.

Verse 4: "But when the kindness of God, our Savior, and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy: by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior."

"Dear God, are you telling me that I'm walking around with the Holy Spirit in me, and that my body is His temple and I live with Him, and then I associate with slum-bums? I associate in all kinds of evils of our society? And when I do it, I'm saying: 'God is a liar. He's telling me I shouldn't do these things, and that this is incompatible with my holiness.'" And, in fact, what has the devil always done? He has always taken what is evil, and that God condemns, and he's made it the central feature of worship.

When this particular book was written, in New Testament Times, Roman society was based upon the religion of Nimrod, the Babylonian mystery religion. And at the heart of that religion was worshiping their gods through sex. That's why there were the male and female prostitutes at the temple. If you wanted to go to worship your God, that's how you did it – through sexual morality. And Satan is there, gloating, and laughing, and sneering, and saying, "You tell me that you are separated Christians from this, and I'm telling you that this is the way to worship God.

**Drug Use**

In the book of the Revelation, as was, in ancient times, so to the end, God says that one of the reasons that His wrath and judgment will be poured out, with unrestrained anger of God, is because of their drug use (their "pharmakeia"), of all things. Right down to the end, they're going to thumb their nose at God. And this, which is destructive to the physical body, becomes this core of their worship. And Revelation said, that they approach the worship of their God (who is Satan) by drug use.

Now, what on earth goes on in the minds and the hearts of believers who are sanctified, and then follow this course? Somebody doesn't understand something here.

Verse 7: "That being justified in His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement. And concerning these things, I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men." The sinful things that you do, that God condemns, are not good for you, and are not good for other people. It is a destructive feature. So, the believer is declared to be set apart by God, sanctified, and therefore, he is called a saint of God. Yet Christians, instead of living, as these passages indicate, to the glory of God, and to the reality that is here, they act as if there's no difference between them and the world. And when you do that, you are telling us that you think God is lying, and that God is not really serious.

**Sanctification**

The principle of sanctification includes three aspects. And maybe this will be a little help in getting straight (to understand) the problems that Christians face who still want to walk in the world. And I'm not going to make any apologies for the fact that when we speak and teach the Word of God, we are teaching the mind of God. Therefore, we're teaching truth. And I'm not going to apologize for the fact that when you resist that, and you take issue with us on something that we have taught on the basis of the Word of God, you are saying we are lying, and therefore, you are telling us that God doesn't really teach that; or if He does, He's mistaken.

**Positional Sanctification**

First of all, the first aspect of sanctification is positional. Most Christians don't understand this at all. They don't understand positional sanctification. So, what they do is that they get sidetracked into trying to chase the rabbit of becoming soundlessly perfect. And they're coming to the place where they are in the holiness movement that began a couple of hundred years ago in the Methodist Church, which is now far afield from any holiness – even from Scripture. But then, the holiness movement was so big, and they misinterpreted Scripture. And they thought that what it meant was that they could become complete conquerors of the sin nature because of certain passages of Scripture. They didn't understand that this was sanctification as a position before God.

Now, the Bible does teach. 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, who have been sanctified." Period.

So, he's writing to people in Corinth, and he's saying, "You're sanctified. You have a sanctification of God. You are set apart." Yet, they were a very sinful people, as reading through 1 and 2 Corinthians soon reveals. What was he talking about? This is a done deed. This is something that God has done, and in their position in Christ – yes, they were set apart.

1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "But by His doing, you are in Christ, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. It is because you are in Christ that you are already set aside to eternal life. You have been sanctified in your position.

1 Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you. But you were washed (you were sanctified), but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God. This word "sanctified" is also a permanent, concluded situation. They are already sanctified. Well, they don't act like it, but they are put aside positionally to God in terms of their destiny.

1 Peter 1:2: "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit." There is a done deed – sanctification. They are now set apart such that they may obey Jesus Christ, and be sprinkled with His blood. May grace and peace be yours in the fullest." This is positional sanctification. This is referring to your being set apart to eternal life through the work of Christ on the cross. That is not in question. This is a position that you hold – a position that is going to put you in heaven.

In Hebrews 10:10, the writer says, "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Through this, we have been sanctified. He is talking about being put aside. This Greek word is "hagiazo," the one we looked at previously, which means "to sanctify." It's in the Greek perfect tense, which means that they had been sanctified sometime in the past, which was the point of salvation, and that sanctification went on continually. Are we always sanctified when we sin? Not in experience – we're not. Well, wait a minute then. That changes, doesn't it? Not in this case, because what this is speaking about – this tense tells us that it's done here. And when the perfect tense is in the Greek, it says, "It goes on forever.

So, this has to be a different sanctification than my experience. And it is my position before God. That's where I am set apart. It's been through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ on the cross, once for all, that this is made possible. A Christian is a saint because he has a permanent position in Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. This is what the baptism of the Holy Spirit does. It doesn't give you supernatural talking in tongues or anything else. It makes you a believer in Christ: "For one Spirit we were all placed into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks; or, slaves or free. We are all made to drink of the same Spirit. We have a permanent position in Christ.

So, this position and Christ bears no relationship to the way you live. And that is a great comfort. This positional sanctification is the same for the most godly spiritual Christian as it is for the worst lowlife carnal Christian. They both have positional sanctification. They are both set apart to God. And they're both set apart to the destiny of heaven. Now, the Lord will have to deal with each accordingly, but that is their destiny. Positional sanctification is as perfect as Christ is perfect. And since we are in Christ, the position is perfect. Positional sanctification never means sinless perfection.

**Experiential Sanctification**

The second aspect of sanctification, that helps you to understand Scripture, is what we call experiential. We're coming down to where we live now. We're coming down to our personal daily practice.

Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God: your sanctification." Then he ties it into a personal experience: "That is, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor." So, every time, here in our experience, it is the will of God that, in our daily life, we are set aside to holiness. Our lifestyle is sanctified (set apart) to honoring God. So, every time we take the physical body, and we practice sexual immorality (mental or overt), we spit in the face of God. And for anybody who does that, this tells us that they have no fear of God. They have absolutely no fear of God. They have no concern for what He has said, and who He is.

**Ahab and Jezebel**

Ahab and Jezebel, in the Old Testament, were the classic example of two people in power that had no fear of God. They brought in the false god of Baal. They established him right there on the grounds of the temple worship. And they did all of the sexual patterns of worship that were required in Baal worship. They did it. And who is the fool in all of this? Elijah – the guy who was talking about the Bible; the guy who was repeating what God had said to them; and, the guy who was saying, "We are a sanctified nation. We are God's client nation. We are Israel. And we have been set apart to a great destiny. We should not be doing this."

So, they wanted to kill the messenger. And poor Elijah had a terrible time. But eventually, the confrontation was brought to a head. You don't play footloose with experiential sanctification, and get away with it. Go ahead. Break the laws of God's moral code. And as the Scripture says, "Your sins will find you out." As the Scripture says, "God's judgment will be appropriate to the crime. He is not blind. He is not deaf. He is not impotent. He is the Almighty God.

So, poor Elijah finally got his day in court, in the great confrontation with the offering of a sacrifice to Baal, and the sacrifice to God. And all they had to do was that the god had to light the fire. And the Baal people went first. They did all the things that worship of Satan does. They called upon their God. They did the hoochie-coochie around the altar that they had put the animals on. Then, of course, as always in Satan worship, you have to have blood. So, they slashed themselves. And they put earrings into their ears, and into their nose, and into the top of their ears, and on the ends of their tongues. They did all those things so that blood would flow. Of course, I'm expanding there a little bit. I'm imagining. But it was the same idea.

Well, Elijah is sitting there, and he's finally glad to see this. Elijah says, "Why don't you talk a little louder? He may be asleep. He does know that you need you." And they went harder and harder, and the drums started beating more. Then (talk about having no respect) Elijah says, "Maybe he's out on the potty. Why don't you check on it?" That's what the Hebrew says. And they said, "Oh, come on, Elijah, how is that the way to talk about our god.

Elijah was enjoying it, because now he's going to show what sanctification means. It means victory. It means power. To walk with the lowlife in the \ slums is only to get you deeper and deeper into the mire of yourself destruction.

Finally, they had to give up. Elijah comes in there, and soaks the altar down with barrels and barrels of water, and calls upon God, and bingo! The heavenly match hits the altar, and it bursts into flames. Then the people of Israel finally understood that they were a sanctified people. Their courage came up. And they went out after the priests of Baal. And they put them to death. Then God proceeded to put Ahab and Jezebel to death.

If you violate the sanctification of God in daily experience, whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, the end result is death. For the believer, it happens immediately. And death means spiritual separation from God: out of temporal fellowship. That's where most church members are. They're such ninnies because they're so untaught. And you get used to being untaught. That's why it's bad to be in a place where you're not taught the doctrinal explanation of Scriptures. It's like some girl going out with some lowlife character. And she has reservations at first, because she has some sense of sanctification as a believer. But she goes out with this character. And pretty soon, she gets acclimated to his evil ways. Pretty soon, she's rationalizing. She's justifying what he does. And pretty soon, she does not recoil. Or this man goes out with a woman, and he does not recoil from her evilness. So, the result is sanctification is compromised, and great disaster and great grief comes into the life. Experience of sanctification is being set apart to the will of God and to the holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 refers to the physical body. Romans 6:1-4 also speaks about our personal, daily walk in sanctification. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?" One might say, "Oh, I can sin, because I can confess it, and then the grace of God forgives me. Then I can go ahead and do it again." That is not repentance. Confession means I repent. I cease and desist. Go ahead and play that game, and boy, will the heavenly match hit you.

"May it have never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" We have died to the power of the sin nature. It's no longer our master: "Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" – not the old filthy life, but in a new life. And that's what water baptism portrays – going down into the grave with Christ, and coming up out of the water into newness of life.

Romans 6:11: "Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin (the sin nature – singular), but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let the sin nature reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts. And do not go on presenting the members of your body (experiential sanctification) to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourself to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." Do not use the physical parts of your body to do that which is evil. It violates your experiential sanctification. Don't associate with people who use their bodies to do evil things. Do not make close association with people like that. Steer clear of them.

Have you never heard the apostle's statement: "Flee youthful lusts?" Do you know how you don't do sin? You get away from it. You get away from the opportunities. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife was propositioning him to violate his experiential sanctification with sexual immorality? He ran away. But the dumb Christians hang around with that crowd. What you should do is put a lot of distance between yourself and them. Contact with them only to let them know that there's a God in heaven who will judge what they're doing, and to be a lighthouse of information to them on how to get out of their pigsty.

Romans 6:17-19: "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of the sin nature, you became obedient from the heart, that form of teaching to which you were committed. And having been freed from the sin nature, you became slaves of righteousness. I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. 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." This is sanctification in my daily experience.

Now, what on earth has changed in the life of a Christian who does not remember that he was once an abject slave of the sin nature, but salvation has freed him? He has positional sanctification. That has empowered him now to have experience sanctification. But his choice has to be made. Instead, what does he do? He chooses to present his body in lawlessness and evil? And instead of being the slave of righteousness, that sanctification now enables him to be, he continues as a slave of sin.

Experiential sanctification, then, refers to the setting apart to God of the Christian in his daily life from acts of sin. This is determined by a Christian's yieldedness to God through confession of sins.

How many times have you been in religious groups where they have called upon people: "Yield yourself to God?" And if you went up to them and said, "I'd like to do that. How do I yield myself to God?" They would probably say something like: "Well, you sit and meditate, and you just get gooey all over. You get sweaty under the armpits, in your intensity." And they give you all kinds of directions except the biblical one. Do you want to be yielded to God?

**Sins of Omission**

First of all, you have to be instructed in doctrine. Then you have to understand the principle of 1 John 1:9 – the confession of known sins. Confession of known sins is the way you yield to God, because what you are saying is, "I'm wrong. You're right. I shouldn't be doing this. I shouldn't be saying this." And the worst sins are of the mind (the mental attitude sins). And one of the worst expressions of mental attitude sins (when we're talking about experiential sanctification, so some of you don't comfort yourself) – it's not what you do. It's what you should have done. That is what Jesus said to the other Pharisees in his time. He says, "All the good things you did – yeah, you should have done those things. But I'm condemning you for the things I wanted you to do (that God has called upon you to do), and you have refused to do.

The sins of omission are where most people like you are going to be hit. Most of you don't have a stomach for the gross sins of Satan, but you don't mind having a stomach for squiggling out of things that God says, "Do it. You can do it. This needs to be done. Here's an opportunity – a golden opportunity for you to serve the Lord with your spiritual gift."

Experiential sanctification is determined through yieldedness to God, which means confession of sin, and the use of the grace system of perception. That's what you're doing now in this context – privately, personally learning the Word of God, and then the development through that of a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, because every time you said "Amen" to what has been told you this morning on the basis of the Word of God, that truth has been stored in your human spirit. Now it's there for action. And it will come up to guide you at the appropriate time.

Experiential sanctification is not a matter of feelings, and it's not a matter of emotions, any more than justification or forgiveness are feeling. You don't feel forgiven; you don't feel justified; and, you don't feel sanctified. That is the charismatics' mistake. That was the holiness movement's mistake, and the charismatics are the current day descendant of the holiness movement. For them, it was all feelings. Progress then could be made in experiential sanctification. And that is determined by the divine provisions for the prevention of acts of sin.

**The Intake of Doctrine**

How do I make progress in my spiritual sanctification? Number one: through the intake of doctrine, through the grace system of perception. It is my knowledge of the Word of God, and this never ceases. Every day I need to learn, and I need to be refreshed. That's why people need to be reading a little bit of Scripture on a daily basis. That is your food line. . . That's your power station.

In Psalm 119:11, how do I progress in my sanctification? "Thy Word I have treasured in my heart that I'm not sin against Thee." It's knowing the Word of God first.

**The Intercession of Christ in Heaven**

Secondly, you advance in your sanctification by the intercession of Christ in heaven. What a great opportunity to move forward in the hand of Christ that is! What a help that is!

Romans 8:34: "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He Who died? Yes, rather, Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us." Who is the one who is going to condemn you? It is not Christ. He has died for you, and now He's interceding for your progress in your sanctification. Why turn your back upon Him by turning your back upon the Word of God, and the rules of God, instead of saying, "I'm with you, Lord? I'm going to go all the way. I'm going to walk with you.

Hebrews 7:25: "Hence also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him (through Jesus Christ), since He always lives to make intercession for them." He is making constant intercession for the people of God.

It's like when Jesus said, "Peter, the devil is really going to have a field day with you. I'm going to pray for you right now, and I am interceding that you come through that experience, and when you're through, you will get back on track." And, of course, that's exactly what happened. But it was a very painful experience for Peter.

We see the intercession of Christ in Luke 22:31-32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strength in your brothers." Once you've been through this, Peter, you'll know how tricky the devil is. You may answer that John 17:1-26.

**The Power of the Indwelling Holy Spirit**

The third thing to move forward in your experiential sanctification is the enabling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is something that many Christians do not fully comprehend – the great power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That's what I have been telling you: that it's almost like an intuitive guidance; the thought that comes into your head; and, the guidance in a very gentle way that the person who is thinking in terms of Scripture, and who is in the Word of God – he will get that guidance, especially when you're in temporal fellowship. You will never have sins of omission when you are in temporal fellowship with the Spirit of God. You will never get to heaven, and look back, and say, "Oh, Lord, I could have done that. And I didn't. Somebody else came along and got the glory, and the blessing, and the reward." My sins of omission will never be there, nor the sins of commission, because you have the enabling power of the Spirit of God working to move you to do His will.

Galatians 5:16 says, "But I say: walk by means of the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh; that is, the desires of the sin nature.

**Sinless Perfection**

Romans 8:4: "In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." It is a great and wonderful thing that we have the capacity as believers to walk by means of the Holy Spirit. Now, we never eradicate the sin nature within us. So, we can never arrive at sinless perfection.

Some of you have told me about your family members, who think that they can arrive at the place where they no longer sin. That is a very sad mistake. Experiential sanctification never means sinlessness.

Here's the great apostle Paul, who understood, and has told us so much about sanctification in our experience. In Romans 7:21, he says, "I find in the principle that evil is present in me – the one who wishes to do good." Paul is distressed about this. He said, "I want to do what is right, and I'm doing what is wrong." And then he found out (he realized) that the problem was (and he gets into this in Romans 8) that we have to understand that the sin nature can only be controlled by the Spirit of God within us. And the Spirit of God will not control anything if I'm not in fellowship with Him. And I'm not in fellowship with him if I'm not obedient, without sins of commission and omission, and I'm walking according to the principles of the doctrines of Scripture.

2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we, who have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." You don't have to try to do it on your own. There is the power of God that enables you to be what you should be, and do what you should do.

Then there's a very clear version in 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin nature, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. A Spirit-filled status is what secures victory for the believer.

The book of Galatians was written to people who wanted to work by their legalistic self-effort. Paul, in Galatians 5:16-23: "But I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh (that is, the sin nature. For these are in opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you please." If you follow the sin nature, you're calling the Spirit of God a liar, because He is telling you, "Don't do the things that the sin nature does." What does our society do? The society that we live in does the things of the nature. And the people that are in it do the things of the sin nature.

Verse 18 says, "But if you are led by the spirit, you're not under the Law (the legalisms of the sin nature). Now, the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." That's not heaven, folks. It's the Millennial Kingdom. Christians can do these things? That's right. If you compromise your experiential sanctification, and do these evil things just like the world does, God says, "It's not going to be a throne with a realm of administration for you." The book of the Revelation tells us that there are many thrones waiting in heaven. These thrones will be assigned to believers on the basis of their integrity and their service, and their walk – their maintenance of their experiential sanctification here on earth. Therefore, that will be part of the rewards, and part of the administration in the kingdom that you will have.

A lot of Christians, because they don't understand that – if they walk with the world now, God's going to say, "Fine. Your job is going to be to clean the latrines, and to change the mud for the pigs." If that's the way you want to live, and if that's the status you want in the Millennial Kingdom: great. Such things shall not inherit a position of authority in the Kingdom. But the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – against such things there is no law. This is what experiential sanctification is, after all, really all about.

So, the sin nature has been judged on the cross. It is no longer an absolute power of the Christian. Romans 6:1-14 explain that. Experiential sanctification is related to growth and maturity in the Christian life. Therefore, it is progressive. You cannot improve your positional sanctification. You're in Christ; you're secure; and you're going to heaven. But you can improve your experiential sanctification. And that's the name of the game of the Christian life – to continually do that.

2 Peter 3:18 is about progress in experiential sanctification. It says, "But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." Why anybody who is a believer, who is related to the greatest, kindest, and the most terrific man that ever lived, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, would want to be associated with Satan and his representatives, is hard to understand. You have to be spiritually insane. There's no other explanation. You have to be absolutely spiritually insane. And that's exactly where the devil will take you if you do not walk before God with fear and respect of His holiness. He has not called you to be like the world. In fact, he has put a very serious burden upon us, when the Lord says, "Be holy as I am holy."

He says, "I want you to walk through the day thinking my thoughts." Only doctrine will be able to do that – to have the mind of God: "I want you to have the same feelings that I have." Only the Word of God, controlling your feelings, can do that: "I want you to make the choices that I want to make. I want you to make the same choices I would make." Only the guidance of the Holy Spirit, free to guide you, can make those choices. That's what experiential sanctification is all about.

One more verse is 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding, as in the mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord and the Spirit." Every day, the glory of God can rest upon me in a greater way in experiential sanctification. The beauty of Jesus will be more and more reflected in me. That's the potential.

Then, there's the final phase of sanctification – the marvels of ultimate sanctification, where it all comes together in the most dramatic way that any human being could ever imagine or hope for. And we should look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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