***The Phases of Sanctification

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-181***

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We are studying Colossians 1:21-23, and our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number 26.

One of the most interesting parts of a service to me is always after the service, when people come by. And I'm always pleased, as happens after almost every service, when somebody comes up and says, "You know, we were driving here today, and we were talking about this very thing, and wondering about questions raised. And here you answered every one of them.” It happened again this morning. Somebody was dealing with someone, and questions were being raised: "And here you deal with that very thing, and it's all suddenly in perspective."

That is no accident. That is the way the Spirit of God works. And it is always awesome. But that is the reality of the Word of God. That Word never comes back fruitless. It always produces its effect.

We had to visitors this morning. Somebody had given one of the ladies a tape, and a bell rang in the heart of a place that explains the Bible. Explanatory preaching is rare. It is not popular. But it's the only way that God has. And you don't learn the Word of God in little groups that meet in a little circle in your home, and you discuss the Bible. That is very shallow and very limited. You don't learn the Word of God by reading books. That has a limited impact. There's God's way, and there is an impact with the fact that you are sitting in this room. You are a priest, free to exercise your negative or positive volition as you choose, in terms of what you hear and what is taught. You are in this quiet setting, apart from the distractions of life. And Christ is here, personally in our midst, and the angels of God stand about, waiting to rejoice in hearing the thinking of God proclaim to the people of God. So, it is no wonder that, out of this kind of a setting, such great things take place in the minds of people.

One of the things that people do tell me is how frustrated they are until they hear something here. And now they understand how a principle of God's spiritual working functions. And they are so frustrated that someone in the circle of their interests (family or friend) are absolutely so spiritually benighted that they cannot grasp these things even when it's explained to them.

So, consider yourself fortunate. There are chairs here tonight that should be filled by people who need to hear what's going to be said. But the devil has beat them to the draw, and they've been shot down again, because they thought there was someplace better to be tonight than in this room. You did not make that decision on your own. It is a selection of God from eternity past, and I am grateful for that.

There's an old axiom that says, "That ignorance is bliss." And a lot of people believe that. The idea is that what you don't know cannot hurt you. This is not true. If you do not know that there is a kernel of cyanide in a piece of bread that you are about to eat – not knowing that is going to prove very unblissful, and very unhappy, and very disastrous and terminal. You indeed may be happy in your ignorance, but in time, reality sets in, and the disaster consequence of that ignorance will follow. And, of course, no place is this true than in spiritual things. In spiritual matters dealing with eternity, most of the human race is in the bliss of their Bible doctrine ignorance. And they are headed for a disastrous reality that, sooner or later, is going to wake them up.

It is amazing to me to see people sometimes who will even sit in this room, and have instruction on some phase of life; some particular relationship; or, some problem area within the family; within the business; or, within their associations with the world. And it goes right by them. They pay no attention until the disaster hits them. Then suddenly, they're trying to figure out what to do; what to correct; or, how to how to have done it right. Well, that's why we gather every time in this room, in these public services – so we can learn how to do it right, because there's only one person that knows how to do that, and that's God the Holy Spirit.

So, in spiritual things, ignorance is not bliss, because those who smugly go on in their ignorance will, on the one hand, in their religion, end up thinking that by their good works they may counter their moral guilt, and they are going to end up in the lake of fire. For some who are save, the disasters of blissful ignorance will be their failure to function on the grace system of perception, which leads to a spiritual maturity structure built in the soul, which enables you to be qualified to start earning heavenly rewards with Christian service that counts. And that is not done by emotions.

**Emotions**

Somebody this morning told me that they had a friend who is very indignant and adamant about there being a difference between hard knowledge and head knowledge. And here they are. And what they are saying is that emotions is the way you get to God. But they were told, "No, no, the Bible says, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness." You get to absolute righteousness by believing something. And in the Bible, the heart is not a place of emotion. And it is not a place of experience. It's a place of thinking. The Bible uses the "heart" for the "mind." And any place you have the word "heart," you can put the word "mind," and it'll make sense. When the Bible wants to talk about emotions, it talks about the visceral area of the stomach. That's where feelings are in the Bible. The Bible never speaks about feelings; emotions; or, convictions in your stomach. That comes from the word "heart." Yet, that person is given a Scripture verse that says that you believe with the heart, so it has to be the mind; and, you can't believe with emotions. And they're blissful in their ignorance, and they will not be taught.

That's why in the Old Testament, we are cautioned: "Do not be like the horses and mule, who must be led about by the jerking of a bit in your mouth. Be attentive to God, and be responsive to His instruction. Ignorance is very costly, though it may be temporarily blissful.

Now, the Colossians Christians have been reconciled at salvation to God's character of absolute righteousness. This is based upon the death of Jesus Christ for them. As believers, they are destined to be presented in the royal throne room of God in Heaven. The saints, as will be true of all of us, will stand before God the Father in the state of holiness – a holiness which is compatible to the very holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are holy because they have absolute righteousness imputed to them. And God's justice, demanding death for their sins, has been justified on the cross. Therefore, they are qualified to be set apart (which is what holy means) to the purposes of God. It is to be set apart for His eternal purpose, from salvation to a marvelously enriched eternity, based upon the fulfillment of your mission for which you were born.

**Sanctification**

Holiness is described in Scripture as the state of sanctification. We pointed out that there are three aspects of sanctification. And I appreciate the words that you have given me on this, because this has clarified some things for some of you, that were a little bit hard to relate to. Once you realized that sanctification has three aspects to it, everything falls in place.

**The First Phase of Sanctification**

The first phase is positional sanctification. You are placed forever into Christ by God at the point of salvation, so that you were *irrevocably* destined for heaven in the full holiness of Christ. You are free of all moral guilt. That is your position now. Nothing can change it. You cannot get more holy in that respect. You are already in God's presence (in His sight), as perfect as His Son.

Then there is experiential sanctification. This is what disturbs people. They don't understand the difference between eternal fellowship, which is positional sanctification, and temporal fellowship, which is experienced fellowship. This is setting apart your to your personal godliness in daily life – for your growing into super grace maturity, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that you are free from the power of sin. Positional sanctification sets you apart from the guilt of sin. Experiential sanctification sets you aside from the power of sin. You can beat the devil at His temptation game.

Then, finally, ultimate sanctification is being set apart in heaven under the complete holiness of God, free of the sin nature; free of death; and, separated from the very presence of sin.

**Justification**

Now, there is a relationship. This threefold relationship applies also to salvation. Salvation has three phases to it. We may describe phase one in salvation as a past position of salvation. The keyword there is *justification*. Please remember that justification simply means that you have absolute righteousness. To be justified is to be as good as God, morally. You have absolute righteousness. Phase one in the Bible speaks of salvation as something which has been completed in the past for every believer. Therefore, it is a permanent imputation to that believer of absolute righteousness.

Luke 7:50: "And He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. That word for "saved" in the Greek is a done deed. This is speaking about phase one salvation in the past.

1 Corinthians 1:18 also deals with this: "For the Word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us, who are being saved (completed action), it is the power of God. Those who are unbelievers, who have not been called to salvation, and therefore the Holy Spirit does not open their eyes to an understanding of their dangerous condition with God, and how to solve it by an act of faith in Christ. To the unbeliever, the Bible, speaking about getting saved by doing nothing, is foolishness. But for those of us who have believed the Word of God, and accepted the gift of God – to us it is the power of being saved. And that saved is a totality done by God. It's in the past.

One more is Ephesians 2:5: "Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved." That refers again to the past phase of salvation.

Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God." All of these verses are in the past tense. They speak about a salvation that is done with, and it is so perfect because it is as perfect as God Himself is, that the same one, furthermore, can never be lost again. That's why salvation in the past tense is irrevocable. It cannot be lost again. It cannot be taken away.

Now, if you ever hear about somebody who says to you that they *hope* they're going to heaven, you can pretty well be assured that they're not going to heaven, because when they say that, they are indicating to you that they are not sure whether they have done enough good deeds to be able to get into heaven. They're not sure whether they have countered their evil sufficiently. They meant that it is not enough what Christ has done – they have to add. And you know from what we said this morning that that's deadly. If you add anything, you have nothing with God.

There are whole denominations that tell you: "If you do not have water baptism, you're not going to heaven." The moment you trust in water baptism plus faith in Christ, you're on your way to the lake of fire. Should people be told that? You betcha. Are they? No. They get into a denomination, and that's what distinguishes them from everyone else. And they hang on to it very doggedly. And they march lockstep together into the Lake of fire.

John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him Who sent me (God the Father) has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." Salvation in the past tense is irrevocable. You cannot lose your destiny to heaven.

John 10:28-29 explicitly declare our security and salvation: "And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "You are safe in the Father's hand.

That is a very apt illustration. Here you have one hand – the hand of Jesus Christ, and you are placed into that hand at the point of your salvation. Then comes the hand of God the Father, and it the covers hand – over Christ, so that you are in double protection from both the Father and the Son. And the power to make that possible is the encasement of the Holy Spirit Himself. So, this salvation is irrevocable. It cannot be lost.

Next we'll look at Romans 8:1. In the Middle Ages, when they used to copy Scripture, somewhere along the line, this verse became a great problem to some copyist, because of the way it is in the Greek Bible: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." And some monk read that and said, "Whoa, wait a minute:" "Somebody who is in Christ" – he understood that that meant to be saved: "There is no condemnation:" There is no possibility of getting lost again? There's no possibility of losing that salvation? He didn't understand salvation in the past tense. So, when he got down the verse 4, he said, "O, I see what it is." And probably first, he put the last of verse 4 on side (in the translation) of verse 1. And that, very often, is how errors were interjected into a copy, because the next person who would copy that script would take what was put in the side and think, "Oh, they omitted this," and they would stick it in the text.

So, if you have a King James translation of the Bible, you will read: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," and then the end of verse 4 will be added: "who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." And that made him feel better – that there's no condemnation provided you behave yourself. And he lost it all. He did not understand the security of salvation, completed by a perfect God, and a perfect plan, that is irrevocable in the past tense. When other manuscripts were discovered, which were more accurate, they realized what somebody had done. So, in consequent versions, this end of verse 4 is pulled out of verse 1. It doesn't belong there. Verse 4 says, "In order that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to the Spirit." What were the requirements of Law? A godly life. And how do you live a godly life? That's sanctification again? And it is fitting in verse 4 that what is required of the Law of godly life, reflecting the character of God – that is something that we have control over. That's our experiential sanctification. And it is up to us not to walk according to the flesh; that is, the sin nature, but according to Spirit; that is, according to the Word of God.

So, the past tense of salvation, which gives us justification, and imputes to us absolute righteousness, is what produces positional sanctification. So, the two are connected. The past tense of salvation, which gives you justification, and gives you absolute righteousness, is related to positional sanctification. We are permanently set apart to the holiness of God.

**Spirituality**

Now, the second phase of salvation is present tense. Present tense salvation is characterized by the word "spirituality." Now the word "spirituality" is often misrepresented. This speaks about the present tense of salvation for the believer released from the reigning power of the sin nature in his daily life. Salvation in the present is salvation from living like an alley cat morally, and from living on the world's corrupt basis of life. And the word "spirituality" means that the sin nature is not controlling, but the Holy Spirit is controlling. The sin nature is knocked out, and the Holy Spirit is controlling. People think that spirituality is something about how you act, and how you present yourself, and how you deal with other people. Well, that will have an effect but being a spiritual Christian has to do with who controls you: the sin nature; or, the Spirit of God. When you are in temporal fellowship, because known sins are confessed, then the Holy Spirit controls. Then you are a spiritual Christian.

That is the key that most people do not understand. So, then phase two (salvation in the present) has to do with our godly lifestyle. Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under Law, but under grace." For the sin nature shall not be your master. You are not under the helplessness of the old Mosaic system. You have the power of God. Therefore, because you're under grace, you can be free to live the godly life.

Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:8 makes the amazing statement that anybody who is in Christ cannot be condemned again. Verse 2 says, "The law of the Spirit of life (that is, God, the Holy Spirit, operating on the doctrine in our human spirit) sets us free from the law of the sin nature controlling us, which leads to death.

2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we are all, with unveiled face, beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. We are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit." Our phase two salvation is something that increases. Phase one salvation cannot be increased, any more than positional sanctification can be increased. . . . But present tense salvation has to deal with our experiential sanctification. That's the tie between the two. And we can improve how we live. We can improve our godliness.

Galatians 2:19-20: "For through the Law, I died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and deliver Himself up for me." It is not just myself, trying to do the best I can. Christ lives in me. I died with Him on the cross, and He has taken over my life, so that His life is now my life. Therefore, when I'm living like Jesus Christ, I'm not an alley cat. I live as a member of the royal family of God, with conduct appropriate to that.

Philippians 1:19: "For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance, through your prayers and the provision of the spirit of Jesus Christ." All of the terrible things that Paul is suffering, he knows that God is going to use them to improve his life, and his devotion to service.

Philippians 2:12-13: "So, then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." We know from other Scripture that this verse is not telling us that we secure our salvation by good works. It is telling us, by our good works, to work out our salvation in the present tense – to produce that for which we were born. So, salvation is a constant, ongoing, personal improvement in walking in the presence and the will of God. And the more you walk in His presence, the more you become aware that He's there. It is a magnificent experience to realize that you are walking in the presence of God. And that's something that every Christian can develop as the present tense of his salvation.

One more: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation, through sanctification, by the Spirit, and faith in the truth." What a magnificent verse. Paul says, "I have to give thanks for all of you people in Thessalonica (you believers), because you have been beloved by the Lord. God has chosen you. When they had that conference of the Godhead in eternity past, your name came up and the Godhead said, "We'll take him. We'll take her." And you were chosen from the beginning, at that conference point, for eternal life, for salvation. And you received that through the sanctification by the Spirit. He gave you positional sanctification, as a result of your faith in the truth, the truth of the gospel. Consequently, now, you are privileged to live in experiential sanctification – the present tense of your salvation.

**Glorification**

Then there is phase three of salvation. Naturally, you probably have guessed it – that is the future tense. And the future tense is characterized by the word "glorification." The Bible speaks of a future phase of our salvation. In that phase, we are told that we will be exactly like Jesus Christ. We will have a perfect body. All of the physical ailments and limitations that we have now, and that accumulate, and that increase with age, and that come with some people more quickly than with others. All of that's going to be removed. We'll be absolutely physically perfect. We'll be absolutely sinless, because we will not have a sin nature. So, we will never be able to do anything, and we will never be able to think anything, except exactly what God would think and do. That's the whole future of every one of us.

So, take courage, whatever the discouragements may be, and whatever the limitations that you may feel and experience now, because glorification means that the glory of God is going to flow out of every molecule, and out of every cell of your body. You are going to be as glorified in presence with the magnificent glow of glory around you, such as Adam and Eve once had, before they chose to go with Satan's advisements, as so many Christians still do today.

Romans 8:29 speaks of this glorification: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. These are brethren who are going to be just like Jesus Christ – He is the firstborn.

I want to point out to you, when it says here, "For whom He (God the Father) foreknew, He also predestinated." Do not make the mistake of thinking that the word "foreknew" in Scripture means that God looked down the corridor of time, and said, "Well, let Me see. Lookie there. Bob Short is going to believe. He'll be saved. That's great. Cheryl Dozier is going to make it too. She's going to believe." Do you see the problem with that? That would mean that God is not omniscient. He had to look down and see what your will would do. That is not what "foreknow" means. Notice the last part of that word: "know." Scripture uses this word to describe the most personal intimacy: "And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived." That's the concept of knowing – a personal intimacy of knowledge (of choice). And "foreknow" is not God discovering something. It is God taking you to His bosom. It's an intimate placing of His arms around you, and drawing him to Himself. That's why He knows you're going to be saved – because He picked you for that. And that's why He predestinated you, someday, to experience future tense of salvation: ultimate sanctification, where you would be transformed into the image of His Son. And He (Jesus) would just be the first one of many just like Himself, as Sons of God.

Romans 13:11: "And do this, knowing the time, that is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." Now, how can salvation be nearer to us at this point in time, and getting nearer all the time, than when we first believed (future tense)? That ultimate future completion of what God has in mind for us, is the salvation phase that he's speaking about here. He's talking about salvation in terms of phase three: the future.

1 Peter 1:5: "Who are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." What salvation is going to be revealed in the last time? Future tense. This is the salvation of your complete glorification – the complete freedom from the very presence of sin.

Then there is 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God. And it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Here's a very definitive statement that our future salvation is yet ahead of us, in terms of being transformed into the very reflection of Christ Himself.

At Dallas Seminary, we had an English Bible course, which went through the whole Bible in the English. And they would bring in very prominent teachers of the Word of God. At the Moody Memorial church in Chicago was a great man named Henry Ironside. And Dr. Ironside was a great expositor of the Word of God. He used to be in the Salvation Army, which was teaching him that he could be holy and completely sinless. He knocked himself out trying to be sinless. And his wife always helped him to remember that he wasn't. So, he finally found the truth about that, and became a great student of the Bible, and a great expositor.

Well, they would bring him in for two weeks of teaching a certain phase of the English Bible course. And I remember that when he was talking to us on this, he told the story of an artist who had decided that he wanted to make one great, magnificent work of art. And he was going to make it really big. It was like from one end of this room to the other here, and on a scaffold because it was tall. And he had to climb up to get at certain parts of it. It was comparable to one you may have seen if you've ever been to Oak Lawn Cemetery in Los Angeles, where a lot of famous people are buried. They have a magnificent picture of a giant size. It's a picture where you get into a room, and it's probably almost as long as this wall. And they gradually open the curtain, and it's the crucifixion scene. And there are all the people around it, that are in the Bible, showing what they're doing at that point. It's a very impressive scene.

So, anyhow, Dr. Ironside said that this artist was working on his picture. And his friend came in, and he said, "Oh, I'm so glad to see you. This is going to be the epitome of my life's work as an artist – the most magnificent thing I've ever done. And I want you to just step back here, and look at this." And he got off the scaffold, and came down, and said, "Just take a look at that." His friend said, "It doesn't look very good. I see a lot of brown here, and here's some black, and here is some magenta over here. And I see these lines here, and this here." But the artist said, "Oh, I'm sorry. When I look at this, I see it the way it's going to be when it's finished. You only see it in the process." Dr. Ironside said, "That's the way Christians need to look at one another – in their failures to live up to the position of their future tense salvation, and to their ultimate sanctification. Just remember that every one of us is not yet finished. God is still in the process of developing, forming, and molding you into the ultimate image of Christ. Always remember that whatever distress you may have with another believer, look at him the way he's going to be when he is transformed into the very image of Jesus Christ." And if you want to know the magnificence of the grace of God, look at the person next to you, and realize that that's the person we're talking about. Now, that takes a lot of grace. That takes a lot of loving magnificence on the part of God, but He's going to do it with the most oppressive person in our midst. He's going to do it. So, take hope.

1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now we are children of God (we're saved), but it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He (Christ) appears at the rapture, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Now, with that being true, and with that being the destiny of our future tense salvation – glorification, reflecting the very glory of God, verse 3 then says, "Everyone who has this hope (to be transformed into the image of Christ) fixed on him purifies himself just as He is pure." It is appropriate, then, that we should live in the manner of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should live the way we are someday going to be when he has completed us.

Colossians 1:22: "Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body, through death, in order to present you before Him, in the throne room of God, the Judge; to present you as one who is holy." And that's what we've been looking at.

But the next feature is to present you as one who will be blameless. The Greek word "blameless" looks like this: "amomos." This word is very definitive in the Bible. This is one that we really know what it means. It means "without a blemish: – without a single ugly spot. This is used in 1 Peter 1:19 also: "But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished, and spotless, the Blood of Christ." This use in 1 Peter 1:9, of course, is tying the idea of without a blemish to the Old Testament sacrificial animal. The animals which were offered in sacrifice, representing Jesus Christ, and the blood that is His life, which He would shed for the sins of the world, had to be without blemish, because it was representing the sinless person of Christ.

In the guidelines given for the animals, we have this stated in Numbers 6:14. In the process of the priest bringing in offering, he is instructed, in verse 14: "And each shall present his offering to the Lord: one male lamb, a year old, without defect for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb, a year old, without defect for a sin offering, and one ram without defect for a peace offering." That's what's in the back of Peter's mind when he talks about Christ as a lamb which is “amomos." He is blameless. He is without any defect of sin. And it's used to indicate the sinlessness of Jesus Christ.

So, in Hebrews 9:14, that's what we're looking for that verse: "How much more will the blood of Christ, Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God? Cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The Lord Jesus Christ was "amomos." He was without any moral defect.

Now, the Christian who is in Christ stands in that same position before God the Father, as one who has no moral blemish to disqualify him for heaven. God the Father chooses a believer before creation to stand morally blameless in His sight. Before creation, in that conference of eternity past, you were selected to be blameless.

Ephesians 1:4: "As He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. What a magnificent, loving God – to choose us to be without defect. So, why would we want to live in phase two salvation (our present experience), covering ourselves with all kinds of blemishes – the blemishes of sin, and the blemishes of living the way the world is?

Ephesians 5:27 tells us that it is the ultimate purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ that the whole church body of believers will be without a single defect, morally: "That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that he should be holy and blameless."

It's a terrible thing to contemplate a wedding in which the bride begins to come down the aisle, and she hasn't noticed that somebody, on the front of her like has spilled a bottle of India ink, black and ugly. That's what we're talking about. So, suddenly, her gown is not blameless. It is not without defect.

The work of God for us, in making us blameless, is going to result in our eternal joy. Jude 24: "Now, to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you say in the presence of His glory, blameless, with great joy."

It is a wonderful thing for God the Father to bring us into our ultimate salvation: blameless. The blameless position of the believer is to be demonstrated in our daily experience to the world. We are to be moral beacons in a sinful world. We are not to live like the world, and we're not to accommodate ourselves to the world's style.

Now, if you have a problem with that, then you need to go to God and work on that, because it's easy to say that there are a lot of Christians who have an intense desire for doing what is wrong. They have an intense yearning for going along with the evil crowd. They will give respect to the people of this world as having some insights, whereas it is God's purpose for us to be the lights.

Philippians 2:15: "That you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." You cannot forget that the Spirit of God indwells you. You're always in the presence of God. And when you fail to be lights in the world, but you cooperate with the crooked and perverse generation in which we live, in this age of the church, God is very much aware of it. And instead of being a light to those people, you are a darkness.

Now, this does not mean sinless perfection, but it means remaining in temporal fellowship. Your known sins are confessed, as per 1 John 1:9. The Christian is permanently blameless in eternal fellowship, but periodically he needs to get back into the blameless position, and get away from the ugliness and the scar by temporal fellowship repentance expressed in confession. This is no small thing. Many Christians do not understand this principle, and that's why all their lives, they do not appreciate that they have a position of blamelessness before God. They are without any ugly mark, and without any blemish, and they don't understand what happens when they create a blemish. Their natural inclination is to think that they are lost.

Our friend Jack Smith in Kentucky – when he got hold of that tape as a guard in the Kentucky State Prison, that told about confession of known sin, stood there dumbfounded as he listened to that tape. He was just over 50 years old. All of his life, he was in church activities. He is an ex-Marine Corps sergeant. So, he'd been someplace in the world. And he never knew how to relate himself to God so that he could handle the ugliness of his life. And I've had him say to me, almost in tears, "And my life has really been something with blemishes on it." And away in his soul is eating away: "How do I handle that?" And suddenly, here it was – a simple little tape from some gang down in Irving, Texas, that happened to explain a verse in the Bible. And the speaker on it happened to have the name "John." So, he always refers to that verse as 1 John Danish 1:9. What is he saying? He's saying, "I'm grateful to you. All of my eternity has been very vitally changed when I learned that I could be blameless, and I could be without blemish.

The Christian possesses absolute righteousness. Therefore, he stands blameless before God (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is the constant goal of Satan, however, to use the sin nature in a Christian to cause him to compromise his blamelessness. So, he chooses to be morally defective. Some people go to psychiatrists and psychologists because they have a problem. If those men were working on the basis of the Word of God, they would say to them, "You don't have a problem. You are the problem. You are your own problem. God has done His work. You can choose to be a pig or to be a prince. Which do you want? You can be a pig, or you can be a princess. Which do you want? You are the problem.

The world has the expression of: "Looking for truth in psychiatry and psychology. And we even have seminaries who are giving counseling on a psychiatric and psychological basis. And the reason defending that is because all the truth comes from God. And they find that what they are teaching is confirmed by Scripture. Well, then why do we want to go to these men who operate from Freudian principles to find the truth, if it's already in Scripture? Let's just go to the Bible. That's why you should never go to a counselor. You shouldn't ever have to go to one. You have a preacher. If he's doing his job, that's counseling. But if you ever do go to a counselor, you go to one that will operate from the Scriptures, not from the wisdom of man.

So, you can choose to be morally defective, or you can choose to be what God has designed you to be: without blemish. Why would a child in God's family want to prostitute his blamelessness by following the thinking, beliefs, and practices of the world of Satan is beyond me. A Christian who lacks experiential blamelessness is a defective human being. He's not normal. He's scarred up mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially. And it is very destructive.

So, not only will we stand in the presence of God holy (absolutely separated) unto God's purposes for us forever, but we will also stand there blameless, without a blemish on us in any respect.

Then there's a third one. And we will look at that next time.

Thank You, God, our Father, for this time in the Word, and for the magnificent things that we have once more seen in the promises to us. We pray that these things will become the realities of our life. Thank You for the holiness that we have. Thank You for the blamelessness.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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