

Series: John

Title: Sanctified Through the Truth

Text: John 17: 17-19

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Our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, intercedes for his people in John 17. This is our Lord's prayer for his people. This is our Savior's heart toward his people. This is his will for his people, his church, for all his elect. What he prays here for his apostles, he prays for all his people. He says,

**John 17: 17: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18: As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19: And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.**

**Subject:** Sanctified Through the Truth

I do not intend to preach *about* sanctification. I want to preach *sanctification*—particularly, *CHRIST* who is our sanctification.

The word “sanctified” is used throughout scripture: “saints,” “sanctify,” “sanctified” and “sanctification.” Sanctification is in Christ and by Christ. It is to be set apart by God for God's use, not to be used for common purposes again. This is by God the Father's election in Christ (Jude 1). It is to be regarded and declared holy. This is by Christ's work for us. It is to be made pure, holy. This is by Christ formed in us.

**Proposition:** Sanctification is all of our triune God alone by his grace, as is every other aspect of salvation.

Therefore, no sanctified child of God will boast in his sanctification. To be truly sanctified is to know Christ is our Sanctification. Growth in grace and the knowledge of Christ is to know more and more Christ is our Sanctification.

**Division:** 1) How sanctification begins in our experience 2) The truth by which we are sanctified 3) A few practical words

## **HOW SANCTIFICATION BEGINS IN OUR EXPERIENCE**

In our experience of God's grace, we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit when we are regenerated or born-again. A new man is created within these bodies of death by Christ being formed in us. Thus we are made partakers of the divine nature.

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostles had been sanctified in this way. Christ said, “I have given them thy word.” When this begins we begin to be taught and to learn that God is holy and requires perfection. When God sanctifies his child, he sanctifies himself in our hearts. We behold God's glory and honor as holy and separate from sinful man—separate from our own selves. We see something of his infinitely great holiness and our sin in comparison.

Numbers 20:13: This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.

When God has sanctified us within then we behold something of God's holiness. We learn that we must be perfect to have communion with holy God. God almighty is holy, righteous, just and perfect. To have communion with God, to dwell with God, to be accepted of God, we must be holy, righteous, just and perfect.

God requires perfection in righteous obedience to his law; anything less will be damned. God requires a perfect sacrifice for sin. God requires a perfect holy heart and perfect holy worship of him. God accepts only that which is perfect.

Deuteronomy 18:13: Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

Leviticus 22:21: And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.

Beholding how holy God is, we see our sin. But God also begins to show us his grace and love and mercy to us. He reveals that God our Father sanctified us in election

Jude 1:1: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.

We see this thing of making us holy began long before we experienced it. Those God sanctifies in time were sanctified by God the Father in election before time. He distinguished his people from all others. He loved his elect in distinction from all others with an everlasting love. He sanctified us. He set apart his elect in Christ. The apostle Paul addresses the Corinthians: "*Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" (1 Cor 1: 2). We learn this is the why God made us to be born again by his Spirit and called us out and separated us in our experience of his sanctifying grace creating a new man within us.

## **THE TRUTH BY WHOM WE ARE SANCTIFIED**

We begin to be taught of God that Christ is the Truth. He is the Word. Christ is our Sanctification. He prayed, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*"

John begins this gospel declaring Christ is the Word that was in the beginning with God and was God and was made flesh like those he came to save. Christ himself declared, "*I am THE TRUTH*" (Jn 14: 6).

Here Christ says he sanctified his apostles and sent them into the world as the Father sanctified and sent him, "*As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*" He said earlier,

John 10: 36: Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?

In the eternal counsel before the worlds were made, God the Father sanctified, set apart, the Son of God to be the Christ. Then at the set time, God the Father sent his Son. Christ is the Sent One of God.

As the Christ, as the GodMan, as the Head and Substitute of his elect, for our sakes he sanctified himself that he might be the truth by whom we are sanctified, “*And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*” Christ was holy, pure, without sin from the womb so it does not mean that he made himself pure. It means he separated himself for God’s holy use to accomplish God’s will. He did that Christ and his accomplished work might be the truth by which God sanctifies his people in our experience of sanctification.

How is Christ the truth? Christ Jesus sanctified his whole person to be the offering to God to take away the sins of his people, to remove all our sins, to put our sins away out of the sight of law and justice by the sacrifice of himself. We were sanctified in him by God the Father in divine election. Then by one offering, Christ hath perfected forever *them that are sanctified*. He perfected God’s elect who God sanctified in him in election before the world was made He sanctified those who experience his sanctifying grace in our hearts by the Spirit. Christ perfected us forever by Christ’s one offering on the cross. It was by Christ fulfilling God’s will on our behalf that God sees us as having fulfilled his will in perfection. Christ fulfilled the will of God on our behalf. The will of God the Father was our eternal and complete sanctification in Christ by Christ’s perfect oblation. That is the will Christ accomplished.

Hebrews 10:10: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*... 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

When God sanctifies his child in regeneration, the Holy Spirit creates a new, holy man within these sinful bodies of death. It is Christ our Holiness formed in you. A new man is created by God, in the righteousness and true holiness of Christ. We have nothing to do with creating this holy man. No sanctified child of God had anything to do with making ourselves holy in sanctification.

It is then that the Holy Spirit purges our conscious by the blood of Christ and gives us faith to believe that we can only come to God in Christ’s merit. He convinces us we have been made holy and righteous by Christ alone through faith. It is the holiness and righteousness God has made us in Christ. Only when we are brought to confess Christ to be our only holiness and righteousness does God declare us holy and righteous and fit to appear before the Lord.

## **A FEW PRACTICAL WORDS**

When it is the Word, the Truth, Christ himself by whom we are born again then we are taught our need of the gospel. And having experienced the power of the gospel to regenerate and sanctify us, we know the power is of God through his gospel so we preach Christ crucified. Paul told the Corinthians it was by the hearing of Christ’s faithfulness they were sanctified and it by the hearing of Christ’s faithfulness that he continues to work this miracle of grace in his people (Gal 3: 1-6). So we give our triune God in Christ all the glory for our sanctification. Christ prayed that this sanctifying knowledge be given his apostles because Christ sent them forth to preach him. It is sanctification by Christ the Word that we learn to preach only Christ and him crucified. The Hebrew writer preached Christ from beginning to end of the book of Hebrews. He exhorted the Hebrews to come out from the vain teaching of those who made sanctification and righteousness to be of man’s works and not to return to it.

Hebrews 13: 10: We have an Altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Christ and his accomplished work is the Word, the Truth, the Incorruptible Seed by which the Spirit of God births a new holy man within these bodies of death. The result is that we look outside of ourselves to Christ alone for holiness and righteousness, as well as everything we need. That is true Sanctification. It is to be conformed to Christ so that we are separated from this world and our lusts by him alone. It is to be separated from all that would separate us from Christ. He continues to keep us partaking of his holiness by chastening us. All is of God our Savior. God keeps us looking to Christ our Sanctification. After Peter exhorts us not to return to our vain lusts in our ignorance but to be holy for God is holy, he begins with the vain conversation we received from our fathers.

1 Peter 1: 18: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21: Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24: For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Through the preaching of the gospel, it is by the same Word, the same Truth, Christ our Holiness and Righteousness, that the Spirit continues to grow us in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

1 Peter 2: 1: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2: As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

It is Christ preaching the word through the Spirit making it effectual in our hearts that sanctifies and grows us in this state of sanctification.

Hebrews 2: 11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12: Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

By our falls and God's chastening, he keeps us sanctified in Christ. Thereby, we learn that those God sanctifies never become unsanctified, never unholy. It is because our holiness is Christ. God grows us in grace and knowledge of Christ more and more, sanctifying God in our hearts. We do not make God holy but we regard him as holy. This begins in the new birth and grows as God grows us in grace and knowledge of Christ. Likewise, God regards his people holy in Christ. Since he chose us in Christ and blessed us with all spiritual

blessings in Christ we have been holy and without blame before him in love, even when we fell in Adam (Eph 1:4). Since our new birth when the Spirit of God sanctified us and gave us faith to believe on Christ, we have been holy and without blame before him in love, even though we sin. It is because Christ is our Sanctification. But we never become unsanctified due to our sins. Our sanctification is Christ.

Furthermore, God makes us cease looking on the outward appearance when we fall or when a brother falls. We do not want to sin. But the same as we do not look to our flesh to make us holy and righteous, we do not look to the sins of our flesh and become discouraged that we are not holy and righteous. Both are legalism. He makes us sanctify God ourselves in our own hearts as he keeps us partaking of his holiness. This sanctifying power of God makes us continue to regard our brethren as holy when they sin because we have experienced God's power to cleanse us personally. And God will continue to keep our brethren sanctified unto him. This is sanctifying God in our hearts in the face of our own sin and the sin of brethren. God's sanctified child is one God has cleansed. What does God say about his child? Let's see an example. God had sanctified Cornelius, a Gentile. God would send Peter to preach to him. So God let down a sheet filled with beasts unclean by law. He told Peter to kill and eat.

Acts 10: 14: But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15: And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

We either are holy are we are not holy. When born again, by our triune God, we are holy. We are fit to enter the holiest by the blood of Christ and the Spirit of our God by our heavenly Father's grace.

Colossians 1: 12: Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

We do not become more holy. The corn plant is a corn plant in the seed, the blade, the ear and when it is fully grown. But our new man which is born of incorruptible seed, created holy by God, does grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Growth is ongoing. Sanctification is a continual work. Not to make us more holy. But being sanctified by God, born again by the Holy Spirit, every believer grows in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not grow more holy. But we grow in the state of holiness. We are taught how to possess our vessel in sanctification. But possessing our vessel is not what makes us sanctified. It is God who grows us from a babe, to a young saint, to a mature saint as his holy creation.

Why declare that we are not growing more fit for heaven? Why declare that God made us meet in Christ in the new birth? What is it so important to believe that our fitness is Christ alone! It is true sanctification that humbles his child. The difference in God's true growth and those who think they are growing more holy is that those God has truly sanctified have a broken and contrite spirit. But those who sanctified themselves and think themselves more holy are haughty and boastful.

Isaiah 65: 5: Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

I think I have put away some sins of my youth. But my holiness and my growth in grace in that state of holiness is not by sins I have put away; unregenerate men stop sinning outwardly

as they grow older but they are not holy by God. But as the Light of Christ shines more and more, we see our sin-nature more and more. We see sins in thought, word and deed more and more. We see sin even in our best deeds that others may see no sin in. So we cannot and will not boast in our sanctification.

But what a blessing! Those sanctified in and by Christ, do not cease being holy and sanctified when we sin. This will be a blessing to you when you fall. But rather, by God's keeping, sanctifying grace, God is teaching us more and more that Christ is our holiness. Nothing we do or do not do changes this.

Growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ is to grow more in these three areas:

Philippians 3:3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Wherever sanctification is found consecration of the heart increases, conformity to Christ in heart and life increases, commitment to Christ and his cause increases, love, devotion, confidence in and submission to Christ increases and love to brethren, forgiveness, longsuffering, patience, mercy increases. But at the same time, an utter lack of confidence in self increases. He must increase, I must decrease! (Jn 3:30).

It is God's continual grace toward us in spite of our sins, his continual forgiveness though we come short, his continually making us behold Christ truly is our Holiness that are the mercies of God that motivate us. He has made us holy and acceptable to God. Therefore, in this state of sanctification, we want to obey Christ our Holiness.

Romans 12:1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2: And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3: For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

**Amen!**