

Last week we began to consider this paragraph—by examining the motivation found in v11-12a—I suggested this related to both what preceded and follows, v11—"and do this"—that is, verses 8-10—"knowing the time"—that is—knowing [1] it's time to awake out of sleep, [2] salvation is nearer than when we first believed, [3] the night is far spent, the day is at hand—thus I suggested—that Christians must labor conscious of eternity...

Now—what we find in vv12b-14—is a rather common description of what sanctification entails or includes—in fact—if we were to compare this passage with other passages in Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, and Galatians, we find similar or identical themes—thus what we will be considering today, both this morning and evening, is the Biblical doctrine of sanctification—that is—the work of God's grace—in conforming us to the image of Christ...

- I. The Passage Explained
- II. The Passage Summarized

I. The Passage Explained

A. Dressing—v12b

1. The first word "therefore" refers back to vv11-12a—where the apostle provided the overarching motivation...
2. V12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—"therefore"—because the—night is far spent and day is at hand...
3. Thus—the apostle begins with the imagery of clothing—what do you do when you wake up—get dressed...
4. So the apostle tells us first negatively what needs to be cast off—and then positively—what needs to be put on...
5. [1] Negative, v12b—"therefore let us cast off the works of darkness"—let us put them off like dirty clothing...
6. The Gk word rendered "put off" literally means—to "put off" or "lay aside"—the imagery is that of a garment...
7. Let say for example—that we spill something on our shirt or pants—we defile or garments or our clothing...
8. The first thing we need to do—before we put on clean clothing—is that we need to remove the dirty clothing...
9. We need to take off the clothing—we need to remove it from us—we need to cast it away—or lay it aside...
10. This is what the apostle is telling us to do with regards to—"the works [or deeds] of darkness"—that is—evil deeds...
11. Thus by "darkness" is meant—the evil and wicked acts done by those who are presently in spiritual darkness...
12. Christians, while they are no longer in darkness, do the works of darkness—in that they commit evil deeds...
13. Thus—to "put off the works of darkness"—is to lay aside the practices of darkness—or immoral behavior...
14. [2] Positive, v12c—"and let us put on the armor of light"—having put off the dirty—let us put on the clean...
15. That is—we are not merely to put away the old way of thinking and living—but we must replace them with their opposites...
16. Now—the question that needs answering is this—what precisely does Paul mean by—"the armor of light..."

17. Well—if darkness symbolizes unrighteousness and impurity—then light symbolizes righteousness and purity...
18. It's referred to as "armor"—in that it serves as a means to protect us from all forms of present harm and danger...
19. Eph.6:14—"stand therefore...having put on the breastplate of righteousness" 1Thess.5:8—"let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love..."
20. In these two passages—"the armor of light" is described as—righteousness, faith, and love—these comprise the breastplate...
21. Thus—when Paul tells us to "put on the armor of light"—he means to put on moral purity and virtue as a garment...

B. Walking—v13

1. Having used the imagery of putting on/off our clothing—the apostle switches to another imagery—that of walking...
2. Now—walking is actually a very common imagery used throughout the Old and NT—of the Christian life...
3. Simply put—by "walk" is meant—"one's life or conduct"—to walk in a certain way means you live in a certain way...
4. We sometimes speak about our "Christian walk"—that is—our Christian life—the way in which we behave...
5. [1] Positive, v13a—"let us walk properly, as in the day"—walk "decently and suitably"—as becomes the day...
6. That is—live in a way that's becoming of who you are—walk in a manner fitting your identity as sons of God...
7. Eph.4:1—"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called..."
8. That is—because you were called to be sons of God—then walk or live in a manner worthy of that calling...
9. [2] Negative, v13b—"not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy"—notice there are three couplets of similar or related sins...
10. Many commentators view these sins as largely representing broader categories of—the works or deeds of darkness...
11. [a] Revelry and drunkenness—these represent outward sins of the flesh—that are evident to all around us...
12. [b] Lewdness and lust—these represent inward sins of the flesh—committed secretly and may never be seen...
13. [c] Strife and envy—these refer to sins committed against others—and include jealousy, contention, and discord...
14. First century paganism—was characterized by darkness—spiritual ignorance, moral evil, and wickedness...
15. Thus—many of these Roman Christians had recently come out of this darkness—and were surrounded by it...
16. Eph.4:17-19—"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness..."

II. The Passage Summarized

A. Sanctification is negative and positive

1. That is—sanctification or the Christian life—necessitates that we stop some things and promote other things...
2. Historically—we refer to these two aspects of sanctification as mortification (negative) and vivification (positive)...
3. Mortification has to do with putting off the deeds of the flesh—vivification with putting on the armor of light...
4. [1] Sanctification is more than negative—that is—it's more than refraining from outward or even inward sins...
5. [2] Sanctification is more than positive—that is—there is the need to—"put to death the deeds of the flesh..."
6. Sanctification is NOT merely promoting positive Christian graces—it also includes putting away deeds of darkness...
7. Eph.4:25-32—"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one *of you*, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and *yet* do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have *something* to share with him who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you..."
8. Notice—we are to stop certain things and promote others things—put off the deeds of darkness and put on light...

B. Sanctification is progressive

1. Now—most of you know that the Scriptures speak of sanctification as both a PAST and PRESENT reality...
2. Now—remember by "sanctification" is meant—the work of God's grace in conforming us into Christ's image...
3. [1] Past sanctification—this refers to what John Murray called—definitive sanctification—which is an act...
4. Every Christian has been sanctified in this sense—this is sumptuous with regeneration—and happens at conversion...
5. John Colquhoun—"Initial sanctification is the same as regeneration, or the renewing in effectual calling. It is the sowing of the spiritual seed of grace in the heart of the dead sinner...In initial sanctification, the Spirit of Christ enters the heart with all His train of spiritual graces, and implants them there. He introduces spiritual life, impresses the soul with the image of God, creates new inclinations and motions, or, in other words, forms the new creature. This He does in an instant. In this initial sanctification, the sinner is entirely passive..."
6. Rom.6:4—"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death...so we also should walk in newness of life...v6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin..."
7. The old man was put to death—this is a once for all reality—the old man, with his evil ways—has been killed...
8. I have been raised in newness of life—or, I have put on the new man—I have been definitively sanctified...
9. Thus—within this definite and initial aspect of sanctification—a sinner is radically restored to the image of God...
10. [2] Present sanctification—that is—I am presently being renewed to reflect the image of God as found in Christ...
11. Now—I take the time to point this out because—progressive sanctification presupposes this past sanctification...

12. Perhaps I can put it this way—we are presently being sanctified—because we have already been sanctified...
13. John Colquhoun—"Progressive sanctification is the Holy Spirit's carrying on the work already begun, till He brings it to perfection. Initial sanctification introduces a perfection of the parts of the new creature; progressive is the gradual advancing of each of those parts to perfection, till this new creature grows to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..."
14. Let me illustrate—think of a man building a house—the first that needs done—is the field needs to be cleared...
15. Secondly—he's going to need all the materials—cement blocks for the foundation, boards, windows, and doors...
16. Well—the clearing of the field and providing the materials—could be likened to past or definite sanctification...
17. There's this radical and initial start of the work—progressive sanctification has its start in past or definite sanctification...
18. Col.3:8-10—"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since [because] you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him..."
19. [a] What we are to do—or the need for present sanctification, v8—"but now you yourselves are to put off all these..."
20. [b] What has been done—or the reality of past sanctification, v9—"do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man...and have put on the new man..."

C. Sanctification is work

1. Here I simply want to point out that Christians are not PASSIVE but ACTIVE in the process of sanctification...
2. This is the clear testimony of this passage—notice—WE are commanded to change our clothing and walk properly...
3. Nobody does this for us—WE are commanded to do—and—WE are responsible to do it—WE must put off the deeds of darkness—WE must put on the armor of light—WE must walk properly as in the day and not night...
4. Now—this I trust goes without saying—I trust we are all in agreement—sanctification is a PROCESS and a WORK...
5. Thus—for our remaining time—I want to expand upon this point—and suggest three things about our working...
6. [1] We work by the Spirit, Gal.5:16—"walk in the Spirit"—that is—we work by the POWER of the Spirit...
7. Gal.5:25—"if we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit"—that is—let us walk by the power of the Spirit...
8. [2] We work with the word, Jn.17:17—"sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth"—sanctification is by the word...
9. The word of God is necessary for our sanctification—for through the word of God that the Spirit works in our hearts...
10. [3] We work from or of Christ, Col.2:6—"walk in Christ"—that is—find strength and grace from the person of Christ...
11. This is exactly what the apostle tells us in v14—"put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—that is—derive strength from Christ...
12. In other words—we are NOT expected to sanctify ourselves—the Lord first clears the field and gives the materials...
13. If I can put it reverently—He first the first by uniting us to Christ, putting off the old man, and on the new man...
14. He then gives us the Spirit, the word, and Christ—as all the materials we need to build a house of sanctification...