

## Salvation—Sanctification (14<sup>th</sup>)

(Today we continue studying the *experimental* aspect of sanctification in the life of the believer as he lives on earth. Today's podcast discusses somewhat the inwards holiness of the heart and spirit.)

As we continue studying sanctification in the life of a believer, we find a plurality of passages that not only teach that we are commanded sanctify ourselves, but we equally discover that the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the child of grace will be sanctified and live a life of holiness. We have already reviewed some verses that teach both parts of sanctification. Nevertheless, while it is impossible to cover all of the passages regarding the topic at hand, we desire to look at others to stress further the importance of the matter. It is sad (to say the least) that we live in such a time that too many professing Christians live so much like the world that the only reason one might think them to be a believer is only because they identify with a Christian denomination and attend worship on some kind of schedule. The words of John Bunyan are apropos to this self-deception and allow me to try your patience as I provide a lengthy quote from his treatise "A Holy Life The Beauty of Christianity," as found in *The Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. 3, pp. 314-315. It is as follows:

Those that religiously name the name of Christ should, must, depart from iniquity, because else our profession of him is but a lie. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie." (1 John i. 6) "And walk in darkness;" that is, and walk in iniquity, and depart not from a life that is according to the course of this world. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John ii. 4) The truth that he professes to know, and that he saith he hath experience of, is not in him. Every man that nameth the name of Christ is not therefore a man of God, nor is the word in every man's mouth, truth, though he makes profession of that worthy name. (1 Kings xvii. 24) It is then truth in him, and to others with reference to him, when his mouth and his life shall agree. (Rev. ii. 2, 9; iii. 9) Men may say they are apostles, and be liars: they may say they are Jews, that is, Christians, and lie, and be liars, and lie in so saying. Now this is the highest kind of lying, and certainly must therefore work the saddest sort of effects. Thus man's best things are lies. His very saying, I know him, I have fellowship with him, I am a Jew, a Christian, is a lie. His life giveth his mouth the lie: and all knowing men are sure he lies. 1. He lies unto God: he speaks lies in the presence, and to the very face of God. Now this is a daring thing: I know their lies, saith he; and shall he not recompense for this? (See Acts v. :4; Rev. xxi. 8, 27; xxii. 15. and take heed.) I speak to you that religiously name the name of Christ, and yet do not depart from iniquity. 2. He lies unto men; every knowing man; every man that is able to judge of the tree by the fruit, knows that that man is a liar, and that his whole profession as to himself is a lie, if he doth not depart from iniquity. Thus Paul called the slow bellies, the unsound professors among the Cretians, liars. They were so in his eyes, for that their profession of the name of Christ was not seconded with such a life as became a people professing godliness. (Tit. i. 12–16) They did not depart from iniquity. But again, 3. Such a man is a liar to his own soul. Whatever such an one promiseth to himself, his soul will find it a lie. There be many in the world that profess the name of Christ, and consequently promise their soul the enjoyment of that good, that indeed is wrapt up in him, but they will certainly be mistaken hereabout, and with the greatest terror will find it so, when they shall hear that direful sentence, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Luke xiii. 27) Christ is resolved that the loose-lived professor shall not stand in the judgment, nor any such sinners in the congregation of the righteous. They have lied to God, to men, and to themselves; but Jesus then will not lie unto

them: he will plainly tell them that he hath not known them, and that they shall not abide in his presence.

Remember this is the man that wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War* and spent twelve years in prison for his refusal to stop preaching at the command of the government. While the quote supplied is somewhat lengthy, the whole article is filled with such exhortations of self examination towards a holy life. I can assure you that John Bunyan was no exception regarding our Baptist forefathers in his dedication to the Lord and in his preaching the gospel. I often wonder what these men would say if they were here today and witness the professing believers of our day. It should be evident that if our lifestyle is inconsistent with the fundamentals of Christian living as commanded by the Holy Scriptures then our testimony and defense of Christianity will be shallow, to say the least, if not ineffectual altogether. The Lord has commanded us to be sanctified in order to witness for the truth of hope within us and to defend the faith. We must seriously consider I Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." This verse is the classic passage that is used to justify the study of apologetics. For those who may not know what apologetics is, I believe the definition supplied in *Wikipedia* to be a simple, overall, and good description: "**Apologetics** (from Greek ἀπολογία, 'speaking in defense') is the religious discipline of defending religious doctrines through systematic argumentation and discourse." (This Greek word is translated "an answer" in I Peter 3:15.) Obviously, the study of apologetics can be expounded to a larger and more complex system of study, but in the end of the day I think one would hard pressed to discount this clear-cut definition. While we are tempted to dive into the subject of apologetics and explore some of the varied ideas and views involved with the subject, we must force ourselves to stick to our current topic—sanctification. Nevertheless, I believe I would be remiss if I did not point out that the verse says that before we are to give attention to defending the faith and explaining why we believe what we believe, it is essential that we must first "sanctify the Lord God in" our "hearts." No. God did not leave it as a suggestion. He commanded each and every Christian to sanctify the Lord God in his heart. In reality one cannot give a "reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" if the Lord God is not first sanctified in his heart. It is obvious that facts and information are to be acquired through much laborious study to defend the faith; however, we are not commanded to sanctify the Lord in our head; sanctification is to be *in the heart*. Too often arguments and defenses are set forth "with excellency of speech" and "enticing words of man's wisdom" (I Corinthians 2:1, 4) while the heart is cold, lifeless, "void of understanding." This brings to mind the parallel passage of II Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Too often we limit our thinking of sanctification to what is seen by our outward conduct, but these two verses direct our attention to the heart and spirit; that is, the inner man. True, only the Holy Spirit can give spiritual life to a person and we need the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us into all truth, John 3:8; 14:26; 16:13. Nevertheless, the injunction is to us "to sanctify the Lord God in" our "hearts," and to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and to perfect "holiness in the fear of God." God does not give us the option as to whether such is to be done. And when we call to remembrance our study of Hebrews 12:5-14 from a previous podcast that God chastens each and every child of grace so that he is a partaker of His holiness, what are we to think about such professors who live like the world and are not "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" nor sanctifying "the Lord God in" their "hearts"?

When professing Christians and members of congregations can miss and ignore the worship services for entertainments, sports, recreational function, or simple laziness, how can it be said of them that the Lord is sanctified in their hearts? When people attend worship in their "casual" attire and conduct themselves in a slovenly and careless way how can it be said that they have a holy reverence for the Lord and His house? I see on social media people who give more attention to their attire and conduct to a

wedding than they do in the worship service of the thrice Holy God of heaven and earth. It matters not when or where the congregation meets for worship—on Sunday or a weekday; in a building constructed for worship or a home—the same reverence and respect is to be given to the God of heaven and earth. People (even children) should not be coming and going to the water fountain or from one spot or group of friends to another for personal comfort. (Obviously, there are occasions when disruption is needful for health reasons, but this ought to be the exception rather the rule.) The New Testament worship is more glorious and holy than that of the Old Testament, II Corinthians 3:7-11. Yet, when they were to appear before the Lord He instructed them to be sanctified: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives,” Exodus 19:10-15. Yes, “shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” Hebrews 12:9.

We do not mean to infer that dress and décor is encouraged to promote pride and vanity under any circumstance, especially in the house of the Lord. Neither are we advocating that one should purchase or dress himself in clothing above his means. We are saying that we should not give more importance or respect in our dress or décor to any other occasion than we do in the worship service of God.

Our time is up for today; farewell.