

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

1 Peter 1:2

INTRODUCTION

- When a sinner is saved, he may have basic knowledge of the gospel, of his sin, of his need of Christ and his power to save
- But there is so much about his salvation that remains a mystery to him – glorious truths regarding election, regeneration, adoption are unknown
- After he is saved, God shows to the growing Christian through his word the blessings of salvation
- Particularly in the epistles of the New Testament many truths about our salvation are revealed to us
- It is one of the great joys of the Christian life to continually grow in the knowledge of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ – a knowledge we will never fully grasp in this life, and even in the ages to come, we will continue to learn of God's unspeakable gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:7)
- As Peter writes to these believers to encourage them to be steadfast in God's grace while they suffered, he reminds them of their identity
- In the sight of the world their identity is one of strangers or foreigners, the object of the world's ridicule and hatred
- But before God, their identity is that of *elect* and *chosen* as a special people unto himself
- This verse describes this salvation as being the work of all three Persons of the Godhead

- Note that this is one of numerous verses that include all three Persons of the Trinity (Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22; John 14:26; 15:26; Acts 2:33; 10:38; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:7)
 - ✓ The Father *appoints* salvation to his people
 - ✓ The Spirit *applies* salvation to his people
 - ✓ The Son *accomplishes* salvation for his people
- Having considered the Father electing according to foreknowledge, here we will consider how God brings it to pass – “through the sanctification of the Spirit”
- As a formal theological term, sanctification is defined as “the work of God's Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13), whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Ephesians 4:24), and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto God in righteousness and true holiness (Romans 6:11).”
- But sanctification is also used in a broader sense as a synonym for “salvation”
- Consider the tenses of sanctification
 - ✓ Past sanctification – this takes place at the moment of salvation when the believer is positionally set apart in Christ (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:9-11; Hebrews 10:10,14).
 - ✓ Present sanctification – the process whereby the Spirit progressively works in the believer so that he puts away sin, puts on godliness (Romans 6:19,22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 1 Peter 1:14-16)
 - ✓ Future sanctification – this is the complete perfection of the believer in spirit, soul and body at the coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

- The Greek word for sanctification (*hagiasmo*) indicates purification, holiness
- In this case, Peter is referring to the Spirit's work in the sinner in bringing him to conversion
- In *eternity* God the Father elects, but in *time* the Spirit sanctifies by bringing the sinner to the point of "obedience" to the gospel and conversion through the blood of Jesus Christ

I. THE HELPLESS SINNER'S REQUIREMENT OF SANCTIFICATION

A. God is holy, and demands holiness of his creatures

1. God the Father is holy (John 17:11), God the Son is holy (Hebrews 7:26; Luke 1:35); God the Spirit is holy
2. "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Psalm 5:4)
3. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13)
4. Heaven is a holy place, and only the holy may dwell there (Psalm 15:1-5)
5. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14)
6. The standard God requires of man is moral *perfection*, even as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48)
7. When God's plan of redemption is finally consummated, all sin will be cast into the lake of fire and only holiness will remain in the new heaven and earth

B. Man is thoroughly unholy

1. In our natural state we are totally depraved under sin (Genesis 6:5; Job 15:16; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10)
2. We are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1)
3. We are in blindness to our true state (2 Corinthians 4:4)
4. None seek after God (Romans 3:11)
5. In our natural unregenerate condition, we are in a state of sin, and of condemnation; and as such we are liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the torments of hell forever
6. If man is to be holy before God, it requires the eradication of our sinful heart and nature, and the creation of a righteous heart and nature from outside of ourselves
7. God's holiness is one of his communicable attributes, and the elect become partakers of his holiness (Hebrews 12:10)

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN SANCTIFICATION

- A. The Holy Spirit has been active in the world from the beginning of the creation
 1. In the beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2)
 2. With the Father and Son, the Spirit performed his life-giving work in the creation (Psalm 33:6; 104:30)
 3. Man, made in God's image, received life by the Spirit of God (Job 33:4; cf. Genesis 2:7)
 4. The omnipresent Spirit providentially oversees and governs his creation (Psalm 139:7)

5. He proceeds from the Father (John 14:16)
 6. He is also sent by the Son (John 15:26; 16:7)
- B. The Holy Spirit has a special work towards sinful mankind
1. He restrains evil (2 Thessalonians 2:7)
 2. He strives with men (Genesis 6:3)
 - a. The “striving” indicates a reasoning and contending as in a courtroom by the Spirit at the bar of man’s conscience
 - b. While Noah preached to the ears of men, the Spirit strove in the hearts of men (1 Peter 3:18-20)
 - c. Yet there is a limit to his striving
 3. He reproveth and convicts men (John 16:7-11)
 - a. Of sin – particularly the sin of unbelief in rejecting Christ
 - b. Of righteousness – that of the holy standard of God in Christ
 - c. Of judgment – Satan is judged and all who follow him will suffer judgment also
 4. He draws sinners to salvation (Hosea 11:4; John 6:44; 12:32)
 5. He points sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (John 15:26; Acts 5:30-32)
 6. He calls sinners to repentance and faith through the preaching of the gospel (Acts 11:18; 20:21)

7. He invites sinners to come unto Christ for life (Revelation 22:17)
8. He opens the heart of sinners that they may believe and receive Christ (Acts 16:13-15)
9. He effects the new birth in those who believe (John 3:6,8; Titus 3:5)

III. THE HUMBLE SOUL'S RESPONSE TO SANCTIFICATION

A. We must obey his calling

1. The sanctification of the Spirit is “unto obedience”
2. “The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32)
3. The Scriptures speak of the gospel as something to not only be believed (Mark 1:15) and received (1 Corinthians 15:1) but to be *obeyed* (Romans 2:8; 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17)
4. This obedience is not “works”, but by grace meeting the terms of the gospel which are repentance and faith
5. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29)
6. This sanctified obedience is the work of the Spirit of God within us (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11)

B. We should desire and seek the Spirit's work in our lives

1. In Luke 11:13, Christ promises the Father to “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him”

2. Note that the sinner's first priority is not to receive the Spirit, but to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Ephesians 1:12-13; John 7:37-39)
 3. When we receive Christ, we receive the Spirit (Romans 8:9)
 4. We must not seek the Spirit as Simon the sorcerer did, who selfishly desired power and glory for himself (Acts 8:18-24)
 5. We ought to desire his complete work in us of conviction of sin, godly sorrow, repentance, faith, regeneration, and complete sanctification
- C. We must be careful not to resist the Holy Spirit, but rather yield to him
1. This world "cannot receive" the Spirit of truth (John 14:17)
 2. The Jews stubbornly resisted the Holy Ghost and suffered God's condemnation (Acts 7:51)
 3. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5)
 4. The Spirit is grieved through continued sinful behaviour (Ephesians 4:30)
- D. We can facilitate the work of the Spirit in our lives through the word of God and prayer
1. The word of God is given by the Spirit of God (2 Peter 1:21) and those who receive the word receive the Spirit
 2. Spiritual prayer is communion with the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20), who assists us and intercedes for us as we pray (Romans 8:26)

3. To neglect these spiritual duties is to “quench” the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

CONCLUSION

1. Without the Spirit sanctifying us there is no salvation
2. The only sanctification the God accepts is “of the Spirit”
3. Many have tried other forms of sanctification, that is of the flesh or of the law
4. Yet this outward sanctification achieved through external forms only brings death, not life (2 Corinthians 3:6)
5. One of the hallmarks of true sanctification is its chief object: Jesus Christ – it looks to him, depends on him, glorifies him
6. But false sanctification looks to man and glorifies man
7. God in saving us does not only pardon our sins (justification), but makes us holy (sanctification) (1 John 1:9)
8. Have you been sanctified by the Spirit, and do you have that evidence in your life?
 - ✓ A changed life (Titus 3:5-6)
 - ✓ A heart filled with the love of God (Romans 5:5)
 - ✓ A walk led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14)
 - ✓ The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
9. For the believer, the question is not, “Have I got all of the Spirit?” but “Has the Spirit got all of me?” (Ephesians 5:18)