

Sanctification

Sermon delivered on October 12th, 2014

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text: *1 Thessalonians 4:1-7; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 7:1*

I - A God of Purpose

Our God is a God of purpose. He is not random God. He is not a hit and miss God. **He never moves without purpose or plan.** God has a will and a plan for each and every one of us. **He doesn't want us to live a random life.** He doesn't want us to **go through life** without purpose and meaning. He doesn't want us **to walk around** and live a hit and miss lives.

What is God's will for our lives?

1. Salvation

God's will and a plan for each and every one of us is first of all, **salvation.**

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

The mockers are saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (*2 Peter 3:4*)

Men are slow in keeping their promises from various reasons, often selfish reasons; **the Lord's delay comes from love and long-suffering.** He delays His coming because He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 2:3 For this is good and acceptable (pleasing) in the sight of God our Saviour; 4: Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

God our Saviour desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2. Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

But God's will for each and everyone of us is **not only salvation.** The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us, lived a perfect life, suffered, died and was buried, and rose victoriously from the dead and now at the right hand of God making intercession for us. And He did all that, **not only to deliver us sinners** from the **guilt** of our sins,

but from the **dominion** of our sins. He did all that not only to justify us, **but also to sanctify us**. Jesus Christ is not only our wisdom, righteousness and redemption but also our **sanctification**. *1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and **sanctification**, and redemption:*

Listen to what the Lord Jesus says,

*John 17:19 And for their sakes **I sanctify myself**, that **they also might be sanctified through the truth**.*

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it**; 26: **That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,***

So don't think that the only reason why our Lord lived and died and rose again is to forgive and justify the repenting and believing sinners. No, He gave Himself for us that we might be **sanctified**; that we might be **purified**; that we might be **made holy**.

*Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14: Who gave himself for us, **that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify** unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Everything that He does has purpose and that includes our salvation. The purpose of God in saving us is **not primarily** to make us **safe** nor to **spare** from the pain and suffering of hell. It is not primarily to make us **happy**, nor to make us **feel good**, nor **healthy**, nor **wealthy**. It is not primarily to make us **active** and be **busy**. It is not to take away our **frustration** and **loneliness**. Some of these may be true but none of these is the primary goal of God in salvation. **The primary goal of God** in salvation is **holiness**. It is **to make men and women holy**. This is the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

II - A Call to Holiness

God has called us **not just** to **new habits** or **new conduct** or **new behavior** or **new religion**. God has called us **to holiness**.

*1 Thessalonians 4:7 **For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.***

What holiness is not

1. It is not knowledge

To have **great Bible knowledge is not holiness**. Holiness is not merely gathering of theories about holy life. There are people who love to hear what every preacher would say about holiness and they gather their theories, but that is all they have.

*Isaiah 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as **this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:***

*Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, **This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.** (cf: Isaiah 29:13)*

2. It is not activities

It is not merely being actively involved in religious activities. **Busyness is not necessarily holiness.**

*Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and **in thy name done many wonderful works?** 23: And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***

3. It is not mere conformity

It is not mere outward conformity.

Philippians 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Holiness is not conforming to the do's and don'ts of any given church. Many conform to a certain church standard but still ungodly.

What holiness is

*1 Thessalonians 4:7: For God hath **not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.***

Holiness or Sanctification came from the Greek word, “**hagios**” which means a separation - set apart, separate. There are two elements of sanctification, namely, set apart from sin and set apart unto God. **Sanctification** is to be **set apart from sin unto God**. To sanctify means to be **set apart for a holy use**. God has set us apart for the purpose of sanctification not impurity

Sanctification follows justification

Do not confuse justification with sanctification.

Justification speaks of a **legal declaration** that gives one a **right standing before God**. It is a one time event. It involves an **imputed righteousness of Christ** in which we, although we are sinners, are pronounced "not guilty" of sin as in a court of law. We are cleared of any charges against us. Christ's sacrifice means He was punished in our place, satisfying the demands of the law, and God's justice upon sin.

Sanctification begins with justification - it means to separate one unto Christ's service. We are both sanctified and justified when we exercise faith in the gospel for salvation. Sanctification is a **continual work** of the Holy Spirit in the believer to **conform us to the image of God's Son**. It is the Holy Spirit's work to bring practical holiness and the fruit of the Spirit in ones live. This is continual process until one is taken to be with the Lord.

In **justification** our sins are completely forgiven in Christ and we are declared righteous. **Sanctification** is the **process** by which the Holy Spirit makes us more like Christ in all that we do, think, and desire.

Justification is by faith and faith alone. The ground of our justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ put to our account by the grace of God and received by faith.

Sanctification or Holiness is not the basis or ground of our salvation. **Holiness does not add to our salvation.** It does not make our justification complete. But it is the necessary **fruit and proof** of salvation and justification. God saved us not only to justify us but also to sanctify us. **We are not saved because we are holy, but we are saved to be holy.**

True sanctification is impossible apart from the atoning work of Christ on the cross because only after our sins are forgiven can we begin to lead a holy life.

IV - The Motivation to Holiness

What should motivate us to follow holiness?

2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 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.

1. Gratitude

In these verses we see sanctification is closely related to adoption. **God delights to be called our Father**; but He is not satisfied simply to be called our Father; He feels and acts like a Father.

2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Psalms 103:13 As a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14: For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

*Matthew 17:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, **how much more shall your Father** which is in heaven **give good things** to them that ask him?*

Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Luke 12:28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

As a Father He promises to be a good and faithful Father. He provides for His children all that is necessary for their physical and spiritual well being. He promises provision, protection, comfort, fellowship, guidance, instruction, etc.

Adoption is a great privilege. Great privilege comes with great responsibility.

2 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.

Now that you are children of God separate your selves from things that defile and walk in holiness.

All filthiness – not only the sin that is seen by man but also the sin that we know are seen by God.

Sin of the flesh (external) – sins that others can see also called external sins, such as smoking, drinking, drugs, gluttony, gossip, lying, stealing, murder, forsaking God's church, not reading the Bible, not praying, not witnessing, etc.

Sin of the spirit (internal) – sins that only you and God can see also called internal sins, such as sins as pride, malice, wrath, jealousy, envying, falsehood, idolatry, coldness of heart, bitterness, unforgiving spirit, lustful thoughts, etc.

Be not like the Pharisees and religious leaders of old **who cleanse the exterior only.** They whiten the sepulcher, but trouble not about the dead bones within. **Many are quite satisfied with external piety; God is not.**

Separate from all that is impure and things that defile and we are to do this out of gratitude, having been adopted into God's family.

2. Fear of God

2 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.

Not in the fear of our Pastor, husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sister, Sunday school teachers, church, but **must be in the fear God.**

What is the fear of God?

The fear of God is not the the fear of dread. Sanctification is not motivated by servile slavish fear. Not like *"I don't want to sin because if I sin I will not go to Heaven."*

There is some element of dread, but it is not the dominant element why we are to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.*

We are seek to be holy out of **fear of reverence and awe**. This fear of reverence comes by having a right apprehension of God in all of His might, power, dominion and majesty. The one who knows God as He is revealed in His word has a right kind of fear of God, **a healthy fear of God.**

It is the recognition and conscious awareness that **I am always before the presence of God.** *Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Sanctification **must be in the fear God** for no man is hidden from His sight, but all are exposed and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

*Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with **fear and trembling.***

We must live with a constant and conscious awareness of God's presence.

Psalms 16:1 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

The fear of God, by which we understand a reverence for his holy character, respect for his holy Law, and a proper dread lest we should by disobedience incur his displeasure and indignation.

3. Promises of God

*2 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.***

Because you are saved, because you are such privileged children of God, because God is your Father, because you are covered by such *"exceeding great and precious promises,"* therefore be in earnest to cleanse yourselves from all evil, watch over all the various forms of conduct, and seek to purify every aspect of your life.

These promises should and will exercise a **strong and positive influence** over the heart and **move us** to a willing and consecrated obedience and **motivate us live holy and godly lives.**

*2 Peter 1:1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:
4: Whereby are given unto us **exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

True Biblical Christianity

Only in Christianity do you see that there is chiefly a pursuit of holiness motivated by a thankful acknowledgment of all God's merciful promises given to us in the Gospel.

These promises are the things that carry us and bear us in our discouragement and carry us on to a greater pursuit of Christ. It is what gives us encouragement in the midst of many conflicts with our sins and discouragement in the world and being buffeted by the enemy.

Closing exhortation

1. Do you want to be holy?

If you would be sanctified, you must begin with Christ. You must go to Him as a sinner and cast your soul on Him by faith, for peace and reconciliation with God. The very first step towards sanctification, is to come with faith to Christ.

2. Do you want to grow in holiness and in sanctification?

You must continually go on as you began. He is the beginning, the middle and the end of sanctification. **Believers who seem at a standstill are generally neglecting close communion with Jesus**, and so grieving the Spirit. He is **willing to help** everyone who by faith calls to Him for help, and desires to be made more holy.