

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 Thess 4:3-8 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification..

Paul has stated that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. He now begins to instruct us in the basics of Christian living. As I noted in last Sunday's message that the Apostle having established the doctrine of salvation in that we are justified by faith alone, in the merits of Christ alone, he now, in Chapter 12, begins to proceed as it were to the doctrine of sanctification. But it is necessary to understand that Paul is not telling us how to be sanctified rather, since we are sanctified that is justified before God he is guiding us as to how we ought to live in loving obedience to God's mercy that has been extended to us in Christ.

But, if this is not properly understood God's elect can become quite confused and filled with doubt as to their salvation. Therefore I believe that it would be good to take this Lord's Day to discuss the doctrine of sanctification and to carefully consider two aspects of our sanctification. 1.) Our sanctification as it relates to our standing in Christ, and 2.) Our sanctification as it relates to an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in us.

A. Our sanctification as it relates to our standing in Christ.

1. The Greek word (ἁγιασμός - *hagiasmos*) translated as "sanctification" means to be in the state of purity.
2. As God's redeemed people we are presently in a state of purity.
 - a. We are by grace truly "saints", holy ones"
 - b. Paul writing to the churches addresses them as saints.
3. This is true of God's elect because we have been made holy by the work of Christ in our behalf.

1 Peter 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

- a. We have been sanctified by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ
- b. We have been washed in the blood of Christ.

*1 Cor 6:11 But **you were washed**, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord*

- c. All of our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ.

*Rom 3:24-26 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a **propitiation** by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

- d. The righteousness of Christ, His perfect obedience, has been imputed to us.

2 Thess 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit

- e. Because of this we are found literally spotless, blameless before God.
4. It is not a state of being that we are experiencing in our daily walk.
5. Herein is our hope and comfort before God.
 - a. As stated in the first question of our catechism. – The power of sin over us has been broken.

1. What is your only comfort in life and in death? (Heidelberg Cat.)

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil.

- b. Our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, has made it possible for us to enter the Most Holy Place.

*Heb 10:19-23 Therefore, brethren, having **boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

B. Our sanctification as it relates to an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in us.

1. We are commanded to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling”.

*Phil 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, . . . **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;***

- a. This is something we actively engage in.
- b. We are to do this with fear and trembling because God hates sin and the sinner.
- c. We understand then that although we have been made righteous in Christ, this is not an excuse for sinning.

2. But this is not a work we engage in alone it is also a work of God in us.

Phil 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

3. And our sanctification is the will of God for us therefore it is **a pressing duty upon us.**

*1 Thess 4:3 For this **is the will of God,** your sanctification:*

4. We cannot do this on our own we need the aid of the Holy Spirit
 - a. We still struggle with a sinful nature warring within us.
 - b. Our flesh fights against the spirit and our spirit against the flesh.

*Gal 5:17-18 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that **you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit,** you are not under the law.*

- c. This is why the Holy Spirit is called our helper.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

- d. The Holy Spirit is given to help us in our infirmities.

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

5. But to walk in holiness, in a life of obedience is an imperative before us.

*1 Thess 4:4-5 that each of you should know how to **possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,** not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

CONCLUSION: What have we learned today?

As to our standing before God - We understand that we are without sin, perfectly holy before God, because of the work of Christ in us.

As to our need to walk in holiness - we understand then that this is an ongoing work of God in us,

Important to understand that He will help us, because it is the will of God in behalf of His elect.

We will continue to struggle with sin and with disobedience

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But we are to quickly repent and seek cleansing and press on.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Now with this in mind, we will, the Lord willing, next Lord's Day see shall consider God's direction for us in holy living.