**LESSON 19 - SANCTIFICATION**

**Introduction:**

The Latin root of sanctification is "sanctus" meaning “holy, pure, clean”

The Hebrew idea of sanctification is

* "set apart" - the position or status of being dedicated, consecrated, set apart for exclusive use (to God), or
* "brightness" – the condition, state or process leading to the New Testament thought of inward transformation gradually taking place, resulting in moral purity, holy, spiritual thoughts expressed in an outward life of goodness and godliness.

**A. Old Testament Background**

1. God's exhortation - "Be holy as I am holy." He wanted his people to be a reflection of his character: moral excellence, righteousness, hatred of evil, concern for the welfare of others. He is actively engaged for the good of his people as well as being separated from evil.
2. Prophets were aware of the danger of only outward sanctification, and exhorted people to revere the Lord. They disparaged outward rituals if there was no inward or practical holiness (Isa. 1:4,11; Mic. 6:7,8; Jer. 31)

**B. New Testament Understanding**

1. God's desire is that we should have a rich, full, meaningful life (Jn. 10:10) - "abundant life." We see in the NT the Hebrew ideas of sanctification as both ***status*** (how God sees us) and ***condition*** (what we actually are). Both are needed to experience an abundant life.
2. The book of Hebrews forms a bridge between external and internal meanings of sanctification:

* Christ sanctifies His brothers and sisters (us) by
  + Making atonement for our sins (2:17)
  + Cleansing our conscience from dead works (9:13f)

This is an accomplished fact, a ***change of status*** (Justification - Heb. 10:10,14). We are righteous before God.

* We also find the exhortation to grow (Heb. 12:14). Paul develops the idea more fully. For example in Col 3 his exhortation to “put off” certain behaviours, and to “put on” others; or in Gal 5, to walk in the Spirit. Here is found the idea of ***applying*** our redemption. Sanctification is a process of our change of status reflected in internal transformation being worked out in our external behaviour.

**C. The Process:**

1. Justification: We are transferred from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light instantaneously (2 Cor. 5:17). We are united with Christ as we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3-8).

\*Note: Justification does not take place by baptism. Baptism is a sign or symbol of the spiritual reality.

1. Sanctification: is specifically the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
   1. It is an ongoing process, and takes a lifetime for the Light to permeate all of life (Phil. 1:6; 2 Cor.3:18).
   2. In regeneration (rebirth) sin no longer has dominion over us (Rom. 6:14). The Holy Spirit is the controlling, directing agent. Not that we are sinless, but we can no longer be controlled by sin. Victory is real and is accomplished. We do not strive or work for this. The evidence of God’s indwelling us by his Spirit is:
      * Hunger for God: Once you have become a Christian there is a desire to grow in your relationship with God, to ***Know God*** is your ultimate desire (1 Peter 2:2-3; Phil. 3:10)
      * We work out in our lives what has been made available to us in our salvation, we are moving forward to reach our God-given potential. *"Work out your salvation in fear and trembling"* (Phil. 2:12-13). If you don't “work out” your salvation, you don't lose it, you just lose the blessings God intends for this life.

The goal is that all sin will be cleansed from us, and we will be completely transformed to the image of Christ, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit – we make choices.

* 1. While sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we ***also*** work.
     + The relationship between God's work and our work is not strictly one of co-operation, as if God does His part and we do ours, so that together we produce the desired result. Rather, God works in us and we respond. It is ***because*** God is at work in us that we are able to ***choose*** to obey and follow Him. The working of God enables us ***"to will and to do what pleases Him"*** (Phil. 2:13)
     + The many exhortations in scripture all remind us that we are intentionally involved in the process of becoming like Jesus (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 1:9-11; 2 Pet. 1:5,8,10)

1. Our transformation involves concentration of thought, of interest, of heart, mind will, and purpose, engaging our whole selves with the means God has given us for attaining the knowledge of Him that transforms us. What are these means?
2. **Regular worship** - Corporately seeking to offer praise and worship to God, enjoying His presence. Worship springs from a love of God. We want to be in HIs presence. Ministry takes place in His presence - to us and to others through us. In His presence we see our sin and are cleansed and equipped (Is. 6:1-8).
3. **Study of God's Word** - in it we are confronted with the living Christ.
   * + We get to know Him, understand His ways and will.
     + Like looking in a mirror, we also see ourselves and our own sin.
     + We discover God's plan and he teaches us how to live. We need to continue studying the word if we are to reach maturity (Heb. 5:11-6:3; Phil 1:9-11).
     + Jesus sums up how we are to live in the Sermon on the Mount, and concludes with Matt 7:24-27: “Anyone who hears these words of min and does them is a wise man, and he who does not do them is a fool.”
4. **Prayer** - personal communion with God, where we make our heart known to Him, and He makes His heart known to us. Prayer is the perfect complement to Bible study - the objective/subjective elements (Eph. 6:18)
5. **Fellowship** with other believers (Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:11-13). We cannot survive as "lone ranger Christians". Like a single log on the fire, our passion will cool if we are isolated from other believers.

Some dangers of isolation:

* + - Faith may become weak – we don't hear/see what God is doing for others.
    - No chance for others to bear your burdens, encourage, strengthen you
    - No opportunity to grow in ministry, discovering and using your gifts
    - Chance of slipping into error – no one to interact with over interpretations of scripture
    - Sin creeps in, no accountability.

\* The other side of fellowship: Paul exercised church discipline by excluding a person from fellowship in an attempt to bring that person to repentance (1 Cor 5) He/she would miss the fellowship of fellow believers and turn back to God. Attempts to exercise church discipline in this way are no longer effective because of the availability of other churches, and lack of co-operation between them. A person just goes down the street to the next church.

e. **Service to others:**

**D. Effects of Sanctification**

1. We develop a **broader understanding of our faith/relationship with God**. Since Genesis, humanity has sought knowledge, wanting to be like God. Now that the Holy Spirit lives in us, we truly can know God and become like Him, through his work in us.
2. **Maturity:** The only way to maturity is God's way. There are no shortcuts. We have to begin with salvation. As we mature, we understand:
3. **God more fully:** We grow to trust Him more easily in those places where we don't understand His purposes or ways.
4. **Salvation:** How many of us fully understood what we were doing when we became Christians? As we mature, we come to realise how little in fact we knew the true meaning of what we had been saying and doing. As grow in love for and knowledge of God, this world become less important. Although we may teach the same doctrines, speak the same words the impact on others becomes greater as the Spirit works in us, the reality of Christ in us, the hope of glory.
5. **Maturing takes time:** A new Christian may "take-off" in the first months or year of becoming a Christian, and growth gradually levels out. This is normal. Growth is not uniform in a tree or in a Christian. In some single months, there is more growth than in all the rest of the year. During the rest of the year there is a solidification of what we’ve learned, without which the "green timber" would be useless.

The period of rapid growth when woody fibre is actually deposited between the bark and the trunk occupies just 4-6 weeks in May, June, or July. So the Lord matures our faith through our experiences both positive and negative, our victories and defeats, days filled with serving or idleness.

1. **Change of values** (Phil. 3:4-11, particularly v.7). The believer begins to have a different set of priorities/goals he/she is working towards. Sometimes the change is quite radical, sometimes more gradual – attitudes towards work, marriage, morality, abortion, the poor, the care of creation, that is not necessarily taught (fitting into a mold) but is a transforming work done by the Holy Spirit.
2. **Increased awareness of sinfulness** driving a believer closer and closer to Christ. Fairly quickly we do away with the external sins - those are the easy ones. As we grow in Christ we become more aware of the sins of the heart - pride, envy, self-centeredness. Many things are tried to deny our selfish nature and bring it under control, some very human-centered:

* Mortification: fasting, withdrawal from human relationships (hermits), laboring
* Conquest: More meetings, more bible study, more prayer, exhausting efforts to conquer old nature
* Training: Good Christian training, the right schools, churches, and parenting to “train sin out and righteousness in”
* Revivalism: twice a year bring in a speaker and hold special meetings which lead to confession, new resolutions, etc. hoping something will bring lasting change (camp style)
* Time: Just hang in there, hoping that in time we will change for the better
* Cleansing: ala 1 Jn. 1:9 - up to the minute confession and cleansing – deals with the sin, but not with the source, which is self (confession versus repentance).

The only way to inner transformation, is to deal with our sinful ***nature*** is through the cross, God's way. Jesus said to ***daily*** take up our cross and follow Him. The self only yields to the cross, not to any self-effort. Crucifixion is not by putting yourself to death, but surrendering to Him (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14;Rom. 6:11) "Reckon yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Holy Spirit can then apply this truth to our lives.

1. **Increasing awareness of God's loving-kindness** toward us

The more aware we are of our sin and our need for Him, the more we realize and appreciate His great love for us in Christ's sacrifice, His continued faithfulness, the ongoing gift of the Holy Spirit, etc.

1. **Increasing gratitude towards Him**
2. **A growing responsiveness to God's will** - as our love for Him grows in response to His love for us, we want to please Him. Good works flow out of our salvation (Jn. 15:14; 14:15)
3. **Enlarges the believer’s sense of responsibility**:
   1. In the use of time
   2. In the use of talents
   3. In the use of possessions
   4. For moral and spiritual integrity
4. **Which produces a life of self-sacrifice,** serving others as we would Jesus (example of Mother Theresa)

We have the promise that He is continually working in us conforming us to the image of His precious Son (Rom 8:28-30), and that at the end of our lives, when we see Him face to face the transformation will be complete – we will be like Him (1 John 3:1-3). Praise God!