

BC article 24, Ephesians 4:17-5:1; Rom. 6:15-19; “Those He Justifies Are Sanctified”

I. Why Sanctification is Necessary II. Who does this Work III. What this Work looks like

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, is it possible for a Christian to be immoral and unconcerned about sin? Is it appropriate for a Christian to retire from the church and the pursuit of holiness? Do Christians have the right to come to a certain age and say- Okay- I have worked hard enough and now I am holy enough. I have progressed far enough in my life of faith- I will just sit back and relax. As we return to the BC this morning, we are reminded of the direct connection between justification and sanctification. Perhaps you remember the Lordship controversy of 20 years ago. It was stated that Jesus can be your Savior and not our Lord? But is that true? Can Jesus be your savior but not your lord? Can He save you without exercising authority over your life? Can you be justified and not sanctified? So this morning we are going to consider the relationship between Justification and Sanctification. Or in other words, once I have been saved how must I now live? When we are justified, we are made righteous in principle, when we are sanctified, we are displaying righteous in our practice. Justification deals with our status while Sanctification deals with our actions. Justification is a onetime event; sanctification is a process that lasts until we die. This morning we will consider this theme: Jesus Christ renews those who have been joined to Him.

I. Why Sanctification is Necessary

The last few weeks we have noticed that we are saved by grace alone. Specifically dealing with Justification last week, we found that our status and standing before God is based on the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ. This week we will be focusing on Sanctification. In the Bible, the word- to sanctify- means to be set apart as holy. But when speaking of sanctification, we are describing the process by which we are made holy in our lives by the Spirit. Our being renewed in the image of Christ- if you will. Since Justification is one time and a once for all event, why do we speak of growth in holiness? The answer is found in the nature of our salvation. In other words, when we are saved, we are more than simply saved! Although we are

saved by grace through faith alone, that faith is not alone! True faith is a living and active faith! In our salvation, we are joined to Christ. And when we are joined to Christ we are also made like Him. Our theme verse is Rom. 6:19, we are to present our members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. Notice – we present our members- we offer our body and our whole lives as an offering. We consider ourselves as slaves- bondservants. We are to take this view of ourselves. As ones having been purchased and now belonging to Christ. We are to give ourselves wholly to God- with an eye towards His good goal and aim for us! And God’s desire for us is that we be holy! We are indebted to justification- righteous in the sight of God- which lead to sanctification. Or I could say- those who are justified are sanctified! Remember that our works cannot add to the merit or righteousness of Christ. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. We do not add to Christ’s work- our status as accepted children is firmly established. But those who are joined to Christ are also being made like Christ! So lets define sanctification as this- Sanctification is the work of God’s Spirit within us by which we are renewed and made holy. Being sanctified we are enabled to grow in holiness- so that we look and act more like Christ!

The example of a good tree producing good fruits is given by our article. We have the good root of faith- and those actions that proceed from a good root are good and acceptable to God- since all are sanctified by His grace. If the tree is really good, it will produce good fruits. Or I could put it this way- in justification we are given a good root- the branch of our lives is grafted onto a good and living vine. Sanctification describes the fruit that flows from this good root- the new life evident in the branch grafted to the living vine. How that tree grows- or how that vine matures. If a tree does not produce fruit, it is in danger of being cursed by God and cast into the flames. No justified sinner will be happy in their sin- no justified person will be content with sin or happy to remain fruitless, unthankful and immature. A believer must always be striving with a good conscience against the evil desires of the heart. Perhaps the godliest among us are those that struggle the most with their sin because their conscience has been awakened. If you do not see

your sin clearly, you will not have much of a battle to fight! No justified believer will be uncaring or unloving- rather they will be striving to show their gratitude. Sanctification is an absolute necessity in our lives. If you do not look like Christ or you are not growing in holy obedience, you should ask yourself if you have been joined to Christ. So this process of being made holy is not an add on- a nice extra to have. No, it is a vital and necessary part of our new identity. Our holiness is not the grounds for but they are a consequence of our being justified.

II. Who does this work

When it comes to our justification, we know that this is a legal declaration- a crediting or transaction that takes place between the Father and the Son concerning us. Justification happens outside of us- dealing with our status. It is not a work of our hand. But what about sanctification? Is this man's response- something that we can do all on our own? How can we grow in holiness? In our second point, we see that even our sanctification is a work of God in us. As Ephesians 2 says, we are God's workmanship. Created in Christ for good works. By the Spirit we not only have the desire, but also the ability to do that which we are called to do. One of the primary works of the Spirit within is this work of making us holy- that is why Jesus sent Him- pouring Him upon us! He is our holy anointing for service! It is the desire of Jesus to see His people living like Him- following in His footsteps! It is the Holy Spirit who changes the heart so that your entire being is conformed to God's Will. In other words, you love because God has first loved you! As our article put it, the Holy Spirit is active in regenerating and He causes us to live a new life and frees us from slavery to sin. So our sanctification is a work of the Spirit within- when we are being made holy in this life, the Holy One is working! The HS prompts us- or enables us to do that which is pleasing to God. We are sanctified for a purpose- so that we might produce fruits. There is no merit when it comes to the work that we do- not even in our growth in holiness- because it is the Spirit who gives us the ability to do it! On the contrary, when we do good, as the article says, we are indebted to Him for the good that we do! Yes, that's right. Instead of paying God back with our works, we actually increase what we owe God

because He has enabled us to do these works! It is the Spirit who is renovating us within. He is the active agent- and His work progresses towards a steady goal. The goal of our sanctification is perfection- but that goal will not be reached until we lay our sinful flesh aside for the last time. We must also remember that these works are done inside of us and by us. We cannot sit on the sidelines and expect good to be done. Rather as Paul said in Phil. 2, we must strive on towards the goal. We must run the good race. Our work is done by the Spirit's work, but we are still the ones who must act! This is a mystery and perhaps hard to understand. You are called to crucify the flesh- to put to death the sins that remain. You are the one who must be active in holiness, but you cannot do the work by your own strength. And even when by grace your faith is seen, God is still the one who receives the praise! We cannot do any perfect work in this life, but these works are purified by the blood of Christ and made acceptable in His sight! You have been freed of guilt, but the remnants of your sin remain and must be fought against with good conscience. To be clear, this work of making us holy in our living is a process. The Spirit by His gradual work is recreating us- so that we become mature and steadfast. But this growth in holiness is of great desire and interest for us as well! We are not just sitting back- waiting for the Spirit to do His work within. No, we are eagerly praying for and pursuing the means by which we might grow in this holiness. As our article says, justification does not make us cold or uncaring! No, not at all! Rather we moved by this love of God we have received! To repeat what I said before, those who are justified must- will be sanctified! It will be our desire- and it is the Spirit's work to bring this holy change to bear! As Rom. 15:16 states, the church is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. So this is the Spirit's work- and work that we are called to as well. As Heb. 12:14 puts it, strive for peace and for holiness! So this pursuit of holiness is a desire that the Spirit gives us- and a desire that we long for and pursue as well!

III. What this work looks like

Now that we understand what sanctification is, let's close by looking at what this sanctification actually looks like. Let's be very clear hear- holiness is a visible mark! We should have every

expectation to see the fruit of the Spirit's work within. Basically, the work of the Spirit is to enable us to put off the old man and come alive in the new. To put to death the old ways of sins and start obeying in the new pattern of life and holiness. As our BC article put it, those who are regenerated by the Spirit are led to live a new life and are freed from the slavery of sin!

Sanctification is this new life we live- having 2 parts- both dying and coming alive. LD 33 calls this the process of daily conversion- the dying of the old self and the rising to life of the new.

As you construction workers can testify, when you plan on flipping a house you need to do 2 things. Tear out the hold, and replace it with something new- right? 2 parts to this process- removal of the bad and the bringing in the good! Depraved qualities and desires are done away with- while good attributes and desires become evident. The mold in the basement and the old countertops are dealt with- killed and removed. New countertops put in and the appliances updated! That is what sanctification is like. This work applies to our entire being- not just external morality. Everything from the foundation to the shingles are covered. Even our desires- what we long for- the things we delight in- are also changed! I Thes. 5:23 says that we are sanctified in our whole being, body and soul. May the God of peace sanctify you completely- Paul says! Or as I Peter 1 says, we are sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. So our desires and our actions. Our very nature- our mind- our body and our soul. All parts of our being are in view here- every aspect being affected by the Spirit's presence and work.

Our passage from Eph. 4 illustrates the various areas and aspects of this sanctification. As Eph. 4:17 states, no longer walk as the Gentiles do, for that is not the way you learned Christ. And again in v. 22- put off the old self and put on the new self- created after the likeness God in true righteousness and holiness. So both the putting to death and the coming to life- the putting off the old and the putting on the new man who is like Christ. Notice the extent- this passage covers the mind, understanding, the heart, the desires and the self. So it covers the whole being- your every thought, desire and action. Notice the contrast- the old man was walking in futility, darkness, alienated from God, removed from life, ignorant, hard-hearted, callous, corrupt,

deceitful, sensual, greedy and impure! That is the old man- the old man- the old nature! This is the part of your life that needs to be killed- stopped- done away with! How much of what we see in this world- and what lives in our own hearts- can't be characterized by this greedy, sensual, impure and ignorant way! But not so God's people! We are called to be renewed, living in the likeness of God, living in righteousness and holiness, knowing the truth and living in the light! That is what our lives are to be like! And to push the issue just a bit further, look at the issue of speech Paul focusses on in v. 25 and following! The speech of the old man tears down, is full of anger and deceit! The old man tells lies- speaks with corruption! But the new man- well, his speech is pure, for building others up- he speaks the truth- giving grace to all who hear! That is the kind of contrast and growth we are talking about here. Development and holiness made evident even in the way we speak!

To conclude, we are called to be imitators of God, not of the world! To live and act more and more like Christ- and less like the world. Remember that every good tree must produce good fruit. You have been changed by Christ, so live like you must in the strength of the Spirit. Pray that the HS might enable you to do what you must! That He would give us the desire- the will and the way to be sanctified- to be holy as our God is holy! As our theme states: Christ renews those who have been joined to Him. So rise and go; do your duty and live for Christ each and every day! May we as good trees produce fruits by the strength of the Spirit. But to death the sins that remain- come alive in the image of Christ- and so be sanctified by the Spirit!