
Sermon Notes

October 4, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

God is For Us: Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

The Family Likeness

- ❖ “You look just like your father.”
- ❖ In sanctification, we are made to look more like our Father
- ❖ Thomas Watson: “A sanctified person bears not only God’s name, but His image.”

Set Apart For a Purpose

- ❖ God separates His children from the sin that so easily entangles and gives them a hunger for holiness
- ❖ A living example
 - the Thessalonians turned from idolatry to serve the living God
 - the testimony that resulted from this became well-known in the surrounding regions
 - Paul is extremely thankful for the way these believers embrace the Word of God for “what it really is” and for how the Word “worked” in the Thessalonians
 - Paul’s beautiful benediction details the sanctification process

God’s Work

- ❖ Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit who lives within all believers
 - *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you*
 - those in whom the Holy Spirit is actively at work
 - live with the assurance that they belong to Christ
 - are kept from abandoning themselves again to a life of iniquity and the devil’s destructive agenda
- ❖ *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely*
 - NOT sinless perfection!
 - “all the way to the finish” or “all the way through”
 - “may no part of you be left untouched by God’s sanctifying grace”
 - the stripping away of sinful habits and inclinations bit by bit, like the layers of an onion

Our Work

- ❖ WE must still resist and fight against indwelling sin
 - all sin is a contradiction of God’s holiness
 - the nature and character of sin does not change because the person in whom it dwells and by whom it is committed is a believer
 - the sin that remains in us contradicts our Father’s sinless perfection and justly deserves both His wrath and His fatherly displeasure

- ❖ We must not indulge sin or take God's grace for granted
- ❖ We must be "on board" with the sanctifying work of God
 - 1 John 3:3, *everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*
 - resist the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16)
 - never ignore or minimize the conflict that exists between the new creation you are in Christ and the remaining sin that plagues your soul (Romans 7:19-24)
- ❖ Cultivate a longing to grab hold of the high prize of your calling in Christ Jesus
 - learn to detest your sin
 - learn to cry out *Woe is me for I am undone* with Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5)
 - learn to *repent in dust and ashes* with Job (Job 42:5-6)
- ❖ The more you identify with the holiness of God, the less self-complacent you will become about your sin
- ❖ Cultivate a constant, growing appreciation that though sin remains within you, it does not have mastery OVER you
 - the difference between surviving sin and reigning sin
 - remember, you are a temple of the Holy Spirit
 - you are not your own
 - you are bought with a price
- ❖ Romans 6:12-13 *...present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness*

Mystery

- ❖ From a human standpoint, it is impossible to fully understand how the symbiosis of God's work and our work accomplish sanctification
 - *he will surely do it* (1 Thess 5:23)
 - *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you* (Philippians 2:12-13)
- ❖ Though we must not trust in our own strength in the sanctification process, neither are we passive spectators
 - inward changes that result in outward evidence
 - make use of all the rich resources God makes available to you (the Word, prayer, ordinances)
 - keep pressing on toward the goal!

Personal Application

1. What is God doing in your life at this time to make you look more like your Father in heaven?
2. As you think of the good example of the Thessalonians, how is God's Word working **in you** to make you turn from sin and pursue holiness?
3. What will you do to help yourself detest your sin and repent of it like Isaiah and Job?
4. What will help you effectively fight against the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life?
5. Which of God's resources (Word, prayer, ordinances) can you use more effectively to keep you pressing on toward the goal?