

1, The Importance of Sanctification

Sanctification

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The book of Romans chapter seven. We will begin reading together at verse 14. Romans chapter seven beginning in verse 14.

Paul here is describing the inward struggle that he has with remaining sin. Shall we read together his description of his own condition as a saved man?

Verse 14.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.¹

Now in describing his inward battle with sin Paul is describing something that we can all identify with. All of us, as Christians, have very good intentions and yet often times we fall short of those intentions. And this struggle with remaining sin in the life of the Christian is a struggle that is a cause of a great deal of grief and difficulty and unhappiness in our lives. We, as Christians, know that Christ came to save us from our sins. And we want to, in cooperating with Christ's intentions in our salvation, to be delivered from those sins. And, indeed, when Christ saves a person he gives them a

¹ Romans 7:14-25.

desire to conquer the remaining sin within themselves. A person cannot be a Christian and be comfortable and complacent in his sin.

There is an enmity of which God spoke in Genesis 3:15 when he said, “ I will put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman.”

And so all of those who are the spiritual children of Jesus Christ are participants in this warfare and this battle against sin.

But as the passage that we read this evening indicates, this battle with remaining sin in the life of the Christian is something that is not easy. It is a great and titanic struggle.

Now this struggle is something that Christians have sought to deal with through the ages. And efforts to address this tension between what we know we ought to do and what we actually do do have resulted in various schools of thought as to how to deal with the remaining sin.

There is the notion of Perfectionism which says the way to deal with this tension regarding remaining sin in the life of the believer is to get a second work of grace. The Methodists teach such a thing where ultimately one can obtain entire sanctification and be delivered from this struggle and no longer do we struggle because we have no obtained deliverance from remaining sin.

Then there is the school of Quietism. And this school of thought says what you need to do is stop struggling. You need to just let go and let God. This is the school of thought that says you need to just let Jesus live his life through you. And so we are to just quietly sit back and let him live his life through us while we adopt a passive posture with reference to our struggles.

And then there is Charismatism. And the Charismatics essentially say, “Well, the way to obtain victory with reference to this struggle with remaining sin is to be filled with the Spirit as manifested by speaking in tongues. And if you can just have this experience of speaking in tongues, then you will have the power to conquer the sinful tendencies that remain within every Christian.”

And then there are the Legalists, those who follow the teachings of Legalism and they basically say, “Well, if you follow these four rules you will always have victory over sin and breaking those rules will cause you to fall into sin.”

And then you have the Antinomians and they say, “Well, it really doesn’t matter. I mean, after all, why struggle? We are not under the law. We are under grace. Let us sin that grace may abound. The law has nothing more to do with us and so we do not need to worry about fighting against things which are a violation of God’s law.”

And so you have Perfectionism. Quietism, Charismatism, Legalism, Antinomianism. All of these schools of thought are an effort or a method to deal with the issue of remaining sin in the believer.

Now it is important for us to understand that none of them are correct. None of them are. And what I want to do this evening and in the subsequent weeks ahead is launch into a study about how to deal with sin in God's people. And this study or this topic is called "The Doctrine of Sanctification."

Sanctification refers to the separation of the believer from his sin. The word "sanctify" is synonymous with the word "holy." Those terms are interchangeable. And also the word "saint," "holy ones" is also drawn from this same basic root word.

Now these words "saint" or "sanctify" or "sanctification" or "holy" all simply mean to set apart or to separate. And in this case it means to be set apart or separated from sin. We know from a cursory reading of the Scriptures that God's whole salvation plan revolves around this one issue and that is separating man from sin.

And so we want to consider the question this evening. How can we be separated from sin? And we are going to be seeking to answer this question over a period of several weeks.

Now some people may ask the question: Why are you going to devote all of this time to this issue? Why is sanctification something that is important enough to spend several weeks considering?

And what I want to do this evening is lay some groundwork and offer an introduction to this whole subject by discussing the importance of sanctification. Why is it important that we as the people of God should be concerned with gaining victory over sin in our lives and being separated from it.

And in the first place this evening, we want to consider together that this doctrine of sanctification is important because it is central to God's plan of salvation. It is central to the plan of salvation.

Now we understand that salvation is not something that happened by accident. The salvation of people from sin is a well thought out plan. God had a very clearly thought out purpose when he launched his work of salvation and the Bible tells us very clearly what that purpose is.

And so if you would turn in your Bibles please to the book of Ephesians chapter one, we will read what the purpose of God is in salvation and in his salvation plan.

Ephesians chapter one beginning at verse three it says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”²

And now he begins to describe what some of those spiritual blessings are and he spends a significant amount of the remainder of the chapter describing the nature of those spiritual blessings. And the first is listed in verse four.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him.”³

The “in love” belongs with the next verse.

What he is telling us here is that God had an elective plan. This was the basis of his salvation. He chose us. But he chose us to be in him, that is in Christ. And this is the means of salvation, is our union with Jesus Christ. And so we have the basis of salvation is election. The means of salvation is union with Christ. The goal of salvation is contained in the word “that.” It is a purpose clause. Here is why he chose us. Here is why he brought us into union with Jesus Christ, in order that we should be holy and without blame before him.

What is the whole goal and purpose of God’s election and of our union with Christ? It is that we would be a holy people, that we would be separated from sin.

And so we see that separation from sin, also known as sanctification, is central to the very plan of God. When God says, “What am I trying to accomplish in the salvation of men?” one of the things he expressly declares that he intended to accomplish is that we would become a holy people.

Turn, please, if you will, to the book of Romans chapter eight and we will see an additional statement regarding the purpose of God in salvation, the book of Romans chapter eight. This is a verse that we dealt with this morning. Romans eight and verse 28.

Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”⁴

Now when God extended his effectual call to us, that call was not just a random call, but it had a specific purpose. We were called according to God’s purpose.

Now the question is: What is that purpose? Well, verse 29 tells us.

“For...” Now he describes his purpose.

² Ephesians 1:3

³ Ephesians 1:4.

⁴ Romans 8:28.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [here it is] to be conformed to the image of his Son.”⁵

That is the purpose of God’s calling. The purpose of God’s calling is that we would be conformed to the image of his Son. Now the image to which we are to be conformed here is to his moral image, that is to his character. And so we see that God in his eternal elective purposes, in his entering in to a relationship with us before the foundation of the world—that is what the word foreknowledge means. To know someone means to have a relationship with him. To foreknow them means to enter into a relationship with him beforehand.

The word “foreknowledge” and the word “election” are synonymous with one another. And so in Ephesians one and verse four we see that election leads to holiness. In this passage we see that foreknowledge leads to conformity to the image of Christ. And these are parallel passages.

And so it is God’s intention in the plan of salvation to bring to himself a holy people. And so sanctification or holiness is integral to the plan of salvation and cannot be separated from it. And this, in the first place, then, is why the pursuit of sanctification is important. The reason why it is important is because it is central to God’s plan of salvation.

But in the second place we want to notice that sanctification is important because it is central not only in the plan of salvation, but also it is central in the accomplishment of salvation. It is central in the accomplishment of salvation.

Now it is one thing to have a plan. It is quite another thing to carry out that plan. What was the intention and the goal of Jesus Christ as he worked out the accomplishment of salvation? When Jesus Christ came to this earth as the God man, lived his life and died upon the cross, did he have in his mind a clear idea about what he was trying to accomplish about what he was trying to do?

Well, the answer is yes.

Turn, please, to the book of Titus chapter two and verse 14.

Now, we will begin reading at verse 11, Titus 2:11.

It says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”⁶

And this grace that brings salvation has some instructions for us. It teaches us that we can live any way we want because, after all, we are saved by grace.

⁵ Romans 8:29.

⁶ Titus 2:11.

Now, clearly that is not what the passage says, although there are some Antinomians who would teach that.

But, rather, the grace of God teaches us that:

...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.⁷

Now notice verse 14. This is our verse.

“Who gave himself for us, that...”⁸

And now what he is going to do is he is going to tell us why Jesus Christ gave himself for us. When he went to the cross, what was it that was motivating him? What was the purpose and goal in his mind? He gave himself for us in order that:

“...he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”⁹

Now the word “peculiar” there doesn’t mean weird. It means a people that are particularly his. They are his particular possession.

But, you see, when Jesus died on the cross the intent for which he died was to purify a people and that is why when the grace that was purchased upon the cross comes to us, it teaches us to live a pure life because that is the very purpose for which it was purchased and that is the very purpose for which it is given.

And so the reason why the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, is because the purpose of Christ in dying was to separate us from such things to purify to himself a people.

So Jesus had in his own mind a very clear intention in his accomplishment of salvation and that was to separate his people from their sins.

Now a second passage that further supports this issue is in Ephesians chapter five, the book of Ephesians, the fifth chapter. In this passage he is talking about the relationship between husbands and wives and in so doing he illustrates how they ought to relate to one another by illustrating the relationship between Christ and the Church.

In Ephesians 5:25 it says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”¹⁰

⁷ Titus 2:12-13.

⁸ Titus 2:14.

⁹ Ibid.

Now why did he give himself for it? Well, verse 26 contains a purpose clause once again. “In order that...”

He gave himself in order that, “...he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...”¹¹

In order that, verse 27, “...he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”¹²

And so Jesus Christ has a very clear purpose. When he set out to accomplish salvation, he set out to accomplish the sanctification, purification and holiness of his people.

And this passage explains to us why he did what he did. Why did he go to the cross? Why did he do it? He did it with the express intention of purifying to himself a people.

And then 1 Peter 2:24.

This passage says, regarding Christ’s death upon the cross, once again, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that...”¹³

Once again a purpose clause. Why did he die on the cross? Why did he bear our sins in his own body?

He did so in order that “...we, [having died] to sins, should live unto righteousness.”¹⁴

You see, Christ’s purpose in giving himself on the cross was in order that we would be enabled to live unto righteousness. And if we are not pursuing and seeking to live unto righteousness, then we are fighting against the very purpose for which Jesus Christ has saved us.

And so these passages make it very clear that sanctification was central in the accomplishment of salvation. When Jesus actually accomplished salvation, he accomplished it with a specific purpose and that was to carry out the plan of the Father which was to make it possible for a people to be those who lived in righteousness.

This brings us, then, to the third reason why sanctification is important and why this doctrine should consume our time and our attention. Not only is it central to the plan of salvation, not only is it central to the accomplishment of salvation, but, thirdly, it is central to the application of salvation.

¹⁰ Ephesians 5:25.

¹¹ Ephesians 5:26.

¹² Ephesians 5:27.

¹³ 1 Peter 2:24.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Now we know that salvation was planned by God the Father. And we know that salvation was accomplished by God the Son. But when salvation is actually applied to particular people, what role does sanctification play in the application of that salvation to individual sinners? What role does it play when salvation comes to us?

Now we would expect that if it was central to God's plan and it was central to Christ's work, then it would be central in the sinner's salvation. And, indeed, it is.

If you look at 2 Thessalonians chapter two and verse 13, Paul is speaking here of the apostasy that is going to come under the influence of the antichrist. And he says in verse 13:

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”¹⁵

Now what we see in this passage is that the sanctifying work of the Spirit and the belief of the truth are inseparable realities. One cannot believe the truth without having been sanctified by the Spirit and he cannot believe and be sanctified by the Spirit without having from the beginning being chosen to salvation.

Verse 14 says, “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁶

And so one who has not experienced the sanctifying work of the Spirit has also not been one who has been elected and he has not been one who has believed the truth and he has not been one who has been the object of the effectual call because when salvation comes, it comes as a package. And we either get all of it or we get none of it.

And so those who have believed the truth also are those who experience the application of the sanctifying work of the Spirit. And we must never divorce those two realities.

This same relationship is found over in 1 Peter chapter one and verse two. We will begin reading in verse one.

It says, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”¹⁷

Now notice the description he gives of these folks. Now he calls them strangers not because he didn't know their names, but because they were strangers to this world. The Bible says that we as Christians are pilgrims and strangers in this world because our citizenship is in heaven. Ok? And so we are strangers to the ways of the world, to the

¹⁵ 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

¹⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:1.

thoughts of the world, to the values of the world, to the behaviors of the world. That is why he calls them strangers.

He says regarding these people that they are, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”¹⁸

Now what he is saying here is that when a person is sprinkled with the blood of Christ—and this is a figure of speech speaking of one who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ through his work of salvation—when one is sprinkled with the blood, he is also sanctified by the Spirit to the point of obedience. You see, it is through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ that these people experience as a result of their election.

And, once again, we see that it all comes as a package. And if we are not sanctified to the point of obedience, then we have not been sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ either, because you cannot have one without the other.

And when that salvation, when the salvation that God planned and Christ purchased is applied to the sinner, what was central to the plan and what was central to the purchase was also central to the application. And since what was central to the plan was sanctification and what was central to the purchase was sanctification, we would expect that when it is applied sanctification would be right there in the middle of belief and being washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. And, indeed, it is always right there.

So sanctification is an indispensable part of salvation. When salvation is applied, sanctification is always experienced and entered into by those who are saved. And you cannot have one without having the other.

And so someone who says, “I am saved,” but there is no sign of any sanctifying work of the Spirit in their lives, you may safely reject that profession of faith as being invalid.

Now the fourth reason why sanctification is important. Not only is it central to the plan of salvation and the accomplishment of salvation and the application of salvation, but, fourthly, it is central to the outworking of salvation. It is central to the outworking of salvation.

Now there are many things we could say with reference to this, but I want to only say two things and the first is this.

Sanctification is necessary if we are to have assurance of our salvation. Sanctification is necessary if we are to have the assurance of our salvation.

Now we have spent several weeks previously studying the doctrine of assurance and we have seen that it is obedience to Jesus Christ that is the thing which demonstrates that we

¹⁸ 1 Peter 1:2.

have genuine saving faith, that we have truly fulfilled the conditions of the universal promises that are offered to all sinners.

In Hebrews chapter 12 and in verse 14 we read that these people to whom the writer of the Hebrews is speaking, he tells them that they are to, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness [or sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord.”¹⁹

In other words, if there is no holiness, there will be no salvation.

Now this phrase, “See the Lord” means to see him with delight, with happiness, with joy, with acceptance from him.

Now every person is going to eventually see the Lord. That is, they will have him registered upon their eyeballs. Every knee will bow. Every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord and all will appear before the judgment seat. And so they will all see Christ in the sense of laying their eyes upon him. But what this passage is talking about is seeing him in terms of seeing him with delight. Like you say, “Well, I went and saw my mom and dad the other day.”

Well, you mean more than that you just laid your eyes on them. It means that you enjoyed their company and their fellowship. And that is the sense in which the word “see” is used here.

And what he is saying is that if we expect to see the Lord with delight and enjoyment and with acceptance, then there must be something which is resident in our lives and that is holiness.

Now the word “without” here refers back to holiness. It does not refer back to peace with all men because sometimes that is something that we cannot obtain because some men will not be peaceable with us. But he is saying here the holiness we must have is practical holiness just like the peace with all men should be a practical peace. And he is saying without this practical holiness in our lives, we will not see the Lord.

Jesus will say, “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you,” and they will be cast out of the sight of God forever. They will not see him throughout all eternity.

So if we are to have the assurance that we will see the Lord and be with him for all eternity, then we must have holiness of life.

The second passage we want to look at with reference to the fact that it is necessary for assurance is 1 John two verses three through four.

It says, “And hereby we do know that we know him...”²⁰

¹⁹ Hebrews 12:14.

²⁰ 1 John 2:3.

That is, we have a personal relationship with him. Remember I said the word “foreknowledge” the word “know” means to have a personal relationship with. Well, here is a very clear example of how the word “know” is used. It doesn’t mean to know about. It means to have a personal relationship with.

And hereby we do know that we [have a personal relationship with] him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him [I have a personal relationship with him. I am his child. I am embraced and accepted by him], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.²¹

In other words, what John is saying here is that if we are going to have the assurance that we have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then there must be in our lives this dominating characteristic of keeping his commandments.

Now keeping his commandments is nothing less than turning from sin and embracing obedience to Jesus Christ. And it is important for us to recognize, as the Old Testament says, that righteous and peace always kiss each other and you cannot have one without having the other. And if you want to have peace with God and you want to have peace of the assurance of your acceptance with him and your knowledge of him, then there must be this dominating characteristic of keeping his commandments which is righteousness.

And we know that sin is the transgression of his commandments and so the keeping of his commandments is the positive pursuit of holiness.

J C Ryle says in his book *Holiness*, he says, “He that follows Jesus most fully will follow him most comfortably.”

And how true that is. If we want to be comfortable in our assurance of salvation, then this matter of sanctification must be a matter that is of central importance to us because the thing that destroys our assurance, of course, is the lack of holiness and obedience to God.

But not only is sanctification central to the outworking of salvation in that it is necessary for assurance, secondly, sanctification is central to the outworking of salvation because it is necessary for service.

Now turn, please, if you will, to 2 Timothy chapter two, the book of 2 Timothy chapter two. Paul is giving instructions here to Timothy. He is warning him against these false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus whose “word [doth] eat as a canker”²² and “Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”²³

Now we want to begin reading at verse 19, 2 Timothy two and verse 19.

²¹ 1 John 2:3-4.

²² 2 Timothy 2:17.

²³ 2 Timothy 2:18.

He says, “Nevertheless...” In spite of the fact that these guys are out trying to destroy the faith of some and their doctrine is just like a cancer which is corroding the faith of some.

He says, “Nevertheless, in spite of that, the foundation of God stands sure.”

That is, false teachers can never destroy the foundation of truth.

“The foundation of God standeth sure.”²⁴

And those who are God’s stand sure.

“...having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.”²⁵

And so from a divine perspective, we will stand sure and certain in our profession of faith, in our walk with God from the divine perspective because God knows who are his and he will preserve them from the likes of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

But then the next phrase says “And...” Here is the second aspect of the foundation.

“Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”²⁶

And so from the divine perspective assurance is grounded upon the fact that the Lord knows those who are his and he will preserve them. But from the human perspective, how do I know that I am being preserved by God? Because I am departing from iniquity and that is how I know that I am standing sure and certain in him.

Now then, he goes on and says in verse 20:

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these...”²⁷

That is, from the iniquity of verse 19, the false teaching and practice of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

“If a man therefore purge himself from these [things], he shall be a vessel unto honour.”²⁸

Now notice.

²⁴ 2 Timothy 2:19.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ 2 Timothy 2:20-21.

²⁸ 2 Timothy 2:21.

“...sanctified, and [fit] for the master’s use.”²⁹

What is required of us to be fit for the master’s use? Well, the answer is that we must be a sanctified people. And in the absence of sanctification we will not and cannot be fit for the master’s use and we cannot and will not be prepared unto every good works and then he says, “Flee... youthful lusts,”³⁰ in the next verse, describing further those things that a man needs to purge himself from.

And the point that Paul is making is simply this. If we want to serve God and we want to be prepared unto every good work, then this matter of sanctification is not optional. We cannot serve God and be living in sin at the same time. It simply doesn’t work. And those who are all concerned about serving God and yet have no concern about their own personal holiness or self deceived people. We should be far more concerned about being righteous than we are about being useful. And business in the work of God is no excuse for sinfulness in our relationship with God.

And so the one must precede the other. And we must be more concerned about obeying God than we are about serving God because if we don’t obey him, we will never be fit to serve him.

We see how this works out in the area of prayer. It says in 1 Timothy two and verse eight:

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up [what?] holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”³¹

And what that means is that hands that are not defiled with sinful acts. We cannot serve God in the area of prayer without holiness.

And then in the area of worship, Psalm 29 and verse two says, “Worship the LORD [how?]in the beauty of holiness.”³²

It is in a context of holiness that our worship to God is acceptable to him. So we cannot pray without holiness. We cannot worship without holiness, nor can we witness without holiness.

Remember our Scripture reading earlier this evening in Romans chapter two where he says to the Jews:

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ 2 Timothy 2:22.

³¹ 1 Timothy 2:8.

³² Psalm 29:2.

abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.³³

And what he is saying here is: Look at it. If you don't have holiness of life, forget about witnessing for God, because if you go out and try and witness for God and your life is marked by contradictions to that witness, then all you are going to do is provoke more blasphemy against God as opposed to faith in God.

And so sanctification is necessary if we are going to serve God. We can't pray without it. We can't worship without it and we can't witness without it.

And so I think we see something of the importance of sanctification. If salvation is about anything, it is about salvation from sin. And if we claim to be saved, then pursuing separation from sin should be one of our chief concerns. And this is why Paul exhorts the Romans in chapter 13 verses 12 through 14.

He says:

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.³⁴

And so it should be the studied consideration of every believer who wants salvation and who has experienced salvation to recognize that sanctification is central to the plan of God. It is central to the accomplishment of our salvation by the work of Christ on the cross. It is central in the application of salvation and it is central in the outworking of salvation.

And if we are going to be experts about anything, we ought to be experts about this matter of holiness. You can debate all day long about your various eschatological themes, but if you are not a holy person then you are thwarting the very center and core of what that eschatology is all about.

And so let us be those who pursue holiness because without that no man shall see the Lord. With that a man or a woman or a boy or a girl will find that they are standing sure and certain in that category of people of whom the Lord knows that they are his.

Well, let us pray together.

³³ Romans 2:21-24.

³⁴ Romans 13:12-14.

Father, we being to recognize something of the weight and importance and centrality of this matter of sanctification. May it motivate us to be zealous and diligent in our pursuit of the matter. And as we study the various aspects of this doctrine in the days to come, we pray that you might guide us with your Spirit into truth, that you might open our eyes to our own condition and that your Spirit may draw us nearer into conformity to the image of your dear Son.

Father, we pray that this whole exercise might be a means of us putting on the armor of light, that it might be a means whereby we are changed from glory to glory even into the very image of your Son by the Spirit. And so, Father, we ask that the Spirit himself would be that great instrument of sanctification in our lives through a fuller understanding of the truth and a fuller implementation of it in our conduct and behavior. Father, we ask these things in the name of Christ our Savior who died to purify to himself a people. May we be that people. We pray it in his name.