

# The Doctrine of Sanctification 15. Its Securer

by A.W. Pink

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## Transcript

### The Doctrine of Sanctification

#### 15. Its Securer

The Christian has been sanctified by the triune Jehovah: infinite wisdom and fathomless grace so ordered it that he is indebted to each of the Eternal Three. The Lord God designed that all the Persons in the blessed Trinity should be honored in the making holy of His people, so that each of Them might be distinctively praised by us. First, the Father sanctified His people by an eternal decree, choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinating them unto the adoption of children. Second, the Son sanctified His people by procuring for them a perfect and inalienable standing before the Judge of all, the infinite merits of His finished work being reckoned to their account. Third, God the Spirit makes good the Father's decree and imparts to them what the work of Christ procured for them: the Spirit is the actual Securer of sanctification, applying it to their persons. Thus the believer has abundant cause to adore and glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is very remarkable to observe the perfect harmony there is between the different operations of the Eternal Three in connection with the making holy of the elect, and the threefold signification of the term "sanctification." In an earlier chapter we furnished proof that the word "to sanctify" has a threefold meaning, namely, to separate, to cleanse, to adorn. First, in Scripture a person or thing is said to be sanctified when it is consecrated or set apart from a common to a sacred use. So in the eternal decree of the Father, the elect were separated in the Divine mind from countless millions of our race which were to be created, and set apart for His own delight and glory. Second, where those persons and things are unclean, they must be purified, so as to fit them for God's pleasure and use. That was the specific work assigned to the Son: His precious blood has provided the means for our purification. Third, the persons or things sanctified need to be beautified and adorned for God's service: this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. It is also striking and blessed to note the relation and order of the several acts of the Holy Three in connection with our sanctification. The source of it is "the eternal purpose" or decree of God: "by the which will we are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10). The substance of it was brought forth by Christ when He fully accomplished God's will on our behalf: "that He might sanctify the people with His own blood" (Heb. 13:12). The securer of it is the Holy Spirit, who by His work of grace within applies to the individual the sanctification which the Church has in its Head: "being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:16). It is not until the Comforter takes up His abode in the heart that the Father's will begins to be actualized and the Son's "work" evidences its efficacy toward us. This glorious gift, then, is let down to us from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. If we consider the nature of Christ's work for His people and the perfection of their standing in Him before God, it could not for a moment be supposed

that this having been accomplished by the grace, wisdom, and power of God, that their state should be left unaffected—that their position should be so gloriously changed, yet their condition remain as sinful as ever; that they should be left in their sins to take comfort from their immunity to Divine wrath. The degradation, pollution, and utter ruin of our nature; our estrangement from God, spiritual death, and our whole heritage of woe are the immediate consequences of sin. And what would forgiveness, justification, and redemption in Christ mean, if deliverance from all those consequences did not directly and necessarily follow? Our being made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) would be but an empty name, if it does not imply and entail recovery from all that sin had forfeited and deliverance from all that sin had incurred. Thank God that, in the end (when we are glorified), will be perfectly effected. It is true that when Christ first seeks out His people He finds them entirely destitute of holiness, yea, of even desire after it; but He does not leave them in that awful state. No, such would neither honour Him nor fulfill the Father's will. Glorious as is the triumph of Divine grace in the justification of a sinner, through the work of Christ as Surety, yet even that must be regarded as a means to an end. See how this is brought out in every scriptural statement of the purpose of grace concerning the redeemed, or the design of the mission and sufferings of the Redeemer: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10); "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14); "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4); "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Since we are made the righteousness of God in Christ the result of this in the Christian, must, ultimately, correspond with that perfection. In other words, nothing short of perfect fellowship with the Father and with His Son can answer to His having died on account of our sins and risen again on account of our justification; and having risen, become the Head and Source of an entirely new life to all who believe on Him. The aim of the Father's love and of the Son's grace, was not only that we might have restored to us the life which we lost in Adam, but that we should have "life more abundantly;" that we should be brought back not merely to the position of servants—which was the status of unfallen Adam—but be given, the wondrous place of sons; that we should be fitted not simply for an earthly paradise, but for an eternity of joy in the immediate presence of God in Heaven. Now it is on the ground of what Christ did and earned for His people, and with a view to the realization of the Father's purpose of their glorification, that the Holy Spirit is given to the elect. And it makes much for His praise and for their peace that they obtain a clear and comprehensive view of His work within them; nor can that be secured by a hurried or superficial study of the subject. His operations are varied and manifold; yet all proceeding from one foundation and all advancing toward one grand end. That which we are now to consider is the "sanctification of the Spirit," an expression which is found both in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2. The connection in which the expression occurs in the two passages just mentioned, clearly intimates that the sanctification of the Spirit is an integral part of our salvation, that it is closely associated with our "belief of the truth," and that it precedes our practical obedience. John Owen's definition of the Spirit's sanctification, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is as follows, "Sanctification is an immediate work of the Spirit of God on the souls of believers, purifying and cleansing of their natures from the pollution and uncleanness of sin, renewing in them the image of God, and thereby enabling them from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace, to yield obedience unto God, according unto the tenor and terms of the new covenant, by virtue of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Or more briefly: it is the universal renovation of our natures by the Holy Spirit, into the image of God, through Jesus Christ." Full and clear though this definition be, we humbly conceive it is both inadequate and inaccurate: inadequate, because it leaves out several essential elements; inaccurate, because it

confounds the effects with the cause. Later, he says, "In the sanctification of believers the Holy Spirit doth work in them, in their whole souls—their minds, wills, and affections—a gracious, supernatural habit, principle, and disposition of living unto God, wherein the substance or essence, the life and being, of holiness doth consist." In an article thereon S. E. Pierce said, "Sanctification, or Gospel-holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, comprehends the whole work of the Spirit of God within and upon us, from our regeneration to our eternal glorification. It is the fruit and blessed consequence of His indwelling us, and the continued effect of spiritual regeneration, i.e., in begetting within us a nature suited to take in spiritual things, and be properly affected by them. Regeneration is the root and sanctification is the bud, blossom and fruit which it produces. In our regeneration by the Holy Spirit we are made alive to God, and this is manifested by our faith in Christ Jesus. Our lusts are mortified because we are quickened together with Christ. And what we style the sanctification of the Spirit, which follows after regeneration hath taken place within us, consists in drawing forth that spiritual life which is conveyed to our souls in our new birth, into acts and exercise on Christ and spiritual things, in quickening our graces, and in leading us to walk in the paths of holiness, by which proof is given that we are alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This, we believe is preferable to Owens, yet still leaving something to be desired. Exactly what is the sanctification of the Spirit? Personally, we very much doubt whether that question can be satisfactorily answered in a single sentence, for in framing one, account needs to be taken of the change which is produced in the believing sinner's relationship to God, his relationship to Christ as the Head of the Church, his relationship to the unregenerate, and his relationship to the Divine law. Positionally, our sanctification by the Spirit results from our being vitally united to Christ, for the moment we are livingly joined to Him, His holiness becomes ours, and our standing before God is the same as His. Relatively, our sanctification of the Spirit issues from our being renewed by Him, for the moment He quickens us we are set apart from those who are dead in sins. Personally, we are consecrated unto God by the Spirit's indwelling us, making our bodies His temples. Experimentally, our sanctification of the Spirit consists in the impartation to us of a principle ("Nature") of holiness, hereby we become conformed to the Divine law. Let us consider each of these viewpoints separately. Our union to Christ is the grand hinge on which everything turns. Divorced from Him, we have nothing spiritually. Describing our unregenerate condition, the apostle says, "at that time ye were without Christ," and being without Him, it necessarily follows "being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). But the moment the Holy Spirit makes us livingly one with Christ, all that He has becomes ours, we are then "joint-heirs with Him." Just as a woman obtains the right to share all that a man has once she is wedded to him, so a poor sinner becomes holy before God the moment he is vitally united to the Holy One. Everything which God requires from us, everything which is needed by us, is treasured up for us in Christ. By our union with Christ we receive a new and holy nature, whereby we are capacitated for holy living, which holy living is determined and regulated by our practical and experimental fellowship with Him. By virtue of our federal union with the first Adam we not only had imputed to us the guilt of his disobedience but we also received from him the sinful nature which has vitiated our souls, powerfully influencing all our faculties. In like manner, by virtue of our federal union with the last Adam, the elect not only have imputed to them the righteousness of His obedience, but they also receive from Him (by the Spirit) a holy nature, which renews all the faculties of their souls and powerfully affects their actions. Once we become united to the Vine, the life and holy virtue which is in Him flows into us, and brings forth spiritual fruit. Thus, the moment the Spirit unites us to Christ, we are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:2). It is axiomatic that those whom God separates unto Himself must be suited to Himself, that is, they must be holy. Equally clear is it from the Scriptures that, whatsoever God does He is determined that the crown of honour for it should rest upon the head of Christ, for He is the grand Center of all the Divine

counsels. Now both of these fundamental considerations are secured by God's making us partakers of His own holiness, through creating us anew in Christ Jesus. God will neither receive nor own any one who has the least taint of sin's defilement upon him, and it is only as we are made new creatures in Christ that we can fully measure up to the unalterable requirements of God. Our state must be holy as well as our standing; and as we showed in the last three chapters Christ Himself is our sanctification, so now we seek to point out that we are actually sanctified in Christ—personally and vitally. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:30)—"of Him" by the power and quickening operation of the Spirit. Christians are supernaturally and livingly incorporated with Christ. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10): that new creation is accomplished in our union with His person. This is our spiritual state: a "new man" has been "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24), and this we are exhorted to "put on" or make manifest. This is not at all a matter of progress or attainment, but is true of every Christian the moment he is born again. The terms "created in righteousness (our justification) and true holiness" (our sanctification) describe what the "new man" is in Christ. It is not simply something which we are to pursue though that is true, and is intimated in the "put ye on;" but it is what all Christians actually are: their sanctification in Christ is an accomplished fact: it is just because Christians are "saints" they are to lead saintly lives. The believer begins his Christian life by having been perfectly sanctified in Christ. Just as both our standing and state were radically affected by virtue of our union with the first Adam, so both our standing and state are completely changed by virtue of our union with the last Adam. As the believer has a perfect standing in holiness before God because of his federal union with Christ, so his state is perfect before God, because he is now vitally united to Christ: he is in Christ, and Christ is in him. By the regenerating operation of the Spirit we are "joined unto the Lord" (1 Cor. 6:17). The moment they were born again, all Christians were sanctified in Christ with a sanctification to which no growth in grace, no attainments in holy living, can add one iota. Their sanctification, like their justification, is "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10). Christ Himself is their life, and He becomes such by a personal union to Himself which nothing can dissolve. From the moment of his new birth every child of God is a "saint in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 1:7), one of the "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1); and it is just because they are such, they are called upon to live holy lives. O what cause we have to adore the grace, the wisdom, and the power of God! When one of God's elect is quickened into newness of life a great change is made relatively, that is, in connection with his relation to his fellowmen. Previously, he too was both in the world and of it, being numbered with the ungodly, and enjoying their fellowship. But at regeneration he is born unto a new family, even the living family of God, and henceforth his standing is no longer among those who are "without Christ:" "Who hath delivered us from the Power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Thus, when one is made alive in Christ by the Holy Spirit, he at once becomes separated from those who are dead in trespasses and sins and therefore this is another aspect of the "sanctification of the Spirit." This was typed out of old. When the Lord was revealed unto Abraham, the word to him was "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred" (Gen. 21:1). So again it was with Israel: no sooner were they delivered from the Angel of Death by the blood of the lamb, than they were required to leave Egypt behind them. Personally we are sanctified or consecrated unto God by the Spirit's indwelling us and making our bodies His temples. As He came upon Christ Himself ("without measure") so, in due time, He is given to each of His members: "ye have an Unction (the Spirit) from the Holy One"—Christ; "the Anointing (the Spirit) which ye have received of Him (Christ) abideth in you" (1 John 2:20, 27)—it is from this very fact we receive our name, for "Christian" means "an anointed one," the term being taken from the type in Psalm 133:2. It is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which constitutes a believer a holy person. That which made Canaan the "holy" land, Jerusalem the "holy" city, the temple the "holy" place, was the presence and appearing of the Holy One there! And that which makes any man "holy" is the perpetual

abiding of the Spirit within him. Needless to say, His indwelling of us necessarily produces fruits of holiness in heart and life—this will come before us in the sequel. Amazing, blessed, and glorious fact, the Holy Spirit indwells the regenerate so that their bodies become the temples of the living God. "The Holy Spirit descends on them and enters within them, in consequence of their union with Christ. He comes from Heaven to make known this union between Christ and them. He is the Divine Manifester of it. He dwells in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He abides with us as our Divine Comforter, and will be our Guide even unto death, and continue His life-giving influences in us and dwell in us, filling us with all the fulness of God in Heaven for ever" (S. E. Pierce). This indwelling of the Spirit is, in the order of God, subsequent to and in consequence of our being sanctified by the blood of Jesus; for it is obvious that God could not "dwell" in those who were standing under the imputation of their guilt. The Holy Spirit, therefore, from the very fact of making our bodies His temples, attests and evidences the completeness and perpetuity of the sanctification which is ours by the sacrifice of Christ. He comes to us not to procure blessings which Christ hath already purchased for us, but to make them known to us: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). He comes to sustain those in whom the life of Christ now is.

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