

Sanctification Three Ways

by David Guzik

David Guzik teaches on the three aspects of sanctification: positional, decisive, and progressive, highlighting God's threefold solution to the problem of sin.

Duration: 45:00

Scripture: Genesis 32:6, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Sin Redemption", "Christian Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the problem of sin as the root issue of the human race. He introduces a three-fold solution to this problem: justification, sanctification, and glorification. The speaker emphasizes the importance of using theological words like justification and explains its meaning as being delivered from the guilt of sin through faith in Jesus Christ. He also highlights the need for Christians to have a decisive dedication in their Christian life, using the example of Jacob's encounter with Esau in the Old Testament. The sermon emphasizes the reality of sin in people's lives and the need for redemption through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

There is really no mystery as to what's wrong with the human race. It's a three-letter word and the middle word is, the middle letter in that word is I. Sin is really the problem, isn't it? You see this marriage over there and it's broken up. Why is it broken up? It's broken up because of sin.

You see a personal relationship that's fractured. Why has it fractured? It's because of sin. I'll say this, you see a business that's going under and I won't say in every case, but oftentimes it's because of sin.

It's because someone has failed to obey biblical principles and to honor God in that business. And of course, I could go on and on and on. Sin is really the root problem of the human race.

Well, God has a threefold solution for the problem of sin. And the threefold solution we could categorize in these three words, number one, justification, number two, sanctification, and number three, glorification. Now, I know that those might sound like big words to you, and they're typically not words that we use in everyday speaking.

So I want to take a little bit of time and explain them. By the way, I am not personally of the opinion that we should throw out good theological words. I mean, stop using them just because people are unfamiliar with

them.

I think that we should continue to use them, but explain them. I think justification is an important word. It's a biblical word.

And so I'm not going to stop using it just because people are unfamiliar with it. I want to explain it to you. Now, the whole principle of justification is simply this justification delivers the believer, the one who puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

It delivers them from the guilt of sin. We know very plainly that the Bible tells us that we are guilty sinners before God. It's as if we're before the courtroom of God.

And there we stand before God as the majestic judge. And our charges, our crimes are read out before God. And we're guilty, guilty, guilty.

I touched on that in this morning's message, but, you know, it's true. No matter what your harshest critic says about you, you know, in your heart that you're really worse than what they even say, right? That's no mystery. You know it very well.

There's darkness and sin and secret sin and hidden sin and sin of the mind and sin of the heart that's within your life. That's worse than probably whatever your harshest critic says of you. Well, God sees it all.

We're guilty, guilty, guilty before God. And God loves us so much that he arranged a way to deliver the believer from the guilt of sin. And we call that justification when the believer puts their faith in Jesus Christ and is born again.

They're justified. They are set in a place not just of not guilty. But they are pronounced righteous.

You know, if you think of it in the terms of a ledger of bookkeeping, we are in debt to God. We're in the debit column, correct? Now, justification doesn't just bring us up to zero. Doesn't just clear our debts before God.

Justification clears our debts before God. And then it puts, if you will, credit into our account. We're justified by the great work of God.

This delivers the believer from the guilt of sin. Now, the third step in the process. Don't worry, I didn't forget the second.

I'm saving it for last. The first step is justification. The third step is glorification.

Glorification is when we are resurrected and completely transformed. The Bible tells us that these bodies will be transformed and will be resurrected and brought to new life before God in heaven. And we know that the great thing about heaven is that glorification delivers the believer from the presence of sin.

Now, sometimes we long for that deliverance right now. God, can't you make it to where I just don't sin anymore and there's no more sin and I'm not. But God, that's in God's plan for you.

Just not now in heaven. That's down the road. There will come that day when you will no longer be tempted.

Isn't that glorious to think about that? No more temptation in heaven, no more solicitation to sin or to evil, no more world, no more flesh, no more devil. All of those classic enemies, they're gone. Everything is poured into the glory and the radiance and the wonder of Jesus Christ.

That's glorification. You know, this principle of sin that's within my flesh that that I have to battle, it's gone utterly redeemed. So we have justification.

Number three, we have glorification. And in between the two, we're safe from the guilt of sin, from the presence of sin in between the two is sanctification, where we are delivered from the power of sin. You see, sin has a power, has a grip that it wants to hold over us.

You're familiar with this in your own life, right? Sin has a spiritual power that wants this whole wants to hold us in slavery unto itself. So we're not we're not free. And God wants to deliver us from the power of sin.

And that process is called sanctification. The idea behind sanctification is being set apart. Justified is being set right in God's court of law.

Glorification is being glorified. Sanctification has the idea of being set apart. You know, once you lived under the power of sin, now you're set apart and you live unto the glory of Jesus Christ and under his power.

Now, what's interesting about this is that for the most part, and I'm oversimplifying greatly, but for the most part, justification and glorification are largely agreed upon by Christians. There's common ground. You know, well, justification, we all understand glorification.

OK, we're in a common ground, but you should know that there is a great difference of opinion surrounding the matter of sanctification about the believer being set apart to God. Now, we use many terms for this idea of sanctification, the idea of holiness. Holiness is just another way of saying set apart.

You know, have you ever heard? Christians should be holy. It's another way of saying Christians should be sanctified, should be set apart to God. Have you ever heard the idea that Christians should be consecrated? I love that word.

That's a good word. That means set apart and anointed for special service. Christians should be sanctified.

They should be holy. They should be consecrated. And essentially, you're saying the same thing when you use those three terms.

So I want you to understand that this idea of sanctification is pretty broad. It covers Christian growth and maturity and holiness and consecration unto the Lord. Now, this is where the difference of opinion is.

Some people think that we are sanctified, that is made holy as soon as we are saved. Their idea is when you're born again, you're set apart to God. You know, he calls you a saint.

He makes you holy. You're sanctified when you're saved. Other people say that we are sanctified, that is made holy at a point of decision after salvation.

In other words, there's a point where you come and say, I need to surrender it all to God. I need to come to a place of real sanctification and surrender to God. And that's how sanctification comes from a point of decision.

And then other people say that we are sanctified, that is made holy in a process that begins when we are saved, but continues gradually until the rest of our Christian life. Well, when you talk about these three things, you say, well, are we sanctified when we're saved? Are we sanctified at a point of decision? Are we sanctified in a process? The answer to that question is yes, the Bible speaks of all three. And that's why I want to speak to you tonight about sanctification three times over.

Now, you may know that I've been reading a lot of the books and works of a gentleman named J. Edwin Orr, and I heard very fondly read in a book about an incident in his life in 1949. He had graduated from Oxford University. He got his Ph.D. there.

He wrote a great thesis on the Second Great Awakening, the Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain. And he had come back to the United States and he was doing ministry, especially campus ministry at that time. God had really opened up doors for him to preach among students, college students.

Well, he went to Minneapolis in 1949 and was being really used of God in a wonderful way. And during his time in that study, he was asked by a gentleman named Dr. Paul Rees, who was a prominent pastor in Minneapolis, the pastor of the First Covenant Church of Minneapolis. And Dr. Rees organized a series of meetings that would invite the whole Christian community in Minneapolis.

He didn't just want it to be for his own church, and he worked very hard to get participation from many different churches. So the people who came to this series of meeting that J. Edwin Orr taught at were Christians of all different backgrounds, from all different theological opinions. Well, one evening, just as Dr. Orr was about to leave the pastor's study, Pastor Rees asked him, what are you going to speak on this evening? It's always good to know what your guest speaker wants to speak on.

And J. Edwin Orr responded, I am going to speak on sanctification. And it's the first time that I've ever spoken on this topic. Well, Dr. Rees was a bit concerned, I wouldn't say alarmed, but he was a bit concerned because he warned J. Edwin Orr that you're speaking to a very mixed group here.

And generally speaking, Baptists don't have the same idea of sanctification as Lutherans, as do Methodists, as do Presbyterians. And you're looking at a church that has all of them here tonight, and we're just trying to get the Christian community together here for a nice series of meetings, and it's all going to blow up on our face because you want to talk about sanctification. He was absolutely convinced that it would be impossible for Edwin Orr to speak on this topic without offending somebody or most everybody.

Now, his biographer says that because J. Edwin Orr was Irish, maybe he means he had a bit of a stubborn streak in him and a combative streak. He insisted on going forth and he spoke that evening for an hour and a half on the subject of sanctification. Afterwards, after the meeting was over, the first guy to come up to him was a Methodist minister in town.

And he said to J. Edwin Orr, praise the Lord. You are the first Baptist preacher because J. Edwin Orr, he was really a man spanning denominations, but he was an ordained Baptist minister. He said, praise the Lord.

You're the first Baptist preacher I ever heard who seemed to grasp the truth of sanctification. Not long after him, a Presbyterian minister came up and shook J. Edwin Orr's hand and he said, congratulations, that was a sane, balanced exposition of the real truth. I wonder how your Methodist friend took it, though.

Then a Lutheran pastor came up to him and he said, well, you surprised me. That was sanctification according to the teaching of the Lutheran saints. And then finally, a Baptist preacher evangelist waited in line to say this to J. Edwin Orr.

That's right, brother. Never be afraid to give the good old Baptist doctrine to the mixed multitude. Isn't that remarkable that when you understand that it's really not so much that the different approaches to sanctification, none of them are really wrong, but they don't exclude one another.

Most encouraging of all to J. Edwin Orr that evening was that there was a large number of people, especially young people who stayed behind to seek prayer and counsel about surrendering their lives fully and decisively to God. J. Edwin Orr later that year in 1949 gave a series of messages at the Forest Home Conference Center, and he gave this same series of talks at the conference and his messages on sanctification and full surrender had a dramatic and lasting impact on the people there at that conference, especially on one of his fellow speakers at the conference. And the fellow speaker was Billy Graham.

This is what Billy Graham said about Orr's teaching on this. He said the messages Dr. Orr gave as one of the other speakers were of tremendous blessing in my own life. His logical development of the whole subject of full surrender and the outpouring of the spirit stirred the entire conference evening by evening.

Well, I want to speak to a little bit about this idea of sanctification and organize it around these three points about sanctification of being in three aspects. The first idea is that sanctification is positional. We are sanctified as a position in Jesus Christ.

The second aspect is that sanctification is something that is decisive. It's made as a decision. And the third aspect is that sanctification is something that is progressive, that it happens progressively in the Christian life.

Let me speak to you first about positional sanctification. And I'd like you to turn to First Corinthians, chapter one, verse two. That's First Corinthians, chapter one, verse two.

To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus called saints. With all who in every place call on the name of the Lord, Jesus of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. Now, you probably know something from previous Bible studies.

You probably know something about the character of the Corinthian church. This was a church that had a lot of problems. This was a church that was divided on its members.

They like to make groups or, you know, camps, so to speak, within the church who rallied around different individuals. You know, some would say, well, you know, I'm really a follower of the Apostle Paul. And another would say, well, you know, I'm a follower of the of the Apostle Peter.

Another would say, well, I'm a follower of Apollos. And then there was another group who really thought that they were really better than everybody. Well, I'm a follower of Jesus.

And, you know, you had this kind of battling back and forth. You had such shameful conduct when they would get together to celebrate the Lord's supper that the people who got there first would drink alcohol excessively and get drunk and eat all the food. So the latecomers, not only did they have to deal with the obnoxious behavior of their drunk brothers and sisters, there wasn't anything for them to eat.

They had people shouting out and saying crazy things in church services. The church at Corinth had a problem with really uppity women in their midst. They were very confused about the matters of marriage and sexuality.

They thought that it was more holy to abstain from sexual relations, even if you were married. And of course, they had the problem with sexual immorality in their midst, where there was a man who appeared to be a living with his stepmother in the church there and nobody had the guts to say anything about it, to say, this is sin and it should be stopped. Instead, they sort of dislocated their elbows, patting themselves on the back for how loving they were.

It was a church full of problems. Yet, Paul says in verse 2 of 1 Corinthians 1, he says, the church of God, which is at Corinth to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Now, this shows us that in one respect, sanctification is positional.

We are sanctified as soon as we put our trust in Jesus Christ and are converted because we are now found in Christ. And is Jesus sanctified? Is Jesus holy? You better believe it. So if Jesus is holy and Jesus is sanctified, if I am in him, there's definitely a sense where positionally I am sanctified.

In this sense, sanctification and holiness is the property of every believer. Now, one of the things that I like about this topic, when J.N. Winore would teach on it, was he talked about each one of these positions being identified with one of three great Johns in church history. I don't mean restrooms.

I mean people with the first name of John. And the first one is a gentleman that you may not have heard of. His name was John Darby.

He was a very famous and influential preacher in the 19th century. He was a great Plymouth brethren leader, and he really championed this view of positional sanctification. Listen, you are sanctified if you're a believer, you are a set apart believer, and that's it.

That's your sanctification. Now, the potential problem with the idea of overemphasizing positional sanctification is that if we overemphasize it, it leads to the thinking, listen, it doesn't matter how I live because I'm already holy and sanctified. You know, I guess there's just going to be sin in my life to the end anyway.

So I'll just be satisfied with being in a position of sanctification. Well, look how bad the Corinthians were and they were still saying, well, I'm sanctified. No biggie.

Now, that isn't what Darby taught at all, but that is the danger of an exaggeration of the position along the lines that John Darby taught. If you overemphasize positional sanctification to the neglect of the other aspects of it, you can end up in a lot of trouble. So the second phase or dimension, we should say, perhaps, to sanctification is what we might call decisive sanctification.

Look at Romans chapter 12, verse 1. I hope this is familiar ground to you because this is one of the most wonderful passages in the entire Bible. Romans chapter 12, verse 1. And look at what Paul says. He says,

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Now, there's a couple of important phrases here. First of all, Paul implores us to do this in light of the mercies that we've already received. In other words, we don't do this to gain mercies from God.

You don't sanctify or surrender yourself to God so that he'll love you more. You do it out of surrender unto him, out of gratitude and joy for mercies already received. The other thing I want you to see is that Paul begs them to do it.

I beseech you as I'm begging you present your bodies. Now, again, that phrase there is very important that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. The verb tense of this phrase present your bodies, the verb for present there is peristae in the ancient Greek language.

The verb tense of that word speaks very plainly, plainly, and I'm quoting a great commentator in this, Leon Morris. He says the aorist infinitive points to a decisive action. In other words, Paul is saying by the mercies of God, that with a decisive action, you present your bodies a living sacrifice.

I hope I don't burst any bubbles when I say this. But Romans 12 one really doesn't have the idea of waking up every morning and dedicating yourself to God. I'm not trying to say that that's a bad thing.

I'm just trying to say that's not what Paul is communicating here. What Paul is communicating here is a decisive action, a point of decision. Where you say, I am going to dedicate myself to God fully and I will surrender to him completely.

And he says, present your bodies. It doesn't mean that God is interested in our bodies and not in our souls or not in our spirits. The idea is that your soul or your spirit, it's living in here.

So when you present your body, you're presenting the whole package. It's the complete self. And it means that we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, as a decisive dedication of the entire personality.

It isn't really speaking in this verse of a gradual or of a daily thing. Now, if you make a decisive dedication, you only need to do it again. If you move from that place of decision.

You know, I have decided to wholly and completely give my life to Jesus Christ, to surrender to him fully. It's whatever you want, Lord, everything. Now, if you've made that kind of surrender, you don't need to make that surrender again unless you move from that place of decision.

And let me make this very plain to you. The kind of dedication, the kind of sanctification that's spoken about in Romans 12. One is complete to say, I'll surrender this, but I'll keep that is not decisive dedication.

I want to understand there are many Christians, many, many Christians who have never come to a place of decisive dedication in their Christian life. To me, there's a great illustration of this in the pages of the Old Testament. You remember when Jacob was going back to the promised land after his years living with Laban and Jacob decided that he would come and come back to the promised land and he knew he was going to meet his brother Esau.

The last words that he ever heard from his brother Esau were the next time I see you, I will kill you. And Jacob had heard nothing from Esau for many, many years. Now, Jacob is bringing a huge tribe of people back to the promised land and he gets report from advanced scouts that he sent ahead and the advanced

scouts bring back the report.

Esau is coming to meet you and he has a large army with him. Well, that frightened Jacob to no end. And Jacob decided that he would send some gifts before Esau.

And so first he sends a bunch of camels. I may have the order mixed up here, but you get the idea. Then he sends a bunch of sheep.

Then he sends a bunch of oxen and then he sends a bunch of, I don't know, cattle, whatever it would be. And I think what's interesting about this is that's very a very accurate illustration of the way that we often surrender to God. God, I'm in some kind of problem.

Lord, I just I just want to get right with you. I surrender, Lord. I surrender all the camels.

And if that's not enough, well, then I'll surrender all the lambs. OK, Lord, if that's not enough, then I'll surrender all the you get the idea, right? You don't wholeheartedly surrender to God. You surrender just kind of whatever you think you need to to get out of the jam that you're in.

And let me tell you, this business of complete surrender to God is radical. We can't dance around this. Complete surrender to God means if God calls you to sell everything and go to the mission field, you do it because you've surrendered all right.

That's a nonissue. If God calls you to, you know, get rid of everything and go and live in poverty so that you can go through ministry training and then, you know, go forth in ministry, you'll do it because that's what God has told you to do. If God tells you to empty out your IRA and give it to somebody else, you do it because you've surrendered it all to God.

If God tells you to give up this habit, you know, whatever habits you see in your life, you just live and say, look, if it's not of God, I have to get rid of it, period. That's all there is to it. You've got to admit, this is a place of decisive surrender that, honestly speaking, and I hope I'm not sounding judgmental, I'm just trying to be factual here, that, honestly speaking, many Christians have not come to.

They're just not there, honestly. You know, it's just kind of in the mentality, and I know this sounds harsh, and I don't want it to come off as harsh. I'm really just striving for accuracy more than harshness.

But since this is such a heavy topic, it tends to come off as harsh. But the idea is pretty much, OK, well, how little can I give God and make him happy? How little can I surrender unto him and, you know, and he'll love me and bless me? Instead of just saying, Lord, it's all, everything, everything I have, everything I am, it's yours. Now, how much do you have to surrender to God to be completely surrendered? Because this is the fact.

You could say that in an absolutely objective sense, there's not a single completely surrendered life to God, right? And this troubles many. Well, how can I completely surrender? I've been, I guess if I can't completely surrender, then what's the deal? Everybody has their sin. What's it? No, no, this is the thing.

How much do you surrender to God? Everything that you know. The degree of surrender is determined by the degree of light that you have. Now, let me put it to you this way, the 10-year-old boy who comes to Christ, he doesn't even like girls yet.

He doesn't have to surrender his sexual impulse unto Jesus Christ. It's a non-issue for him at that age. But later on in his teens, he has that experience in his life and, you know, begins to grow with it and he has to surrender that.

And then the man, you know, listen, greed, materialism, the guy doesn't have two nickels to rub together. This isn't something he really has to surrender to God, but he begins to become successful in his career and starts to amass some things. And now this is an issue.

Then he has to deal with that issue of surrender. So do you get what I'm saying? Is that it's a matter of you surrender all that you know. And when God shines more light, then you carry out that previous decisive decision and you surrender more.

You just surrender according to the light that you have. Now, I want to suggest to you, according to Romans 12, one, that this is something that Paul already experienced. Paul was not shy about saying we in referring to things of the Christian life.

Right. But look at what he says in chapter 12, verse one, that you present that you present your body's a living sacrifice. He didn't say that we present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Paul is writing from the perspective of saying, I'm not perfected. Paul would never say that he's perfected. They said, I've done this.

I come to this place where everything that I am and everything I have has been surrendered to God. And I'm just living this kind of life. And I want you to live it as well.

Now, if John Darby was the great champion of positional sanctification, then John Wesley was the great champion of decisive sanctification. He was a very well-known advocate of this view. And the idea was that it's important to come to a place in your Christian life, a point of decision where you surrender all and yield all to God.

Now, people might say, can't that happen at conversion? Can't that happen when you're born again? I would say that it's certainly possible, but just in the way that it works out in the Christian experience of most people, it just doesn't happen that way. It's too new. It's too wonderful.

Everything's too. I mean, you see a common pattern in Christian life where a person first comes to Jesus Christ and they're just their their their initial experience with the Lord is so wonderful. And then this glorious, just the flush of first love.

And it's great. But over time, you know, that sort of backs down a little bit. And maybe there's even a little bit of backing off and downgrading.

And then they sort of come to a place of greater perspective and perhaps even maturity in their Christian life where they have to say, all right, am I really going to do this or not? You know, I mean, I've lived this great, glorious flush of Christian experience. I know what it's like to not live for Jesus. Now it's kind of before me.

Which way am I going to go? I can't live in this half land anymore. I've either got to go full on for Jesus Christ and fully surrender or I need to give up on this and turn my back on it. That's just practically the way that it works out for almost every Christian I know.

I know it worked out that way for me in my life. Now, there's a potential problem with the idea of decisive sanctification, and the potential problem is that if you overemphasize the idea of decisive sanctification, it can lead to the thinking of, hey, I'm sinlessly perfect. I've arrived.

I'm fully surrendered. I don't sin anymore. Do you know, there's people who actually have said that in church history, that they've had this second blessing, this great experience, this great experience of sanctification or surrender, and they just don't sin anymore.

And that's exactly what some of the theological followers of John Wesley have taught, that you can come to this place, really a virtually sinless perfection. And and that's, you know, that's obviously wrong. That's obviously unscriptural, but it's a potential problem with an overemphasis of the view of decisive sanctification.

Now, the third aspect that we want to bring up is what we might call progressive sanctification. We talk about positional sanctification, decisive sanctification and then progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification, I think, is described very well in Romans chapter 12, verse two.

Look at it right there. He says, and do not be conformed. In other words, after you've come to this place of decision, how do you go on from there? Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

And the idea there is of a continual process that you may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. This continual transformation by the renewing of your mind is what we might call progressive sanctification. It doesn't happen in a once for all experience, but it starts and continues on through the Christian life.

The idea is simply this, that real sanctification, that holiness, consecration, full surrender, you might say. It's a decision with view to a development. Yes, it must have a critical decision that comes to the place where with eyes wide open, you say, I surrender all, but then it moves into a process, a development.

It's decision that moves into development. This was the approach emphasized by John Calvin, that sanctification is a process that continues on through the Christian life. Now, there's a potential problem with this.

If you overemphasize this particular aspect of sanctification and the potential problem is simply this, if it's overemphasized, it leads to the thinking I don't need ever to make a point of decision. I'm just rolling along since I was saved and I'll continue to roll along in some way or another. It's just kind of automatic.

I'm saved. I'm Christian. I'm still a Christian.

I must be getting more and more sanctified. No, no, no. It doesn't necessarily work like that.

And that's why in Romans 12, 1, Paul plainly and boldly calls believers to a point of decision. And then he describes the continual development of it in Romans 12, 2. So, friends, you get the picture here. Three ideas of sanctification.

Positional sanctification, decisive sanctification, progressive sanctification. Or let me put other words to it. I just want you to hear these words.

Positional holiness, decisive holiness and progressive holiness. I'll throw the other term in there again, just so you can hear it with your own ears. Positional consecration, decisive consecration and progressive consecration.

Let me read you a quote from Jade Lenore. He says, The lives of saintly people seem to show that there was indeed a first time when they consciously yielded their all to God. And that yieldedness was renewed from time to time.

Obviously, they experienced both crisis or decision and process. I have to say that in my life, that's been a critical time. I remember as a young man within the first year or so of my Christian life, a radical, you might call it an I surrender all experience with God.

And God built upon that. And there's been times when God has very much had to radically bring me back to that place. Not as if it never happened.

But, you know, I think that I had just sort of drifted from that place of real decision and dedication. And you need to come back to it, but then to progress upon that. Now, let me make a few points here just to conclude with.

Number one, all three phases of sanctification are essential, especially for Christian service. Do you want to serve the Lord? You will only find your greatest effectiveness by understanding, implying all three aspects of sanctification. Of course, understanding your positional sanctification, but then coming to a place of decisive sanctification where you say, I just surrender it all.

Everything. It's all yours. Everything I have, every habit, every thought.

I just want to give it all to you, God, with no reserve. Whatever you tell me to do, I'll do it. There's nothing you can't tell me to do that I won't do because you you're in charge of my life.

Again, from Jay Edmonor, he says the tragedy today is that Christians insist on attempting to serve God in their own way instead of in the appointed way. The experience of the writer was bitter failure time and time again through trying to work for God in his own strength. You see, that's the real glory of sanctification.

The glory of sanctification, of holiness, of consecration is seen in what we are separated unto. Now, take a person who feels that God has called them to go work in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which I don't know is one community, probably among many in South America that I've had some pretty bad slums, just the slums of any vast inner city. That person feels called, they feel separated unto this work.

Well, let me ask you a question. There doesn't sound to be anything glorious in that, right? I am consecrated, I am separated unto the slums. Well, good for you.

It sounds like a big loser to me. But listen, there's an entirely different flavor when you understand that, no, I am separated. I am set apart unto Jesus Christ.

That's glorious. That's the prize. And Jesus wants me to go to the slums.

OK, you see, there's an entirely different perspective. And when you realize and when you fully grab a hold of what you're consecrated unto, what you're separated unto, what you're called out unto, it's the Lord God himself. And might I say, that's what's going to be fulfilled in heaven.

In heaven, you are going to be totally separated unto God. All the distractions, all the things in this world that keep you from God are all going to be done away with in heaven. Now, what's funny is that there's a lot of Christians who anticipate going to heaven and fully plan on being there, but they don't seem to live like they would like heaven very much right now.

Because they fill their lives with all these things that are going to have no place in heaven whatsoever. None. You know, and you would look at their life and if you looked objectively, you'd go, man, I can't see that you want to go to heaven at all.

You know, it's funny, if you really wanted to go live in another country, if I wanted to go live in Sweden and really felt a passion to go do that. Well, you know, I would be really busy right now learning Swedish. I'd be busy on the Internet, you know, looking up the news from Sweden.

I'd be, you know, just developing an interest and developing character and all those things. And and whatever personal habits I might have that wouldn't really be, you know, Swedes have a certain way that they eat at the table, which is common to many Europeans. And it's kind of different than than Americans.

You know, Americans kind of tend to shovel their food in. Europeans, they kind of tend to eat a little bit differently. It's a little more dignified and proper and all that.

So, you know, you say, well, I want to develop those habits because this is where I'm going. I want to do it. Well, isn't it funny that oftentimes we want to go to heaven, but we don't develop any of the habits, any of the thinking, any of the mindset, any of the language that's compatible with heaven.

How much do you really want to be there? You see, that's the glory of sanctification, understanding what you're separated unto. Sanctification of holiness often gets a really bad rap as if it's a negative thing. Think of an angry man with a craggy face, shaking a bony finger in your face.

You better be holy, young man. No, no, no, no, no. It's a very positive thing because we are separated unto the glorious love and grace and mercy and goodness of our God.

And that's worth it. That's what makes it worth it to say, oh, I surrender everything. I give up everything for the glory of this.

So here's the challenge. First of all, are you saved? Are you in a position of sanctification? If you're not, then I implore you, I would dare command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come to faith in Jesus Christ tonight. To not leave here without believing on Jesus and getting forgiveness for your sins and yielding your life to him for conversion, to be converted and transformed by him.

I want you to know that you are commanded to believe. And if you will not decide for Jesus, then realize you are making another decision. Then right now, why don't you come out, out and out for it? I think some evening we'll do this or some Sunday morning.

We'll have an altar call, not for people to come forward to receive Christ, but you come forward if you want to reject Jesus Christ. Come on, you're making a decision. Let's just be upfront about it.

Be a man about it. Be a woman about it. Show some integrity here.

Why don't you just come forward right now and stand before everybody and say, I've heard the appeal. I've heard the gracious offer of God's love. I've heard about what Jesus Christ did for me on the cross.

I've heard it all. I don't want it. I will go my own way.

Well, then we could respect you. It's a very honorable, but yet very stupid man or woman. But you're coming to a great place of decision, aren't you? Secondly, the first question is, are you saved? Are you in a position of sanctification? Secondly, are you fully surrendered? Have you made a decision of sanctification? And might I say, when we consider all that is involved in this idea of a full decision of sanctification, it's a heavy thing.

I think we generally tend to think that it's much lighter than it is. We realize, look, I belong to Jesus. Everything I have, everything I am is his.

You know, when Paul wrote those great words in Philippians to live is Christ to die is a game that's full surrender, right? What can you do to a man like that? Take away all his possessions, take away his computers, his books, his surfboards, all the rest of it. So what? Because he doesn't say to live, his computers, to live, his surfboards, to live his books, to live as Christ. You can't take that away from me.

He says, that's where my life is. And I think it's something that the church as a whole needs to be awakened to. And then third, to ask yourself, are you growing in holiness? Are you in the process of sanctification? It's a position, it's a decision, it's a process.

God wants all three of these things to be alive in our life tonight. Father, our prayer is that you would make this real to us. Lord, we don't want it to be just ink on a page or words in a church.

It has to pierce through to our heart. And Lord, some of us, honestly, we have a vague desire to be fully surrendered to you. We seem to have very little grasp to know how or why or what to do with that, how to go about it.

Lord, I just pray that you would speak to our hearts about what we have to do, what we have to yield, what dream we have to yield before you, what hope, what fear, what possession. Show us what's involved in each individual life to come to you in full surrender, in a decisive act of sanctification. And then, Lord, help us to progress along the way.

I pray this, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.

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