

The Pattern of Sanctification Part 1

by John Murray

The sermon explores the pattern of sanctification, emphasizing the call to holiness as a reflection of God's character and the example of Christ.

Duration: 52:02

Scripture: Matthew 20:26

Topics: "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the lessons and good things found in daily scripture readings. The main focus is on the concept of not conforming to the ways of the world, but instead being transformed by the renewal of one's mind according to the will of God. The speaker references Romans 12:2, which urges believers to not be conformed to the age they live in, but to seek the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. The sermon also highlights the example of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, and encourages listeners to follow his example of humble service to others.

Transcript

O blessed and gracious God, may we ever have the vision of holiness, of thy perfection, complacent with reference to it. May we look not on things which are as a prize, but praise thee for thy reliance. God's working, and the more assured we are that God works in us, the more diligent and persevering are we in our work.

The fruitful and acceptable service of God responds to our servitude, respecting the supply of his most efficient goods. Well, that's all then. We do not take account, quietly, in any case, there are no oscillations, and the seriousness, more than the question, with that to which the sanctified, the norm, after sanctification, the definitive act, the norm, is that God himself, on occasion, is concerned with holiness.

The Old Testament, as well as the New, lays emphasis over two passages in the Pentateuch. Verses 11, 44 and 45. For I am the Lord your God, sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy.

For I am holy. I am the Lord that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. Nothing could be... The reason why sanctification has respect to holiness, that God himself is holy. And you remember how Peter takes up that refrain of the Old Testament, when he says, he writes, as he who was called, he was holy.

So be ye holy, in all manner of life, because it is written, ye be holy, for I am holy. First Peter 1, 15 and 16. How he attaches this demand for sanctification to that principle so clearly set forth in the Old Testament.

Be holy, for I, our Lord himself, enunciated the same principle. Matthew 5, 48. Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

If not, how that principle is introduced by our Lord. It is introduced in order to enforce a concrete, practical duty. In the context, as you remember, the disciples are being exhorted to bestow loving kindness upon their enemies.

The reason is that God himself is kind and thankful. So the reason is simple. They are to be kind because their heavenly Father is kind.

The sons of their Father, who is in heaven, the sons of the family of our Semitic family, are to follow the character of him who is their Father, by adoption. And there you have a concrete example of what is involved in being perfect, as God is perfect. Abstract, something so transcendent that it escapes our understanding and our application.

It is down to earth. When we are thinking of the norm of sanctification, we are properly concerned with the law of God as the criterion of right and wrong. The law of God as the criterion.

Likewise, we are concerned with the revealed will of God as the norm of what is well-pleasing to God. We are concerned with conformity to the image of Christ because that is the supreme, practical, exemplification of what holiness means in our practical life. But when we are thinking of these various criteria, the law of God, the revealed will of God, the example of Christ, there is something more basic that underlies all these aspects, gives them validity and sanction.

Namely, that likeness to God is the ultimate pattern of sanctification. And the reason why that must be the ultimate pattern is that man is made in the image of God and nothing less than the image of God or the likeness of God can define the restoration which redemption contemplates. You see how this is illustrated in definitive sanctification.

For from one all-important aspect, definitive sanctification consists in being renewed after God. After God in knowledge and righteousness and holiness of the truth. Now when we say that likeness to God is the ultimate pattern which all other criteria or all other ways of expressing the criterion are simply expressions.

We must not forget the distinction between God and us for there is a total discrepancy between God as God and man as man. I say a total discrepancy between God as God and man as man. Between God as sovereign and man as dependent.

Hence likeness to God as the pattern of sanctification is never absent. Never absent. For there is a sense in which to aspire after likeness to God is the essence of iniquity.

The essence of iniquity. You see it illustrates how fine is the line of distinction between iniquity and holiness. The point of divergence.

Strange as it might seem. The recognition that there is no likeness. That there is no likeness.

The presupposition of the principle which we are now concerned namely that likeness to God is the ultimate and primary pattern. It all depends you see on the sense in which expression likeness to God is used. It is very likely, very likely I am not dogmatizing but it is very likely that the genius, the allegation with which the tempter first seduced Eve ye shall be as God knowing good and evil I say the genius of that allegation obliterating the distinction between the true and the false in that form of stigmatism confusing the true and the false or the false and the true in reference to likeness with God.

In any case the distinction must be guarded. And since this distinction must be guarded we are completely dependent upon revelation revelation defining the respects in which likeness to God is the pattern for us. Revelation defining is indispensable for otherwise we would be in hopeless confusion hopeless confusion respecting the object in our sanctification respecting the ultimate principle.

So the necessity of revelation the necessity of revelation defining these respects shows how consonant with the ultimate principle the ultimate norm, the ultimate pattern see how consonant with the ultimate pattern are the other respects in which the pattern of sanctification may be stated namely the law of God the redeeming will of God that which is well pleasing to God the example of Christ these are the ways in which revelation comes to our aid in defining the respects in which likeness to God is legitimate for us.

A little further expansion the law of God the law simply the transcript of God's perfection as His perfection is regulated of our thought our word and our behavior and that thus defined when thus defined the law of God guards this distinction of which we have spoken because again the law for us is the mean will to regulate our thought and our behavior in ways consonant with His holiness and you can see there if I may say this parenthetically why every depreciation of the law of God as the pattern in terms of which sanctification is to be regulated is to be fashioned a depreciation of the law of God as the pattern inevitably leads inevitably leads to the adoption of patterns depreciation of the law of God as the pattern inevitably leads to the adoption of patterns three positives never

that it depreciation of or department of the law of God as the norm then a limiting annotating to ourselves of that which belongs to the inimitable one law giver one law that belongs to God inimitable inimitable that belongs to the uniqueness in respect of which the attempt to be like God is flat don't have supreme regard for the law regulated for us we are faithful to God the differentiation it is called relativeness to say to God the differentiation in respect of likeness that is called relativeness the divine developing this a little further the scripture speaks of the law of God this as spiritual no massive copy the law of God as spiritual now that means that it is of divine origin and character that it is of divine origin and character that it is supernatural that it is derived from

the Holy Spirit it is validated by its authorities and it is seen the law is also spoken of as holy, just and good holy, just and good these of course are attributes of God express what God is he is holiness he is justice he is good and therefore to characterize the law holy and just is but to claim in the most explicit way possible that the law is of God bears the imprint of his character holy, just and God and consequently every lack of conformity to the law of God is lack of conformity to God's likeness conformity to God's likeness is that that perhaps more than any other one consideration point of the iniquity of lawlessness is also conformity to that law what is the supreme and ultimate pattern the supreme and ultimate pattern of sanctification and therefore likewise points out not

only the obligation but the unspeakable that which God has provided with deathly grace now I also said a moment ago that the revealed will of God the revealed will of God is the pattern of sanctification or one of the concrete ways in which the revealed will of God in this respect Paul's word in Romans 12 brings us again to the same issue to the very thing that we have already discovered in dealing with the law the law he says there be not conformed to this world literally it is be not conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that ye may prove what it is the will of God the good the acceptable and the perfect giving the literal rendering so what is the will of God the good the acceptable he does not describe the will of God simply as good and acceptable and

perfect good not simply as good and acceptable and perfect but as that which is the good the acceptable and the perfect in other words the will of God is that which for us is the epitome of the good of the well-pleasing and of the perfect it is that which defines for us what is good what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect at the zenith of their representation and reinterpretation the good and the acceptable and the perfect at the zenith of their revelation and reinterpretation without such characterization such characterization would be impossible if it were not the case that the will of God with the will of God for us we bless that which God did as alone the good and the perfect God alone ultimately the ultimate I would always say that it would be God do not extend it only to

us to come to us this as the good the acceptable and the perfect there is not this relationship the will of God which the will of God sustains to us that which he has revealed now the third example I gave of that which exemplifies for us these three patterns the example of Christ the example of Christ I would spend more time on this important and even delicate the supreme revelation of what God is and of his will for us the supreme of the patterns which is the norm of sanctification the supreme exhibition I say of the patterns which is the norm the ultimate norm of sanctification is the Lord Jesus Christ himself because he is the epulgence of God's glory and the transcript of his being he is the image of the invisible in him dwells the fullness of Godhood utterly the fullness of Godhood

utterly it means that the fullness of God's truth is manifest in him as the incarnate one so that in flesh in flesh which is identical with ours as to its nature as to its metaphysical constant the holiness of God as it has reflected in and impressed upon man the holiness of God as it has reflected in and impressed upon man comes to perfect it in no other way could God's holiness be so effectively revealed and then described why? the example of our Lord is in this with incomparable significance the incomparable significance that even goes beyond that of the law of God or the religion of God he has given us an example that we should follow it because there is in the example of our Lord the whole the whole ordeal or in life is one concrete reason for God's holiness in in we remember how

Jesus of Assisi did this again in what is perhaps a better interest in his own in his own life whosoever would be first among you let him be servant of all whosoever could be first among you let him be servant of all for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life among you for many Matthew 20 27 and 28 Mark 10, 44 and 45 and the scripture following that very same emphasis Apostles in turn can say 1 Peter 2, 21 Philippians 2, 5 for even here unto where he called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example that you should follow let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus Peter and Paul in that order let this mind be in you now these appeals to Christ these appeals to Christ's example afford us some very important

lesson because it was this which in here dealing with the example refers to us must be observed that we are to have proper understanding and application first the example of Christ is abused by our Lord and his

apostles to enforce the elementary duty of humble service to others unselfish considerateness for a page in suffering Christian liberality and so on and to think how elementary these are how practical, how concrete you don't have to work to heaven in order to breathe why here? why here? nothing is more relevant to the example of Christ than the way in which it bears upon it is not to invite Jesus that the example of our Lord is pleading to talk

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