

# Sanctification 1 of 2

by Mack Tomlinson

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*Mack Tomlinson's sermon on sanctification emphasizes the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in every believer's life, highlighting both positional and progressive aspects of holiness.*

**Duration:** 46:40

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:12

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the work of God in our salvation and sanctification. He highlights the immense sacrifice of God giving His Son for sinners and how this should assure us that He will also change, sanctify, and deliver us from besetting sins. The ultimate goal of our salvation is sanctification, which involves being built up into the image of Jesus Christ. The preacher emphasizes that sanctification is a work that can only be accomplished by God Himself, as He empowers our will, renews our mind, and pours out His Spirit upon us.

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## Transcript

We want to look at verses 12 and 13 tonight. Very popular verses, very well known perhaps, and yet I'm convinced not really appreciated, and probably more convinced not truly understood as much as they ought to be. Philippians 2, 12 and 13, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for or of His good pleasure. Paul is certainly the theologian of sanctification. And when you stop and think about it, is that not what all of his epistles in the New Testament are for to begin with? Either to correct error that was attacking Christ's church, or to teach truth.

But either one of those, the ultimate goal was sanctification. The building up of the people of God into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wesley's hymn that we just sang, speaks the reality of that.

That one verse, Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. That's spiritual death and depravity. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke the dungeon flame with light.

That's regeneration. My chains fell off. My heart was free.

I rose, went forth and followed Thee. That's conversion. And within that very hymn, Wesley speaks of the reality, as does Paul here in this text, of the great process that begins in the heart.

Sanctification. The great reality of Christian experience and growth. The fact that God, for every single Christian, God has made every believer holy through their union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, as a result of that, that we are in the process of increasing in holiness of heart and life. Now the first half of this message tonight, I don't know if it will be the half of it, but will be introduction on the theme of sanctification. This afternoon I was in Harcru's office and I looked down there on Brother Darren's desk.

I hope it's not his daily devotional. It was his most recent copy of Bohan America. And it was laid open and there was a quote by Daniel Webster there.

And I read that and I said, Mercy, I do believe in evolution. I said, you know, evolution is true. I'm glad I've got your attention now.

Because Webster defined evolution as this, the process of continual change from a lower or worse condition to a higher, better state or condition. So at least in the area of sanctification, evolution is completely true. The great reality of our growth.

What is sanctification? Well, definitions are good. I'll give you one that I think is true and to the point. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are renewed and changed in the whole man, mind, will, affections, emotions, desires, choices, mentality, outlook.

We're changed in the whole man into the image of Christ. And we are enabled more and more to die into sin and live unto righteousness. Let me repeat that.

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are renewed and changed in the whole man after the image of Christ and enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Simply put, it's increasing in holiness of life. And this is true of every Christian.

Sanctification doesn't happen in deeper life Christianity or reformed Christianity or whatever kind of Christianity. Sanctification happens in normal, real Christianity. Biblical Christianity, the only kind that there is.

It happens in the life of every Christian. The process of sanctification. And in this text in Philippians, that's clearly what Paul must have in mind.

The reality of our working out our salvation. That is, the process of sanctification. That's the only way his words can properly be understood.

He tells the Philippians, this salvation you possess, your own salvation, you have a responsibility in this thing. You are to work it out. You are to bring it to its proper final conclusion.

You are to bring it to its final goal and destination of maturity. Sanctification. This is the will of God, Paul tells the Thessalonians.

Even our sanctification. He says in Romans 6, that having been set free from sin and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto holiness and the end, eternal life. Paul said to the Colossians that it was his goal and desire to what? To present every man, that is every believer, perfect or mature in Christ

Jesus.

He told the Ephesians that it was God's great purpose for the church, that He might sanctify and cleanse her. As A.W. Pink said one time, Christ comes with a blessing in each hand, forgiveness in one and holiness in the other. Always together.

So this great process of holiness and growth it's amazing to think about it, how important it is. When you think about the fact that it is the entire Christian life. Think about it.

From the moment of your regeneration and conversion, until you close your eyes in death, you know what is happening in you? The work of sanctification. So it's a vast reality how important is it for us to be clear on it and to have it in our hearts, as Peter said, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're speaking about holiness.

Now, holy and holiness are terms that have borne the brunt of many false views. Heaven think. Everything from those who completely deny that holiness is necessary to those who go to extremes on what it means.

The word holy seems archaic, outdated and backward. To some, it's legalism at its worst. Supposing holiness is a lengthy list of rigid rules.

For others, when they hear the word holiness, they think of unattainable perfection. But it's none of those things. Holiness of life is holistic.

That is, it includes our entire life. Every sphere of our existence. I think one of the holiest things, perhaps this week I did, was stop for two days in Arkansas with my 11-year-old twins and spend time with them and take the boy fishing.

My daughter wasn't interested in the fishing, but we went out to a pretty lake there, outside of Hot Springs, and he fished. And I thought, this is pleasing to God. Holiness of life.

Holiness is not a list, but rather a life that is Godward. Holiness of life. Now, as we begin to talk about this tonight and more tomorrow, I want to begin by mentioning just a foundational truth.

It's probably not important among this bunch to labor it very much, but it's simply this fact, that our sanctification is rooted in the reality that God Himself is holy. Exodus 15-11, Moses said, Who is likened to be, O Lord, glorious in holiness? 1 Samuel 2-2, Samuel said, There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside Thee. And you remember there in 1 Samuel 6, when they were bringing the Ark of the Covenant, and the men of Beth-shemesh, 50,000 of them, died under God's judgment when they looked into the Ark of God.

And after that happened, the living then cried out, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? All the way to the book of Revelation, John cried out, Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before Thee. This is needless to labor the truth of this tonight, perhaps, in our midst. Not only is God holy, but what else has He said to us about holiness? He's commanded us to be holy because He's holy.

Leviticus 11-45, that great Exodus reality of redemption. God said, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Be ye therefore holy because I am holy.

And you know that Peter quotes that very text in 1 Peter, when he talks about what manner of conversation or lifestyle ought all believers to have. And he quotes that. The fact is, when God calls a people out of Egyptian darkness into His marvelous light, they are radically separated unto Him forever.

The names and numbers of God's elect are a secret thing. Don't even worry about it. But if there's one thing plainly laid down about election, it is that elect men and women will be known by their holy lives.

Forty times in the Old Testament, God is referred to as the Holy One of Israel. The word holy is found over 900 times in Scripture. Think of it.

Now, while the Old Covenant that Charles is contrasting and talking about in relation to the New Covenant in these sessions that he'll be teaching us, while the Old Covenant demanded external ceremonial holiness and morality, the New Covenant gives freely internal transforming holiness of heart. The Old Covenant demanded external ceremonial morality, but the New Covenant, by grace, gives to us internal transforming heart holiness. But the Old Testament word and the New Testament word have the same meaning.

The word holiness or holy. Both convey two ideas. One idea is the idea of separate, indicating position.

Separate position. The other idea conveys the idea of brightness that sends forth light, indicating a condition. A condition of brightness that sends forth light.

Both of these things are true about God. Jonathan Edwards said, Holiness is more than just an attribute of God. It is the outshining of all that God is.

Holiness. And yet, both realities, the position of being separate, and a condition that sends forth light and brightness, both of those things are true of every Christian. And if you're a believer tonight, they're true of you.

You have been perfectly separated unto God forever as His unique possession, and you currently possess a condition about you that always emanates moral light and reality. Whether you know it or feel it or see it or think it or not has nothing to do with it. That's talking about positional sanctification.

The completed fact that every Christian is sanctified. Already in their regeneration and conversion. This was accomplished by the redemptive act of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Separating us unto God forever through redemption. Holiness about the Christian is an internal reality. And it's a fact for all who are in Christ.

The Bible calls all believers those who are sanctifying. Now there are a number of scriptures that make this abundantly clear that all Christians are called sanctified. For instance, Acts chapter 20 verse 28.

When Paul is saying goodbye to the Ephesian elders, he commends them to God and to the word of His grace. He says that He is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among who? All those who are sanctified. That is all believers.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul uses it twice in that one chapter in this way. He starts out speaking to the Corinthians now, remember. And by the way, we often view the Corinthian church based on the first epistle.

Why don't we get our view of them based on 2 Corinthians? Just think about that a little while. But Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, he says it twice. To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, and verse 30, Christ Jesus has been made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

In 1 Corinthians 6, he reminds them of what they once were, but he says, but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews especially uses this word about all believers in this sense. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 10, And by His will, we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

Hebrews 10 verse 13, four by one offering. He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Now just think of that.

He has perfected forever who? All those who evidence in their life that the process of sanctification is happening. And Hebrews 13 verse 12, or maybe it's 12-13, Jesus that He might sanctify the people suffered outside the camp. Now, this is not ongoing progressive sanctification, but rather our complete separation to God forever.

Colossians 1 says, You, has He now reconciled through death to present you holy, unblameable, and unapprovable in His sight? Now, if you're a believer, do you see yourself that way before God? You might say, well, no, I just see myself as a sinner. That would be arrogant. It's downright unbelief for you to call unclean what God has called clean.

He has said every believer, Christ has reconciled us through death to present us holy and unblameable and unapprovable in His sight. His death set every Christian apart forever unto the Lord. The New Testament does not say that Christians must lead holy lives in order to become saints, but rather that Christians, because they're already saints, they do lead holy lives.

Christians are sanctified ones. Every Christian. Not preachers, not theologians, not missionaries, not Christians that have been Christians 70 years, not strong ones, not perfect ones, but the person that repented and believed on Christ five seconds ago, the five-year-old who is a new believer and doesn't know much.

Every single Christian is a saint, has been sanctified by God. Now, holiness is what we have in Christ already. But at the same time, we know the New Testament tells us that we grow in it and we strive for it.

And every true Christian does. No believer has arrived. Some of the brethren here, and I know a preacher, a campus preacher, who has traveled the campuses of the United States, I guess for 25 years at least, and he will stand on campus and he will say, I have not sinned in 20 years.

Well, I don't know why I said that except to say that what an absurdity, what foolishness for someone to think that they have arrived. No believer has arrived. That's why progressive sanctification is just as biblically true as our positional sanctification.

Every Christian is holy before God, and yet is growing in holiness of life, growing in grace. Or to use that good old word that isn't used much anymore, godliness. Growing in godliness to become like God.

That I, a child of hell, should in His image shine. What a thing that you are growing right now tonight to be more like God. More like Christ, more like the Holy Spirit, more beautiful in nature and in character and in

desires, being changed.

All of us are prone to have a low view of the significance of sanctification. We have a tendency to confuse evangelical holiness with morality, failing to see that gospel holiness is the work of the triune God in planning and sustaining spiritual life within us. It's an important question to ask.

Is this work of sanctification God's work or is it the believer's work? And the answer is yes. But as we see Paul here speak to the Philippians, in the first verse we read, he places the responsibility on their shoulders, doesn't he? And then in the second verse, he tells them the basis and the reason why they can with confidence work out their salvation. Because it is God who is at work within them.

We're going to take the second verse tonight and the first verse tomorrow, is that alright? Because properly understood, we have to view sanctification as first the work of God. It's the work of God in our souls that begins when our dungeon flamed with light. When the blessed Spirit of God brought us from death to life.

And we awoke and the chains began to fall off. And we realized God's real. Christ is real.

I'm clean. I'm different. The grass is really greener.

Everything is new. Something is happening in me that's a work of God. It's a work of God in our souls, this reality of sanctification, that begins the moment we believe in our conversion.

Thank God that it's not up to us to keep ourselves. But we're kept by the very power of God through faith. And we work at our salvation because it is God who works within us.

This is central to New Testament teaching concerning the Christian life. If our sanctification is truly a work of God that must be performed in us, then there are some basic truths here we see in verse 13. So let's turn back to Paul's words and let's just look at verse 13.

He says, it is God who works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Now the first thing we see, the first truth there, just stands out in those first three words. It is God.

Paul here is telling us, first of all, that our sanctification is supernatural. It's supernatural. It is God who is at work.

The God who at creation spoke the universe into existence. The God who pulled back the Red Sea and they went across, not on muddy land or damp ground, but on dry land. This God is the God who is at work in every believer.

Sanctification is supernatural in nature. 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul says, The Lord is faithful who will establish you and keep you from evil. Leonard Ravenhill used to say, The greatest miracle God can do is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, make him holy, put him back in an unholy world, and keep him holy.

That is you if you're a Christian. Every Christian is a miracle of vast proportions. Because the very power of God Himself has wrought a change that nobody can explain away.

1 Thessalonians 5, Paul says, May God Himself sanctify you through and through. Now earlier in that epistle, Paul said something to the Thessalonians that we often skip over. It's one of those verses that we

miss and yet there's a great gem there.

In 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13, Paul speaks of the Word of God performing its work within you who believe. Do you realize every time you open your Bible and you read it with an open heart, maybe a dry heart, maybe a needy heart, maybe a struggling heart, but when you come to the Word of God and you read it, or you come to sit under the preaching and teaching of it, every time you do, a miracle takes place. There's a divine transforming reality that occurs because the Word of God by the Spirit of God performs its work in your heart and you go away changed.

But the God of all grace, Peter said in 1 Peter 5, who has called us to His eternal glory, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. Brethren, our growth, our increase is supernatural because it's nothing less than the work of the Spirit of God within us. God at work within us.

J.C. Ross said what God requires of us, He Himself works in us, or it is not done at all. Think about it. The godly farmer that goes out and plows his field in the summer.

We were driving from Texas and I saw all through there in Arkansas and on into Missouri and southern Illinois, I saw farmers on their tractors and they were tilling soil. The farmer who plows his field and then later sows the seed and then fertilizes and cultivates, and he does all he knows to do with the best effort and the best seed, he's ultimately aware that he's utterly dependent on forces outside of himself to make that crop be fruitful. He can't send the sunshine.

He can't send the rain. He can't germinate the seed. God must cause the growth.

And it's true of us spiritually as well. God Himself causes our growth. David said in Psalm 116, he said, He it is who delivers our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling, in order that we might walk before Him in the land of the living.

It is God that causes our growth in grace. Paul plants, Paulus waters, but God gives the increase. Dear brethren, none of us, not a one of us, can go higher or deeper in the Christian life than the supernatural grace of God works in us to take us there.

That's why John Owen said, To be truly holy is a greater matter than most are aware of. So greater work, it can only be accomplished by God Himself. It is God who delivers you and I from ongoing sin.

It is He that sets us free, that empowers our will, that renews our mind, who pours out His Spirit upon us when we most need Him, that strengthens and encourages our needy hearts just in time. He ever lives to rule over us and defend us. He restrains and conquers all of our enemies.

And He keeps us and He supplies wonderful grace in time of need as we call upon Him. David said in Psalm 94, When I said my foot was slipping, Thy mercy, Lord, held me up. Beloved, every one of us in here would have given up a long time ago had God not kept us.

That's why the hymn writer said, and that's why we sing, Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith on heaven's table in a higher plane than I have found. Lord, plant my feet, please, on higher ground. He must take us there.

He must get us there. If sanctification is a work of God in us that's supernatural, then we ought to be much crying out to Him to sanctify us, to increase His work in us, to pray more for His Spirit upon us, to pour out

our hearts in dependence upon Him daily. Oh, the great, radical, extravagant grace that's readily available to us, if we would but through prayer avail ourselves of it.

Lord, work in me. Change me. Turn my heart and I'll be turned.

Heal me and I'll be healed. Increase my faith. Teach me to pray.

Enlarge my heart to fear Your name. Isn't it true that all the prayers in the Bible evidence the fact that we cry out for God to do what we can't do? Spurgeon said this, God loves to see the hearts of His people glowing toward Himself. Let us seek His grace that the fire may never be quenched.

If the unseen hand behind the wall pours on the sacred oil, it will blaze higher and higher. Oh brethren, cry out for that unseen hand to always be pouring on the oil. Our sanctification is always supernatural.

We persevere only because of the perseverance of God within us and upon us, in and through and despite our own sins and failures and unbelief. Just think of the amazing reality that here Peter, in the presence of a teenage girl, three times cowardly denies the Lord. And in a few days after, he's the one standing at Pentecost courageously preaching the gospel to thousands.

You talk about supernatural. It's God that works. It's nothing less than supernatural.

Well, that's a little bit that's just in that first phrase. It is God. Our sanctification is supernatural.

But then, secondly, Paul tells us that it is God who is at work. It is God who is working. It is God who works.

This tells us that our sanctification is not only supernatural, it's continual. Think of that. It is God in you who is always at work.

Sanctification, your growth in grace as a Christian, is always continually happening. It's always, always occurring. When you're awake, when you're asleep, on a good day, on a bad day, it's always, always occurring.

Leviticus 6, verse 13, The fire shall ever be burning on the altar, it shall never go out day or night. And the work of the blessed Spirit of God in relation to the redemptive work of Christ, our altar, the work of that fire never goes out. That fire is ever burning on the altar.

It is ever at work within us. From the moment of your regeneration until you close your eyes in death, the Spirit of God will be doing His divine remodeling project in your soul, changing you into the image of God's dear Son. Now, the fact that sanctification is continual, it's always occurring, destroys the carnal Christian doctrine completely.

The idea that there are different classes of Christians, or that some Christians are growing and some are not, that is a lie. By the way, liberalism didn't foster that lie. Dead 20th century fundamentalism produced that one.

But the Philippians 1, 6, isn't this just wonderful? He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it until the very day of Jesus Christ. If he's begun a real work, it will be perfected. Note the words carefully.

He will perfect it. What's the next word? Until. That's continuation.

That's continual. He will bring our salvation to full completion. Here it means that God has progressed so far with His work in us that what He is doing now is simply putting on the finishing touches of our salvation.

A great artist having painted a masterpiece, and it's basically done. To the untrained novice eye, it would look completed. But not to the eye of the master.

He wants to dip his brush here and put some grey here and some lighter shades here. He comes to put on finishing touches, to bring it to perfect completion. That is what God is doing in our sanctification.

Christ left the glories of heaven for us. He endured the wickedness and the opposition of sinners against Himself daily as a man for us. He perfectly obeyed His Father every moment of this earthly life, securing for us actual righteousness.

He went to the cross bearing His Father's holy wrath, and He took on Himself all of our guilt and all of our sin. And He finished the work, and He rose victoriously. And He ascended to heaven in our behalf, and now He sits in session.

The King tonight is in session. A man sits on the throne of the universe, the God-man Christ Jesus. He fully accomplished our redemption.

And the Spirit of God, when He drew you with cords of love, and He awakened you, and He turned you, and He saved you, began to apply that redemption, and He's still applying it. So now, since all that has happened, is it any great thing in the light of God giving His Son for sinners to die, is it any great thing that God will therefore certainly now change you and sanctify you and help you and deliver you from those besetting sins, or those idols that still try to hang around? He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not with Him freely give us all things? What a thing! The most important part of our salvation is already done. And the majority of our salvation is already completed.

Now God is putting on finishing touches. He who began this good work in us shall bring it to completion. It's continual.

In every situation you face, God is sanctifying and changing you. Through every trial, through any circumstance, any setback, any experience you go through, God is at work within you. Our worst days and our worst moments, through the darkest times and difficulties, there's never a moment that God is not at work within us to perfect that which concerns us, whether we feel it or not.

Every second, saving and sanctifying grace is at work in the heart of every Christian. Just think about Peter again. When Peter denied the Lord, think of this.

Jesus says to him, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. Grace was continually working before his denial, in and through it, and afterward. Paul and Barnabas, their split, was under the furtherance of the gospel and the growth of both of them.

If you're a Christian, you every day are being changed more and more into the image of Christ, because His work in you is supernatural and it's continual. Well, let me hasten on to the third part of that verse. Paul tells us, not only is our sanctification supernatural, it's God, and it's not only continual, it's God who is at work in us, but it is God at work within us to somehow figure out how He's going to make us holy.

Is that what it says? Well, if you brought a living Bible, maybe that's what yours says, but it says God is at work in you to will and to do. God never wills within us anything He doesn't bring about. He wills and He does.

This is a great mystery, and I can't explain it. Whatever questions you have, just go ask Charles Leiter, because he's the one who taught me all this anyway, so ask him all your questions. Paul's prayer for ongoing sanctification in 1 Thessalonians 5 when he prays, I pray your whole spirit, soul, and body will be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What's the next thing he said, the next verse? Faithful is He who called you who also will do it. Our sanctification is not only supernatural and continual, it is certain. It is God who is at work in you to will and to do.

Faithful is He who called you who also will do it. Jude 24, unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and present you blameless before Him. God in Christ in love has predestined that every child of God will be conformed in an image of His beloved Son.

I've got good news for us tonight. God is not wringing His hands in frustration, wondering how He's going to get a carnal church holy. Rather, He is with perfect wisdom, consistently perfecting a redeemed people who love Him because His Son died to make them holy.

2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord. Every Christian before very long will be in His presence and will perfectly be like the Lord Jesus Christ because their sanctification is of God and it is certain. Why is it certain? Because our sanctification is an essential part of the new covenant.

For instance, Jeremiah 31, verse 33. Jeremiah states that covenant. He says, Behold the days come, I'll make a new covenant with the house of Israel.

This will be the covenant I'll make. I'll put my laws in their inward parts and write them in their hearts. The only reason some of you drove me miles to be here was because the law of God's been written in your innards, in your inmost heart, and you love Him and you long to be more changed.

And that's proof that you're part of this new covenant. He writes His laws in our hearts. Jeremiah 32, verse 40.

I'll make an everlasting covenant with them and I will not turn away from them ever to do them good. I will put the fear of me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from me. Ezekiel's statement of this covenant, chapter 36.

He says this, I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you'll be clean. There's regeneration. From all your filthiness and all your idols, you know what's been happening since the day you were saved? God has progressively been washing you and cleansing you continually from filthiness, sins of the flesh, sins of the mind, sins of the spirit.

He's been delivering you from all your filthiness, from all your sins and from all your idols. It's a process that started, it's happening now, and it's going to continue to happen because your sanctification is a part of the new covenant promise. And it happens in every single Christian.

Every Christian will be delivered progressively from all their idols and will never turn back from following Him forever. That's a promise of the new covenant about everyone in the covenant. John 10, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

It is certain because it's part of the new covenant. It's also certain because Christ Himself specifically prayed for your sanctification. John 17, verse 17.

Did you know in the days of His flesh when He was here on earth that He prayed specifically for you? He said, Father, I pray not only for these that have believed, but I pray for all those who will believe. Father, sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth.

Now, whether He was praying for perfect, positional, redemptive sanctification that His people that He was soon to go to the cross to die for would be separated or progressive sanctification, I don't know that it matters. Regardless of how you slice the pie, it tastes awful good. Is it possible the Lord Jesus Christ could have a prayer that could go unanswered? He prayed, beloved.

He prayed for your sanctification. If you're His, what a thing. What a certainty.

What an assurance. He prayed for you and me to be made His in holiness. Well, it's also certain because our God who cannot lie, who is even faithful when we believe not, and He continues to be faithful because He can't deny Himself.

He has promised all through Scripture that the work in His children, in every one of them, will be completed. For instance, Proverbs 4.18, the path of the just, that is of every Christian, every believer, is as the shining light that grows brighter and brighter all the way to the perfect day. Are there any dark spots on that path at times? Yes.

But then He lifts you up. The righteous fall seven times, and they rise again. He lifts you up, and He keeps you on that path, and the path grows brighter.

And it's going to grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day for you, regardless of what your experience is if you're His. Psalm 138, verse 8, He shall perfect that which concerns me. That's one of my favorites.

When I feel so needy, when there are difficult circumstances, when I struggle with sin, I'll go there and I'll say, Lord, all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. You have promised to perfect that which concerns me. So here I am.

I'm just checking in, Lord, for You to do it. Do it afresh in me. Perfect that which concerns me.

It's a promise, beloved. Promises are not exhortations. They're declarations of a loving Father who has said, I will do all of this for you.

Believe Me for this. This is why Paul prays with confidence for the Thessalonians. I pray your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.

Is that your heart's cry tonight? Lord, there's nothing in this life that really matters except my being made like the Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately. There's nothing that matters. I pray, God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord.

Faithful is He who called you who also will do it. Or as the hymn that we sing says, Changed from glory into glory, Till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before Him, Lost in wonder, love, and praise. Beloved, if you're a Christian tonight, take heart.

Because your sanctification is a work of God. It will not be thwarted by demons, by anything in this earth, by sin, by evil men. Nothing shall be able to stop God's work in the soul of every Christian.

Amen.

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