

Sanctification 2 of 2

by Mack Tomlinson

Sanctification is the lifelong process of becoming holy and set apart for God's purposes, requiring an engaged heart and the mortification of sin.

Duration: 50:33

Scripture: Psalm 84:4-7, Matthew 10:22, Matthew 24:13, Mark 13:13, Philippians 2:12-13

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Christian Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the reality and immediacy of eternity. He reminds the audience that time is short and that this world is not our permanent home, but rather a temporary passage. The preacher highlights the importance of viewing eternity in the right perspective, as it affects how we handle trials and experiences in this life. He also emphasizes the responsibility of every Christian to work out their salvation and pursue God and holiness, regardless of their age or experience. The preacher warns against being complacent or lazy in our spiritual walk, and encourages believers to be on guard against the temptations of the world.

Transcript

I would ask you to turn to two passages of Scripture. The 84th Psalm. Psalm 84.

We'll read there first and then we'll turn again to Philippians 2. Psalm 84, speaking about the pilgrimage of the Christian pilgrim. Let's read verses 4-7. David says, Blessed are those who dwell in your house.

They will still be praising you. Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a spring.

The rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength. And each one, every one of them appears before God in Zion.

Philippians 2, verses 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 His good pleasure. Vance Havner, the old Baptist, said this, If ever our souls need to be on guard, it is today. The temper of the times demand it.

The world is chloroformed by the prince of darkness, and Christians even danger about slumbering in spiritual stupor. Our nature demands it, that we're on guard. We're lazy and inclined to float downstream instead of swimming against the current.

Forgetting the things which we have heard, we drift away from them. So the heart must be broken up and sown with good seed, and cultivated if there is to be a good harvest. But we're disposed to let weeds grow.

Some have so interpreted the grace of God as to minimize our personal responsibility, to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. And that old hymn in the mothball collection ought to be put back into circulation. Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me unto God? The answer is, no, it's not.

It never has been, it never will be. A. W. Tozer said, When we were born again, we were born behind enemy lines, and we'll live here until we go to heaven. Today, I want to speak on sanctification as the work of the believer.

We saw last evening that Paul said that our sanctification is a work of God, that it is supernatural, it is continual, and it's certain. But in this first verse of this text, he tells us that it is also the work of the Christian, the work of the believer, that it is something we are to work out, that we have responsibility in this thing that's genuine, that's serious. In fact, the Bible tells Christians to fear.

Hebrews says, Let us therefore fear, lest any of us even seem to come short. So, this is a great reality that we're responsible toward. The fact that while our sanctification is a work of God, it is just as true that it is a work, it is a responsibility of the believer as well.

Now, this is one of those paradoxes of the Bible, one of those two-sided truths like the absolute, complete sovereignty of God and the full, genuine responsibility of man. Paul says, You, if you possess true salvation, you work it out. You bring it to completion.

Someone has said this, God's working in us is not suspended or stopped because we work and engage ourselves, nor is our working suspended because God works. God works in us and we also work. And because God works in us, we therefore work out our salvation.

This means that God's keeping us involves His working within us savingly so that we live believing. We believe and He preserves. Both faith and grace and effort are essential in sanctification.

Works for salvation, works unto salvation. Paul would say, Let man or angel be accursed, whoever brings that false gospel. But works in sanctification, well, let's hear the New Testament writers just to get a perusal of emphasis that they make.

For instance, Paul, Romans 6 verse 19, he says, Just as you presented your members as slaves to unrighteousness, did anybody here ever do that? Did you ever serve sin with zeal and commitment and excitement and pleasure and fervor? Did you ever yield yourself and your members as instruments of unrighteousness? Then Paul says, So now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. 2 Timothy chapter 2, Paul says this, The foundation of God stands sure. There's two pillars there.

First, the Lord knows them that are His, and let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. If anyone cleanses himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for the Master. So Paul says, we're responsible in this thing.

John the Apostle himself, 1 John chapter 3, He says it in two places, Everyone who has this hope, what hope? The hope of seeing Him one day as He is and being like Him. Everyone who has this hope, what does he do? Purifies himself even as he is pure. 1 John 3 verse 9, Whosoever is born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not.

1 John 5 verse 18, We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not. But he keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not. And in the last verse of 1 John, John says, Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Now I know up in these midwestern states, there's no idolatry, but down in Texas where I live, there's a lot of it. Isn't that right, Brother Randall? A lot of idolatry. And the Bible admonishes you and I to keep ourselves from it.

I remember a dear man of God said, We should never dare presume to ask God for grace to do something like, Lord, would you please humble me. He's already told us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. So we ought to be about doing what He's commended, and there'll be grace in the doing of it for God to work within our hearts.

Jude verse 20, Keep yourselves, he says, keep yourselves in the love of God. What a statement that is. And Peter in 2 Peter chapter 3, He says, Giving all diligence, brethren, add to your faith virtue and the virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance and temperance patience, and to patience godliness and brotherly kindness and love.

We ought to do some holy mathematics in our lives as believers. We're to add these things to our life continually in our sanctification. Giving diligence to make our calling and election sure.

Peter says, For if you do these things, you shall never fall. As redeemed children of God, who have a new nature and a new heart, and have the Spirit of God within us, whose wills are now free, whose minds are being renewed daily, God puts upon us genuine and wonderful responsibility as to our growth in grace. You're responsible to grow.

Peter said, but grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This popular notion of passive sanctification, especially made popular in the 19th and 20th century, is a modern invention that is not true to Scripture. A let go and let God idea, not found in Scripture, the view that any activity on our part must be fleshly or carnal, and we simply stop all effort, somehow enter into some rest, where we become neutral and passive, and we trust God simply to make us what He wants.

It's a false view. Passive piety fails to produce the godliness found in the saints in Scripture and in church history. It is the responsibility of each of us to engage ourselves and to walk in our responsibility of working out our salvation.

Holiness is no more by faith without effort than it is by effort without faith. Both things are true. God tells you personally to grow, to increase, to engage yourself in this thing of increasing in holiness, realizing that we are working in our sanctification, we're working from a position of total, complete victory already from the beginning.

But there is no holiness, J.C. Ryle said, without warfare. Sanctification is always a fight, because you're in this body of flesh which is the playground for sin. We are in this vile world, and temptation and sin in this world is always going to be at war with us.

The true Christian is never at peace with sin. But as Samuel Rutherford said, the devil's war is surely better than the devil's peace. And today, you are either engaging in your sanctification in a warfare, or you are in slumber under the devil's peace.

One or the other is true. Now, what are the ways a believer works out his salvation? Well, if you look at verse 12 there, Paul doesn't even give us five easy steps to sanctification. He doesn't give us three special keys to certain victory.

He tells us to work it out. But because that's true, we have to go to the whole New Testament, and the Word of God in general, and to see what admonition Scripture places upon us that God calls us to do. These are realities and facts about every Christian.

The responsibility we have to work out our salvation. They're responsibilities, and yet at the same time, they are also proofs and evidences, signs of true sonship. In other words, everything believers are called to do, the Spirit of God works within us to will and to do of His good pleasure, and we do walk in these things.

They're signs of life. They're evidences of true salvation, and at the same time, they are personal responsibilities. You may be a 12-year-old Christian this morning.

I have news for you. You are as responsible to pursue God, and holiness, and love Christ as Paul Washer is, or as Pastor Jack is. This stuff's not for adults.

It's for every Christian. This is for you this morning. You are to work out your salvation, first of all, with an engaged heart pursuit of Christ and holiness.

A heart pursuit of Christ and holiness. The Bible calls us to pursue our sanctification. Now, you remember where it does that? Hebrews chapter 14, verse 12.

It says, pursue after what? Two things there. Pursue after peace with all men, and holiness, sanctification, without which you'll live a defeated, miserable Christian life, but you'll still get to heaven, because we know you walked the aisle one time. No, without which no one will see the Lord.

No holiness, no heaven. Pursue it. Hunt it down eagerly.

The word there is the word used over in the Sermon on the Mount for the word persecution, or to persecute. We are to hunt down and go after holiness. You know, if someone escapes from a prison or a jail, and the authorities go out on a manhunt, the sheriff's department, the state troopers, the police, they may be going through beautiful fields by beautiful ponds, but I guarantee you one thing, they're not out there to fish.

They're not out there to sightsee. They have one thing on their mind. They are in pursuit of that one who has escaped.

And that's the mentality we're to have. We are to be ever pursuing after, hunting down, going after eagerly with a single mind and single focus, holiness after Christ, to know Him, to pursue Him. We're to be on a manhunt for holiness.

Sometimes, as Thomas Watson said, sanctification is sweaty work. It's hard. Paul said to Timothy, but you pursue after righteousness, faith, endurance, gentleness.

When was the last time you said, I'm going to pursue some gentleness? Some of us could use a good dose of that. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Do you hear any passivity in that verse? And when have you ever heard a sermon on this verse? From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

What a thing that is. Spiritual, violent mentality, a militant heart toward God, to know Him and to have His blessing more than anything in life. Holiness is not an option.

Now, one of my dear friends is here in this conference. He means a lot to me. He has a Honda Accord.

And that thing, it's a new one, and that thing has a satellite navigation system in it. And I mean, you can program that thing from Podunk, Alaska to Briar, Texas, and it'll take you all the way. And if you miss a turn, it'll say, please make a U-turn and come back and turn left instead of right.

Now, you know, there are standard equipment on cars, but that satellite navigation system, it's optional equipment. My car has tires, an engine, a steering wheel. Listen, brethren, holiness is not optional equipment.

It's standard. It comes with a package of real, genuine salvation. We are to pursue it.

The highway of holiness is the only path that leads to heaven. And Spurgeon, he even gets more offensive. He said this, if your religion does not make you holy, it will damn you, because it is only painted pageantry in which to go to hell.

And those who are unwilling to rid themselves of sin only show that they are yet dead in their sins. Think of it. This is proof and evidence you are a Christian, a heart that pursues Christ.

As the deer pants for the waters, so panteth my soul after thee. O God, my soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Psalm 63, O God, You are my God.

Early, earnestly will I seek You. My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

My soul follows hard after You. Are You like that? Do You desire to be? Do You hunger and thirst for righteousness? You and I must set the sight of our hearts on the pursuit of a holy, wonderful Savior who longs to be laid hold of by us, who longs for us to lavish and swim in His love and to embrace Him and to kiss Him with the kisses of our heart. David said we ought to have quick response of our hearts to Him.

David said, Lord, when Thou saidest, seek my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Christ Himself is our sanctification. O Christ, He is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love.

The streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above. There to an ocean fullness His glory does expand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face.

I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace. Not on the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land.

The Christian's heart is in loving pursuit of Him who has loved Him unto death. Do you love Him this morning? The true Christian's eye is on that celestial city. The road design is in his heart, and he is

engaged in a heart pursuit of Christ.

This is how we work out our salvation. Robert Murray McShane prayed for revival there in Scotland in Dundee where he pastored. And it was after he left to go to Israel for some months, and he had William Burns come and preach for him.

It was then that revival came. Brother Jack, are you willing to leave the church and God to bring another preacher and revival break out? I'm willing, because it's not about us. McShane, when revival broke out in Scotland in 1839, they were self-focused on the right thing.

McShane wrote to Burns and said, Oh brother, cry for personal holiness, for constant nearness to God. Bask in His beams, lie in the arm of His love, be filled with the Spirit. Go on, dear brother, for only an inch of time remains, and the eternal ages will roll forever.

But it is now an inch of time on which we can stand and preach the way of salvation to a perishing world. A passionate heart pursuit of Christ. Engage your heart, beloved brethren, to pursue Him more and more.

He will be found of you more and more as you pursue Him in sanctification. And then another area. How do we work out our salvation? Not only heart pursuit of Him, but what the Bible calls mortification.

We work out our salvation by mortification. This is the lost doctrine of American Christianity. It simply means the lifelong subduing and putting to death of sin when it tries to raise its stinking, ugly head.

We put it off. The putting to death of sin that tries to get us. What is our responsibility in this battle with sin? It is not one of passivity.

It is not one of working from a defensive position. We are, first of all, to realize that because we are dead to sin, we therefore are to put it to death progressively. Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 1. He says, Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We are to cleanse ourselves. We are to deal with sin. The Bible calls us to put sin to death regularly, consistently.

On what basis? On the basis of our own strength. No, on the basis of redemption that our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary completely dealt with and defeated sin forever, and it is a conquered foe, and we work from that position. But you know, much of the reality of His sacrifice in dealing with sin has been eliminated from our understanding and our theology, and even from our hymns.

Remember Isaac Watts' hymn, Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed? It's also known as At the Cross. See if you've ever heard this stanza of it. Thy body slain, sweet Jesus Thine, And bathed in its own blood, While the firm mark of wrath divine His soul in anguish stood.

Redemption. The bloody reality of the cross. The work of Christ in all its perfection.

The atonement. Him bearing our sins in His body on the tree, bringing and accomplishing reconciliation. The great fact of the gospel that Christ has conquered sin utterly and eternally and put it away forever.

So we reckon on the fact of the cross and that our old man died in Him, with Him there, and was buried with Him. Now when we talk about sanctification, there's three great central sections in the New

Testament that are vital. I would encourage you, if God stirs your heart about sanctification as a result of these days together, go and memorize these sections and meditate upon them and study them and let them become part of you.

Romans 6, Ephesians chapter 4, Colossians 3, the central and most important sections, perhaps, in the New Testament on the doctrine of sanctification. Just think about what they say. Romans 6, for instance.

If you were to summarize it, you could say, Paul says this, we don't continue in sin anymore because our old man is dead and we're dead to sin and free from it. Therefore, we live in the freedom of righteousness. That's what he's saying.

Colossians 3, we seek those things that are above. Because we are dead and our life is hid with Christ and God. Therefore, we mortify sin because that is true.

The Christian is a new creation, a new tree that produces good fruit. Just think of it, beloved. Just think of it.

We were a dead, defiled, depraved, deformed, wretched rebel against a sovereign and loving God. That's what we were. But now the Christian is a brand new creation that's never existed before.

Supernaturally and eternally transformed. Martin Lloyd-Jones said this to a friend, to realize that you are dead to the dominion of sin and alive to God takes away hopelessness. Because I can say to myself that not only am I no longer under the dominion of sin, I am now under the dominion of another power greater than anything else.

Galatians 5, verse 24, is true of every believer. They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and desires. Now, 1 John even expounds the reality that's more.

Turn to 1 John 3, verse 9 if you would. And let's meditate on this passage briefly. 1 John 3, verse 9. John says, Whosoever or whoever has been born of God does not sin for his seed, that is, the very divine life of God himself, the divine seed remains in him.

And he cannot continue to sin. He cannot sin because he is born of God. This clearly means that the newly regenerate person now has the very seminal life of God in his soul that is always renewing him in true righteousness and holiness.

And therefore, the regenerate person can never, ever continue to practice sin as they did in their unregenerate state. They don't even have the capacity to do so anymore because the old man is gone forever. He doesn't exist anymore.

It was Mark Twain who said, The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated. Sin itself or the devil or even others often try to tell us, You know, your death to sin has been greatly exaggerated. Now, reports of Twain's death were exaggerations, but our death to sin finally and truly has never been exaggerated.

It is true. It's a fact. It's a reality.

Paul said, You are dead and your life is hid with Christ and God. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Old things are passed away.

And so because that is true, we are to have a militant stance against the sin that rises up against us. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We are to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Abstaining from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. So when we are at the crossroads of temptation and there's nobody there but us and the Lord, and we feel the pull of it, we can recognize and we can speak to ourselves and we can say, Choosing that sin, that is who I once was, but that person is now dead. That's not who I am anymore.

No thank you. I'll choose the way of truth. I'll choose the way of righteousness.

I'll choose the way of life and freedom. So we are to say no. We are to put sin off like an old dirty garment.

We are to lay it aside. We are to set it aside, the sin that tries to so easily beset us. We are to resist it.

We are to refuse it. We are to subdue it. Spurgeon said, Learn to say no to sin.

It will do you more good than knowing Greek or Hebrew. But do we truly practice in our hearts saying no to sin? Our sins, brethren. Christ did not just save you from hell if He has saved you at all.

He saved you from sin. His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Not in their sins, from their sins.

The question is not, Has He saved you from hell? Has He saved you from sinning? Is He consistently today in your life saving you from sin? From covetousness? From anger? From an angry temper? From impatience? Lust or pride or self-dependence or independence? Are you being saved from sin? Deal with your sin. You know, if we just realize there is not a single sin that has ever brought us a moment of happiness or true pleasure or satisfaction or fulfillment or health. Every sin we have ever committed has only brought bondage or misery or defeat or guilt or death.

And we are far too casual toward this enemy of our souls. How did our Lord Jesus Christ tell us to deal with sin? That's right. If your eye offends you, pluck it out.

If your foot offends you, cut it off. If your hand offends you, cut it off. If what you look at is causing you to stumble, then eliminate it radically out of your life.

Don't watch things that are unholy and impure and then go to the preacher and say, Brother, I'm just having such a battle with my mind. He ought to send you home without any counsel at all if He's a true physician of souls. If the places you go cause you to sin, then cut your foot off completely.

Stop going there. He who would dance around the pit of temptation is the righteous judgment of God that he falls in, radically dealing with sin. You remember if you saw them in one of the movies, The Lord of the Rings, the hobbits and Gandalf are crossing that long bridge.

And what's pursuing them behind? The big, that big demon. And here he comes across that narrow bridge, and they make it across, and Gandalf's coming across, and suddenly that demon is coming. What does Gandalf do? He stops.

And he declares who he is, and he says, You shall not pass! Now, brethren, if you would do that with sin more often, you might walk in a little more victory over the things that are trying to drag you down. But you're too casual about it. Dealing with sin, mortification.

Now, we don't have time to go into that more, but I want to tell you what, by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit within us, we can deal with every sin that tries to get us. Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh. Be always putting sin to death, because it's a conquered foe.

Christ is going to deliver you of all of them. So you already have victory in Him completely. God is our loving Father, abundantly ready to cleanse, forgive, and deliver us.

So, we ought to mortify sin. That's how we work out our salvation. That's part of it.

But let me hasten on. We not only work out our salvation by a heart pursuit of Christ and holiness, and by mortification. There's another aspect that it's not so much that we do this, it's that sanctification comes through this.

Your salvation is often worked out through suffering. Now, there are some amazing statements in the Scripture about this. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the prime example about this.

Hebrews 2, verse 10. The Hebrew epistle says it was fitting for Him. It was right for Him.

It was godly. It was proper. It was within the divine purpose.

It was fitting for Him in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. What a mystery that the man Christ Jesus in His manhood and in His human nature was perfected perfectly as a man for us to be able to bring us among those sons to glory. What a thing.

He suffered. And Peter says, therefore, in chapter 4 of 1 Peter, Therefore, since Christ suffered for you in the flesh, arm yourselves with this same mind. When have we ever really believed that? I am to arm myself with a mentality of courage and readiness to face what suffering comes.

Arm yourselves with this same mind. Why? Listen to this. For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

You mean somehow our sufferings are sanctified and causes us to enter more into holiness and cease from sin. Yes. Do I understand that? No.

Can we believe it? Gloriously yes. What a great reality that is. Now, Peter said in chapter 5 verse 10, May the God of all grace, after you have suffered a little while, establish strength and settle you.

But we don't want it. Hebrews 12, though, tells us, If we endure chastening, God is dealing with us as sons, He chastens us for our what? For our profit, that we might be made partakers of His holiness. Suffering and chastening, therefore, are employees of the Christian.

They profit us. They bring us profit. Do we see them that way? Do we really see them that way? A Christian never moves so swiftly to heaven, someone has said, as when they are under a sanctified cross.

The greatest times that God has drawn you to Himself have not been the times of ease and pleasure, but times of difficulty, when you greatly felt your need of Him. Think of Job and the great means of sanctification in his life. Every lost dollar of his empire.

Every lost animal on his massive ranch. Each death of ten children all at once. Those freshly dug graves out on the hillside that he and his wife could both see.

Every harsh word from his heartbroken, grieving wife. Every word of judgment from the ignorant friends who came. Every boil on his body and every sleepless night became a sanctifying friend to him.

That's why David could say in Psalm 31, I will rejoice in your mercy, for you have considered my trouble. You have known my soul in adversity. God knows our souls in adversity.

He knows us and He loves us right then. And you have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy, but instead you have set my feet in a wide place. What a reality.

The school of affliction is a school of faith. Leonard Ravenhill, I heard him tell this story one time at least. He was preaching for A.W. Tozer in Chicago.

And he and the song leader in the meeting were staying on the fourth floor of this hotel. And in the middle of the night, the hotel caught on fire and the fire was raging and they couldn't get out. In fact, the song leader, I think he died in the fire.

No offense to song leaders. And Ravenhill couldn't get out. And he went over to the window and it was four floors down, four stories down.

It was wintertime in Chicago and there was snow and ice. And Ravenhill didn't know what to do. And he said, the Lord spoke to his heart and said, surely thou shalt live, jump.

And he did. And he broke his back, broke both his legs, broke both his feet. And he was scheduled to preach for a year in different nations.

And instead he spent a year in the hospital in Chicago in a body cast. And he said, many preachers on their way to the golf course came by and quoted Romans 8.28. He said, not a one of them ever helped him. But he said a little Chinaman who had suffered in persecution was brought to see him.

And a Chinese Christian looked at him and said, the Lord sanctify unto thee thy deepest affliction. And Ravenhill said he learned to worship that year on that bed. And Christ became more precious to him.

The darker the night, brethren, the brighter the stars. The hotter the fire, the more pure the gold. Suffering weans us from this stinking world and all its fanaties.

And it takes our hearts away from the temporal to the eternal, from this world of Christ. Real sanctification happens during trials and suffering because the husbandman is never so near as when he's pruning. But better to be pruned to grow than cut up to be burned.

And if you are being pruned, your loving Father is only trimming off the dross to make you more fruitful. Suffering sanctifies. In fact, Philippians 1 says that it's a grace gift.

Paul said, unto you it has been granted not only to believe on Him, but to suffer for His namesake. What amazing grace gifts. Salvation in Christ and suffering for His sake.

Suffering sanctifies. The old poem. I walked a mile with pleasure, she chattered all the way, but left me none the wiser for all she had to say.

I walked a mile with sorrow, and never a word said she, but oh, the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me. Brethren, don't waste your sorrows. They are sanctifying friends.

That's how our salvation is worked out. And let me hasten on. Our salvation is also worked out by what the Bible would call perseverance.

Our perseverance, as we were reminded last night, and as Paul assures us in verse 13, is a certainty. But by nature, that means that we must persevere. We must endure to the end and run this race all the way to heaven.

Running the race to the end. Believing to the final salvation of your soul. You know Christians, or you know professing Christians.

You know people that one time professed Christ, and they seem to begin to run well. Are they still running? Tozer said, it's not a matter if you begin to run well. It matters if you run well to the end.

Probably the greatest book that has ever been written on perseverance, or maybe the Christian life in general, is the Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. Bunyan had a hymn, and he says this. It's a wonderful hymn.

I only know of one church that sings it. He who would valiant be. This is talking about the Christian pilgrim.

He who would valiant be against all disaster. Let him with constancy follow the Master. There's no discouragement shall make him once relent.

His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim. No foe shall stay his might, though he with giants fight. He will make good his right to be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend us with Thy Spirit. We know we at the end shall life inherit. So fancies flee away.

I'll fear not what men say. I'll labor night and day to be a pilgrim. That's a real Christian.

They keep believing. They continue walking by faith. They're kept by the power of God through faith.

They never, ever turn back. In the spring of 1519, Cortes and a fleet of ships sailed from Spain to the east coast of Mexico. And Cortes told his men, this mission must not fail.

This mission will not fail. But the hardships of the new world caused some of the men to begin to murmur. And they began to whisper, let's go back to the life we knew.

So Cortes sent directions to his faithful men. We're here to stay. Burn the ships! And they did.

Brethren, how often does a voice come to you as a Christian? It's too hard. Go back to the life you knew. And when we hear that siren call, we also hear the voice of our Savior saying, the ships are burned.

You can't go back. No way to go back. We are not of them that draw back to perdition.

What's back there? The world, the flesh, the devil, and eternal destruction. You want to go back there? We are not of them that go back into perdition, but of them that believe unto the salvation of the soul. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief and departing from the living God.

But rather, exhort one another daily, for we are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. The final perseverance of the Christian is proof and fruit of true

salvation. Hebrews 10, Now the just shall live by faith, but if anyone draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Jesus said it in three places in Matthew 10, Matthew 24, and Mark 13. You shall be hated by all men on account of me, but the one who endures to the end, he it is that shall be saved. So, brethren, we are to continue in His Word and thus proving that we are His disciples indeed.

We work out our salvation by persevering. Just keep running the race. Don't look back.

Bunyan said true perseverance is keeping one hand on the plow while you wipe the tears away with the other one. You just keep on. You don't let anything draw you away from steadfastly following after Christ.

And then finally, I want to say one other thing. As we talk about sanctification, we know it's uniquely and especially the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer. We work out our salvation especially by the power and ministry of the blessed Spirit of God, the Comforter, the unseen God who is with us, an amazing, amazing reality in us.

A missionary in China had given a New Testament to a Chinese man. And in a few days, the Chinaman came back and said, You Christians, you most amazing person in the world. And the missionary said, What do you mean? He said, Your book, Ephesians, says you, you, you the temple of God, God dwell in you.

It ought to amaze us. It ought to amaze us that the one who sanctifies us and changes us dwells within us. He's with us forever to change us and to continue to sanctify us.

And we have unique, serious responsibility toward Him. We're to receive Him. We're to obey Him.

We're to yield to Him. We're to welcome Him. And we can also grieve Him, the Bible says.

We can resist Him. We can quit His work. The ministry of this Spirit imparts the very person and life of the Lord Jesus Christ to us.

Christ manifested to our hearts. And there are anointings and fillings and baptisms and empowerings and visitations and quickenings. And there are comings of the Spirit that are ours by birthright, that are part and parcel of our full inheritance in Christ.

In Acts 2, the Spirit came upon them. But the same bunch in Acts 4, the Spirit came again and empowered them for service and work. David said, I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

Paul said in Philippians 1 verse 13, he said, I'm confident as he was in prison that I will be delivered, that this will turn to my deliverance through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Do you seek fresh giftings of the Spirit in your life? Luke 11 verse 13, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Why can't we take that Scripture for what it says and just believe it and appropriate it? The only thing that hinders us from doing so is outright unbelief or a wrong dispensational hermeneutic that says that it's not for today. But the Bible says, the promise is unto you and your children and all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

A great part of our prayer life ought to be asking for more and more of the Spirit's working upon us and in us. Father, give me more of Your Spirit. Quicken me.

Control me. Come upon me. I thought yesterday of Simeon in Luke chapter 2. He was righteous and devout and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

And Luke says it was revealed to him by the Spirit that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. The Spirit abiding upon him.

The Spirit teaching him. The Spirit guiding him and leading him. Now tell me why he can know that before Pentecost any more than we can today.

The ministry and work of the Spirit of God. There's much more about this, but not time for it. Let me just close with this exhortation.

Our motives in sanctification must be God's glory. The glory of God. God is not about making any of us a spiritual museum piece so people will admire our sanctification.

It's about Christ. Christ being glorified. The glory of God.

That's a motive, brethren, that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Another motive is the reality and the immediacy of eternity. Brethren, the time is short.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7, you know, forever is the most solemn word in the Bible. Forever is a very short word, but it's never ending. This world is not our portion.

It is our passage. It's only a dressing room for eternity. Very soon, you will be there in eternity.

How quickly have the last 20 years of your life passed? We are a flower quickly fading. We're just a wave bobbing in the ocean. We are a vapor that's here and gone, and we will be in eternity very, very soon.

The trials and experiences of this life would not make such an impression on us if we viewed eternity as we should. And it is a great motive for our sanctification. John said, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, and the world is passing away, and the lusts are off, but he who does the will of God abides forever. What a glorious reality.

Beloved brother, sister, young Christian, older Christian, your salvation is nearer than when you first believed. Press on. Lay hold.

Mortify sin. Give all diligence. Endure to the end.

Fix your eyes on Jesus until your eyes close in death, and the next millisecond later, you will see Him in all of His glory. You'll be like Him, and you'll be in a land that's fairer than day with Him, and sanctification is over then forever. So until then, we must pursue it.

Spurgeon said this, I rejoice to know that the day is coming when God will finish the work He has begun in me, and He will present my spirit, soul, and body perfect without spot or blemish. Oh, happy hour when I cross the Jordan and the work is done. May God help us to pursue sanctification.

Amen.

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