

Simplifying a Difficult Word

by Russell DeLong

The sermon simplifies the concept of sanctification, emphasizing its practical significance and the transformative power of God's grace in a believer's life.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:14

Topics: "Entire Sanctification", "Christian Holiness"

Description

Russell DeLong simplifies the theological doctrine of 'Entire Sanctification' by breaking down the meaning of sanctification into consecration and purification, emphasizing its practical benefits in daily living. He explains that sanctification involves being dedicated to God's will and purified from sin, addressing both sinful acts and the sinful nature within individuals. DeLong highlights the importance of experiencing forgiveness through justification and then seeking cleansing through sanctification, as taught by biblical figures like St. Paul, St. Peter, and John Wesley.

Transcript

SIMPLIFYING A DIFFICULT WORD

Or

What Does It Mean To Be Sanctified?

Scripture Reading -- St. John, Chapter 17.

The average man is confused and frightened by theological and philosophical terminology. His life is such that he has little time for hair-splitting jargon -- what he wants is something that he can readily understand and which, when understood, can mean something of value to his problem of daily living. Any doctrine which is merely theoretical speculation devoid of any practical benefit he renounces.

Both philosophy and theology have by their language lost many possible adherents because they have made simple and practical matters too ponderous, too muddy, too theoretical, and too other-worldly. In terminology it has appeared to be their policy always to use a big word when a small one would have done just as satisfactorily. This professional tendency has frightened many persons and reflected on the practicality of both theology and philosophy.

It is my purpose in this sermon to consider one of the greatest of theological doctrines

which deals with the most wonderful experience that a finite human being can have in this life. Don't let the customary designation of a doctrine scare you, for we want you to see the simplicity of the truth and its practical benefit to you personally. The theological name is "Entire Sanctification." Let me simplify its meaning and you will readily understand its great significance and we trust you will come to experience its utilitarian value.

To be sure, to most people, the word "sanctification" is a dark, foreboding and meaningless word. Let me give you concisely its definition as gathered from many dictionaries, including Webster, Worcester, Funk and Wagnall's, Century and Standard. All agree that "to sanctify" means: (1) to consecrate, dedicate or set apart for holy use, and (2) to purify, cleanse or purge. When the word is used with reference to a person it means that such person is: (1) dedicated to God's will and (2) his being has been purified. So you see when the word "sanctify" is broken up into more common words it is easily understood. It simply means consecration and purification. Now let us apply it to ourselves.

Every member of the human race is confronted with the sin problem. Here is where the

practicability of the truth comes in, for is it not a fact that the most important hindrance to your personal happiness is the presence of sin bringing its condemnation, guilt, remorse, discontent, and despair? In fact, sin is the cause of all of man's troubles and sorrows? It is the Public Enemy Number One of the world. Greed, hatred, jealousy, envy, licentiousness, covetousness, and war are all results of sin. Speaking of practicality, what could be more practical than the elimination of this monster.

Now let us take the next step -- sin is twofold. Sin is what you are and what you do. It is concerned with both being and doing. The acts that you commit which are violations of the laws of God's moral government are called sins -- plural. But the nature that prompts these acts is called the sin born in us, or to use theological terms, inbred sin, native depravity, or carnality. Therefore, we stand before God as sinful creatures who have broken His righteous statutes.

Let us proceed further. A man who violates the laws of the United States is a criminal. He

is a rebel against society. He must be apprehended and punished.

In the government of the universe, we find the immutable laws of God, the Ten

Commandments. All have sinned -- we are criminals in the sight of God. We merit the penalty of broken law.

But Jesus came and paid our penalty on the Cross. When we accept His sacrifice with a

repentant heart for our wrongdoing, our sinful acts, we are forgiven. We are no longer rebels. We stand before God no longer as a criminal or a rebel. In theological language this is called "justification." It is a legal, forensic, judicial term which simply means that the demands of the law have been satisfied and we are free from guilt, condemnation and penalty. This is a great, mighty, tremendous experience -- a sinner forgiven of every sinful act, the slate wiped clean, the record of transgressions expunged, "remembered against us no more forever." This is man's initial experience with God -- one of pardon, one of forgiveness.

One part of the problem of sin is now settled. My sinful acts are forgiven. I am now

justified in the sight of God.

But what of the other part of the sin problem? My sinful acts have been forgiven but my sinful nature still remains. And that is where the glorious truth of entire sanctification comes in. Now don't be frightened by the word, remember it simply means, according to the dictionaries, two things,

(1) consecration and (2) purification.

Here is the correct procedure -- first, I come to God and confess my sins -- he forgives me. I now offer myself to Him -- My talents, my time, my self, my all, this is consecration. In a real sense I humanly sanctify myself -- that is man's part. I yield all to Him. God's part in sanctification is to purify, to cleanse. God cannot and will not purify a rebel, a criminal -- no, first that sinner must repent and be forgiven. That is the first work of divine grace. But God will purify a forgiven, pardoned person. This is the second act of divine grace. The first deals with my sinful acts and the second deals with my sinful nature.

Yes, it is as simple as that. But let not its simplicity deceive you. It is all important,

Because:

1. It is commanded -- "be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1: 15-16).
2. It is required -- "Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).
3. It is the will of God -- "Even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3).

All churches believe a man must be holy to enter heaven. There is no dispute on this point. All are agreed.

St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. Augustine, John Wesley, George Whitefield, John Fletcher, all taught and experienced not only forgiveness but cleansing.

In closing let me raise the three questions in Your mind.

1. Is this experience Scriptural?
2. Is it Practical?
3. Is it Possible?

Yes, it is scriptural.

I Thessalonians 4:3 -- "For this is the will of God ... your sanctification."

I Thessalonians 4: 7 -- "For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

I Peter 1:15, 16 -- "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Colossians 4:12 -- "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

I Thessalonians 5: 23 -- "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

Jesus prayed in St. John 17:17 -- "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Furthermore -- it is the most practical thing in the world. Why live with constant internal

strife? Why be victimized by carnality, upset by anger, fear, hatred, jealousy? Why suffer the heartaches of a sinful nature driving one to sinful acts necessitating constant forgiveness. Why be a weak, ineffective Christian? Certainly it is practical to be free from this internal disturber of life.

But the wonderful truth is that it is not only scriptural and practical, it is gloriously possible in this present life.

That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him) all the days of our life (Luke 1:74-75).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

To be a candidate for this experience you must first know that your sinful acts have been

forgiven. If you are still a sinful rebel you are not qualified to receive anything but pardon or penalty. But if you are justified you are now ready to present your all -- to consecrate - and receive from God His great gift -- the cleansing of your sinful nature by the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit.

In a future sermon I shall consider the relationship of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to

Entire Sanctification. It is sufficient to say here that God purifies the heart when a person has made a complete consecration. Peter testified concerning the Day of Pentecost when he received the Holy Spirit that his heart was purified.

If this truth is new to you let me make a suggestion. If you are honest and sincere and desire God's best, do this -- study God's word, pray earnestly, lay your need before Him and "ye shall know the truth." He will send the Holy Spirit to your heart. If the thousands now listening will follow the above formula -- never mind involved theological dogmas -- search the scriptures, follow the urge of your hungry heart, and your sinful nature will be purged.

God bless every one of you.

Let your supplication be:

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;

I want Thee forever to live in my soul;

Break down every idol, cast out every foe;

Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow;

Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

God can do this mighty act for you now. You make a complete consecration of your all.

You do your part and God will do His part. He will purify your innermost nature. Let your heart reach out as follows:

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,

I wait blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet;

By faith for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow,

Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Prayer

Let us now pray -- O God, we have endeavored to preach the inspiring truth of Thy great

plan of salvation -- complete deliverance from sin. Thou canst and wilt forgive repenting men for their sinful acts. But in addition Thou wilt cleanse sinful natures of consecrated followers by the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. We earnestly pray that scores of honest, sincere people may consecrate their all this very minute and realize the greatest experience a finite soul can know.

Send Thy Holy Spirit to their hearts this very hour. Amen.

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