

Sunday, December 15, 2023
SANCTIFY ME LORD, SANCTIFY US

- 1. Have you ever prayed, “Lord, make me more like You?”**
2. Have you ever prayed, “Lord make us more like You?”
What are you longing for? What are you yearning for?

Today we are going to look at a prayer request.

It was the prayer request by Jesus hours before His arrest and crucifixion.
It was a prayer request to His Father on behalf of His disciples.

It is found in John 17, verse 17.

It is an easy verse to remember, but it takes a lifetime to work out.

SANCTIFY THEM IN THE TRUTH, YOUR WORD IS TRUTH

What a request! Of all things Jesus would pray for, He prayed for us...

Why was this so important? Why was our sanctification such a heart concern to Him?

I pray at the end of this sermon, we will have a clearer understanding of why.

Today we are going through this petition, word by word.

We will look at the **WHAT, WHO, HOW and WHY** of sanctification

We will see that sanctification (to become holy) is a lifetime process for every truly born again Christian

BIG IDEA: All truly born again Christians are sanctified and are being sanctified for God’s purposes and always for His glory.

TITLE: SANCTIFY ME LORD, SANCTIFY US

Let’s Pray

CONTEXT: THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

Just hours before Jesus will be arrested, He is with His disciples and He begins to pray to His Father. This moment may capture our best view into the heart of Jesus and the intimacy between Him and His Father

Jesus first prays for Himself, and looking up to heaven He says **“Father the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You”**

He then continues His prayer:

>” I have manifested Your name to the men you gave me.” Jesus says in His prayer that they have **KEPT** His word, **RECEIVED** His word and **UNDERSTOOD** and **BELIEVED** that He was **SENT** by the Father.

Let me pick up and read from verse 13-19.

*13 But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may **have My joy** made full in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the **world has hated them**, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to **keep them from the evil one**. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth**. 18 As You sent Me into the world, **I also have sent them into the world**. 19 For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

Jesus was getting ready to send His disciples into the world. He knew they would be hated, relentlessly pursued by the enemy for the purpose to steal their joy and destroy their witness. He prayed that they would have His joy, be protected from the evil one and that they would be sanctified.

T/S Before we unpack John 17:17,

Let's look at a description of **THE HOLINESS OF GOD**.

The holiness of God is who God is. **God is holy, which means He is separate, unique, above all created things. He is the creator of all things, seen and unseen. He is pre-existent with no beginning and no end. He is all powerful, all knowing, all present.** No one, or nothing is near His equal. He is the standard by which all things and persons are judged. **He transcends all that is. You can say He is out of this world. He has perfect moral excellence and purity, and is undefiled, separate from all evil and sin.** He is righteous in all His judgements and in all His ways, **and His glory is what emanates from the harmonizing of all His perfect attributes.**

WE are called to be holy. BE HOLY, FOR I, THE LORD AM HOLY - Leviticus 22:10 Our personal holiness may have a direct effect on how the lost world views God, THUS JESUS PRAYS FOR US.

T/S Before we look at sanctification, let's first look at SALVATION

Salvation has three stages. It is the rescue and deliverance of the redeemed sinner from the penalty of sin (Justification), the power of sin (Sanctification), and the presence of sin (Glorification). It is all a gift from God by grace through faith and it is eternal.

1. JUSTIFICATION. An act of God by which HE declares the sinner to be not guilty, acquitted of their sins, justified, and declared righteous through faith alone in the substitutionary death of Christ.

It is the sinner's new legal standing. They are united with Christ. It is a one-time event that occurs in an instance. When one is born again, they are made alive by God, forgiven of sins, becomes a child of God, they are a new creation with a new nature. They now have a righteous standing with God through Christ. See 2nd Corinthians 5:21

2. SANCTIFICATION. Sanctification is the lifelong process of the believer being made holy; progressively being set apart from sin, and gradually being transformed into the image of Christ while having a righteous standing in Christ.

3. GLORIFICATION. This takes place immediately the moment the Christian is face to face with God at one's death, or when Jesus returns. The Christian is given a glorified body which is pure and undefiled, forever to dwell with God in glory.

T/S Let us now unpack this verse and see the WHAT in sanctification.

DEFINITION: Greek: Hagiazō means, holy, to become holy, separate, set apart.

It is where the word saint is derived. The root semitic meaning is to cut.

Old Testament: Things set apart by God for His holy purposes

1. **Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19)** Tabernacle, Temple , Priests , utensils in the temple, the Altar, the Sabbath (Genesis 2.3)

New Testament: Every truly born again Christian

Sanctification is the life-long process of the believer being gradually transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ.

Sanctification is becoming more Christ-like as one is becoming increasingly set apart from the world and sin.... Becoming more holy

Though positionally holy in Christ, we still sin. Because of our new heart, we long for God and His ways, but there is now a war with our unredeemed flesh, the world and the devil.

But praise God we are new creatures in Christ. We have died to sin.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.

Colossians 3:3 - *For you have died and your life is hidden in Christ in God.*

We now walk this walk with newness of life. (the sanctifying process)

Romans 6:4 *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life*

IT IS A BATTLE, IT IS WAR

Romans 7:19-24 *For the good I want, I do not do, but I practice the evil that I do not want.... wretched man I am Who will set me free from this body of sin and death. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In this battle, when we stumble, **we can be assured that our sanctification is not dependent on our perfection, but resting in the confidence that we have righteous standing before God in Christ.**

We are sanctified, and at the same time we are being sanctified.

Hebrews 10:14 - *For by one offering, He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.* **WE are becoming what we already are, HOLY!**

This brings us peace and encourages us to continue to cling to Christ.

We should not be surprised that we still sin. We are still growing.
and it is by grace through faith that we have the victory.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world our faith. 1 John 5:4

**IT IS ALSO WORKWe are not passive in our sanctification but active.
(we will look at that more later)**

Philippians 2:12 ...***work out your salvation in fear and trembling.***

Great news: verse 13 - ***For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. PRAISE GOD!***

IT IS ALL BY GRACE (PARADOX OF GRACE, even the work)

1 Corinthians 15:10 ***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain, but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.***

PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION

T/S. Before we look at WHO is being sanctified, the Bible is clear that sanctification is a progressive transformation.

2 Corinthian 3:18 ***But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.***

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WHO

T/S Lets now look at WHO Jesus is speaking of. ***“Sanctify Them”***

1. **HIS DISCIPLES** (JOHN 17) ***Given by the Father***, they kept Your word, ***received Your word***, truly understood that Jesus was sent by the Father, they are ***hated by the world***. Jesus prays, “Sanctify them”

Jesus also prayed for all who would believe in Him by their word.

2. **ALL TRULY BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS**

John 17:20 “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those who believe in Me through their word.” It started at Pentecost and continues today and until every tribe, tongue, and nation and has heard the Gospel.

Who is a truly born again Christian ? The one who has been transformed by the Miracle of God’s saving grace through faith in the Gospel of Christ. That person has been forgiven of sins and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They are the” whosoever believes” in Christ. They are chosen by God.

Romans 8:29 - *For those He foreknew , He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son (Sanctification)...and those He predestined He called, and those whom He called, He also justified (Justification) and those whom He justified, He also glorified (Glorification)*

And praise God, Jesus is always interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25 *Therefore He is also able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

T/S Before we move on to the **How** of sanctification, it is important to know that all three persons of the Trinity are working in perfect harmony in our sanctification.

1. **Father:** *Philippians 1:6 ... He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.. John 17:17 Jesus prays to the Father, “ Sanctify them”*

2. **Son:** *1 Corinthians 1:30 - But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*

3. **Holy Spirit:** *2 Thessalonians.2:13.... for God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

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T/S Let us look now at HOW one is sanctified. .

The primary means of our sanctification is the Truth

TRUTH So what is truth ... **This is the question of all questions that confounds the religious, philosophers, scientists, mystics, lawyers.. Just about everyone.**

>TRUTH IS WHAT IS, It is reality, It is how things really are, Real state of affairs,

>It is fact, It doesn't contradict itself, It stands alone, It is not relative, It has no variation, It is exact

>It is Absolute, It has no blurred lines.

>**All truth originates from God**

>**Truth is divine. All God's commandments are truth (Psalm 119:151)**

>Truth is whatever God says. He is the God of truth (Psalm 31:5)

> Jesus said "Your word is truth" (John 17:17)

> *The truth will set you free (John 8:32)*

> *The knowledge of truth that leads to godliness (Titus 1:1)*

>Obedience to the truth will purify your soul. 1 Peter 1:22)

>**Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.** (John 14:6).

>And before Pilate He says, "I have come into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."

TRUTH IS THE INSTRUMENT OF GOD THAT SANCTIFIES

"YOUR WORD IS TRUTH" The major way God speaks to us is through His Word. The Bible which is the Holy Book that contains the Word of God, is the only source of divine truth. **From the Bible we read:**

>John 17:17 *Your Word is truth.*

>John 1:1, 14 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh. **Jesus is the Word.** Every word Jesus spoke and everything He did was truth.*

>2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is God breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God is equipped for every good work. (see it's sanctifying work)*

>1 Peter 1:23 *The Word saves* >John 6:63 *The Word gives life*

>1 Peter 2:2, *Like newborn babies desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow thereby. (It gives nourishment for growth)*

>Psalm 119:9 *How does a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. (It keeps one pure)*

>John 15:3 *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken (It cleanses)*

>Ephesians 5:25-26. **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, *so that He might sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.***

>John 10:17 *So faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of Christ*

>1 Peter 1:24 - *The word of the Lord endures forever (never dies)*

The Word pierces, shatters, burns and melts to transform us into Christ's image. Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is sharper than any two edged sword able to pierce as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both bones and marrow able to judge the thoughts and the intentions of the heart. .. and no creature is hidden from His sight.*

Jeremiah 23:29 *“Is not My word like fire?” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock? Sword, Fire, Hammer... Oh how the truth of God's word will cut, chisel, and melt us till we become more like Christ.*

As we are made more like Christ through the hearing and heeding of the truth of the word, we see also from the word that sanctification is a walk with God. LIKE ENOCH.... ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD Genesis 5:24

> 3 John 4 *I have no greater joy than this, to see my children walking in the truth.* Gripping His hand and walking in OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH

> 2 John 6 *And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.*

> Galatians 5:16 *But I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the deeds of the flesh*

SANCTIFICATION OCCURS BY THE RENEWING THE MIND

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world , but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you will prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

THE MIND IS THE DOORWAY TO THE HEART

Our minds are corrupt by our old nature and all that is coming in daily. We need God's word to renew us to the truth of who God is and what is His will. **If we do not study God's word, then we are ignorant of who God is. We become stagnant in our relationship.** By the renewing of our mind with the word, we will have a greater knowing and understanding of God. Our love for God and our worship will intensify. **Affections for God will overflow and our Christ-likeness will manifest in our attitudes and actions.**

There is no substitute for true spiritual growth other than the hearing and heeding of God's word. This is the message in John 17:17.

Also, I want to share an aspect of sanctification that is seen in the word, often in the Epistles. (Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews). We mentioned it earlier. We are not simply passive in our sanctification, but also active.

It involves the active laying aside of the negative behaviors and at the same putting on the positives.

Example: Colossians 3:5-14

PUTTING ASIDE THE NEGATIVES: *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, **put them all aside:** anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him*

PUT ON THE POSITIVES: *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is [k]the perfect bond of unity.*

There are dangers on both sides.

Unchecked Activeness, may give way to legalism, self-righteousness, pride, joylessness. It can become all about the doing.

Utter Passiveness: laziness, cheap grace, no need for the Law, faith without works.

Both extremes could be symptoms of a false assurance of salvation; Jumping over the cross. **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith** (2nd Corinthians 13:5).

We must be active AND yet at the same time be totally dependent on the Holy Spirit for His power and leading.

What sins are you struggling with? What efforts are you taking to battle sin? Are you resting in Christ?

How are you working those spiritual disciplines? Prayer, fasting, solitude, Bible study, service, worship, stewardship, relationships, meditation, journaling.

HOW IS YOUR GROWTH? HOW ARE YOU LOOKING MORE LIKE JESUS
Are you thinking of others more than yourself? kinder? gentler? more patient? showing mercy? easier to forgive? longing for the Word more than social media ? rejoicing more in the hard times? learning the secret to be content in all circumstances? Mourning over sin? more persecution for your righteousness? Is grumbling ceasing? Is sharing Christ more intentional? ARE YOU YEARNING FOR CHRIST?

Are you aiming for perfection, or are you motivated by your love for God and His love for you? IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE HEART

Dr. Steve Lawson said this, “God is more concerned for your godliness than your giftedness. He is more concerned for the depth of your maturity than the width of your holiness. God is most concerned with your character than with your career.”

Before we look at reasons why we are sanctified, I just want to mention other means that lead to our sanctification.

Persecution: to know the sufferings of Christ, (Philippians 1:29)

Affliction: proven character, hope, love, (Romans 5:4-5) Comfort others(2nd Corinthians 1:3-5)

Trials: endurance, test our faith (James, 1:3)

Discipline: (share in holiness, restore, Hebrews 12:10-11)

Pruning: (bear more fruit, John 15:2)

Iron sharpening iron (Proverbs 27:17). Help each other see what we don't see, Confront and comfort and inspire others to grow in holiness.

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WHY Finally, let's look at the purpose of our sanctification. **WHY** are we sanctified?

1. GOD COMMANDS IT, “ YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” (1 Peter 1:16).

Since God is holy, so shall His people be. We, His children, are to reveal to the world His holy character. ..like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves, also in all your behavior. 1 Peter 1:15....Peter also says we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

The Apostle Paul said, “Imitate me as I imitate God

Matthew Henry: Be sober-minded in opinion, as well as in practice, and humble in your judgment of yourselves. A strong and perfect trust in the grace of God is agreeable with best endeavors in our duty. Holiness is the desire and duty of every Christian. It must be in all affairs, in every condition, and towards all people.

We must approach God with reverence and fear. We can't be loose, flippant, or cavalier. Remember Nadab and Abihu. Consumed by fire at the altar.. *Then Moses said to Aaron, “ It is what the Lord spoke saying’ By those who come near to Me, I will be treated as holy, and before all people, I will be honored.’* “Leviticus 10:3

A lack of fear and reverence is a sin that we all are constantly susceptible to.

2. GOD'S WILL 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you*

know how to possess his own [vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

We now know God. We love Him. We want to honor Him. We no longer live as slaves of sin, but slaves of righteousness.

3. TO BE SENT John 10:34, Jesus speaking, “... *whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world.*” John 17:18, *As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

We are sent to win souls for Christ. We are sanctified so we can wage war against the enemy and rescue captives behind enemy lines.

We are sent to carry out the **Great Commission, to make disciples**. Only those who have been called by God and set apart, can do this by the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. WITNESS AND SERVANT Isaiah 43:10. “*You are my witnesses, declares the Lord and my servants...*” We are witnesses and servants of God to show the world who God is. Our sanctified lives will bring a distinction between the world and the people of God. **This distinction will be the light that will draw the lost and cause them to yearn for Christ.** Our sanctified living should be fresh water for the thirsty and food for the hungry. We are the light and salt of the world. We are sanctified servants of God doing kind deeds that glorify God. ***We are His workmanship created for good works in Christ and His Ambassadors.***

The Bridge manifesto in our building speaks to our distinctives.

5. UNITY Our sanctification (our holiness) helps to identify us as those united with Christ. **.Our holiness is the uniform we wear that identifies us as belonging to Jesus.** Without that holy attire we cannot enter the wedding feast. *And without holiness, no one will see God.* (Hebrews 12:14)

Our unity will be the proof to the world that God sent His Son . We read in John 17:20-21, “ I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word; that they may all be one ; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe You sent Me.

Our unity, noted by our holiness, is the Billboard to the world that GOD IS and that Jesus was sent into the world to save sinners.

Let me ask you, what is your unifying role in the body of Christ?

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:16-16. *15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

If you are not active in a local body of believers, then pray and ask God what body He is calling you to. Then come BE that part. God has designed all of us to be fitted together, **working in unison and in one accord.**

Romans 15:5-6 **Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

6. TO KNOW AND BELIEVE **Isaiah 43:10** **“So that you may know and believe .”** We see that the sanctification process not only transforms us into Christ’s image, but brings us into an ever increasing intimacy with God as we come to know and trust Him.

The Apostle John wrote, **“We have come to know and believed the love which God has for us.” (1 John 5:16)**

Perhaps it is the wisdom of God to design this process so that we can experience His love and faithfulness hand in hand as we walk with God. The truth of His word changes us from glory to glory...Our motives, attitudes and actions begin to resemble Christ’s. We become increasingly in love with God as we experience His love. We fear and revere Him more, and at the same time long for His gentle everlasting kindness. He is our good, good Father and our best friend.

As we are becoming more like Christ, though painful and fearful at times, we are longing more for Christ which is a result of the Miracle, the gift of His saving grace. We embrace the call to be holy, as we yearn for intimacy with our Savior.

The Apostle Paul said it best in Philippians 3. He likened the pursuit for Christ-likeness to a race. **His quest to know God was his purpose.**

> I count all things loss for the surpassing knowledge to know Christ.... That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.....Not that I have obtained or have already become perfect, BUT I PRESS ON toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus .

The prize of the upward call Paul is speaking of is to be united with Christ forever in glory. Our sanctification is preparing us for the same.

For those who are struggling with their walk, I want to encourage you to look back at your justification, the joy of being born again

Remember the darkness before your salvation... **Then do as Hebrews 12:1-3 says, ..lay aside every encumbrance and sin that entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us fixing our eyes on Jesus,...who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame....For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow worry...**

In fear and reverence, consider His death on the cross for you, and be restored back on the walk to increasing holiness.

As previously stated, “All truly born again Christians are sanctified and are being sanctified for God’s purposes, and always for His glory.” Let us continue glorifying God by living holy lives.

For one day we will see Him face to face, and for those who love Him, they will not shrink back, nor be ashamed, but will look forward to His appearing, for we shall be like Him. *And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him, purifies himself as He is pure.* 1 John 3: 3.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.