

Sanctification – Another Misunderstood Word in Scripture

Beloved, sanctification does not mean righteousness. Sanctification does not mean justification. Sanctification does not mean the establishment of your position before God. Sanctification simply means to be “set apart”. Another word meaning the same thing is the word “holy.”

You can be sanctified and not justified. Justified means positional righteousness before our Heavenly Father. In other words, when we are asked by the Lord to sanctify ourselves, we are being asked to set apart our behavior from that of the world. Further we are to believe that we are already sanctified because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

When we look closely at 1st Corinthians chapter 1 verse 30, Paul says “but of Him (The Heavenly Father) you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In other words, you and I have already become “set apart” unto God through our relationship with the Lord Jesus. This is not because of what we do, but because of who we have become. We have become joint heirs with the Lord Jesus, we are made the righteousness of Him, and we are as righteous as He is righteous, totally based upon His finished work, and our belief in that settled fact.

Look again at the 7th Chapter of 1st Corinthians starting in verse 13: “and a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. It is obvious by the statement “who does not believe” that Paul is talking about an unbeliever. He is someone who does not have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is an unbeliever.

However, notice the next verse. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified (set apart) by the believing wife, (and the same is true of the unbelieving wife married to the believing husband), for Paul continues: “and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: otherwise your children would be unclean, but now that are holy” (set apart or sanctified).

You and I are “sanctified” or “set apart” or “holy” because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus. He, Himself has been made our sanctification.

Every place you go, every event you take part in, whether it be a restaurant, a book store, or a ball game is “sanctified” because of your presence. Because you are there, so is the Lord Jesus Christ, and everywhere you go, you take Him with you. The facility becomes “set apart” because of His presence within you.

In the Old Testament we learn from 1st Samuel 2:2 “No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.” In other words, God is separated from everything else. There is nothing to compare to Him. He is set apart from everything and everyone on the earth. Here we are not looking at His righteousness, even though there is no righteousness apart from Him. We are simply looking at the fact that He is set apart from all of His creation.

Holiness and sanctification mean virtually the same thing. We are holy and sanctified because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not because of our actions, but because of our belief in Him.

We read in the Gospel of John, chapter 17 where Jesus is praying for His church. He says in verse 17 and following “Father, (Jesus is saying), sanctify them by Your truth, your word is truth. Further Jesus says in verses 15 through 19: “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one, they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world, sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.”

As Jesus “set himself apart” from the things of this world, so too, He has already done the same thing on our behalf.

Remember, sanctification is not righteousness. Sanctification is not positional justification. The sanctifying process has in view that the believer should “separate, or set himself/herself apart from the things of this world. We have no continuing relationship with this world. We have no inheritance in this world. We are pilgrims and sojourners just passing through this world. Our inheritance is the Lord Jesus Himself.

Remember the disciple of the Apostle Paul by the name of Demas? We read in 2nd Timothy 4: and following where Paul is about to finish His ministry on the earth, He is exhorting the believer to continue in the faith, convincing, preaching, rebuking, exhorting with all longsuffering, telling them that the time will come when folks would not endure sound doctrine for they will find teachers that will turn their ears away from the truth, turning rather to fables.

He then goes on to say that His disciple Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica. This forsakenness did not condemn Demas to hell. It merely means that he no longer was following Paul in the faith. Demas loved the things of the world, more than the things of the Lord. Beloved, this happens more often than we would like to believe. These are believers who just quit following the things of the Lord, in favor of the things of the world. Money, possessions, power, etc. are constantly pulling at the believer to get him/her to forsake the Church and its activities.

We are encouraged then to “keep on keeping on.” We are to “press toward the goal for the prize” ie; the crowns that await the believer for keeping on keeping on. Three of the 5 crowns available to the believer are the incorruptible crown – given to all believers who set their affections on the things above (1st Cor: 9:25, Coll 3:1) the crown of righteousness, given to all believers who “love the fact of His appearing,(2 Timothy 4:8) and the crown of life – given to all who endure temptation even to martyrdom. (James 1:12).

Being set apart unto Him is something we already possess, and at the same time we are encouraged to continue to separate ourselves from the things of this world. In other words, because you are sanctified, walk worthy of your calling. Direct comments and questions to tommorrison0808@yahoo.com.