

St. Paul's 'Election' Is Unto Sanctification.

by Daniel Steele

The sermon explores the biblical understanding of sanctification as an act of divine grace facilitated by the Holy Spirit, emphasizing its importance in the believer's life and relationship with God.

Scripture: Romans 5:5, Romans 6:19, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:6, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 4:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Timothy 4:12, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:2

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Daniel Steele preaches about sanctification and holiness post-Pentecost, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in creating and preserving purity in believing hearts. The act of sanctification involves divine grace removing impurity in those born of the Spirit, leading to deliverance from sin. Sanctification is viewed as the goal of Christian purification in this life, breaking the power of sin and allowing believers to bear fruit and experience eternal life. Steele highlights the importance of sanctification for spiritual perception, love, and clear spiritual eyesight, ultimately glorifying Christ and enabling believers to see God.

Transcript

It is our purpose in the present reading to discuss the post-pentecostal nouns expressive of sanctification and holiness. They are four in number. They were not used in the four Gospels because the Agent who produces holiness was not yet given as the Sanctifier. He is called the Holy Spirit, not to distinguish him from the Father and the Son, who are equally holy, but to designate his office, to create and conserve purity in believing hearts. It may be that he was not sent to do his official work before Christ's ascension, because his instrument, the sword of gospel truth, was not completely forged and tempered, like a Damascus blade. Gospel truth is a series of historical facts beginning with the manger-cradle and ending with the ascent from God's footstool to his throne. There may have been another reason for delaying the gift of the Paraclete. It is reasonable that the incarnate Son of God should be glorified in heaven before he should be glorified on earth. For the work of sanctification glorifies Christ, inasmuch as faith in him, implying perfect self-surrender to him, is the indispensable condition.

The great word for sanctification is *hagiasmos*. It occurs ten times in the New Testament. St. Paul uses it nine times and St. Peter once. In the A. V. it is translated by "holiness" five times, and five by "sanctification." The R. V. always renders it by "sanctification." This is the more accurate version, since the ending *mos* in Greek means an act, as does the ending *tion* in English, while the ending *ness*, as *holiness*, signifies a quality or state.

Hence the revisers have furnished five new proof-texts to the definition of sanctification as an act in the catechism of the M. E. Church. Ans. 57. "Sanctification is that act of divine grace whereby we are made holy." The act is that of removing impurity existing in the nature of one already born of the Spirit. Deliverance from sin as a tendency born with us is the act of God through the Holy Spirit.

2 Thess. 2: 13, "God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The election was made in view of the foreknown purifying work of the Holy Spirit wrought on the human condition of freely believing gospel truth. All foreknown, persevering believers are foreordained unto eternal life. This is the key to the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Instead of "us" read "believers," to whom the epistle is addressed, "the faithful in Christ."

I Pet. 1:2, "Elect . . . in sanctification of the Spirit," because it is the Spirit who accomplishes the cleansing. The human condition here is "obedience," a synonym for faith, as disobedience and unbelief are interchangeable terms in the Greek. Rom. 6:19, "Even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification," the goal of Christian purification in the present life. This is the aim of every regenerate man who places his mental and bodily powers at the disposal of righteousness, as a ruler over him. The purpose of justification, as here stated by St. Paul, is to open the way for entire sanctification. The same truth is stated in other words in verse 22, "But now being made free from sin [as a despot], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life."

The power of sin is broken by regenerating grace. The ripe fruit of this state of victory over actual sin is sanctification, which is viewed as done not at death, but before we reach the end, which is eternal life. The plain teaching of this text is that amid this wicked world the sanctified man is to stand laden with luscious fruit many years before he is called to his eternal reward. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world."

Heb. 12:14, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." Only holy beings can rise to the sight of the Holy One. Whenever the Scriptures speak of the divine vision as the prerogative of the sanctified, it is a blissful, spiritual perception of God here and now. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." When the heart is purged of sin the eye is purged of film. President Edwards, even when a young man, had such enrapturing communion with God, and such a perception of his glory, that he seemed to be the only solid reality, while all earthly things seemed unsubstantial and shadowy. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him." The Son reveals the Father by sending the Holy Spirit to anoint the inward eye with eye-salve. The same truth is implied in the declaration, "He that loveth not knoweth not God." The implication is that love has eyes. But where does evangelical love come from? Turn to Rom. 5:5, and you will find the secret. "The love of God hath been shed abroad [a Niagara outpouring] in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us."

Spiritual perception comes from love; love comes from the Spirit, who perfectly fills the sanctified heart to the exclusion of the sin-ward trend. Hence sanctification gives clear spiritual eyesight. It is the assurance of faith, or faith merged into certain knowledge, Eph. 4:13. "Unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" -- not two unities. as the faulty punctuation teaches. but one. as in Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament. To all doubting and hence weak Christians let me speak a word of cheer. Keep on trusting in Christ. The path of faith leads to the wide open door of knowledge, where the sun shines day and night all the year round. "For I KNOW him whom I have believed." An ill use is sometimes made of Heb. 12:14, by quoting it as a threatening against the regenerate who do not realize the

completion of the work of inward cleansing. There are no threatenings in the Word of God against the persevering sons of God. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Heirship hinges on sonship, not on development into perfect manhood. Hence it is neither scriptural nor wise to take Mt. Sinai for your pulpit when you preach entire sanctification. Preach this glorious doctrine, "always drawing, not driving."-Wesley.

The word *hagiasmos* is sometimes used to denote either the act of God, or the believers own act of preservation of the holiness imparted by the Holy Spirit, as in 1 Thess. 4:3, 4, where abstinence is enjoined from fornication, to the conscience of the pagan world at that time an act of utter moral indifference, as it is to this day. Another text for the act of preservation is 1 Tim. 2:15, "If they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety."

For holiness as a quality there are three words in the Greek Testament, used only by St. Paul, and each used only twice. We come now to a word not found in classical Greek -- *hagiotas*, 2 Cor. 1:12. "For our glorifying is this . . . that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom . . . we behaved ourselves in the world." This is a very emphatic profession of holiness. The same word is found also in Heb. 12:10, "That we may be partakers of his holiness," not in degree, but in kind. This is the recovery of the lost moral image of God, a glorious possibility to every believer.

Hagnotas is a word not quite unknown in classical Greek. St. Paul uses it in 2 Cor. 6:6, "In pureness." This is another instance where holiness is unequivocally professed. In 2 Cor. 11:3, St. Paul again employs the same term to express his fear lest the Corinthians had been "corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." The peculiarity of this word is that it means purity, and not consecration. That is true also of the next term, *hagneia*, in 1 Tim. 4:12, and 5:2, "In purity," "in all purity." These texts prove the possibility of inward cleanness in this life, for they both relate to intercourse in human society as now constituted.

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