

Wholly Sanctified

by Stephen Kaung

God's purpose for His people is to be wholly sanctified, separated from everything common and natural, and to take on a holy character, like His.

Duration: 1:08:50

Scripture: Matthew 5:48, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 1:4, Philippians 3:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Hebrews 12:14

Topics: "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of striving for holiness and not settling for mediocrity in our relationship with God. He highlights that God has called us to be separated from the common and to be uniquely His. The speaker also explains the concept of the tripartite nature of man, with the spirit being the master, the soul being the steward, and the body being the servant. He emphasizes that true transformation requires a thorough change in our soul and that our body is also affected by our belief in Jesus.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 2 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, no 1 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 23 and verse 24. Now the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is faithful who calls you, who will also perform it.

I'll read it again. Now the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is faithful who calls you, who will also perform it.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, we do thank thee that we can continue to come to thee, not only to remember thee at thy table, but to hear thy word. We pray, Lord, that thou will grant to us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and open the eyes of our heart that we may enter into thy word.

Let thy word enter into us and transform us and conform us to the image of thy beloved Son. This is our prayer. We pray that thou will answer according to the riches of thy glory.

In the name of our Lord Jesus. These days I have been exercised before the Lord about these two verses. The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica, a church in its first love, and he concluded his letter

with these words.

You may consider these words as his prayer for the Thessalonian believers, or you may consider these words as a benediction over that assembly. Or you can even consider this as a proclamation of God towards his own people. But in whatever attitude you may take, one thing is sure.

And that is, we see in these two verses the heart of God, the purpose of God towards his own people. He says the God of peace himself, sanctify your holy and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus. And he is faithful who calls you, who will also perform it.

So in these two verses you can see God's purpose towards his own people. He wants us to be wholly sanctified. Wholly sanctified, in some verses said, sanctified through and through.

Not just a little bit. And this wholly sanctified means that your whole being, your spirit, your soul, and your body, your whole being be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus. And that is what God wills for each one of us.

These people in Thessalonica, they are already saved. They have believed in the gospel preached to them. They are saved.

Not only saved but they suffer persecution for their faith. They have the faith, the love, and the hope. It is a very healthy assembly in its first love towards the Lord.

And the Apostle Paul shared with them God's heart for them. In other words, God's heart is not that we are merely saved. Sometimes we can draw back and feel contented by being saved.

Thank God for that. That's a great thing. So far as we are concerned, probably on earth there is nothing better or greater than this.

That we who were supposed to be eternally condemned, no hope, and yet God save us by His beloved Son. Our sins are forgiven. We are given a new life.

We have hope. That's great to us. But to God, this is just the beginning.

He wants something much more for His people. He wants us to be wholly sanctified. And that means our whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Now brothers and sisters, can we say today that we have been wholly sanctified? Sanctified through and through. Or can we say that our spirit and our soul and our body have been preserved blameless, irreproachable, holy. If the Lord should come now, we can stand before Him without shame.

Knowing that we have fulfilled what God has willed for us. Can we say that? Here you say, may the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly. Why is it God is addressed as the God of peace? What is the meaning of peace? Often times we find in the word of God, peace be unto you.

The grace of God and the peace be upon you. Now what is the real meaning of peace? The God of peace, what does it mean? It means that our God is one who is at peace with himself. That is to say, in him there is no conflict, no division, no contradiction, no difference of opinions.

In the Godhead there is perfect harmony. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. And in such oneness, it is peace.

And this God of peace wants us to have that same peace. That in our spirit, our soul and our body, there is no conflict, no contradiction, no at odd. But there is perfect harmony.

Our whole being in ourselves as well as in relationship with God is totally harmonious. There is nothing against God in us. Now this is a tremendous work.

And thank God, he said, he who calls us is faithful and he will perform it. In other words, this is something that no man can do. He not only purposes for us, but he promises us that he himself will perform it.

Only if you allow him. What do you mean by sanctify? You know in the Word of God, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, this idea of sanctify or holy actually is the same thing. Holy is sanctify.

Holiness is sanctification. These are synonymous. Now what is the meaning of holy? What is the meaning of sanctify? Just a few days ago, I was reading a book.

And in a message given by Wilbur Smith. And we know Wilbur Smith is a person who is so widely read that he is considered as a scholar who knew the Word thoroughly. And he said in his message, he said we do not really appreciate, understand the word holy.

We use that word very carelessly. But actually, holy or holiness is a character of God that is uniquely his. In other words, holy is something that you can only find it in God.

In the Old Testament or in the New Testament, this word means to be cut off, to be separated from. You know in the Old Testament time, if you read say Leviticus chapter 24, you will find that whether it is a person or whether it is a house or whether it is a land or whether it is an animal, now a person can separate it, cut it off from all common use and offer it to God. That is the meaning of holiness.

In other words, holiness is to be separated from, cut off from all that is common. And then it is separated for a solemn purpose and begin to take it, upon it, a new character that is extraordinary, uncommon, special. And that is what holy or holiness means.

You cannot find holiness anywhere else but in God. He is unique. He is uncommon.

He is different from anything. And this is his unique character. Nothing common, nothing ordinary.

It's all special, unique, only one of his kind. And that is holiness. God is holy.

The seraphims will cry out, holy, holy, holy. Why? Because he is the only being in the whole universe that is altogether different and alone. You know, it's very strange.

Another person, Dr. Zuma, he was greatly used by God among the Muslims. And he asked a Muslim scholar, is that word, the word holy in Sanskrit, the true word holy in Sanskrit, ever been in the Book of Koran? And the scholar answered, it's not there. Why? Because holy, holiness belongs to God alone.

He is altogether different. And yet he wants to share it with us. He wants those who believe in him to be wholly sanctified.

That we too may be completely separated from everything that is common, that is natural, that is of the world, and take upon ourselves a holy character, just like he who is holy. Now, that's the idea behind it. So, dear brothers and sisters, as I meditate upon this, I feel that how much we need to pray that prayer.

How much we need to really come to the Lord and allow him to so work in our lives that we may be sanctified wholly. And this is the preservation of the saints. Probably you have heard of this term preservation of the saints.

How can we be preserved? What is meant by preservation of the saints? It means that we will be preserved, blameless at the coming, the parousia, the presence of our Lord Jesus. That we may stand before our Lord Jesus under his light and found to be blameless. This is why God has chosen us.

In Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4, even before the foundation of the world, God has chosen us that we may be holy and without blame in love. That's what we are chosen to be. And in Colossians chapter 1 verse 27, or 24, I forgot, it says that he will reconcile us, that he may present us holy, irretrievable, irreproachable, without blemish, in harmony with him, to be like him.

And that is the calling of God. Do not lower God's standard. I'm afraid today we as believers, we are satisfied with a very low standard.

As we compare ourselves with the world, we think we are far better. That's enough. That's good enough for us.

And because of this, we do not press on. We do not seek the Lord with earnestness. We draw back.

We sit back. We think that we are all right at the coming of the Lord Jesus. But brothers and sisters, if you read the word of God, you'll find that is not true.

God has called us because he is holy. He wants us to be holy. He wants us to be separated from anything that is common and be special.

Extraordinary. Uniquely his. That is God's purpose for us.

And he will not be satisfied less than this. That is the work of our Lord Jesus. The work of Calvary is so thorough that he wants to bring us to a place where we can be in perfect harmony with God.

So let us not lower God's standard, but let us press on. Even the Apostle Paul, in his prison letter, he is still pressing on. He said, I do not think that I have already attained, but I forget the past and press on towards the goal.

So this is, this should be our attitude. God has called us for this very reason. And he himself will work it out.

But he wants our cooperation. Not only in our will, but also in our yieldedness, so that his purpose may be fulfilled. So here he said, May the God of peace himself sanctify you through and through.

Now what does he mean by sanctify you through and through? Separate you through and through. In other words, it touches your whole being. It touches your spirit.

It touches your soul. And it touches your body. Now for the sake of some who may not have that basic foundation, I'm afraid we have to go back to the very basic in order to build upon it.

So this morning probably all we can do is try to go back to the very basic. And that is, God wants our spirit to be sanctified. God wants our soul to be sanctified.

God wants our body to be sanctified. Why? Because when God created man, he created man and tripartite. If you turn to Genesis 2, verse 7, God used the dust of the earth, the red earth, and he used the red earth to form a body.

Then he breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of that form. And man became a living soul. In other words, you find that when God created man, first he prepared the body.

He used the red earth, very common, and he used the red earth and shaped it into a human form. But there's no life there. So he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

In other words, you'll find there is something that comes out of God himself. Not only his hand worked with the mud, as it were, and formed the body of the man, but here you'll find there is something coming out from God himself. It is the breath of life.

He breathed, he shared his life, as it were, and he used that breath of life into that dead form. And as that breath entered that dead form, something happened. It's a creative act.

For the breath of life, that is something come out of God himself, becomes the spirit of man. You know, God is spirit. So that breath of life, when it enters into that mud form, it gives a new organ, as it were, to that mud form, which is the spirit.

God is spirit, so he made man with a spirit. But the wonderful thing is when the breath of life comes into that form, not only it becomes the spirit of man, but the spirit reacts with the body and produces the third part, which is the soul, a living soul. That is the formation of man.

Man has a body because this body is made of earth. Therefore, this body gives us world consciousness. We are in touch with the world around us.

It came from the same source. The spirit came from God and it gave us God consciousness. We are in touch with God.

And when the two come together, it produces a soul, a living soul, a soul that has life. But this life is not God's life. This life is man's life.

It's an animated life, a created life, a life that makes man active, living. And this soul gives us self-consciousness. We are conscious of ourselves.

So you see, man is made of three parts. It's a whole being. Now, you can distinguish them, but you cannot separate them because it is one whole.

In a sense, it's like God is a trinity. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. You can distinguish them, but you cannot separate them.

They are one. And the same thing with man. Spirit, soul, and body, and yet one, because the soul gives us self-consciousness.

Therefore, the soul represents man, of what he is. He is conscious of himself. The soul has a will.

The soul has a mind. The soul has an emotion. And by these faculties, we are conscious of ourselves.

One is different from the other because the way you think, the way you feel, or the way you decide, everyone is different. That makes our individuality. We are all individuals.

No one is exactly the same. Our soul represents ourselves. It is I. It is me.

That's our soul. But in the creation of man, God has a purpose. And there is an order there.

God's order is, because he gives man a spirit, so that man is supposed to use his spirit to commune with God, to receive from God his will, his mind, and then pass it on to the soul. You will will it. You will will the will of God.

You will think about the will of God. You will love the will of God. And as you do that, you will pass on to your body to work it out, to do what God's will is.

So sometimes we use an illustration. Our spirit in man is like the master or the mistress. And the soul, our soul, is like the steward in charge of the house.

And our body is like the servant or the slave. The master will communicate with the steward as to what he wants to do in the house. And the steward will accept that order.

Not reject, but accept, agree to that order. And pass it on to our body to live it out, to act it out. So that is the way that God created man.

God created man not just with a soul. Now strangely, in the Chinese Bible, in Genesis 2, verse 7, the Chinese Bible says, and man becomes a living soul with a spirit. But in the English versions, you don't have that.

Anyway, you'll find the idea is there. And another thing probably you may notice, that in the original Hebrew, the breath of life, the word life is plural in number. It is the breath of lives.

Now there are two different interpretations. One interpretation is in the Hebrew language, sometimes it uses plural for emphasis sake. Now it can be so.

Or it can mean that the breath of life actually, there are two lives there. One life gives the spirit, human spirit. And one life gives the human soul, soul life.

So you'll find the word lives there. But anyway, this is the way we are created. This is the way that God makes us.

And this is the order that God wants us to live before him. And then God put man in the Garden of Eden. Now our brother this morning already said, it is such a beautiful garden.

Plentiful garden. There is nothing bad in that garden. Only good, better, and the best.

I often think that God planted all the trees, fruit trees, all kinds of fruit trees in that garden for man to enjoy. And man needs these fruit trees. Because at that time man lived by eating fruit.

How good that would be to maintain his physical body. This body is created with needs. It needs to be nourished.

And God provided all the nourishment there for that body. It's good. You know when you think of the body, the psalmist in Psalm 139 says, we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

You know in the world people go to extremes. Either they indulge their body, they worship their body, or with some religions or people they look at the body as evil. But in the scripture we are told that our body is fearfully and wonderfully made.

It's a masterpiece of God. God has a purpose for our body. God wants our body to be wholly sanctified.

That is his purpose. But in the garden you have the tree of life. Tree of life is symbolic of the life of God.

Eternal life. Uncreated life. God put that tree in the midst of the garden.

Why? Because God has a reason there. He created our spirit but our spirit needs food. Otherwise it cannot live.

Our spirit needs life and God created our spirit in such a way that it can receive the life of God in our spirit. No other creature can do that. Man is created uniquely for God.

So he put the tree of life in the midst of the garden. As if he is saying to man take it. Eat it.

Then you will be united with me in life. And that will fulfill. But by the side of the tree of life God placed another tree.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now some people say that's a bad tree. I don't think so.

I do not believe God will put anything bad in that garden of Eden. I believe it's a good tree. Better than all the other trees except the tree of life.

We can say it is better because this tree tells us of a knowledge. The knowledge of good and evil. Now brothers and sisters in the whole world there is no knowledge higher than this kind of knowledge.

Scientific knowledge. Technical knowledge. Philosophical knowledge.

Ethical knowledge is the highest. That you may know the difference between good and bad. Good and evil.

That is the highest knowledge in the world. In other words it will be good for the soul. Knowledge is soul food.

Fruits. Body food. Tree of life.

Spirit food. Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Soul food.

And God put these two trees side by side. Why? Because God created man with a free will. Just like he is.

And if you have no opportunity to exercise your free will who knows you have a will. So God put man in the garden gave him the opportunity to exercise his free will. He can choose.

He can choose by just eating all the other fruit trees to maintain his body and forget about his soul and spirit. All he can choose to nourish his soul. Build up his soul to such an extent that he can be independent of God.

He has no need for God. He makes himself. Or he can choose the tree of life that he will live by the life of God and fulfill all God's purpose for him.

So brothers and sisters you'll find God gave man a chance to choose. How does he want to live? You want to live just for the body? Make your body your God? Or you want to live by your soul? With your knowledge? Independent? Totally self-sufficient? No God? Or you can live a life with God and fulfill God's purpose of creation? You can choose. Unfortunately, our forefathers made the wrong choice.

Now what happened? In Genesis chapter 2 verse 17 God says to man you should not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because if you eat on the day that you should eat thereof you shall die. God knows Knowledge without God's life is the most dangerous thing. Knowledge without God's life means death.

And I think for these 20 centuries it must have been proven. It is not that God is jealous. He doesn't want man to grow up.

It is because God knows life is the most important thing. With the life there that knowledge can be used rightly. And you can have the power to control knowledge.

Otherwise it's deadly. But man chooses to live by knowledge. Mental knowledge.

Not by the life of God. So what happened? Brothers and sisters the Bible said God said on the day that you shall eat thereof you shall surely die. But Adam lived hundreds of years afterwards.

So far as his body is concerned he lives on and on and on. Nine hundreds of years. Not only that the Bible said he begot sons and daughters.

In other words his soul is very active. Now how is God's word fulfilled? On the day they eat. Their spirit.

Their communication with God was cut off. The spirit, the human spirit as an organ is still there. But it is in a coma.

And it is in a sense symbolic by Adam and Eve immediately discovered they were naked. Now I do not know but I think probably you know every living thing God clothed them with clothes. With skin, with hairs feathers, you know.

Now how can God create a man naked? A naked body? I don't think so. I believe there must be a kind of glory as a cover over man's body. But when they seen the glory you remember Moses? When he was with God for the days and for the nights even his face shone.

There is a glory clothing there. But when they seen the glory is gone. They are naked.

And they had to hide themselves from God. Their conscience began to accuse them. They cannot face God.

They try to use the fig leaves to cover their nakedness but they cannot because the wind blows. Their spirit was dead. Brothers and sisters in Adam all died.

We were all in Adam before. So when we were born we were born with a spirit in a coma. No power, no communication.

It doesn't mean we don't have a spirit. We have. But that spirit is in a coma.

Sometimes there is still some activities. Sometimes our conscience will wake up. Sometimes intuitively.

When we are in danger we think of God. But we are in a coma. You know death.

Scientific definition of death. What is death? Death is the cessation of the communication with its proper environment. That is death.

What is the death of the body? When the body ceases to communicate with its proper environment that is the world. Now that is the bodily death, right? So spiritually dead is the same thing. The communication with its proper environment which is God and because our spirit is dead so man becomes flesh.

You know in Genesis chapter 6 God said, My spirit will not strive anymore with man because man is a flesh. Now the word flesh has different meanings but there is one meaning and that means flesh means soul and body without the spirit. That's the definition of flesh.

When man lives by his soul and body without the spirit man is a flesh. The natural man is a flesh. Man lives by his soul and by his body.

Sometimes we live by our soul by our intellect by our thinking. Sometimes we live by the passions of our body. But whatever way we live it is within the fleshly area because our spirit is alienated from the life of God.

That is our condition. Before we were saved then when you are saved what happens? The Bible tells us you must be born again. You must be born from above.

What is to be born? Nicodemus said, Can I go back to my mother's womb and born again? No, it is not in the bodily sense nor is it in the soulish sense. It is in the spirit sense because John chapter 3 verse 6 He that is born of the spirit is spirit and he that is born of the flesh is flesh. Our parents being man and woman of flesh they born us also man and woman of flesh.

That's natural birth. Spiritual birth, new birth is the spirit, the Holy Spirit touch our dead body, dead soul cleanse it, renew it bring it to life become a new spirit. So in Hebrews chapter 10 it says our conscience of the heart is being cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus.

His blood cleanses our conscience. You know our conscience accuses us and the blood of the Lord Jesus not only speak for us before God it also cleanses our conscience from our sins. It also stops the mouth of the accuser, Satan and our conscience being washed by the blood of the Lord Jesus a new life, even the life of God come into our spirit and that spirit is renewed.

So the Bible calls us a new spirit. If you read Ezekiel 36 verses 26 and 27 you'll find that God said I will give you a new heart I will give you a new spirit I will take away your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh and then I will put my spirit into your spirit to cause you to keep my ordinances and my commandments. So brothers and sisters that's what happens when you are saved.

When you are saved not only your sins are forgiven your conscience are cleared you know but also you'll find the Holy Spirit brings a new life into your spirit and make your dead spirit alive again and not only that but the Holy Spirit himself come and dwell in your spirit. So Romans 8 said the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Not born of flesh not born of man not born of blood but born that's what initial salvation is.

So when we are saved what happens? What do you mean by you are saved? It means that your dead spirit is renewed become a new spirit and the spirit of God comes and dwells in your spirit and your communication with God the Spirit is resumed. I think that's our experience. We may not know too much we do not even know the Bible but the communication with God has begun.

So what happens when we are saved is our spirit being reborn. Now how about our soul and our body? If you believe in the Lord Jesus one thing is necessary repentance. Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus.

Now repentance means a change of mind that's in the realm of the soul. A change of mind formerly your mind is set upon sin now your mind wants to turn to God. A change of mind.

So actually you see that in our when we are saved our mind is affected. There is a change of mind but unfortunately it is not complete change. It is change of the hour.

So very soon you will discover your old thinking comes back. You will begin to love what you loved before. You will begin to want what you want.

In other words your soul has not been drastically changed. Completely changed. The life in your soul is still your own natural fallen.

It is still your own endemic life that is controlling your soul. Your emotion your will your mind. In the spirit the Holy Spirit comes in to be in control.

But in the soul your soul life animated created life fallen life is still in control. So the change is superficial not thorough. Your soul needs to be saved.

And what about your body? Well your body is affected because before you believe in the Lord Jesus you may have a long face. But when you believe in the Lord Jesus somehow it becomes round. It affects you.

But it is superficial. It is still the mortal body. You have not yet been changed into an immortal body.

It is still the corruptible body. Not the incorruptible. Still that body.

Right? So your body needs to be saved. Now that is our situation. But dear brothers and sisters remember it is more than to be saved.

It is to be wholly sanctified. Now that is what is before us. That is what God has put before us.

So this morning I think that is all we can say. Hopefully we will seek the Lord about this blessing or benediction that God desires for every one of us who are saved. Otherwise He will not be satisfied.

And we cannot see His face. May the Lord help us. Dear Lord we pray that we may hear Thy voice and we may respond.

In Thy precious name we pray. Amen.

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