

Sanctification of the Spirit

In the first message on the Holy Spirit we examined the first work of the Spirit which is to convict men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8). Before the Spirit can do anything further, He first has to get our attention. If we have a moment of honesty with ourselves, we can begin to turn the tide of sin and destruction by acknowledging our sinfulness. It is at that point, if we are willing to repent and receive Christ, that the next work of the Spirit *begins* to transform us.

1. Salvation by faith -

Before we can look at the work of sanctification, we must first be reminded that after the conviction of the Spirit, we have the responsibility to respond.

Eph 2:8,9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Our works do not transform us. We might think we add on bits of righteousness when we do good, but what we are adding onto is a sinful spirit. We cannot earn our salvation by performing so many noble acts of goodness, but there is no work involved in believing. When we place our faith in Christ, we don't *produce* any work, instead we *receive* the work Jesus produced to pay for our sins. We don't offer anything up to God pay for our sins, we recognize the work that Jesus did. In faith, we do not add to Christ's work on the cross. Getting salvation is receiving, not achieving: it is about receiving His work, not achieving by our work. As Isaiah preached:

Isa 43:10 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye **may** know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before

me there was no God formed,
neither shall there be after me.

In the Old Testament, believing is recognized as one of the capacities that man has. There are no footnotes that are added on to explain this away. God complained that Israel had reason to believe but would not.

Num 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Once we believe the next work of the Spirit takes place.

2. The Quickening of the Spirit -

Once we have believed on the work of Christ to pay for our sins and called upon Him for that salvation we are brought into the first stage of the sanctification. We are saved from the wrath of God in Hell.

The Holy Spirit brings power to our prayer when we call out for salvation.

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We might not exactly know all the right words to pray, but the Holy Spirit does. The *groanings* of our desire for righteousness with God are translated by the Spirit for us. When I lead someone in prayer for salvation I want to make sure the right ideas are articulated in the prayer, but there is no one prayer that is more efficacious than the others that are also according to the Scriptures. Consider the prayer of the publican:

Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a

publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The publican's prayer presupposes some things, but all he knew how to explain it was that he was looking for God's mercy. Compared to the Pharisee, he had the right idea and the Holy Spirit was there to interpret the rest.

The very words of Christ were filled with the Spirit to quicken us, or make us alive.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

Next, just as God breathed life into men, the Holy Spirit is the one who brings life to our spirit.

Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Eze 37:5,6 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you,

and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

In the mechanics of salvation, the Father plans, the Son redeems, the Spirit transforms us. First we are sanctified by the Spirit in salvation. We are set apart, which is what sanctification means. We are set apart unto God in salvation.

1Pet 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3. Sanctification of the Spirit -

Next comes the second stage of our sanctification. One of the common problems young believers have is that they don't *feel* exactly sanctified.

The story is told of a young girl who accepted Christ as her Savior and applied for membership in a local church. "Were you a sinner before you received the Lord Jesus into your life?" inquired an old deacon. "Yes, sir," she replied. "Well, are you still a sinner?" "To tell you the truth, I feel I'm a greater sinner than ever." "Then what real change have you experienced?" "I don't quite know how to explain it," she said, "except I used to be a sinner running after sin, but now that I am saved. I'm a sinner running from sin!" she was received into the fellowship of the church, and she proved by her consistent life that she was truly converted.

— Our Daily Bread

Young believers often wonder if they are even saved because they have recurring problems of temptation and sin. They are saved, alright, but that is because they are *spiritually* born again.

John 3:5-8 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The problem is that even though their spirit is born again, they still have a corrupted, dead soul and body.

Rom 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

That is why Paul prays for the entire sanctification of the *whole* believer.

1Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The spirit and the soul are similar in that they are immaterial, but they are severable. They are able to be separated.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our spirit is transformed into a righteous child of God.

2Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature:

old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become
new.

But it is just our spirit that has been
transformed and righteous.

1John 3:9 Whosoever is born of
God doth not commit sin; for **his
seed remaineth in him [the seed
that remaineth in us is our
spirit because that is the part
that is born again]**: and he
cannot sin, because he is born of
God.

Unfortunately, we have the struggle
between our new spirit and our old flesh
and soul. Our spirit is God conscious, the
flesh is world conscious, and the soul is
self conscious.

Gal 5:16-18 *This* I say then,
Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall
not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the
Spirit, and the Spirit against the
flesh: and these are contrary the
one to the other: so that ye cannot
do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit,
ye are not under the law.

We are, first, sanctified by the Spirit
unto salvation. This second stage of
sanctification is our growth in power
over the flesh.

Jude 1:20 But ye, beloved,
building up yourselves on your
most holy faith, praying in the
Holy Ghost,

When a person becomes a
Christian, he usually undergoes
some radical life changes,
especially if he has had an
immoral background. Through
the first steps of spiritual growth
and self-denial, he gets rid of the
obvious sins. But sad to say,
many believers stop there. They
don't go on to eliminate the less
obvious sins that clutter the

landscape of their lives.

Gordon MacDonald, in his book *Ordering Your Private World*, told of an experience in his own life that illustrates this truth. "Some years ago, when Gail and I bought the old abandoned New Hampshire farm we now call Peace Ledge, we found the site where we wished to build our country home strewn with rocks and boulders. It was going to take a lot of hard work to clear it all out....The first phase of the clearing process was easy. The big boulders went fast. And when they were gone, we began to see that there were a lot of smaller rocks that had to go too. But when we had cleared the site of the boulders and the rocks, we noticed all of the stones and pebbles we had not seen before. This was much harder, more tedious work. But we stuck to it, and there came the day when the soil was ready for planting grass."

— Our Daily Bread

Gal 5:22,23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Rom 8:13,14 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

4. Sealed by the Spirit -

There is one more stage in the work of sanctification of the Spirit. We are not only quickened by the Spirit and grow by the Holy Spirit, we are kept by the Spirit until the resurrection.

Rom 8:3,10,11 For what the law

could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Ultimately, the Holy Spirit will quicken not only our spirit, but also our bodies in the resurrection.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

1Pet 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Eph 1:13,14 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

In the previous message, we saw that the Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself. However, He *is* entirely instrumental in our salvation and sanctification. The comfort to us, immediately, is that we don't get saved by our own power *and we don't grow in our own power*. Sometimes we might not feel like we can live a life surrendered to God, *which we can't*, but we can by the power of the Spirit!

Jas 4:5-10 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to

envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

When we resist the devil and draw nigh to God, the Holy Spirit will lift up our spirit. Even though growing in the discipline of Christ seems hard at times, we will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God to do so. Paul gives a short list of how we can be then filled with the Spirit.

Eph 5:18-21 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 [1] **Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; [praising God]**

20 [3] **Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; [instead of excusing your weakness on how oppressed you are]**

21 [4] **Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. [seeking our the strengthening of the fellowship with the church of God]**

These are not the only things listed in the Bible for being filled with the Spirit of God, but they are a good start. Spiritual growth can happen, depending on our response, as we go through

problems of life. How much better it would be if we *deliberately* sought spiritual growth!

The first deliberate step is to make sure you are a child of God. Call upon the Savior and the Holy Spirit will give power to your prayer. The next deliberate step will be to grow in the power of the Spirit. The final step we have to wait for. That is the step when we are resurrected by the Spirit in a glorified body.

Take the steps you know you have to do by the command of God. If you are not baptized, obey Christ and follow Him in baptism. Seek out the Lord diligently. Don't just come on Sunday morning to church. There is much more teaching available to you that you are not making use of. Participate in reaching out to others and encouraging the brethren and you will grow in that power!

1. Salvation by faith - Eph 2:8,9, Isa 43:10, Num 14:11
2. The Quickening of the Spirit - Rom 8:26, Luke 18:10-14, John 6:63, Gen 2:7, Eze 37:5,6
3. Sanctification of the Spirit - 1Pet 1:2, John 3:5-8, Rom 8:10, 1Thess 5:23, Heb 4:12, 2Cor 5:17, 1John 3:9, Gal 5:16-18 , Jude 1:20, Gal 5:22,23, Rom 8:13,14
4. Sealed by the Spirit - Rom 8:3,10,11, 1Pet 3:18 , Eph 1:13,14, Jas 4:5-10, Eph 5:18-21