



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, 2 Corinthians 7:1

"Sanctification in the Christian Life, part II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege that is ours again to turn the Scriptures to hear what they have to say to us concerning the doctrine of sanctification. We realize that this is truth that pertains primarily to believers. If there are some here, Lord, who are not yet believers we pray that through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and died for sinners they may come to know him whom to know is to possess life eternal. May, O God, there be conviction of sin and conversion.

And then Lord, we pray for us who are Christians here that we may learn the principles by which we may grow in our faith and become more fruitful in our Christian testimony and more pleasing to Thee in our Christian walk. We commit our time to Thee now. We pray that it may be a time of spiritual for each one of us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, last week we began a series of two or three studies on the doctrine of sanctification in our studies in Basic Bible Doctrine. And I tried to point out among some of the things that were said that there exists considerable confusion in the realm of the doctrine. There are competing viewpoints. The viewpoint of the Roman

Catholic Church is that justification cannot be clearly distinguished from sanctification. And justification is an infusion of grace by the sacraments securing remission of original sin and imparting the habit of righteousness. The process of improvement, which sanctification is, is that which enables God to justify man so that ultimately in the Romans system both justification and sanctification proceed on the basis of works.

The Wesleyan view, which is the view of the Wesleyan Arminians or the evangelical Methodist Church and also of other churches similar to them such as; the Pentecostal Church. I don't mean to say that the Wesleyan's are charismatic but they are in their theology of grace, approximately on the same plain.

Other churches such as, for example, the Christian church or the -- these are probably the main ones that are Arminian. The Church of Christ is an Arminian type of church. In the Wesleyan view of sanctification, sanctification is a process of improvement, which may be completed here while we are here on the earth. A person is still subject to involuntary transgressions, but according to John Wesley involuntary transgressions are not to be reckoned as sins. And thus, a person can be in a state of perfection while he is still living here upon the earth. But I'd like to make it very plain, we're not saying when Wesleyans believe in state of perfection that the person is without all sin. That is not what they teach because they do acknowledge the fact that there are involuntary transgressions but they are not considered to be sins.

Sometimes what it comes down to is that the Reformed people have a different definition of what sin is. And the Wesleyans have a view of what is sin that is contrary to the views of those who are of the Reform persuasion. Those of the Reform persuasion would believe that involuntary transgressions are also sins, and therefore a person cannot be in a state of perfection now but perfection is something that is reserved for the presence of the Lord.

The Reformed view concerning sanctification is essentially that it is a process of improvement in the life of believers which is completed only at the death of the believer

or at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which ever may occur first. In evangelicals, generally speaking, sanctification partakes of this character of progressive sanctification. It may have other characteristics too and we'll talk about them in a moment. But almost all evangelicals believe when you mention the term sanctification that is a process of improvement that takes place in a believer's life and it is not completed until one's death. The means by which this sanctification is obtained and is carried out, however, is something over which there is considerable debate. There are some very interesting terms that people use which are not necessarily scriptural terms. For example, some will say, "We must let go and let God do his work in us." Or, "Surrender to the Lord God." Others say that, "The secret of sanctification is abiding." Still others say that, "We must not quench the spirit or grieve the spirit and walk by the spirit." If we are obedient in these three respects, sanctification will proceed and everything will be growth in the Christian life. Still others talk about the faith rest technique. Almost all of these techniques are what may be called "boot strapping it" in the Christian life because almost every one of them is ultimately dependent upon the act of the human will so that sanctification is generally hinged upon the positive response of the will to the word of God. But it is an act of free will and not the act of a will energized by the Holy Spirit.

Now, all believers, Reformed and otherwise, believe that an act of the will is involved continually in sanctification. The key issue is that act of the will an act that is the product of the previous working of the Holy Spirit or not? And as we've often said in the preaching of the gospel, "If a man is to be saved it is because he exercises his will as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit in his will." And the same principle pertains in the Christian life. We are not saved by the work of the Holy Spirit and sanctified by our own work. We will discover, I think, as we read the Bible that sanctification is just as much a work of grace through faith as is salvation.

We talked also about the biblical terminology. And we pointed you that the words of the Old Testament and the words of the New Testament words that stress

separation. That they are not in themselves necessarily words that pertain to inherent purity. But that purity of the doctrine of sanctification and the purity associated with the word sanctify or holiness, for they come from the same roots, is the issue of separation to a holy person. So that the idea of purity is not necessarily in the word but it is associated with the doctrine of sanctification because when a person believes he is set apart to the Lord God who is holy and because of his separation to him sanctification comes, takes on the concept of moral holiness. That's a derived force then of the term "to sanctify." The proof of this, we gave you a number of texts but if you'll remember the Lord Jesus said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified in the truth. Well, of course, our Lord did not make himself holy, he all ready was holy. By the term sanctify he referred to the fact that he was setting himself apart to accomplish the work on the cross. And as a result of that, they might be set apart for possession by the Lord God.

Then we talked about the biblical concept of sanctification under four headings; preparatory sanctification, which was the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to the cross. It is equivalent to efficacious grace. We looked at 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 13 where that passage teaches this. We also looked at 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 2 where we saw the same usage. Then we considered 1 Corinthians one two and tried to point out that the moment that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ every believer is positionally sanctified. In other words, a process or a procedure takes place by which a believer, the moment that he believes, becomes in the sight of God holy. That is why believers in the New Testament are called saints. Every one of us is a saint. I am no different from you. You are no different from me. We are all, if we are believers in Christ, saints. The since of that is that that is our position before God.

Now, of course, in our daily life we are far from being inherently pure yet. That will only transpire when we enter the presence of the Lord. Saints, of course, should live saintly and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to continue this work of sanctification in a practical way so that we, as the years or weeks, or months, years go by, we may become

more like in our daily practice what we are by position. So positional sanctification is something that is true of every believer. Every believer is a saint. Every believer has been sanctified, set apart for God.

Now, in a third usage of the term sanctify is in the sense of progressive sanctification. And I don't think we looked at the text in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 1. So if you have your Bibles turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 1. Here the apostle writes, 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 1, "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God," or perfecting sanctification in the fear of God. Notice the present tense with perfecting. This is something that goes on daily constantly in the Christian life, progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification may have degrees. The Bible does speak about two degrees. The Bible speaks about infants and it speaks about adults.

In one sense, this is the age of infancy. In other words, we are infants as long as we are in the flesh. We do not attain to full manhood until we get to heaven. But the Bible also uses this in more limited sense in that we begin our Christian life as infants and we should, as we pass through the experiences of the Christian life, grow and reach adulthood. And when we reach adulthood then there may be still further growth. But the apostle distinguishes between infants and adults in the Christian life. Infants are beginners in the Christian life. Adults are those who reach maturity, and they have maturity by reason of their Christian experiences. So the New Testament then is justification for speaking of two degrees of progressive sanctification, but the moment that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ a practical work of sanctification begins in the life of every believer.

Now, Paul speaks of it here as, "Perfecting holiness in the fear God." He also speaks of this in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18, though in this text he does not use

the term holy or sanctified. The truth, however, is plainly here. He says in verse 18 of chapter 3,

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. (He's referring the word of God) are changed (Or literally are being changed. This is something going on constantly) are being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord."

So progressive sanctification is something that goes on constantly in the life of the believer

The fourth of these aspects of the biblical concept of sanctification is what we have called prospective sanctification. It is the complete agreement of our position and our practice, and that will take place at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's turn over to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and read verses 23 and 23. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 23 and verse 24. Here the apostle says, verse 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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

Now, notice the statement in verse 23,

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, (This is his prayer) and I pray that your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (And he adds the promise) Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

So his prayer is that the believers might be sanctified wholly. He associates it in the next clause with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he buttresses it by this great promise, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

In Romans chapter 8 and verse 29 we have another passage that bears on the topic of prospective sanctification. The apostle say, "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." So the end of the program of God, so far as we individually are concerned, is that we ultimately become, "conformed to the image of the son that he might be the first born among many brethren."

Now, I put a little diagram on the board, which is drawn very roughly. And sought to show these four aspects of sanctification by the use of this simple diagram. We have here a representation of an individual who is the object of the primary work of sanctification, which is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring him to the cross of Jesus Christ and salvation. That's primary sanctification. That is what we have called her in our notes preparatory sanctification. It's the work of efficacious grace to bring us to Christ. The moment that we are converted we stand on two planes before the Lord God. We stand, every one of us, on this plane here possessed with one hundred percent holiness. That's our position. That's our standing before God. We said that when a man was justified he is declared righteous before the Lord God as judge of the universe. When he becomes a believer in Jesus Christ he also is declared to be holy, absolutely holy, and thus he may enter into the temple of worship and worship the Lord God. So these are really just two aspects of the same thing; positional sanctification and justification.

Every believer then possesses one hundred percent holiness. We are absolutely pure in the sight of God because we stand in our substitute; the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the reason we are one hundred percent holy. He has born our penalty. He has provided our positive righteousness that was needed. He is our representative, our federal head, and therefore the way he stands before God is the way we stand before God. This, of course, is why we have boldness to approach the throne of grace. This is why we as sinners may bring all of our requests to the Lord God at any time and know that the will hear us because he sees us in Christ.

Now of course our life, from the time that we saved to the time that the Lord comes, is a rather checkered one. Now, this one happens to be a diagram of Mr. Howard Prier's life. [Laughter] He is one of our elders and he made excellent progress there for a while at the beginning but then stumbled here and here. And then made unusual progress there and became rather proud of what progress he had made and fell rapidly back almost too where he was a considerable period of time before that. But I want you to know that he's still making progress although he has not yet reached the standard that he will ultimately.

Now, it's not often that we have the revelation of a diagram of a particular person but if you'd like to give me yours I'd be happy to put it in diagram form, too. [Laughter] It is true, however, that you cannot get below the old plane of life even though you may think that you really do at times. There will be progress in the spiritual life always in the life in the believer because he has had a radical transformation there has been a definitive change when he believed in Jesus Christ and consequently he cannot persist in the old manner of life.

Now, he may do certain things that were characteristic of his old life and may actually be afflicted with some of the old habits for a lengthy period of time. That should not cause us to think that we do not have salvation. But in the life of a believer there must be a definitive change of life. It doesn't mean that the people about you must necessarily see it, but it must really be there. It is something often that, of course, only God sees. This is called progressive sanctification. And of course, this is not the diagram of anyone's life. And I want you to know it's not Mr. Prier's life, although I'm not sure, I imagine that most of you realize that his life wouldn't have anything like this. It's just straight up. Straight up.

Now, the Bible also then speaks finally of the time when the Lord comes. And at the point, wherever we may be in our spiritual growth, that which is progressive sanctification becomes completed at the second of the Lord Jesus so that our practical life

becomes identified with our position before the Lord God. That is our prospective sanctification and we look forward to that. This is a simple diagram. It's not true to every facet of the Christian life, of course, but it does set forth these biblical uses of the term sanctify. Primary sanctification, to bring us to Christ. Positional sanctification, what we all have as believers, our standing before the Lord God. Progressive sanctification, just simply growth in the daily which of course is something that God of course, of course, as we shall see in a moment. Finally, we look forward to the day when we will be sanctified wholly, when our position is the same as our practice.

Now, we could also put here two stages or two aspects of this progressive sanctification. That aspect, when we are infants and that aspect of sanctification when we have reached adulthood in the Christian faith. But adulthood is not perfection. We still, of course, have much land to possess.

Well, now let's move on to some of the characteristics of progressive sanctification because I think it should be clear to you that most of us are particularly interesting in progressive sanctification because progressive sanctification is in effect where we live. Before we do, let me just give you a definition by one of the outstanding theologians of sanctification. Professor Louis Berkoff, who was for many years professor of systematic theology of Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has defined sanctification I think quite accurately in this way.

Now, you will see he is speaking of progressive sanctification. "Sanctification," Professor Berkoff has written, "may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which he delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God and enables him to perform good works." Let me read that again and reflect upon it as I do. "Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which he delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God and enables him to perform good works." And let me say one other thing that I had forgotten

to say. This sanctification, of course, is grounded in the work of Christ on the cross. The only way by which we can be sanctified is the way of the cross. No doctrine is seen clearly and truly unless it leads us to the cross. No work is pleasing to God. No experience is genuine and vital unless it has its source in the cross. No waiting for the Second Advent is healthy and purifying unless it is called forth by the contemplation of the great God and savior, who gave himself for us and redeemed us from all iniquity, so that standing under all of the work of sanctification is the work of Jesus Christ in dying for our sins.

Sanctification flows out of our salvation brought through the cross.

The important features of this progressive sanctification include its principle, its author, its mediate cause. We'll see if we can cover those three. If not we'll cover just a couple and we'll finish this in our next study, the Lord willing. It's my understanding that next week we will not be meeting because of the election. But the following week when we meet we will finish up our study of the doctrine of sanctification.

What we're really talking about now is how we live the Christian life. It's really a very simple thing to set forth as a doctrine. It is not difficult. It's very simple. The difficulty of the Christian life is not in the doctrine itself. The difficulty lies in the practice of the doctrine. Just as our salvation, the salvation of God provided in the Bible is a very simple method of salvation. But it's just very difficult for a person to come and he cannot do it apart from the work of the Holy Spirit to repentance in faith, and the acceptance of the Lord Jesus as his own personal Savior because of the implications that that has for his present mode of life. Much of the same difficulty exists in the realm of sanctification. The reason that believers don't make steady progress is because they have to fight those struggles of the will that is touched by their old nature and often dominated by it and frequently this takes a considerable period of time. But capitally the principle of progressive sanctification, sanctification is a work of irresistible grace and this must be kept before us always. In other words, sanctification is something that is accomplished by the Lord God.

Now, you know this as far as salvation is concerned. There's probably not a single person in this room who does not realize that the Bible teaches that a man is saved not by the works that he performs but by the work of Jesus Christ. Just take simple text that we all know, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." But frequently when we become Christians we abandon the principle of grace and we seek to become sanctified by the things that we do. We think that if we do certain things in the Christian life we will be progressively sanctified. We fail to realize that we still possess the old nature. We still possess the sin principle, and consequently we are just as dependent on divine grace through faith in the Christian life as we were in becoming saved. Just as we are responsible to believe in Jesus Christ, and yet when we do it is a work of God alone.

So in sanctification we are responsible to be obedient to the word of God. And yet, our obedience is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit alone. Just as we say in justification, "Salvation or justification is of the Lord," so we say in sanctification, "Sanctification is of the Lord." But it's very difficult to be saved and understand the principles of grace clearly. The very fact that there are people who are saved who then talk about free will is evidence that they have not yet thought purely about the grace of God. Well, the same thing pertains in the Christian life. They frequently will say, "We are sanctified by grace but they will talk about the necessity for making decisions of their free will in the Christian life. It's just almost impossible for the natural man to follow the preaching of the Gospel, immediately respond to it, and then in the Christian life grasp the principle of growth in the Christian life and make great progress. We all, it seems, have to pass through stages of ignorance or stages of rebellion. We listen to the Gospel for a long time and grace does not really come home to us. Finally, after a lengthy period of time, it may strike us and we say, "For the first time I see it."

Mike Black just came up here before the meeting to speak about his brother and how he listened to the preaching here in the chapel for a long period of time but just

recently, before he went home to be the Lord, he came to a clear understanding of the principle of grace. He spoke about how he had come to an understanding finally of the grace of God. That's the work of the Holy Spirit in illumination and it's a sovereign work. The Holy Spirit does it when he wills and the same thing is true in the Christian life. Man can be a Christian for a lengthy period of time and struggle and fight in his own strength to do the will of God and be very unfruitful, fail the Lord, constantly have difficulty until suddenly, just as in salvation, he loses all hope of being saved himself. And the Holy Spirit says, "Salvation's of the Lord and it comes home to him." So in the Christian life he become so miserable in his own efforts that finally he turns to the Lord God and God begins to work mightily in him as he come to understand grace in his Christian life.

So the principle of sanctification is that it is a work of irresistible grace. The new life implanted in every believer, it's inclination and disposition, is implanted by God. We have no power to create another inclination. We cannot, the moment we believe in Jesus Christ, of our own begin to serve the Lord God. The inclination to do the will of God must be implanted there by God the Holy Spirit. So the inclination to serve the Lord God positively, the disposition to be obedient in measure to the word of God is something the Holy Spirit gives us. So internally and irresistibly we are wrought upon by the Holy Spirit and we are led, and guided, and enabled to do the work of God.

Now, I want to turn to a few passages of Scripture and the first one and the most important one is in the Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6. So let's turn to that passage and let's take a good look at what Paul is saying, Philippians chapter 1 verse 6, page twelve hundred and eighty in the New Scofield Edition of the King James Version. Verse 6, the apostle says, "Being confident of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you, (What is the good work that has been begun in us? Well that very simply is the work of salvation.) He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Now, that's a text that states that that salvation work that was begun by the Lord God, when you came to faith in Christ, will be performed by the Lord God until the day of Jesus Christ. In other words, he will carry on his work. He began a work in you. He is not going to abandon that work. He is going to do it. You may fight him.

You may resist him. You resisted him when the appeals of the gospel went out. You know you can resist the grace of God. The thing that you cannot resist is irresistible grace. Men resist the grace of God, even believers. We all resisted the grace of God. But finally, God, in irresistible grace, draws us to himself. He will, once you have become a Christian, he will continue his work in you and he will perform it. So if you have believed in Christ, every single one of you will be sanctified someday. It may be a long struggle. The stage from your diagram of life, or the place where you are, may be quite a long ways up to that one hundred percent holiness but he will accomplish it. Because you see, you have a heavenly father who has power to do his will and he's going to do it. You may have to be disciplined considerably in Christian life, freed from trust in yourself, freed from trust in your own good works and the other things that we lean on. From your rebellion, but he's going to accomplish his work.

Let's look at some of the other passages in which this type of thing is referred to. John chapter 3 and verse 21 has an interesting little clause or so in it. John chapter 3 and verse 21, here we read the Lord Jesus is speaking in the context of the interview with Nicodemus, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God." Notice that they are wrought in God. What that means is that his deeds are accomplished by the Lord God. Everything that we do that is pleasing to the Lord God is something that is wrought by him. The reason for that is simply that all works that are pleasing to the Lord God are works that have the glory of God as their goal and have true faith in God as their origin. But faith is a gift of God. So anything that is wrought in God is the product of the work of God. Yes, when you get to heaven there won't be anything you can boast about except boast in the Lord God himself.

Acts chapter 15 and verse 12, Acts chapter 15 and verse 12 after the debate over the nature of grace has been resolved Peter has stood up in the so called Jerusalem conference and has said, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." Luke writes, "Then all the multitude kept silence and listened to Barnabus and Paul declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the gentiles by them. In other words, it was God who did those mighty works through the apostles and others. They were simply instrumentalists. So the things in the Christian life that are pleasing to the Lord God are things that are done by us as agents, but the person who really does the work is the Lord God. God had wrought by them.

Romans chapter 15 and verse 18, Romans chapter 15 and verse 18, the apostle says, "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me." Notice again the apostle is the instrumentality but it is the Lord Jesus Christ who does the works. "Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed." In the Old Testament we even have this expressed in Hosea, the last chapter of the book of the prophet Hosea, chapter 14 and verse 8. Now, some of you are not turning in you Bibles. Now, that's the Old Testament so don't go ahead and try to find it. Use your index. It's right near the Book of Joel. Hosea chapter 14 and verse 8, we'll take time out for a cup of tea while you find Hosea. [Laughter] Now, we have to get through here in just a few minutes but I want you to read this text. I want you to see that we are talking about is not simply some special truth of New Testament times but is characteristic of all of the activities of God toward men. Near the end of the Book of Hosea the prophet writes, "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do anymore with idols? I have heard him and observed him, I am like a green fur tree, from me (This is from the Lord God he's speaking) from me is thy fruit found, from me is thy fruit found." In other words, the things that are fruitful in our life, that are pleasing to the Lord, are things that come from the Lord God.

One final text, Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 and 23, Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 and 23. This is a very familiar passage. You all know it. "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, against such there is no law." In other words, the fruit is fruit of the spirit. It is the spirit that produces these great virtues in the Christian life. So the fundamental principle of the Christian is, it is a work of irresistible grace. It is something that God the Holy Spirit accomplishes in our life.

Second, the author of it, now we have all ready made statements that clearly identify the author. The author is God. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18, remember where we read, "Our being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the spirit." In 2 Corinthians chapter 7 one, the same thing is said. So like salvation sanctification is a work of God, not man. Yet just as in salvation man is responsible to use the means of sanctification. When we preach the Gospel to men we may tell them, "You cannot believe if the Holy Spirit does not bring you to faith." But that does not mean you can sit back and say, "Okay, since I have to be brought by the Holy Spirit I'm not responsible." No, the Bible says you are responsible to use the means of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit to come to faith in Christ. If you do not respond you are subject to judgment. So the in the Christian life man is responsible to use the means of sanctification even though they are things that come sovereignly from the Lord God.

Now, there is no way in which I could completely, in a few minutes, satisfy questions that everybody has concerning on the one hand the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God. It's easy to harmonize the sovereignty of God with the free will of man for there is no such thing as free will. But responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God, that is question that we could spend several hours on and probably would not be able to answer all of the questions that all of us would have. But then there are some things about God that pertain to his infinite character and nature, and we shall

leave them for heaven. There are some things that we anticipate finding answers to when we get to heaven. But I want you notice now that we are responsible.

Look at Philippians 2, twelve and thirteen and we'll stop with this because you do need to get home and turn on that tube. [Laughter] We'll just read the text. I just want you notice that responsibility is harmonious with the sovereignty of God in salvation. The apostle writes, Philippians 2:12, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence, you (believers he's talking to) you believers work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That's our responsibility. We are responsible to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. That is a command addressed to us.

We cannot say before the Lord God, "Well I didn't work out mine because I was waiting on the Holy Spirit to work in me." No, you cannot say that. You are responsible. It is there in Scripture. That is your responsibility to work it out. But if you say, "But I am of myself unable to do this," that's a Christian idea. That's a Christian thought. So what do you do? You get down on your knees and you say, "Oh God, I cannot sanctify myself. Through the Holy Spirit work in me that I may work out my salvation." That's what you do when you get saved. You say, "I cannot save myself. I'm such a sinner. I'm in bondage to sin." So you get down on your knees. You confess your sin and say, "Oh God, save this lost sinner," and he does. So in sanctification the same principle pertains.

Notice the next verse, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So he calls upon as responsible Christians to work out our salvation, but then says we work it out because he works in us not simply to do it but even to transform our wills positively so that we will to please him. That is the sovereignty of God in sanctification, the same principle that pertains in our salvation.

I said I'd let you go. All right we have to stop at this point. We'll finish it up in our next study. Let me close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the truths of holy Scripture and we do pray that we may come in our Christian experience to a deeper understanding of the principles of sanctification, and especially also to a growing knowledge of the Lord God in sanctification in fruit...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]