



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“Riches of Divine Grace III: Sanctification”

TRANSCRIPT

This week we were talking before we [Tape skipped] clock it is now a minute after 7:30 so I think we had better go ahead and begin. And let's begin with prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the opportunity to turn again to the Scriptures. And we thank Thee for the great things that Thou hast accomplished in our salvation through Jesus Christ. And we pray that tonight as we consider another one of the great things that Thou hast done that all of the facets of it that our hearts may turn to Thee in grateful praise for divine blessing poured out upon us. We pray for each one who is here tonight and ask for enlightenment, and may the Scriptures be very plain to us.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight our subject is sanctification and, of course, if you have any acquaintance at all with the things that have happened in Christianity, then you will recognize immediately that this is one of the doctrines concerning which there is considerable confusion. In fact, it is probably one of the doctrines about which there is more confusion than almost any other. There are many competing views. For example, the Roman Catholic Church's view of sanctification is largely this; sanctification is a

process of improvement which enables God to justify us. Now, to my mind that runs contrary to Paul’s statement in Romans chapter 4 in verse 5 when he says,

“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

And so God does not wait for a process of improvement to take place in us and to reach a certain stage before he justifies us. It is thoroughly unscriptural for us to suggest that we should not be saved today but we should wait until we get a little better, and then we should turn to the Lord. Because the statement of Romans chapter 4 in verse 5 is that God justifies the ungodly. He does not justify the godly. He justifies the ungodly. In fact, the Lord Jesus, speaking along the same lines, said that

“He came not to call sinners to repentance or the righteous to repentance but to bring sinners to repentance.”

So that his ministry is not directed to those who thought that they had no need, but it was directed to those who knew that they did have need. So this view, I think, is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. The Wesleyan view has been sanctification is a process of improvement which may be completed in Christians while we are here upon the earth. In other words, it has been thought possible among a large branch of professing Christendom, for some of us at least, to reach the stage where we should say that we are wholly sanctified. And you, no doubt, know that there are branches of Christianity some of which is genuine Christianity in the sense that salvation by grace is proclaimed that in this segment of Christianity there is the view that it is possible for us to reach the stage where we do not sin. We are wholly sanctified.

Now, again I think, the Scriptures are opposed to this. The Apostle John writing in his first epistle in the first chapter writing to Christians says in the 8th verse, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” And he says in the 10th verse of that first chapter of 1 John, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” And so if we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar and his word is not in us. The Reformed view has been this that sanctification is a process of improvement which is completed only at death. I think that is a biblical view so far as it goes.

It just does not tell us everything that the New Testament says about the term sanctification. Sanctification is a bigger doctrine than the improvement that is wrought and saved after he believes in Jesus Christ during the time that he is a believer on the earth until he enters the presence of the Lord. There should be sanctification. There should be progressive growth. In fact, if there is not progressive growth, we have no assurance that we really belong to the Lord. We cannot say to a person who does not manifest a definite change in his life and who does not manifest definite evidences of growth; we cannot say to him that you have hope of eternal life. If possible, we may be confused about where he stands so far as his will’s situation is concerned, but we have no right in the Bible to assure a man, who outwardly is making no progress whatsoever, that he belongs to the Lord, because if he does belong to the Lord there should be evidence or proof of it. But when we have said that sanctification is the doctrine that has to do with our growth in Christian life and we say that only, we do not say everything that the Bible has to say about sanctification and I hope our study tonight will at least show us that.

The Pauline view or the New Testament is broader than any of these views. It is broader than the Roman Catholic view. It is broader than the Pentecostal or Wesleyan view. It is broader than the Reformed view. And I think it is also a corrective of these views too. For in the New Testament there is a four-fold sanctification spoken of. Now, I

have put in the outline here the four-fold sanctification. This diagram is one that I drew up many, many years ago in an attempt to explain a particular passage in 1 Corinthians to which we shall look in a little while, but we have in the New Testament primary sanctification. We also have positional sanctification. We have progressive sanctification. And we also have prospective sanctification.

Now, frequently this is looked at in this way. This is positional sanctification, this is progressive sanctification, and this is ultimate sanctification. And I, as you obviously can see, have chosen the word prospective because if I have four P’s the chances are that I may be able to remember it a little better than if I have the other. So here they are: primary, positional, progressive, and prospective. And we will be talking about them individually in a few moments as you can see from our outline C, D, E and F.

But first of all, let’s take a look at the Hebrew and Greek words for sanctification because if we can get these things straight in our minds right at the beginning I think we shall have an insight into precisely what sanctification is. The Hebrew and Greek word for sanctification, and let’s take up the Hebrew word first. The word that is the root of the word sanctify in the Old Testament is a Hebrew word which I am going to transliterate for you. It would be pronounced *kadash* or *kavash*. And this is the transliteration of it for those of you that are Hebrew scholars, there may be one, it looks like that *kavash*.

Now, this word is a very important word and it has its New Testament counterpart about which we shall speak in just a few sentences. But first of all let me say this about *kavash*. The root meaning of the verb *kadash* or *kavash* is “to be separate.” It has the idea of separation or occasionally the idea of withdrawal. But the idea of separation is the fundamental concept of the word which is translated holy or sanctified. Now, remember also secondly that the English word “sanctify” and the English word “holy” and their words related to them are words that come from the same Hebrew word and the same Greek word. So when we read in the Old Testament about holiness or when we

read sanctification, we’re not reading about two different words. We are reading about the same word which is translated in two different ways. When we read in the New Testament about saints and about holy ones or sanctification and holiness, we are talking about the same word not different words. And this word in the Old Testament *kavash* which means to be holy or to be sanct--to be separate has the root idea of separation or to be set apart.

Now, I gave you a simple little illustration before when we were talking about this. I might, for example, take up this eraser which is in the pulpit and I might put it over here in order that I may have it handy for use in erasing something on the board. And I could really say I have sanctified that eraser. That is, I have put it over here in order that I may use it. I have set it apart for a particular use. Now, that’s the biblical concept of sanctification, fundamentally. It means to set apart for use. Now, in the Bible in the Old Testament something may be set apart for an evil use just as much as it may be set apart for a good use.

Now, of course, if God sets something apart for his use it is a good use. And since the Bible ordinarily speaks about God doing the separating, sanctification came to connote the idea of holiness or righteousness or goodness. It had a good connotation but the word in itself is neutral. It may refer to that which is set apart for evil use just as much as that which is set apart for good use. And I’m going to ask you to turn to a passage in the Old Testament so that we can see this and also I think we shall have a better concept of the word “sanctification.” And my passage that I want you to turn to is in the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter in the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 23.

Now, you should know where to find Deuteronomy those of you that are in the adult science skills class here because Mr. Dale McCrae is teaching Deuteronomy right now. And so you can find it. I hope. And I want you to look at verse 17 of Deuteronomy chapter 23. “There shall be no whore, there shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.” Now, the interesting thing about

this text which, I think, proves what I’m trying to say is that the word that is translated whore or harlot is a word which in Hebrew is this. Now, you can see that it comes from this word here and it is a feminine for *kedesba*. And thus, the word for the harlot is one set apart, a sanctified one. This could really be translated in verse 17, there shall be no female set apart of the daughters of Israel set apart for this unholy use. There shall be no female sanctified for illicit sexual use.

Now, you see in ancient times in connection with the worship of heathen religions frequently they had prostitutes of both male and female sex attached to the temple. And individuals who wished to carry out the evil worship of the false God used the prostitutes and the sexual intercourse in order to worship God. They were so vile in their worship that actually their doctrine made it possible and a necessary thing for them to engage in illicit sexual intercourse in order to worship their God. That’s how bad things were in the land of Canaan for example.

Now, the Greek temples, which we have which are related to the New Testament times, had the same thing. In fact, in the temple at Corinth at one time, I have forgotten the precise numbers there’s numbers in my notes on 1 Corinthians somewhere, but something like a thousand prostitutes perhaps attached to one temple for the use of the worship was in that particular religion. And that shows you the vileness of the religion, but it also shows you the meaning of sanctify.

Now, the word translated sodomite here is this word which is the masculine form of this and as you can see is very clearly related to this. So that the word for the sodomite and the word for the whore or harlot is really a word that means sanctified one, sanctified. So the term sanctified in itself does not have any special moral connotation. It means simply to be set apart or to separate.

Now, that is true of the New Testament too. And the New Testament word is the word *hagiazō*. The Greek word is this and we would translate it something like this. HAGIAZO would be adequate *hagiazō* or since Z is pronounce in Greek like the S

*bagiaso, bagiaso*. Now, that word in Greek to be set apart. The *bagiaz* is the saint. When you read in the Bible that the Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed to the saints which are in emphasis it is to be *bagiamos*. Who are in emphasis, the saints, the set apart ones. And if you’re a Christian that’s what you are. You are a saint. Now, I know that maybe produce consternation for you to think that you are a saint but that is precisely what you are. You have not been made a saint by church canonization. You have been made a saint by faith in Jesus Christ. And you can really say I am saint and here is Tom Ray in the first pew up here and I’m looking at Saint Tom. And there is Dick Parker in the second pew there or third pew and he is Saint Dick. And in case you find it hard to believe that they are saints. I am Saint Lewis. [Laughter] That seems to be the more difficult to believe from the way you laughed but it’s true nevertheless.

Now, that does not mean we are intrinsically holy. It means that when we have believed in Jesus Christ we have been by God set apart for his possession and for his use so that we are set apart once. So the idea of moral holiness, which attaches to the word sanctification, is not a fundamental idea of that word root in the Old Testament or New Testament. The fundamental idea is the idea of separation, but, of course as I said, if it is set apart for divine use because God’s is intrinsically holy then that word gains the connotation of holiness in the moral sense. And that is, of course, its ordinary use in the Old and in the New Testament. Holiness means set apart for divine use and therefore, moral holiness is involved.

Now, that’s enough for the word. I hope we understand that so that when we think about sanctification we are thinking about something that is a doctrine that has to do with being set apart for divine use. So let’s define it. Capital B in our outline – “The Definition of Sanctification.” Justification remember is a forensic word. It is a word that has to do with the court. We appear before the court of the throne of heaven and there we are declared righteous by the judge who is God.

Now, sanctification is a word of the ceremonial world. It’s a ceremonial word not a legal word a ceremonial word. And it has to do with the worship of God in the temple. So when you think about sanctification you should think about the temple of God. When you think about justification, you should think about the law courts of God. So just as justification declares us righteous before the law courts of God, so that we have that righteous position before him, so sanctification declares us worthy to approach God in the temple and worship him. So there are words that in some aspects of biblical truth refer to the precisely same thing under different kind of metaphor and yet they do have some differences also.

Now, to define it I would define sanctification something like this. Sanctification is that work of God whereby he by the Spirit through the cross sets apart the believer for divine possession, worship, and service. Now, there were two people who were not able to write that down as I said that and so for them I’m going to repeat it. Sanctification is that work of God whereby he by the Spirit through the cross sets apart the believer, I mean believer in Jesus Christ, for divine possession, worship, and service. Sanctification is that work of God whereby he by the Spirit through the cross sets apart the believer for divine possession, worship, and service.

Now, let’s notice what the New Testament has to say about the term. And so we come to C – “The Preparatory Sanctification or Primary Sanctification.” Now, I want you to turn with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 again in verse 13 and verse 14. And we have referred to this before, but we want to refer to it again because it touches upon our doctrine of sanctification. So 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 in verse 13 and 14 and remember this, as Professor Denney used to say “Is a system of theology in miniature.” Now, listen 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 13, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

Now, notice, that the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit occurs before the belief of the truth. So this is a work of the Holy Spirit which has to do with the setting apart of us for faith in Christ. It is a work that occurs before we believe in Jesus Christ. So it is possible for us to say that we have been sanctified before we have been saved if we are talking about primary or preparatory sanctification. It is the equivalent of efficacious grace. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to Christ. And I’ve tried to put this on the diagram and, of course, all diagrams fall short of the truth of the word of God. But by putting this before the cross, I am trying to suggest that there is a work of sanctification that precedes the cross, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13.

Now, that is evident not only from this text. I don’t think it’s wrong to rest the doctrine on one text in the Bible. How many times does God have to say something for it to be true? Two? Three? Five? Seven? Or just one? Well, of course, one text if we interpret it correctly and it says this is enough, but this is not the only passage where this is found. We also have it in 1 Peter 1 verse 2. Let’s read that too. These are the only two places by the way where this word sanctification is used in this precise sense, although I’m going to show you a third which I think should be included with it in a moment. I guess that’s very illogical to say something like that. There are only two places in which it’s used in this way, and I’m going to show you a third, but it isn’t quite as parallel the third and that’s I guess why I said the other.

Now, notice did I say 2 Peter? 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 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.” And there you can see that the sanctification is with a view to the faith, that’s obedience, unto the faith and strengthening of the blood of Jesus Christ. So the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit is with a view to obedience and with a view to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. So this is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Notice it’s the work of the Spirit, he says, “The work of the Spirit who efficaciously sets us apart for faith in Jesus Christ.” He doesn’t say this pertains to the

world. He says this pertains to those who believe in the Lord Jesus. So they are sanctified before they are saved. This is primary or preparatory sanctification.

Now, the other passage that I want you to look at is found over in 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Now, let me see if I can find it. I think it’s about verse 15. It just popped into my head as I was talking a minute ago. And I think it pertains to what we’re talking about. I made a mistake. It’s verse 14. Listen, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.” Now, what does that mean? Well, it doesn’t mean that he is saved but when a woman is saved and her husband is not, he is in a special relationship as a result of that. And the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, “else were your children unclean; but now are they” and here is the word “holy” but in the Greek text it’s the word “sanctified” “are sanctified.” Now, what he is saying is the children of parents of whom one is a believer are set apart. They’re not saved. They’re sanctified. They have to be saved just like anyone else, but they have a special relationship because one of their parents is a Christian. And so that kind of sanctification is presalvation sanctification too, but it’s not precisely what we were talking about because it is not a guarantee that they will come to salvation. And so I go back to my original statement. This type of sanctification is really found only twice in the New Testament but if God says it twice or even once that’s enough. So this is primary sanctification.

Now, let’s take a look at the second and this is capital D in our outline, “The Positional Sanctification.” Now, let’s turn for our text to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 in verse 1 and 2. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. Now, this is a very, very wonderful opening of an epistle and it has some very important doctrinal points in them. Now, here he says in verse 1, “Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints or called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.” Now, saints and sanctified again are the same

term. Holy is the same but notice this epistle is addressed to the church at Corinth and they are called sanctified, notice the past tense, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Now, this particular word sanctified is in the Greek text, at this point, in the perfect tense, sanctified. Now, in the perfect tense ordinarily in Greek the perfect tense refers to an action in past time. Let us designate that action by this asterisks. The results of which continue up to the time of the use or writing. So that this is action and this is result. So that when we use the perfect tense in Greek, we are using it of an action that has taken place in past time but the results of it continued down to the present. Now, let’s apply that to this statement. Paul says that the Corinthians have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. That would tell us that there was a time in the past when they were sanctified. When was that? Of course, it was when they believed in Jesus Christ. Then they were sanctified in this sense. Of course, they had been the recipients of a preparatory sanctification too, but the primary stress of the New Testament is on the other aspects and so we, I think, are being very, very safe in saying that the sanctification here is a reference to an act in the past.

Now, we can say that’s a finished work. In other words, their work of sanctification is a finished work. But now were the Corinthians holy in the moral sense? Were they? Well, just think about the epistles of the church at Corinth. Does it tell us about a church that was perfect? No, just the opposite doesn’t it? It tells us about a church in which there was a lot of problems. That was a New Testament church by the way. It was one founded by the Apostle Paul. These churches weren’t perfect. You know sometimes you hear preachers stand in the pulpit and say “Oh, if the church today just was able to be like the church in the first century.” I always say “Oh no. let’s don’t be like them.” I’m glad they were like they were because, of course, as a result of the words of the Bible addressed to them to correct them and help them we know the things that help us when we fall into the same problem. But the churches of the first century were just ordinary churches such as we have today. The idea of an early church basking in the

pristine glory of holiness because they had the benefit of the apostle’s ministry is completely unknown to history.

Now, the Corinthians were not holy. Paul says in the third chapter, “And I, brethren, were not able to write unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ and not even yet now am I able. For whereas there among you envying, and strife, are you not carnal, and walk as men?” It was a carnal church. They were in sin many of them. And yet he said they were sanctified.

Now, what does that tell us? That tells us that the Bible may call us sanctified when at the same time our practical life is not a holy life in this sense. Well in what sense can we be sanctified and yet at the same time not morally holy? Only in a positional sense. That is, this is our standing before God. This is our position. It’s not our practice. It’s not our state. But it’s how we stand before God. We stand before God as if we were one hundred percent holy, but practically we may be in carnality. So we can be called sanctified in the sense that this is a finished work and a positional work. While at the same time we may be called carnal.

Now, that shows us that there is then a second aspect of sanctification, a positional aspect which is true of every believer in Jesus Christ. By the way, why may God call us holy when we’re not holy? How can he do that? Someone may say I don’t see how God can do that. I don’t see how he can call us holy when we’re not holy. It would seem to be a lie would it not. If he knows we’re not holy and yet he addresses us as holy one. How can he do it? Well, of course, he can only do it because he is looking at us in Christ. That’s the only way in which he can call us justified because we’re not just. But you see there has been a transaction between the members of the Trinity which took place at the cross at Calvary hundreds of years ago by which God is now righteously able to call us just and righteously able to call us holy because he had a representative one day who came to this earth. His name was Jesus of Nazareth. He was the representative man. He stood for you and for me. And he went to the cross and there he bore our judgment. He

bore our sins. And he righteously made it possible for God because our sins were bore, bore by him to declare us forgiven, to declare us cleansed, to declare us justified, to declare us sanctified.

We are holy because our unholiness has been taken away in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is the way we stand traditionally before God. That’s why we’re called saints. That’s why we’re called righteous in the New Testament. Now, you can see from this that there is a sense then in which we are positionally holy. We may called to go, we may be may be referred to as those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Now, the means of this of appropriating this wonderful work is by faith. And if we had time we could turn to Acts chapter 26 and verse 18 for there Paul speaks about sanctification as being a work of faith but we’re going to have to hurry on because we have other aspects of this doctrine to consider.

Capital E – “The Progressive Sanctification, Progressive Sanctification.” Now, the word sanctification not only refers to that preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us true faith in Christ, not only does it refer to the fact that we stand before God the moment that we believe in him positionally, one hundred percent holy before God, but it is also used to refer to the progress that we made in the Christian faith. It is used to refer to our growing maturity. That is sanctification. That is a process that is going on in the hearts of all of the redeemed. If it is not going on we are not part of the redeemed. But this is progressive sanctification. And let’s take a look at a text which, I think, makes it plain that the Bible speaks of this 2 Corinthians chapter 7 in verse 1. 2 Corinthians chapter 7 in verse 1, page 1234 in the old edition, approved edition of the King James Version. 2 Corinthians chapter 7 in verse 1. Do we have it, all of us? Now, listen Paul says, “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.” Perfecting sanctification in the fear of God.

Now, you can see he has already referred to these Corinthians in his first epistle as already holy. He says they are the holy ones, the saints. And he has said that they are sanctified, but now he says “Perfect holiness in the fear of God.” How can he perfect that which is perfect? Well you cannot. So he must be talking about a different aspect of sanctification. Here is talking about our state not our standing. Here he is talking about our practice not our position. Here he is talking about our life as we really are not as we are in the mind and imputation of God reckoning of God. So there is a sense then in which we have a progressive sanctification and increasing holiness of life.

Now, this outline or this diagram is one I said I manufactured about fifteen or twenty years ago to express some these things. Now, let’s just say for the sake of a diagram and remembering that no diagram is really true to biblical doctrine, it always seems to fall down somewhere. But this let’s say is divine standard, one hundred percent holiness. No one shall ever enter the presence of God who is not one hundred percent holy. In fact, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states that doesn’t he? He said “Without holiness no one shall see the Lord.” So, one hundred percent holiness.

Now, when we come to faith in Christ we come by the activity of the Holy Spirit who sets us apart to faith and the moment we believe, at that moment, we may be called sanctified. We are positionally holy but we’re not practically holy. We’re vain. Now, you know there’s one thing that characterizes all babies, every one of them even you, you know what it is? When you were a baby you were a mess. In fact, you knew you were going to be a mess or someone else knew you were going to be a mess because they arranged with a diaper service even before you came so they might be prepared. You are a mess. All babies are messes. That’s why no infant in the faith should ever be put in a position of responsibility in a local church. He’s a mess.

Now, you may be a lovely person according to the world. You may have tremendous influence according to the world. He may have great capacity according to the world but he should never be put in any place of responsibility, spiritually, as an

infant. If you are looking for a new president of General Motors you wouldn’t look around among the grammar school people would you? You wouldn’t look in the kindergarten. Unfortunately, that is often what is done in our Christian churches.

Now, it’s fine for an infant to get up and give a testimony and say how he has come to life. Who doesn’t love to hold a baby in your arms? I can’t wait to hold little Debbie in my arms. And I probably will coo and act just as silly as any grandfather would act with this little baby. And every little sound that she makes will thrill me. But you wouldn’t give them any responsibility would you. So it’s wonderful to have newborn babes tell us how they came to faith in Jesus Christ nothing wrong with that. The Apostle Paul testified to his salvation immediately after he was saved but even Paul was for many years growing in the knowledge of divine things before he really began to carry out the responsibilities which had been prophesized concerning him and his conversion. So when we start out in the Christian life we start out right here. And this is the old plane of life and we are not very far along the way just after we’ve been saved, but we are a little bit above the line and there should be, of course, always a little distance above the line that marks us out as genuine Christians. You see this that’s the difference. There is always a difference. There is always a difference between a saved man and an unsaved man. There is always a difference between my life as a Christian and my life before I was a Christian.

Now, the world may not see it. I may not see it. You may not see it in me but it’s there and so we start a new life. By the way, you are wondering whose chart this is. Every one of us has a particular chart. Now, this happens to be the chart of Mr. Howard Prier. [Laughter] And so I want you to know that he has made unusual progress. [Laughter] He has started out very well. In fact, for a long period of time it was all uphill. He was really making progress but then, right here, something happened. One day Ann did something that he didn’t understand. And he blurted out some short words to his wife.

Now, mind you. This is not in the Bible. In fact, this doesn’t even approach the truth. I can imagine that they probably have never had an argument in all of their lives but at any rate, we are just trying to imagine what happened. And here he had a little fall. And so when he fell he finally confessed his sin 1 John 1:9 and he made some quick progress and he reached this peak and it happened again. This time it was one of the children that caused him to fail. And so he sinned. And so right here he had some rocky days, but I want you to notice that according to the chart when he was right at the bottom here, in the midst of his fall, he was still one hundred percent holy before God. So even when we’re out of fellowship with God we’re still positionally are holy.

Well, then he made some great progress and here had a few rough moments again. And right here he went to a spiritual life convention. And as a result of this spiritual life convention, he just was lifted on a tremendous plane of life. And he almost touched heaven itself. [Laughter] But then he fell again and as always the case. And I want you to know Mr. Prier is along about right here now so far as I can tell. Now, he’s not yet at the line because, of course, we shall never reach that line until the Lord comes and takes us to be with him. In other words, there is always a difference between our present state, our standard.

Now, mind you. I’ve been kidding you. This has no relationship whatsoever to any man’s life and probably would not be reflective of any of our lives here because it’s just purely supposition. But at least, you can see there should be progress. And that there is never completion of maturity until the Lord comes, at which time, we will be caught up to meet him in the air and then our position shall be the same as our practice. Our state shall also be our standard. Now, when that takes place we are not only sanctified positionally but we’re sanctified practically. The old nature is removed, eradicated and not until then. Then prospective sanctification takes place.

So then sanctification that you can see is F in our outline. Sanctification is primary by the Spirit in bringing us to faith in Christ. Sanctification is positional the moment we

believe in Jesus Christ before God we are reckoned to be one hundred percent holy. Sanctification is progressive that has to do with our growth in maturity, in holiness while we’re here in the earth. And sanctification is prospective at that time our standard and our state are the same. And that does not happen until we meet the Lord in the air or until we pass into his presence.

Now, then I wanted to say just a few concluding remarks before we stop for tonight. Sanctification, as you can see, is in many respects similar to justification. It is a work for us. It is a work in us. It is a work on us. It is a past work. It is a present work. It is a future work. It is by the Spirit of God. It is by the word of God. It’s in the present. And it is by the presence of Jesus Christ in the future. All three of these aspects are found in one passage which I would like for you to turn to now before we close. And you will see that aside from the first stage, preparatory salvation, we really have reference here to the three aspects of the work of Christ and particularly reference to the work of sanctification. Notice verse 25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” That is the basis of positional sanctification deep inside verse 25. What did I say? Oh I’m sorry. You are not experts in ESP yet are you? Ephesians 5 verse 25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” That is the basis of positional sanctification, our Lord’s work on the cross. Verse 26, “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

Now, this progress sanctification is a sanctification that is carried out through the word of God. This is by the Spirit of God. This is by the blood of Jesus Christ his saving work. This is on the basis of his saving work but it is by the word of God. This is accomplished by the presence of Jesus Christ. But here progressive sanctification by the word of God that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That is why the Bible is so important for us. It is the means of our daily cleansing and the means of our growth in grace. We shall never be able to grow in grace if we do not

spend time in the word of God. It is the cleansing agent. It’s like taking a shower every morning to study the Bible because the Bible is a cleansing agent. God works through his word. And we shall not make progress if we do not listen to his words.

Well, what then are our responsibilities? Well our responsibility, as far as positional sanctification is concerned, is to believe in Jesus Christ. Our responsibility, as far as progressive sanctification is concerned, is the study of the word of God. Our responsibility, as far as prospective sanctification is concerned, is to look for his Son from heaven. Even that is a sanctifying activity as John tells us in his epistle.

Let me conclude with this. We must never keep before ourselves the fact that sanctification is not sanctimoniousness. Sanctification has to do with holiness. It has to do with a set apart condition before God and position before God. And we should also remember that those whom the word of God calls saints positionally have a responsibility to live saintly. Let’s close with a word of prayer. You are surprised that I finished on time aren’t you? So am I.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for Thy word. And we thank Thee for the doctrine of sanctification. We thank Thee, Lord, that in the Scriptures these truths are so plainly set forth. And we shall not be carried away by every wind of doctrine, doctrines that complain that we are or may be perfectly holy in this life, we know it is contrary to the word of God. And we pray, Lord, on the other hand that we may not advertise that we are saints and not really saintly. We pray that the Holy Spirit may have his way in our hearts and that he may motivate us to the study of the Scriptures in order that Thy purpose may be accomplished within us. And then, Lord, we look forward to the time when, as Paul says in the fifth chapter of Thessalonians, “Thou mayst sanctify us holy in our whole body soul and spirit may be preserved unto the coming of our lord Jesus Christ.” We look forward to that day. And we thank Thee for the time to study together

In Jesus’ name. Amen.