

Salvation: Sanctification

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[0 : 00] Okay, I've got a confession to make. I'm not a coffee guy. I don't really know a lot about coffee. If you make it for me, I might drink it, like the guys who live with me make really good coffee. And I'll ask them sometimes, like, hey, are you going to make any coffee? And they're like, no, but you can make some if you want. And I'm like, that's okay, never mind. That's as far as my love for it goes.

But because I am ignorant of coffee, like I drank some a little while ago because it's kind of just fading. And now I'm like just really messed up.

So we'll see how it goes tonight. But a little out of sorts. Yeah. Well, tonight we're talking about sanctification.

What a word. You know, what a confusing word at times. And I think if I have a title for tonight, it would be sanctification, becoming who we are in Christ.

[1 : 02] So becoming who we are in Christ. So I kind of have an introduction, and then I have four different, or five, something like that, questions we're going to look at just on this.

But to understand what sanctification is, we need to ask another question, and that is, what does holy mean? What does holiness mean?

And when we talk about the holiness of God, what does that mean? And from that, we need to, from there, we can kind of continue on about what sanctification is. But the Old Testament root, the Hebrew word for holy, it implies a lot, okay?

There's not just one fixed definition that you can actually put on for what holy means. It's really quite difficult. But when talking about holy, at least in the root word in the Hebrew, it's an idea that means to be separated, to be utterly different and distinct from anything else, and to be utterly devoted to something else.

And when applied to God, it's meant that God's holiness is His separateness. It's the way of God being in a class all by Himself.

[2 : 18] If you have to pick one term almost to define who God is, it's holy. He's totally separated from everything that is not God, in a way, if you want to put it that way.

He's being in a class all by Himself. And because He is in a class all by Himself, that makes Him, like, supremely, infinitely valuable, because of Him being in this category by Himself.

He's distinct from all else that is not God. So it kind of implies transcendence, otherness. It's a part of God's very essence.

There's no lack or deficiency in God at all. I'm going to just read out of Revelation 4.8. You don't have to turn there. But there's this scene going on around the throne of God.

And there's these angelic beings that are flying around and they're crying out to God. It says, The four living creatures, each of them has six wings, are full of eyes all around and within.

[3 : 20] And day and night they never cease to say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come. So that's what is constantly going on.

It says they don't stop doing that. That's constantly going on around the throne of God. These creatures are crying out to God, Holy, holy, holy. And so, if you wanted to limit holiness just to being separate, they've got to be saying more than, like, separated, separated, separated.

It just doesn't roll out like that. It implies a lot more. It's a holiness is where our language kind of runs out and we can't describe who God is anymore.

And we're kind of like, we've reached the edge. And then beyond that is just the vastness of who God is. It really, we can't actually put our hands on it. But holiness does mean that God is, like, utterly separated from all things that are sinful, all things that are evil.

He's in a completely different category in and of himself. And Isaiah had a similar experience. Like when he was in the throne room of God, he saw angelic beings, seraphim, flying around and crying out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

[4 : 42] The whole earth is full of his glory. And he was confronting with that. If you were here a long time ago for one of the first messages, that was a passage we actually looked at. And a lot of us, you know, we have this idea that we just kind of want to, like, run right upon God.

We want to see God. We want to behold God. And kind of almost an idea of just, like, waltzing right into his presence. But everyone in Scripture seems to have a completely different kind of experience.

Because whenever they encounter God, whenever they encounter the holiness of God, they're utterly terrified. Like, they are, some of them almost, some of the experiences almost even kill them. Because that's how powerful it was. And this holiness of God is in a category in and of itself. And that's why in Isaiah, all throughout Isaiah, which I'm kind of reading right now, I didn't count how many times, but I mean, I at least saw it seven times, where God says something kind of like this, To whom then will you compare to me, that I should be like him, says the Holy One.

God's always, like, daring people to find something to compare to him. And it's because he is completely other, completely separate, completely immorally pure, is God.

[5 : 59] So look at this. Turn to 1 Peter, chapter 1. So, God is holy means God is God.

If you want to think about it that way. Yeah, so, what does this have to do with sanctification? Well, since God is holy, he calls his people also to be holy.

Those who belong to him, those who are in Christ. So, 1 Peter 1, verse 14. It says this, As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

So don't be like you were before you were a Christian. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy.

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with that which is the precious blood of Christ, like the lamb without blemish or spot.

[7 : 30] So, it says basically here, God is saying, You will be holy, for I am holy. And that's quoted out of Leviticus 11, 44. It says this, Yahweh, your God, He is holy.

You must consecrate yourselves because He is holy, for He is holy. So, it's this idea that because God is holy, He now calls His children, those who belong to Him, to also walk in holiness.

If you look at the language here, it kind of carries the language of like children to a father. And you see that here? He commands us to be holy, but He's not giving us an arbitrary command.

He's basically saying that like, Look, if you belong to God, holiness is a family trait. Like, holiness is like the spiritual DNA that we have received from God, and it should be in us.

If we truly are born of God, if we truly have been born again by the Spirit, then like His DNA has been put in us. And so, He's saying, Walk as the children that you are.

[8 : 31] Walk as those who have been changed by God. And then He goes on, He says, Because, you know, you were ransomed by the precious blood of Christ.

Like, you were made His, you were made His child through the precious blood of Christ. So, you were bought. Right? You no longer belong to yourself. You belong to God.

And you want it to be that way. Right? The freest person in the world is the one who's a slave to a perfect master. Right? We want to belong to God.

And we want to be who He's called us to be. The spiritual DNA that's in us is holiness. So, point being here, whenever the New Testament talks about sanctification, it's basically talking about holiness.

Okay? That's kind of what the focus is. You can't really understand it without the others. So, let's get into some of the things here. The first question, which we're going to kind of unpack this with, is what is sanctification?

[9 : 37] What is sanctification? And so, just talk about terms a little bit. Don't get lost in this. I tried to condense this as much as I could. But, the English word sanctify, or sanctification, comes from the Latin word, you know, sanctus.

And it, which means holy in Latin, sanctus. But, the problem is, like, in our English language, the adjective holy, we don't have a way of, like, converting that into a verb.

We don't have, um, holification. You know, it doesn't exist, like, in the English language. But, um, but in the New Testament, the adjective for holy can also be made into a verb, which means to make holy, or to set apart as holy.

It can be turned into a verb. So, so, the adjective holy can be implied as the condition of being holy, right? The condition of being holy, holiness, or it can imply to the process of becoming holy.

It's, uh, either one of those, which would be like holification, uh, which doesn't really exist. Again, if the word existed. So, we use sanctification. That's, basically, what we're, what we're getting this word from.

[10:53] Um, so, the crucial point is this, all right? Anytime you read in the New Testament, the word sanctify, you know they're talking about holiness. That's what, that's what you need to, to kind of read into when you're, when you're reading those words.

Okay? So, therefore, the goal tonight is to talk about not just being holy, but like becoming holy. It's, it's both of those. Uh, as the New Testament talks about it.

And so, the New Testament refers to our holiness in both senses, a condition of being holy and becoming holy. All right? So, uh, but, if you start really researching this and studying this, you're going to find like the word sanctify, sanctification, is used for like a lot of different kind of things. And you're going to be like, how do you put all this together? It's not as clear a term as like regeneration or justification. It's really broad. But, it can be said that there's two ways that it occurs the most.

There's two different ways. So, so in what ways does scripture speak about sanctification? Okay, now, this is the two that you want to write underneath that first title. What is sanctification?

[11:59] Excuse me. But the first one is called definitive sanctification. A big word, definitive, right? Try to spell that, whatever. Definitive sanctification.

All right, and I'm just going to read a definition of it for you by John Frame. It's not really that long, but in this sense, definitive sanctification is a once-for-all event simultaneously with regeneration that transfers us from the sphere of sin to the sphere of God's holiness.

From the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God. It's this act that God does himself where he like takes us from the realm of sin, the realm of Satan, and moves us to the realm of the kingdom of God.

It's like a transfer that he's done. He's made us like his people. I'll give you an example of this. In 1 Peter 2, it says this. Are you already in Peter?

Are you still in Peter? Oh, how about that? Go ahead and flip over to chapter 1, verse 2. Excuse me, chapter 2, verse 9. All these words are blending together. Chapter 2, verse 9.

[13:07] It says this. And this is one way we can think of definitive sanctification. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

See that? A people for God's own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people.

Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. You see that? It's like this transfer of like you were this and now you're this. God has like brought you there. He set you aside to be his people and to live for his purposes.

That's one way that this is used. But I didn't intend for you to turn there, but turn to 1 Corinthians 6 real quick. I'll show you another example of this. 1 Corinthians 6.

Then go to verse 9. Alright?

[14:11] So it says, Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Rhetorical question. Do not be deceived, neither sexual, immoral, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Okay? So he's saying like that's, that's, those kind of actions are manifestations of someone's sinful condition. They come out of us because we are sinful. So he's saying if you live by those things, if that's what's coming out of your life constantly and that's what you live for, he's like, you won't have, you won't not inherit the kingdom of God.

But then he changes his kind of tone and he says, and such were some of you, the Christians he's talking to, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God.

Pretty awesome. Like a picture of like us moving from this realm to that realm. That's who a lot of us were. Some of you may still be in that realm, but God has all the power to move you into his realm, the kingdom of light and to be a part of the holy nation, his own possession.

So, so definitive sanctification redeems us, okay, this is important. Definitive sanctification redeems us from the ruling power of sin in our life and it frees us from the slavery of sin.

[15:44] Okay, so it, so we still sin, okay, right, as believers, we all know that, that's where we're kind of, where we're kind of going here. But, but it's not the same like as it was before, before we were in Christ.

The power of sin has been broken. So, if you really have become a believer and God's Spirit is in you, you should notice over time, like, sin weakening in your life in certain areas.

Not totally being demolished, but like, God's power and God's Spirit inside of you is causing you to have more and more victory over those sins in your life, in your actual life.

So, and that's because of definitive sanctification. God has caused you to be born again. Some of you were here when Nathan, if you weren't here when Nathan preached on regeneration, I don't know if we have the sermons up yet, but do we have the sermons up yet?

Okay, working on it? Yeah, but, but if that has happened to you, you now are not a slave to sin anymore, you're not a slave to Satan anymore, you belong to God and by His power you can like walk in victory over sin.

[16:50] So, it destroyed the dominion of sin over your life. So, sanctification in this sense is decisive and it's a radical break with the power and pleasure of sin, okay?

It's like a, and God does this, it's an act that God does at regeneration as He moves us from one kingdom to another. So, that's the first one. Thank God for that one.

That's the first way it's used. We've been set apart as God's people for His purposes. Sorry. The second way this is mostly used, alright, and this is probably the one that we're most familiar with, is progressive sanctification.

Progressive sanctification. And Wayne Grudem, he defines it this way, it's a progressive work of God and man, key phrase there, work of God and man, that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives, like right now.

Read that again. It's a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives. So, so in definitive sanctification, it's all the work of God.

[18:07] Justification, all the work of God. You don't cooperate at all. Being born again, completely the work of God. But in sanctification, at least in this sense, we do cooperate with God.

We exercise our new natures and the new desires and wills that we have that were given to us to love God. So what? So guess what? We're not puppets, right? We're not machines dangling around.

We have real actions. Our actions mean things. And we can choose to love God or choose to disobey God, even as believers. So, in this sense, we can think of sanctification as the outworking of the new life that we have in Christ.

Okay? It's like the new life that was given to us in regeneration, we're actually now moving more and more into our new nature that was given to us when we were born again.

And this involves like a gradual, incremental, progressive work, spiritual work inside of us when we're still putting to death remaining sin in our lives.

[19:12] All of us still have remaining sin in our lives. I know I do. But by God's power, what I'm able to do is I can rely on His strength and I can have more and more victory over those particular sins that are in my life.

And I can become more like Christ in this life. So we do play a role. We cooperate. Alright? Let's just say you're facing that moment of temptation. Right?

It's before you. And everything in you is wanting to go for it. Like your flesh, which actually is not your nature. That's a whole new talk. You have one nature now. Right?

It lives in corrupted, sinful flesh, but you have one spiritual nature. And that's the new man that's come from the act of regeneration. So you're faced with temptation. Alright?

Now you have a chance there. The Holy Spirit, this is His operation and us, by the way. He's saying like, don't do this. This is close enough.

[20:10] Stop now. You know this is going to lead to disaster. You know that God is so much better. Trust me. Right? And then He will begin teaching you and showing you ways to get out of

that situation.

And what? You can either say, okay, alright, I'm out of here. You know, like whatever it is. Or you can be like, you know what? I really don't want to fight right now.

So I'm just going to lay down and get into my sin. Right? So that's an example of how this works in reality. We do play a role. We cooperate with the Holy Spirit as children of God.

And we have to yield to His work. I'll turn to Colossians 3. I'll show you an example of this.

Sorry. Sorry. So here, Paul writes, okay, to the Christians here, in light of your new identity in Christ, in light of what Christ has done for you, because of that, live this way.

[21 : 18] That's kind of what he's saying. Because of who you are now, live this way. Walk this way. Colossians 3, verse 5. And you'll see this is a picture of progressive sanctification.

It says, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these, you too, once walk. There's that idea of like, hey, you know what? You used to be that way. That's who you were before Christ. Then he's making a present connection.

But he says, but now, you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another.

Seeing that you have been, you have put off the old self with its practices, and you have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.

[22 : 19] Right? So, if you remember the talk a good while back when Kyle talked about sin and the fall of man and how we were, man was the shattered image of God, the broken image of God, how we were meant to reflect who God is, right?

His holy character and His dominion. And sin shattered that. Okay? But as believers now, people that have been born again, have a new nature, most of us sin here, we can now actually reflect who God is.

You see that? It says there at the end. It says, He's being renewed after the knowledge, or excuse me, the knowledge after the image of its creator. We can now reflect to the world who God really is. It's really cool. We can actually do that now as believers. But He says, you know, put what's earthly in you to death. Stop these things because that's not who you are anymore.

And really sorry Bible teaching, which I grew up with a lot and a lot of us have been exposed to, they'll jump immediately like, do these, don't do these, do these, don't do these. But the problem, a great example of this, maybe John remembers this, maybe not, but a long time ago, we were teaching through Ephesians when we were all in college, and the first three chapters of Ephesians, okay, are about who we are as children of God, who we are in Christ.

[23 : 45] It talks about our identity, right, our new identity. And then the next three chapters talk about, now, in light of who you are, walk this way. That's kind of, this is what the new man looks like.

So it's a totally different way of thinking. It's saying like, wow, this is who we are. You always hear Nathan and Wes and I say, you were created to be and not to do, and now the being comes to doing.

This is what we're talking about. So put to death these things that remain in you, right? So that's progressive sanctification. So, I'm going to show you probably one of the wildest verses in the Scripture, I think.

It's very interesting. Look at Hebrews 10 real quick. Is there any places where you see definitive and progressive sanctification in the same verse?

And the answer is yes. That's kind of mind-boggling here. But look at Hebrews 10, verse 10. So, these passages demonstrate how true Christians are sanctified, they are holy, but then it says they also are being sanctified, they're becoming holy.

[25 : 02] It's really a crazy thing, but both are true. So look at verse 10. And by that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

See that? So which one do you think that's implying to? It says, and by that we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Which one? Definitive or progressive? Someone say something. Definitive. Yeah. He's like taking us and moved us here. Okay? So then, in the same chapter, look at verse 14.

Let's go down just a little bit. Here's like the verse that just is like, what? It says, for by a single offering, Christ has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Right? Christ has perfected for all time those being sanctified. So there is a sense, right, by which we believe in Jesus and we are sanctified in this verse.

[26 : 10] We are holy. Right? But then later on, like in this verse, we see that Christians are both perfected, we already are holy, and then we also are being sanctified.

We're being made holy. It's pretty crazy. So one of the greatest sources of joy for us as believers is that to endure and keep fighting, which I think Chris McKean is going to talk about that next week. You don't want to miss that. It's going to be a good one. So where it says, for by a single offering, namely Christ Himself, right? Just look at the verse. He has perfected for all time those being sanctified.

And that's amazing because in the same sentence, right, he says we are being sanctified and that we already are perfect. Isn't that nuts? So being sanctified means that we are imperfect, right, in the process of, but we are becoming holy but not because, but we're not fully holy.

And I'll read you this quote by John Piper on this particular verse, right? The joyful encouragement here is that the evidence of our perfection before God is not our experience perfection but our experience progress.

[27 : 26] See that? I'll read that again. The joyful encouragement here is that the evidence of our perfection before God, right, being holy, is not our experience perfection. Most of us don't really experience what it's like to be perfectly holy, right?

We don't in this life. But he says the evidence of our perfection before God is our experiential progress. Are you growing? That's the evidence that you already are perfected.

And this is what he says, the good news is that being on the way is proof that we have already arrived. Pretty awesome. The good news is that being on the way is proof that we have already arrived.

So don't ask, like, am I perfectly holy yet? Because the answer is going to say, like, experientially. No, you're not. But are you growing in holiness? And you can answer yes, then that's evidence that you've already arrived.

That's kind of like what he's saying. So that's the two ways that the Bible mostly talks about sanctification. But number two, the big number two, second point or question, what is the difference between sanctification and justification?

[28 : 36] Those are serious distinctions. You might couldn't call yourself Christian if you don't understand, at least in experience, right, what these differences are.

There's a big difference. So we have to be careful to distinguish the two, but also not to separate them. We can't have one without the other. Some people actually want to make that happen. The same thing is like light and heat from the sun. You can't really separate those things. The sun gives out light and heat. We both need those things. And so they're not the same, but they're not separated either.

They're still together. It's what the sun gives us, right? So the problem is a lot of people want to say, I've been justified, like I've been made right before God, but then they actually don't experience any kind of growth in this life, right?

That can be dangerous. They want to kind of separate those two things. And also, at least in church history, the Roman church would put sanctification before justification.

[29 : 46] Saying that you actually have to, like, make yourself holy enough in this life to actually be justified. I'm glad that's not the case. It would mean that we have to, like, make ourselves godly, right?

And that he only would justify us when we had made ourselves godly. It's a big difference. We believe that sanctification is the evidence of justification.

It's the outflow of what God has done. So I'm going to give you some statements, okay? And just differences, just to kind of make a clarification.

The justification versus sanctification. Justification is being declared righteous by God.

Sanctification is being made righteous.

Declared and then made, right? Justification is about God's attitude to me changing. Sanctification is about God changing us, right?

[30 : 48] He accepts us because of what Christ has done, right? Kind of the point there. Justification is our position or status before God, legally speaking.

But sanctification is a practice that continues throughout our lives. It goes on and on throughout this life on earth. all right? So, this is a big one.

Justification is immediate and complete upon conversion. It's like that, okay? It's instantaneous with being born again.

So, what's cool about that is you can't be more justified today or tomorrow than the moment you first believed. You can have a terrible, awful day and like falling to grievous sin.

That doesn't make you any less justified before God as your so-called best day where you share the gospel with five people and you read your Bible for three hours. You're just as justified before God as you always have been.

[31 : 49] So, that's big. And so, comparing that to sanctification, sanctification is a progressive process. It's a process. We are being sanctified, growing into holiness.

then, okay, justification is objective. Sanctification is subjective, right, because we cooperate with God.

All right, and then the last one here, justification is completely an act of God, monergistic, God alone. Sanctification, we actually play a role by cooperating with the Holy Spirit and growing in holiness.

So, those are major differences. If you switch those around, we would be in trouble, because it would be like God standing on top of Mount Sinai saying, like, you have to, like, climb all the way up here, obey every single law with your heart, your mind, your soul, on your own, and when you get up here, I'll justify you.

No, that's not the way the Bible actually talks about it. It says that justification came first, clearly. That's what the whole Reformation was about, almost.

[33 : 03] So, Luther would argue, so, all together now, let's kind of put this, all these statements together. All right, so, when you were born again, right, God raised you from spiritual death to life.

Like Lazarus being called out of the tomb, Christ said, Lazarus, come out, and he came out. And, so that's regeneration. generation. The result is, the new life you have actually breathes air.

That is saving faith. The air that the new person breathes is saving faith. Right? That's what happens at conversion. And then once we have, says what, we're justified by, we were here, last week, justified by what?

Works or faith? Faith. So we were justified by faith. So when you actually have saving faith, in that moment, God justifies you. It's all like this.

It's not a, well, I was born again, but I don't think I'm justified yet. It's like this one instantaneous act. We actually just know that there's some sort of sequence based on how Scripture talks about it.

[34 : 10] And it carries on. So if we're justified, right, we've been established permanently as a living, breathing, new nature, child of God, right?

And so how we put sanctification into this? Sanctification is the exercising of or the working out of the new nature in which the Holy Spirit is like our trainer.

He pushes us and disciplines us and encourages us as our teacher to like walk more like the person that we now are before God. If you want to think about it that way, it's like the exercising of the new man, right?

So another example is like, I mean, whatever, Jesus might have been a carpenter, maybe, I mean, his dad was, his earthly dad was, so maybe he learned that, but there's really nothing in the scripture that says that Jesus was a carpenter, but necessarily.

Let's just say that like Christ being the carpenter, he carefully crafts us into something beautiful, right? The construction is messy, and it takes time, and it does hurt us from time to time, and he has to move things around, but like major renovations, right, require, you know, us to like get rid of things that are in us, right?

[35 : 24] We need to push those out and allow him to work. And so, I read this somewhere, this is this side of heaven, right? We never will reach complete perfection in this actual life, it's not going to happen.

But with something we should strive for and move into. And so, God basically kind of hangs this sign of our heart that says under construction.

And when we go to heaven, we go to glory, which glorification will be in a few weeks, we then will be completely and fully holy, perfect, sinless. That's when it's completed.

So, I remember this really kooky saying, all right? I remember when I was an early Christian back in the early 2000s, I liked him a lot.

He's a nice guy. He's kind of a traveling Baptist preacher. He was from the North American Mission Board, I think. He was an old guy, and he was like really, he did a really good exposition of John 3, I think.

[36 : 28] But then he said this, all right? When God saves you, there's an inward transformation, which leads to an outward demonstration, not sanctification, which leads to an upward destination.

When God saves you, there's an inward transformation, it leads to an outward demonstration, which leads to an upward destination. But you couldn't say that something actually happened inside of you if there was not something showing for that.

Big difference. So, you can remember it that way, maybe. So, number three, what is our role in sanctification? Right?

Tell me what to do. So, what is our role in sanctification? Look at Colossians 1. We're going to stay in Colossians just for a minute. Colossians 1, verse 9.

Colossians 1, verse 9. What is our role in sanctification?

[37 : 36] Alright, verse 9. Paul says, And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

And then he says this, So, walk, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Alright, so it kind of says there, if you look at it, it's like, yeah, walk this way, do this, bear fruit in every good work, increasing the knowledge of God. It's kind of like telling you to do something here.

So, we want to please God, right, and with our attitudes, and bearing fruit is kind of the example of that. So, this fruit that we have in our Christian life is evidence of God's work in us, right?

It's the outflow of what God has done in us. And so, if you want to take a statement here, if you want to just ask the question, what is our role? We are called to be faithful, obedient, to labor, and to toil in the work of being holy.

[38 : 50] In growing in holiness, we do play a role. We are like to strive for this, you know, and just even practically speaking, you know, what does that look like? It means like taking advantage of every means of grace that God has given us.

You being here tonight is a means of grace because you're hearing the word of God, you're reading the word of God, being around the people of God, the church, the body of Christ, that's a huge means of grace. Something that probably 60-70% of college students neglect because they're content to just be on campus, you know, but the body of Christ will help you grow in holiness.

You need to be around older individuals that have gone before you and have lived, you know, different lives and they can teach you and disciple you. and ultimately prayer, like sitting, talking to God, pouring out your heart to Him, listening to what His heart is, and meditating, reading, and practicing the word of God.

Those are all means that He's given us. Those are the primary means, right? So, that's it. We're to be faithful, obedient, to labor, to toil.

It's not the whole let go and let God. It's kind of like a, applying it to growing in holiness is kind of like not true. In some situations when you're trying to control everything, maybe it is, but we are to be active, proactive in this, being obedient children.

[40 : 13] All right, which brings us to the next question, number four. What is the Spirit's role in sanctification? All right? And you find that in the next verse, verse 11. It says, May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Saints mean holy, holy ones, right? So those who have been set apart, that same idea uses the word there. So the Holy Spirit gives us, according to this, the divine strength we need to live holy lives.

He, like, gives us that. He shapes our desires and our wills. He comforts us. He guides us. He teaches us. We were taught in the Holy Spirit a few weeks ago. Good, great message.

You can go back and hear it once we get that up and running again. But the Spirit empowers us, right, to live for God. He gives us the strength we need. So, the second statement here, all right, so what's the Spirit's role?

As we step out in faithfulness and obedience, as we move, right, the Holy Spirit is faithful to empower and encourage and guide and comfort us while we're growing in holiness.

[41 : 35] All right? And so that's the great spiritual mystery, right? Some people just want to make it one or the other. It's either all God or it's all us, but in this case, it's both. We have a clear calling and a clear part to play in this, but ultimately, it's God's power that's working inside of us.

And since you're in Colossians, jump to the end of the chapter to verse 27, right? And we're going to see like how, again, both of these work together. Verse 27, to them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

All right? That's the message. And here's what Paul says. Him we proclaim, warning everyone, teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

For this I toil, struggling. See that? I'm toiling, I'm fighting. He actually uses the word agonize in lots of his letters. He is like toiling, fighting, struggling.

Then it says this, with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. What? You know? So like, as we step out and are active, being proactive, being obedient, God gives us the strength we need to endure.

[42 : 57] All right? So, kind of wrapping this up. We got started a little late tonight, but I apologize for that. Number five, the last one.

And this is the encouraging part. God will finish, you might feel like you're never going to ride, but God will finish what he started in us. God will finish what he started in us. Right?

So one of the greatest heartaches in the Christian life is like the slowness of our change. We like, it's so slow. Personally, I get very discouraged at how slow I change and are black thereof of change in my life at times.

I get very discouraged. I'm not seeing a lot of spiritual growth during certain seasons in my life and I can be very hard on myself. I really long to love God with all my heart and all my mind.

Right? I want to love him fiercely. I want my whole life to be consumed by him. I want that. I know that that's what most of you want too. But then you find yourself just slipping back into a reoccurring state in your life and you get discouraged and dang it, you just want to quit.

[44 : 09] I know the feeling and I know I'm not alone here. So, if you feel like that sometimes, be encouraged because, unlike us, who start a lot of things and don't finish them, right, God never does that.

Whatever he starts, he always finishes. He always brings you completion. Right? So, our destiny, one day, is to be one day like completely holy, sinless, perfect before God.

That's where he's going to take us. I think in three weeks, something like that, four weeks, we're going to talk about the doctrine of like glorification, which is basically being perfect and being with the Lord in eternity.

And he's going to take us there. Philippians 1.6 says this. Most of you have heard this verse.

Philippians 1.6 I am sure of this, sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

He will complete it. So, true, genuine believers, right, who have experienced God's saving power and have the confidence that one day the work that God started right now is going to be completed.

[45 : 28] It's going to be finished. He will complete it. Another man discouraged about the slowness of his change, kind of like I can be, and maybe like most of you, hopefully, that you grieve over your sin, the sin of your life, was John Newton, former slave trader and brigand and drunk and brawler who became a believer and completely had a life change, completely was devoted to Christ and actually helped bring down the slave trade in the British Empire years later.

But he said in that hymn, Amazing Grace, it was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Right? And what he says right here, a very cool statement. He says, I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world.

But still, I am not what I used to be. And by the grace of God, I am what I am. Pick that up like, I'm not where I want to be. The one encouraging thought is I'm not who I used to be.

Right? And by God's grace, I am what I am. Very powerful. So, we'll close with this text. Let's look at 1 Thessalonians 5. Just to kind of wrap this up. 1 Thessalonians 5.

[46 : 53] Just showing you another verse here. Verse 23. And this is kind of a prayer of Paul.

And he would pray it for us too. He says this. Verse 23. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Right? He who calls you is faithful and surely He will do it. See that? He's going to do it. He's going to bring us to completion. Holy and blameless.

And it's going to be God's power. He will do it. So let's pray together. Let's pray together.