

Sanctification - Part 2

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[0:00] I don't really know where to tell you to open your Bible. There's a lot of places we're going to go to tonight. I guess just open it up to Titus 2. That'll be our first passage that we come to.

So last week we began discussing sanctification, which is, as Clay already said, a topic that is literally eternally vast.

There's so much in it. We're never going to cover all the things that we need to cover. And so at the very beginning, hear me say, I encourage you to study it more than you're going to get tonight. I'm going to try to answer some questions. I started last week by answering the first three of the total six questions that I wanted to pose. And those first three were, I believe, if I find in myself, or if I find that I'm sinning more than I'm, or if I find in myself more failure than I do success, am I still being sanctified was the first question.

Secondly, what about that one setting sin in my life? Am I still being sanctified if that thing is true with me? And then thirdly, I think I simply just asked, how can we be sanctified? Tonight, we're going to deal with these three.

[1:17] If no matter what I do, I can't lose my salvation, then why should I care to be sanctified? Number two, where should I start?

And number three, what should I be expecting? And obviously, these are really general. The first one's more specific, but the last two are really general. And so we're just going to scan it. I mean, we're just going to be a survey of these things.

It's not going to be an exhaustive study at all. But before we get going, I'm just going to pray, and then we'll really dive in. Father, we don't ask you to teach us everything there is to know about sanctification.

We just simply ask you to teach us something more than we knew when we came in. We just want to grow through this time. Lord, if it's just the next 45 minutes or so, just let us truly benefit, truly, truly benefit in Christ from being here.

And Lord, just give your people your word. If what they're just saying is truly the cry of their heart, if they really are hungry and they really are thirsty and they really want to be fed, then I pray that, God, I would be given the grace in this moment to give them true food and give them true drink, which is Christ.

[2:39] I pray that they would eat of you and drink of you and be filled with you. They would know you better, Lord, than they ever knew you before. They would understand what sanctification is. They would understand how it's supposed to work.

They would understand what's facing them, what's to come in their life pursuit of sanctification. So just aid me, God. I need your grace.

I am inadequate apart from Christ completely to do this. And so, God, just make yourself look glorious through our study.

In Christ's name, amen. Before we really get into the questions, I just want to talk about, or I guess briefly redefine for you what sanctification is.

That's a big word. The root of it is sanctify. And it really just means to be set apart, okay, to be made holy, to be consecrated unto God. It is the process of us becoming more like Christ.

[3:42] That's a daily thing. That's a moment-by-moment thing. There isn't different stages and levels of sanctification. There's just this process of you daily becoming more like Jesus Christ in every single facet of your life, in your thinking, in your doing, in your acting, in your reacting, in the things that you focus on, in your motivations, in your ambitions, in your affections.

Everything is becoming more like Christ, more for Christ. And that's what it means to be sanctified. It's a work of the Holy Spirit.

We learn that in 1 Thessalonians 5. It says, by the Spirit of peace, may He sanctify you entirely. Okay? So we know from the beginning of it that it's a work that God does, but it's also a work that we're called to.

It says in Hebrews 12 that we should pursue sanctification. Okay? So I said this last week.

This is hard to get your mind around, but sanctification, this idea of becoming more like Christ, is something that God will do to every Christian by His grace, but it's also something that we pursue as Christians that are striving to glorify Christ.

[4 : 59] It's the only way that you can glorify Christ, by the way, is to become more like Him and to live in light of that. But Christ's glory is the purpose for it, and Christ's blessings are the rewards of it.

But if you want, if you feel, maybe you're sitting here tonight and you feel like, man, you know, I like coming to Bible studies, I like going to church on Sundays, I like, you know, the people that I'm around, these are great people, but I don't really feel like I'm really growing any closer to Christ. I don't really have any kind of sense of His presence in my life. I believe it is biblical to pray for a felt Christ. I believe God can be not only known about, but known relationally.

You know, and so, if you're wondering why that may be for you, then I would venture to say it's probably the fact that you're not striving to be holy. That sanctification isn't as big of a part of your life as it should be.

So, just know that, I guess, at the beginning. It's experienced, okay, so sanctification is experienced by us primarily through faith. Through dependent faith.

[6 : 17] Through childlike, simple faith. In God's Word. As we exercise faith in God's Word, as we read it and we take it for what it says at face value, and we believe it, and we live it, that is how we experience God's work of sanctification.

You will find the energy for things you did not have energy for. You will find love for people you did not love before. That's what God will prove to you as you endeavor to be sanctified.

It's that you have these new affections and these new feelings and these new intangibles that God gives to his people for his glory, for our blessing.

But it's also... Well, that's pretty much what it is. I don't want to get too complicated.

It's important to understand this. I said this as well last week, and this is why I had you turn to Titus 2. That's a really, really important thing to understand.

[7 : 31] Okay? He saved you to make you holy. Let's look at Titus 2.14. It says, my first word here is who.

That's Jesus. Jesus gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Just to further corroborate that, 1 Peter 2, verse 24 says, And he himself, that's Jesus again, bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by his wounds you were healed.

Okay? So what do we have there? We have Jesus Christ dying on the cross, so that you could die to your sin, and so that you could live to righteousness.

Which is another good definition of, I think, sanctification. It's dying to sin, it's living to righteousness. It's casting off the old man with our old desires and our fleshly desires and vents and inclinations, and it's putting on the new man.

[8 : 55] It's putting on Christ. Romans 13, I think, says it like that. Now, it's almost seen as like clothing yourself in Jesus Christ.

Those are all just, I guess, metaphorical ways of seeing it. So Christ gave up his kingdom, Christ gave up his crown, Christ gave up his holiness, or not his holiness, but his righteous cloak, you could say, in heaven, to come down and to be a peasant, to be a man, to take on flesh, to take on all of the experiences of the human being.

And then he died, right, in our place, so that we could be holy. So it's primary. This isn't a secondary thing. It's not like, you know, Christ died simply to save you, and sanctification is, you know, kind of the thing that he hopes for.

Okay? Christ died to make you holy. Whatever the cost. Loving Christ is not a small thing.

At times, it's very difficult. And you were saved, okay, let me just say this again, one more time, then we'll get to the new stuff. You were saved in an instant, by pure grace, and it costs you nothing.

[10:16] But you will be sanctified, throughout your lifetime, and it will cost you everything. You were saved in a moment, right? In a simple little moment. And it didn't cost you anything.

It cost Christ everything. But you are sanctified, over your entire lifetime, and that will cost you, your life. Alright? We're going to dive deeper into that.

First question. If no matter what I do, I can't lose my salvation, then why should I care to be sanctified? I hear this a lot from people.

Maybe not explicitly, but I think implicitly. They think it is totally cool, if they don't strive for holiness. They don't see the reason for it.

I mean, I've been saved, I've said the right prayer, I've done the right thing, I've been confirmed in the church, these things are true of me, so why do I need to be holy? You know, if I go make a confession to my priest, or if I go do this, or go do that, then that means I'm good to go.

[11:23] I can do whatever I want during the week, and then I can be right on Sunday, and then God's going to accept me on the last day. There's all these, there's this, this disease, I would call it, flows throughout Christendom.

It underlines a lot of people's faith. It exposes it, I think. So firstly, okay, in order to answer our question, sanctification is the proof of your salvation.

Again, I quoted it earlier, Hebrews 12, 14 says, pursue sanctification without which you will not see the Lord. That's a pretty strong statement.

Pursue sanctification without which you will not see the Lord. So pursue holiness. Become like Christ, or else, you will not see the Lord.

You will not be found to be in Christ on the last day, if this is not true of you. So when people neglect sanctification, it's just simply evidence that maybe they're not saved.

[12:36] And that's really simple to understand, I think. If that's really why Christ died, I mean, if that's really the purpose of God was to make you holy in saving you, then surely it's going to happen.

We can't thwart the will of God. But I think it's more important to understand why this is true. Okay? Why is it true that God's people become holy? One-to-one correlation.

Why is it true? Why are all true believers sanctified? Go to Romans 6. Romans 6.

This is such an awesome passage. Paul had just gotten finished here in the context.

For five chapters now, for the first few, he really just kind of puts an indictment on all mankind. He says, these things are true of you if you're a Jew. These things are also true of you if you're a jinn fowl.

[13:39] That means if you're not a Jew. So these things are true of everybody. He just kind of, he exposes everybody in their sin. He doesn't leave anybody out no matter where you are, no matter who you are. Everybody's a sinner. Then he starts talking about how salvation is by faith alone.

Alright? And he goes through chapter 4 and chapter 5 and he's exposing how salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It's a gift. He talks about Abraham as an example, all these different things.

And then he gets to Romans 6 and he kind of begins to anticipate the rebuttal. you could say, of the religious leaders that he's writing to. He knows what they're going to ask.

He knows their questions and so he begins in verse 1 of chapter 6 and he says, What should we say then? Or in other words, you might say this. Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?

May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?

[14:47] May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? So he's anticipating them saying, Paul, if you're being serious right now, if you're saying that it's completely by grace that we're saved, then why not just keep sinning all the more so that God gets more glory if that's really true.

I mean, if it's all grace and there's no works at all, then let's just keep sinning so that grace may abound, Paul. And his response is, in the strongest Greek negative that there is, may it never be. Or no way. Or almost like a you are out of your mind to think that kind of thing. How shall we who have died to sin, he says, still live in it?

Your old man died when Christ died. What is the old man? That's your humanness that has fallen. That is your enslavement to sin. That is your identification, you could say, as a child of the devil.

[16:13] That is your inability to honor God. That is your inability to love Christ. All those things died with Christ when He died.

And when you were raised with Christ, when you were made a new man, made a new woman, by His grace, you were risen with freedom from the power and dominion of sin, and you were then given freedom to the power, the spirit, the mind, and the grace of Christ daily.

Okay, so hear that. Those things are literally available to you if you were a believer. The power that rose Christ or that raised Christ from the dead is within you.

The spirit of God is within you. The spirit of God, the spirit of an omnipotent being is within you.

The mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2.16, I think, says, is yours. What does that mean?

[17:28] That's the ability to comprehend this by faith and actually have it work in your life and not be words on a page.

And then the grace of Christ is available to you daily. which is the foundation upon our whole Christian life. If I'm not, I literally had one of the worst weeks ever this week.

I literally, it was such a terrible week. Okay, like in so many ways, so many different ways. And yet, the only thing that really kept me going and the only thing that didn't keep me from just really being, you know, led into more sin was the fact that I was standing on the grace of God.

And then again, I reminded myself it's not about what I've done, it's not about what I've earned, it's not about what I merit from God, I'm standing on the grace of Christ. Which is that sure, it's that sure foundation.

So, all these things are ours. All those things are ours. And so, Paul doesn't mean, I mean, what he's saying here in the verse is that holiness isn't an option. It's not an option anymore.

[18:45] And I'm not, I'm not meaning that like you better do this kind of, it's not an option. I'm meaning it like it's impossible not to be holy. Why?

Because you died to your old man. And you were risen in Christ. Now, I want to exhaust that, but I can't.

There's so much in that. I mean, I know you guys are probably thinking, what is the old man again? Go study it. Get commentary on it, but just understand that old man is who you once were and the new man is who you are now in Christ.

There's so much more to say. So, then jump to 15. Okay? We just skipped an entire semester worth of information.

But, verse 15 here, same chapter, says this. He anticipates another question and he says, what then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

[19:52] May it never be again, he says. Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as a slave, as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey?

Either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness. But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, that's that old man, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. righteousness. What's he saying? He starts off with the question, shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Again, he's pointing out something that they were believing that was false. if in fact I am not held accountable by the law anymore, then it's not a well, then why not sin?

It's more of a well, then can I sin? You know? I think the first question is kind of the well, why not sin? Kind of this like arrogant you know, like what do you mean Paul? Like you know, just, but then in 15 he's kind of already addressed that so in 15 they say well then why can't you sin?

[21:17] It's more of a genuine like you know, why not? Shall we sin? Shall we sin because we're not under law but under grace? And he says may it never be. And he goes back to his original argument and he says basically you can't serve two masters.

Okay, that's what 16 through 18 is basically communicating is you can't serve two masters. You can't love sin and Christ. those things are no longer able to coexist in a loving way.

You may still sin. I'm not saying you can't sin. I'm just saying you can't love sin like you once loved it. You won't be enslaved to sin like you were once enslaved to it because your affections have changed.

And how do we know that? Because it says here you became obedient to God's commandments from your heart. So part of becoming a Christian is imagine your heart as a heart of stone, right?

A heart of stone. It's a stony heart. It has no sensitivity to anything. I can kick a stone as hard as I want to it's not going to feel it. Right? There's no sensitivity in it. When I become a Christian God says He gives me in Ezekiel 36 a heart of flesh.

[22 : 38] It has life. It has sensitivity to the things of God. And so I became obedient to the commandments of God in my heart.

I'm sensitive to Christ, right? I now love this person. I love this Christ. And so there's certain things that because I love Him I don't want to do that to Him. I care about Him.

My heart is for Him. My affection is His. And so I don't want to do those things that I once did. So you find when you sin how do you feel? It's like I'm not again.

I just keep doing the same thing. And He addresses this in Romans 7 but He's like I do the very thing that I hate. Right? I do the very thing that I hate. So we find that if you are truly a believer and you're loving Christ from your heart and you're obeying God's commandments from your heart then you will inevitably hate sin.

Which is why Paul can justifiably say so clearly so simply how can you sin if you've died to it and if you're now living in Christ?

[23 : 46] How can you sin if you now hate sinning and love godliness? It's just a really simple argument but it's I mean it's you know it's shrouded in this complex you know supernatural spiritual stuff that we can't really get our minds fully around but I'm that's what he's essentially saying you can't serve two masters and who your master is listen to this guys who your master is will be evident by the fruit of your life right?

The vine doesn't lie an apple tree bears apples an orange tree bears oranges a sinner bears the fruits of sin Galatians 5 tells you what those are whereas a man being sanctified a godly man bears the fruits of that godliness there's no hiding it that's why Jesus says about the Pharisees and the Sadducees when he's dealing with them himself he just says you'll know them by their fruits what they love will be known all your sin will find you out you can't hide from God and you can't hide who you are the Christian having been freed from sin and enslaved now to righteousness as we see in our verse obeys God whereas the unrighteous man being enslaved to sin is ruled by his lusts which reign over him as his master verse John 3 turn there this is one of the clearest clearest clearest texts in the whole bible on this topic and I think it just speaks so pointedly to it 1st John 3 verse 7 you guys there it says this little children so he's speaking to Christians let no one deceive you the one who practices righteousness is righteous the one who practices sin is of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning now listen to this here we go again with what I said earlier the son of God appeared for this purpose that he might destroy the works of the devil so why did Christ appear destroy the works of the devil now I think that obviously means in a salvation way he came to destroy the dominion that Satan once had over human beings he came to destroy the threat of death but I think it means that he also came to destroy sin within the believer now he came to make holiness possible truly possible why does God save you to make you holy right how by destroying the works of the devil let's keep reading no one who was born of

God practices sin because his seed abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God okay now obviously that doesn't mean we can't ever sin but that means that we can't live in it I've said this illustration a couple of times and I think I said it a couple of weeks ago but I'm just going to say it again imagine yourself before your salvation okay before Christ as a fish now as a fish you swim in the water right your natural habitat is the water you breathe it in you have gills for that that's your ecosystem that's where you live that's where you breathe whatever okay then you become a Christian let's say then you become a Christian and God changes you from a fish to a man now I don't have gills

I have lungs and now I breathe air and now my natural habitat is on the land and I walk around and I don't have I don't swim anymore now as a human being right as a human being as a Christian I can go back in the water temporarily I can swim there I can go underwater I can hold my breath for a little while but I can no longer live in it I can't live in it I don't have the lungs for it I don't have the gills for it I should say okay as a Christian you can sin again it's not saying that a Christian doesn't sin it's saying that you can't!

[29 : 00] live in it you can't practice it there's a huge difference now I know that there's other questions coming up I think I dealt with some of those questions last week with regards to what about that one of the setting sin in my life if you guys want to know the answer to that I don't know I guess listen to the podcast or just ask me and I'll send you the notes or something but that's what

that verse is saying let's keep reading one more verse he says this by this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God nor the one who does not love his brother so John is just black and white he's like he's like if it doesn't look like a Christian and talk like a Christian and out like a Christian and think like a Christian it's not a Christian it's not you know

I mean there's this one guy that said he described this verse like this he's like I live in Chicago and I live in Illinois whatever like I have this farm and you know during the certain seasons these hunters will come onto my land and they'll go deer hunting but unfortunately every single time that this happens every single season that and I just want to be there and go to them and be like it's not a deer it moves it's black and white you know I don't know what they were seeing it doesn't look it doesn't have the characteristics of a deer right it's a cow and he says the same thing why do we super spiritualize everything when it comes to being a Christian not being a Christian if it doesn't look like a Christian act like a Christian talk like a Christian love God like a Christian love God's people like a Christian it's not a Christian that's what he's saying

Donald Barnhouse once said this he said holiness starts where justification finishes and if holiness does not start we have the right to suspect the justification never started second question where should I begin where should I begin a lot of you probably wondering this I still kind of wondering this where should I begin sinification seems lofty to me it seems overwhelming in a lot of ways where should I go how should I start well this is encouraging Go to Colossians 2 really simple answer Colossians 2 verse 6 he says as you therefore have received

Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in in the very same way that you received Christ that's how you continue it's a really simple answer so then the question becomes what how did I receive Christ what was true of me what things characterize!

me you received Christ firstly by grace alone go to Ephesians 2 8 Bible drill Ephesians 2 8 you guys probably know this one by heart for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God by grace you have been saved it says grace the definition of it is the merciful kindness by which God exerting his holy influence upon souls turns them to Christ keeps strengthens increases them in Christian faith knowledge affection and kindles them to exercise to the exercise of their Christian virtues it's really wordy what he's basically saying is this

[33 : 39] God saved you by no merit of your own that's what that means he did this work he saved you by grace turned you to Christ and then he keeps you he strengthens you for his glory you were depending fully on God's grace for salvation when you began he would like for us to fully depend on him for sanctification too so I hope you understand that literally so much of sanctification comes down to just understanding that it's all by grace in the moment you begin to put your trust and your confidence in yourself and what you can do and how much you can resist how much temptation you have the ability to conquer yourself you're going to find yourself falling into it more and more I kind of like this illustration!

One writer said as a bird depends on its wings to fly so we must depend on God to be holy Secondly You received Christ you were saved through faith alone!

Ephesians 2 8 again For by grace you have been saved through faith A couple of weeks ago we talked about faith True faith True genuine God-honoring faith gives things substance and gives things feet we said It gives things a certain tangibility a certain believability that it didn't have before It gives in a sense I think I pictured I painted it like this It's like, I can hope in something, like an ice cream cone, waiting on the sidewalk.

You know, but it's not really mine until I taste it. A lot of people have this general hope in God, but when you really have God, it's like a taste.

It gives things substance. It gives things depth. There is such a thing as a felt Christ. There is such a thing as that.

[35 : 54] It isn't merely an agreement to some doctrine. It's a calm confidence in Christ that alone, okay, that alone can enable a man to resolve to follow Him.

It is the most natural thing for the believer, and it is the most unnatural thing to the non-Christian, to live by faith.

You began by simple faith in Christ as the only way to be saved, and so you must continue by simple faith in Christ as the only way to be sanctified.

Just trust in the Lord. Thirdly, you were saved in Christ alone. In Christ alone.

Ephesians 2.8, again. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourself. It is the gift of God, or Christ. It is the gift of God. Your faith was a gift from Christ.

[36 : 51] He gave Himself up for you on the cross, and then to you in salvation. He gave Himself to you in salvation.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live. It is Christ who lives in me. In the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, gave Himself up for me.

Christ is in you, He says. He is like oxygen, in a sense, you could say, that we breathe as we run this race of sanctification.

He is like the oxygen. It is a necessary thing. Try to run without oxygen. It is not going to work very well. You need it. You have to be breathing it. You are not going to be able to run without Christ.

You are not going to be able to be sanctified without Christ. If you begin to run without Him, you will find yourself exhausted, and tired, and weak, and unable. He is like oxygen.

[37 : 55] If you find yourself fatigued, then take a break, right? And dive into the Word of God. And dive into prayer. And get Christ. Take a breath of Christ.

Let it renew you and refresh you. It says this. Fix your eye on Jesus, who is the author and the finisher of your faith. That's in Hebrews 12. Fix your eye on Jesus, who is the author and the finisher of your faith.

I love that, because what does it say? What does it allude to? Author, right? He wrote it. He began it. He initiated it. He created it. But He is also the finisher of your faith. From beginning to end. He is the alpha and the omega of your faith.

And lastly, by Scripture alone. You were saved by Scripture alone. If Christ is the oxygen that Christians breathe in, then I would say that Scripture is like the food that they eat.

Deuteronomy 8.3 says this. Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

[38 : 59] As your physical body needs nourishment, so your spiritual body needs the nourishment of 1 John and Ecclesiastes.

Right? Revelation. And the book of John and Daniel. You need that nourishment. There's a lot of different vitamins that go into your diet. Well, you need vitamin Ecclesiastes.

God used the truth of the gospel to save you, and He will use it to sanctify you. Joshua 1.8 says, Don't let the book of the law depart from your mouth or your mind or your heart.

David Brainerd said this. He was a missionary. When I return home and I give myself to meditation and prayer and fasting, my soul longs for mortification, self-denial, humility, and divorcement from all things of the world.

I have nothing to do with earth, but only labor in it honestly for God. I do not desire to live one minute for anything which earth can afford. That's the result of being immersed in the Word of God and finding in it more satisfying things than what the world has to offer.

[40 : 43] Third question. What should I be expecting? What should I be expecting? This is important to understand. First and foremost, you should be expecting satanic opposition.

Satanic opposition. Go to Ephesians. You already are in Ephesians. Turn a page over. Chapter 6, verse 10.

10-13. Here we go. Ephesians 6, 10-13. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Listen to this. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood or humanity. But our struggle is against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm. Satan is a very formidable opponent to all of us.

[42 : 07] He is so much bigger than you think that he is. And I'm going to give you a little taste of that right now. Have you heard people ask this question? If God created everything in the universe, if He created the entire universe in all of its billions of galaxies, why did He only choose to populate one little dot called Earth?

The actual answer is He didn't. He just populated Earth. He populated the entire expanse of the heavens with angels and demons.

They're invisible. You don't see them. But they are waging war right now in ways that would make World War II look like child's play. It is unbelievable what we can't see.

It is unbelievable. You say, where are you getting this job? It's in our verse number one. In the heavenly places, He says, these wicked forces dwell. It's also in Daniel chapter 10, verse 13. Daniel prays. Daniel prays for God to answer the certain request. God does answer the request. God sends an angel from heaven as a messenger to Daniel to give him assurance that this thing has been answered.

[43 : 29] For 21 days, this verse says, the angel was prevented by a demon, by a spirit from Persia, it says.

There are things happening that you don't even have a clue about. There are demons working in ways that you have no clue about. And for us to think, and it's important for us to grasp these kind of things, because when you think that you have the ability to just resist a devil or a demon, like you have the ability to resist your sister when she wants to slap you, or like a friend that's trying to fight you, you are grossly underestimating Satan.

We need to give him a little bit of respect. He is very good at what he does. So you might ask me, how does Satan work? Satan works primarily through the world system.

Okay? Through the world system. He works through things like media. He works through things like religion. He works through things like music.

He works through things like television. He works through things that aren't necessarily this conspicuous and overt and obvious demonic force. He works through things that are subtle.

[44 : 56] He doesn't want you thinking about him. He wants you thinking about, I don't know, food, sex, drink.

He wants you thinking about something else. But all those things and all those people that advocate those things are of him. And they're being manipulated by him to destroy us.

So first and foremost, remember, we can't put our trust in ourselves. Satan is the ruler of the cosmos.

Okay? That's the opposite of chaos in the Greek. Or maybe it's in Latin. Okay? He is the ruler, it says, of the cosmos. It means order.

He's not all over the place. He's calculated and he's smart. And he's been at this for 6,000 to 10,000 years. And he knows what the heck he's doing. And he's supernatural.

[45 : 58] He's brilliant beyond our comprehension. And he works through all these deceptions and lies and deceits and distractions. And he will do everything that he can within his power to kill you.

Satan hates Christ.

Okay? He doesn't really care about you. He hates Christ. So as a Christian, you are a child of God, right? You have Christ, as we just said earlier, in you.

And so Paul says it like this in Colossians chapter 1. He says, He says, And I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake. And in my flesh, I do my share on behalf of his body.

That's Christ's body. That's the church. I do my share on behalf of the church, which is the church.

In filling up what is lacking, it says, in Christ's afflictions. When we're afflicted, when we're tormented, when we're aggressively sought after for our destruction by Satan, it is not really about you as much as it is about Christ.

[47 : 10] He's trying to hurt Christ. He's trying to stop Christ. He's trying to kill Christ. He's trying to dishonor and bring reproach to the name of Christ. And so we suffer.

And that's why you suffer. He's focused on this. And how can God be most dishonored?

If you were a father, if you were a father and you had a child, would it bring more dishonor to you? Would it enrage you more?

Would it frustrate you more? Would you see it as a stronger hate crime against you if someone were to harm you or your son? Your son, right?

Your child. I would much rather you hurt me than my child. So Satan sees it as opportunistic to hurt God's people, to hurt Christ's people, to hurt his children.

[48 : 10] And so he does whatever he can to stop you, to distract you, to kill you. There's three ways, I think, three ways that he primarily does this.

And I, this is not, believe me, we could do, again, an entire series in a semester, maybe even a year, on Satanology and on spiritual warfare. There are so many things to say here.

There's so much material on this topic. There's so many different things that really need to be grasped by us all to understand how the enemy is working. But let me just give you three things, three D words that help us understand how Satan's working.

First is, first is he distracts. He distracts. Your mind, your thoughts, dictate your actions. So he distracts you.

The majority of Satan's focus is to keep your focus off Christ. I remember C.S. Lewis once said this in his book, *Screwtape Letters*, which is a great book to read if you're interested in this kind of thing. [49 : 25] He says, it's funny how mortals think that our best work is done in putting things in their minds when really our best work is done in keeping things out. And the premise of *Screwtape Letters* is one higher ranking demon riding to a lower ranking demon.

So that's from a demon's perspective. It's funny how mortals think that our best work is done in putting things in their minds when really it's done in keeping things out. Satan works through distractions.

So what do you find yourself being distracted by? What do you find yourself thinking about more than the Lord? What do you find yourself waking up in the morning and contemplating or going to bed at night and sleeping on?

That I can tell you if it's not Christ or if it's not something concerning Christ or if it's not a godly motivation or a godly desire I can assure you that it is a satanic thing.

Truth frees people. Okay? Truth frees you. It's John 8 that says that. Truth frees. Truth waters the seeds of faith that God planted in your heart.

[50 : 38] It exposes Satan. Truth exposes Satan. Listen to the words of the psalmist. This is in Psalm 119. He says this, Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day.

Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies. For they are ever with me. So, again, I go back to the Word of God and I say this is how we know what is good, what is profitable, what is honoring to Christ and what is not.

This, believe it or not, can make you wiser than your enemies. Secondly, Satan deceives. He deceives. He distracts and he deceives.

I'll read you a verse really quickly from John 8. Jesus is rebuking these Pharisees and He says, You are of your father the devil and you want to do the desires of your father.

He was a murderer from the beginning and he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature for he is a liar and he is the father of lies.

[51 : 52] So Satan lies. That's the second thing that he does. Believing his lies, which he, again, propagates through the world system, will end in destruction.

Hosea 4.6 says, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. So, again, to combat this method of warfare by Satan, I would say, again, know the word of God.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Thirdly, he dilutes or dilutes. Robbing glory from Christ is the name of his game in a sense.

If he can be successful in that, if he can be successful in ejecting the church with heresies and with a tolerance for error, then he's won. If you find that to be true of you, if you have the ability to be tolerant when somebody is in error about the doctrine of Christ, then you have been affected by this, by this dilution, by this satanic method of warfare.

I was reading recently, Spurgeon was talking about these Christians from Holland who a long time ago willingly died at the stake to preserve baptism.

[53 : 23] They died willingly. It wasn't even a question to these people to preserve the God-glorifying act and obeying act of baptism.

By immersion. Nowadays, Spurgeon says, I wonder if Christians are even willing to lose a finger for such doctrines.

You just, you know, that's cool for you, it's cool. I mean, like, what is the truth, right? We have to be intolerant to error. We have to also be, we have to also realize, I think, at the same time that we're not error-free ourselves.

We have to be honest about that, but there needs to be a strong, I think, push in this way. We must know God's truth, we must hold it fast if we wish to see Satan excommunicated from the church. another thing to expect is tribulation. 2 Timothy 3.12 says, if you desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, you're going to be persecuted.

[54 : 28] it's going to be inevitable. Why? Because we naturally persecute things that we hate. All of us do. We naturally persecute things that we hate. Sinners, okay, they hate Christ.

Therefore, the more that we look like Christ and act like Christ, the more that we're going to experience persecution from them. Persecutions in the Greek, this word, this phrase, in a sense, means to pursue in a hostile manner in any way whatever means possible to harass, to trouble, to molest somebody, to be mistreated, to suffer persecution on account of something or someone. Some of you think that you must go and do something radical to be persecuted. That isn't so. If you are Christ-like, the persecution will come to you.

I promise. Lastly, let me just say this. Let me just say this as well. Why would God allow persecution in your life?

Why is it something that He would want for us to rejoice in? It's because there's not a clearer way in the world to display the gospel. So when persecutions do come your way, it is a privilege because it is a way to imitate Christ like no other.

[55 : 52] through faithfulness and suffering. There have been a lot of haters of God that have been saved through seeing God's people suffer well. And lastly, the last thing I'm going to say, you should be expecting triumph over sin.

Romans 8. This will be the last text that I read. Romans 8. Verse 35-37. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress or peril or persecution or famine or nakedness or sword? It's rhetorical. Just as it is written, for your name's sake we are being put to death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Christ who loved us.

There won't be anything that you experience in this life that God does not or has not given you the Holy Spirit to conquer. Nothing is beyond your means.

[57 : 03] Another verse in Acts says that through many tribulations we're going to enter the kingdom of heaven. But you will enter the kingdom of heaven. You will be triumphant on the last day.

Though you may falter, you will never fall from His grace. Though your heart and your flesh may fail, Christ will be your portion. He will satisfy you in the end. The Christian life, the Christian will live his life on the battlefield and He will see both victories and defeats.

But the outcome of the war is already determined. Christ has won and we will be triumphant. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the Gospel and the fact that the Gospel is not only the story of Christ's coming, but it's also the story of Christ's saving and the story of Christ's sanctifying and the story of Christ one day glorifying.

And we have many things to be, I think, encouraged by in light of what's been said tonight. I think we have many wonderful truths to reflect on, many wonderful scriptures to meditate on. God, we do admit that we're destroyed often.

We're spoiled often for a lack of knowledge. We don't know You like we should. We often neglect You, Father God, and we get wearied so easily by our devotions and we get wearied so easily by the Christian faith and the Christian walk in life.

[58 : 39] And I myself, Father God, have been found to be just unfaithful in many ways this week towards my coworkers and just many different areas of my life.

And I just pray, God, that You would humble us all in light of whatever things are coming to our minds, in light of whatever sin is on our hearts. And You would just, Father God, remind us that grace is alone that we can trust in and grace is alone what You've given to us.

God, we love Christ. We just want to love Him more than we do even now. So, just give us more of You.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.