

SANCTIFICATION

PRESENTED BY

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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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TONIGHT WE HAVE COME TO THE STUDY OF "SANCTIFICATION." FOR OUR TEXT I AM READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH, THE SIXTH CHAPTER AND BEGINNING IN THE NINTH VERSE. "KNOW YE NOT THAT THE UNRIGHTEOUS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? BE NOT DECEIVED: NEITHER FORNICATORS, NOR IDOLATORS, NOR ADULTERERS, NOR EFFEMINATE, NOR ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND, NOR THIEVES, NOR COVETOUS, NOR DRUNKARDS, NOR REVILERS, NOR EXTORTIONERS, SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: BUT YE ARE WASHED, BUT YE ARE SANCTIFIED, BUT YE ARE JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD." WE HAVE INDICATED IN THE STUDY OF EVERY ONE OF THESE WORDS, I THINK, THAT PERHAPS EACH ONE OF THEM BRINGS TO THE MIND OF HIM WHO HEARS IT A PARTICULAR IDEA. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THESE PARTICULAR IDEAS HAVE SOME FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE, BUT JUST AS TRULY, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THOUGH OUR CONCEPT OF THESE WORDS, THEIR DEFINITION, THEIR MEANING IN OUR LIVES, HAS SOME FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE, STILL, BECAUSE WE HAVE TOO LIMITED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THEM, BECAUSE WE DO NOT APPRECIATE THE FULL IMPLICATION OF THEM, WE DO NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE USE THAT IS MADE OF THEM, NOR WHAT THEY IMPORT FOR OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. SO IT IS WITH THE WORD "SANCTIFICATION." "THE WORD "SANCTIFICATION" BRINGS TO THE MIND OF MANY INDIVIDUALS THE IDEA OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL. IT BRINGS TO MANY THE IDEA THAT MAN IS ENDOWED WITH CERTAIN MORAL AND SPIRITUAL QUALITIES. BUT THIS IS NOT THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF THE WORD "SANCTIFICATION." THE BIBLICAL USE OF THE TERM "SANCTIFICATION," PARTICULARLY IN ITS BEGINNING USE, SPOKE NOT OF MORAL OR SPIRITUAL QUALITIES WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO BE WITHIN THE MIND OF MAN OR IN HIS HEART. RATHER, THE WORD AS IT WAS FIRST USED AND AS IT MUST BE FIRST UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO USE IT NOW, SPOKE INSTEAD OF A SPIRITUAL POSITION, OF A SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP--A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN MAN AND HIS GOD. THE HEBREW WORD FROM WHICH WE GET THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD, "SANCTIFY" OR "SANCTIFICATION," PROBABLY COMES FROM A ROOT WHICH MEANS "TO CUT." IN ESSENCE WHENEVER THE WORD "SANCTIFY" IS USED IN EITHER OLD TESTAMENT OR NEW, THIS IS THE ROOT IDEA BEING EXPRESSED. IT SPEAKS OF RELATIONSHIP, THAT MAN IS CUT AWAY FROM SOMETHING AND HE IS PUT INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMETHING ELSE. THUS, WHEN MAN IS SANCTIFIED IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, IT SAYS THAT MAN IS CUT AWAY FROM THE WORLD, THAT MAN, IF YOU WILL TO USE A MORE SCRIPTURAL TERM, IS SEPERATED FROM THE WORLD AND HE IS ADDED TO JESUS CHRIST.

BUT WHILE THE SCRIPTURAL WORD SANCTIFICATION SPEAKS FIRST OF ALL OF A RELATIONSHIP, IT ALSO DENOTES AN OPERATION WHEREBY GOD WORKS IN MAN TO PRODUCE IN HIM CERTAIN SPIRITUAL AND MORAL QUALITIES. THAT THIS IS TRUE CAN BE SEEN FROM A NUMBER OF PASSAGES. FOR INSTANCE, JOHN 17:17. JESUS SPEAKING, SAID, "SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH." JESUS WAS SPEAKING TO GOD AND THEREFORE WITHOUT DOING VIOLENCE TO THE PASSAGE, WE CAN SAY THAT JESUS SAID, "FATHER, YOU SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH, THY WORD IS TRUTH." IN ACTS 20:32 THE APOSTLE PAUL IN SPEAKING TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS SAID, "AND NOW, BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP, AND TO GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED." HERE IT IS GOD WORKING THROUGH THE WORD WHICH PRODUCES SANCTIFICATION IN THE HEART OF MAN. IN ACTS 26:18 WE READ, "TO OPEN THEIR EYES, AND TO TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, AND FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD, THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND INHERITANCE AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH THAT IS IN ME." THIS INDICATES THAT WHILE SANCTIFICATION IS A WORK OF GOD, THAT SANCTIFICATION IS NOT WHOLLY THE WORK OF GOD, THAT WHILE IT IS INITIATED OF GOD AND WHILE IT BEGINS WITH GOD AND WHILE APART FROM GOD THERE CAN BE NO SANCTIFICATION, MAN MUST ALSO CO-OPERATE WITH GOD OR MAN WILL NEVER BECOME SANCTIFIED AT ALL. WHAT WE ARE SAYING, THEN, IS THAT

SANCTIFICATION IS A VERY PRECIOUS REALITY, INVOLVING HOLINESS OF HEART WHICH LEADS TO HOLINESS IN LIFE. IT BEGINS WITH REGENERATION. REGENERATION IS BEING BORN AGAIN. REGENERATION IS A NEW LIFE PUT WITHIN MAN, AND UNTIL THIS NEW LIFE OF HOLINESS IS PLACED WITHIN MAN THERE IS AND CAN BE NO SANCTIFICATION AT ALL.

THIS IS IMPORTANT. PARTICULARLY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO ARE DEPENDING UPON THEIR BEING GOOD, MORAL PEOPLE TO SAVE THEM AT LAST TO UNDERSTAND. FOR YOU SEE, NOWHERE IN ALL OF THE WORD OF GOD, DOES THE WORD OF GOD ENCOURAGE A MAN TO BE A GOOD, MORAL MAN SIMPLY FOR THE SAKE OF GOOD MORALS ALONE. ALWAYS THE BIBLE INDICATES THAT GOOD MORALS ARE ACCEPTABLE ONLY AS THESE GOOD MORALS ARE FOUND IN RELATION TO GOD, FOR GOD'S SAKE, AND WITH A VIEW TO GOD'S SERVICE. A MAN MAY REFORM HIS LIFE, A MAN MAY BRING INTO HIS LIFE A GREAT MANY GOOD MORALS THAT HE DID NOT HAVE BEFORE, BUT THESE THINGS HAVE NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH SANCTIFICATION UNTIL THESE MORALS ARE A PRODUCT OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. A MAN MAY BECOME A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER, BUT UNTIL HE GETS INTO THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, THOUGH HE BE A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER, HE IS NOT A SANCTIFIED MAN.

SANCTIFICATION IS FOUND ONLY WITHIN A CERTAIN SPHERE. LISTEN TO WHAT PAUL SAID TO THE CORINTHIAN BRETHREN IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST BOOK, VERSES 2 AND 30. HE ADDRESSED HIS BOOK, "UNTO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH, TO THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS, CALLED TO BE SAINTS, WITH ALL THAT IN EVERY PLACE CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, BOTH THEIRS, AND OURS: . . . BUT OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO OF GOD IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION." IN VERSE 2 AND AGAIN IN VERSE 30, PAUL SAYS THAT THESE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WERE SANCTIFIED, BUT HE INDICATES THAT THIS STATE OF SANCTIFICATION IS ENJOYED ONLY WITHIN A CERTAIN SPHERE AND THAT SPHERE WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING "IN CHRIST JESUS." I WANT TO POINT SOMETHING ELSE OUT, ALSO, ABOUT THIS 2ND VERSE OF I CORINTHIANS 1. PAUL SAYS, "UNTO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS CORINTH, TO THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS, CALLED TO BE SAINTS." NOW THE WORDS "TO BE" ARE NOT IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT. I THINK IF THEY ARE DELETED AND THE STATEMENT IS THEN READ, IT BECOMES MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL. THE CORINTHIANS WERE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS AND CALLED SAINTS. ANY MAN WHO IS IN CHRIST IS SANCTIFIED AND ANY MAN WHO IS SANCTIFIED IS CALLED A SAINT.

HOW DOES THIS SANCTIFICATION WORK? WHAT IS THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH IT REACHES US? JOHN 17:17, "SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH." EPHESIANS 5:26, "THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT (SPEAKING HERE OF THE CHURCH) WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY (OR THROUGH) THE WORD." WHEREVER SANCTIFICATION IS BROUGHT UNTO MAN, IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

THE BASIS OF MAN'S SANCTIFICATION IS EXPRESSED IN HEBREWS 13:12. "WHEREFORE JESUS ALSO, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE WITH HIS OWN BLOOD, SUFFERED WITHOUT THE GATE." WHENEVER A MAN SPEAKS OF THE BASIS OR THE GROUND OF HIS JUSTIFICATION, THAT GROUND AND THAT BASIS IS ALWAYS FOUND IN THE DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD. WHEN THE WRITER OF THE HEBREW LETTER SOUGHT TO TELL US WHERE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAN'S BEING SANCTIFIED CAME TO HIM, HE WROTE IN HEBREWS 10:10 IN THIS LANGUAGE, "BY THE WHICH WILL WE ARE SANCTIFIED, THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL." SO ON THE CROSS, IN THE BODY OF CHRIST, IS THE PLACE WHERE THE POSSIBILITY OF SANCTIFICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE UNTO MAN. NOW, SINCE JESUS HAS DIED, SINCE THE BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED, THAT MEANS THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SANCTIFICATION HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE UNTO MANKIND.

THE NEXT QUESTION, THEN, IS THIS--HOW DOES MAN AVAIL HIMSELF OF THIS POSSIBILITY AND HOW DOES MAN REMOVE HIMSELF FROM A SITUATION WHEREIN HE HAS THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING SANCTIFIED INTO THE STATE WHEREIN HE IS SANCTIFIED? HEAR ACTS 26:18 AGAIN. "TO OPEN THEIR EYES, AND TO TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT (YOU SEE, FROM A STATE OF BEING UNSANCTIFIED, DARKNESS, TO A STATE OF BEING SANCTIFIED, LIGHT), AND FROM THE POWER OF SATAN (UNSANCTIFIED) UNTO GOD (SANCTIFIED), THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND INHERITANCE AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED (NOW HOW IS IT DONE?) BY FAITH THAT IS IN ME." THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST COME INTO THAT REALM WHEREIN MAN IS SANCTIFIED. THEY COME INTO CHRIST JESUS AND HERE AGAIN WE GET A VERY VIVID ILLUSTRATION OF HOW THE TERM FAITH IS USED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL. TO THOSE

TO WHOM HE WAS SPEAKING IN ACTS 26:18 HE SAID, "YOU ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH THAT IS IN JESUS CHRIST." BUT HIS USE OF THE TERM FAITH DID NOT EXCLUDE OBEDIENCE TO GOD FOR IN EPHESIANS 5:26 HE SAID, "THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT (SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH, SPEAKING OF CHRISTIANS WHO MADE UP THE CHURCH) WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD." PAUL'S USE OF "FAITH" DID NOT EXCLUDE OBEDIENCE. IT DID NOT EXCLUDE BAPTISM. IT WAS THAT PAUL DID NOT KNOW THE PRESENCE OF FAITH FOR A MAN WOULD REFUSE TO BE IMMERSSED IN OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMAND OF THE SON OF GOD.

THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS OF SANCTIFICATION. SOMETIMES THIS GETS A BIT CONFUSING. FOR INSTANCE WE READ A MOMENT AGO FROM I CORINTHIANS 6:11 WHERE PAUL, SPEAKING TO THE CORINTHIAN BRETHREN, SAID, "YE ARE WASHED, YE ARE SANCTIFIED." IT SEEMS THAT IT WAS A ONCE AND FOR ALL ACCOMPLISHED THING. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PASSAGES WHICH SPEAK OF SANCTIFICATION AS BEING A PROGRESSIVE THING AND SANCTIFICATION IS EQUATED WITH GROWTH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT SANCTIFICATION IS USED IN BOTH WAYS.

SANCTIFICATION IS FIRST OF ALL AN ACT. THIS IS REFERRED TO AS BEING "DEFINITIVE" OR "POSITIONAL" SANCTIFICATION, WHICH IS TO SAY THAT WHEN THIS OCCURS A MAN IS BROUGHT INTO A POSITION WHERE HE IS SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST. WHEN THIS TERM IS USED, THE TERM "SANCTIFIED" OR THE TERM "SAINTS" IS APPLIED TO EVERYONE IN JESUS CHRIST. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT HIS STATE OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY OR IMMaturity MAY BE. FOR INSTANCE, WE HAVE READ PERHAPS TWICE ALREADY IN THIS LESSON THE OPENING WORDS OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WHERE HE WROTE, "...UNTO THE CHURCH OF GOD, THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS, CALLED SAINTS." YET, AS WE TURN THROUGH THE BOOK OF CORINTHIANS, WE FIND ANYTHING BUT SPIRITUALLY MATURE PEOPLE. AS WE LOOK AT THE LETTER, WE FIND PEOPLE WHO WERE HAVING EVERY SPIRITUAL PROBLEM THAT MAN COULD HAVE. THERE WASN'T ANY PROBLEM, WHETHER IT WAS A PROBLEM OF IMMORALITY AMONG THE MEMBERS, OR WHETHER IT WAS A PROBLEM OF THE CORRUPTION OF WORSHIP, WHETHER IT WAS A PROBLEM OF A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS--YOU NAME THE PROBLEM AND THE CHURCH AT CORINTH HAD IT. BUT YET WHEN THE APOSTLE WROTE TO THE CHURCH IN THE CITY OF CORINTH, HE SAID THAT THEY WERE "SANCTIFIED," THAT THEY WERE "CALLED SAINTS." WHY? BECAUSE IN SPITE OF THEIR PROBLEMS, IN SPITE OF THEIR LACK OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT HE SAID, "ARE YE NOT YET CARNAL, ARE YE NOT YET WALKING AS MEN," THEY WERE STILL IN JESUS CHRIST AND IN JESUS CHRIST A MAN IS IN THE REALM OF SANCTIFICATION.

BUT, YOU SEE, WHEN A MAN COMES INTO JESUS CHRIST, THOUGH HE COMES INTO THE REALM WHERE THE SANCTIFIED DWELL, SANCTIFICATION IS NOT AN ACT ONLY. IT IS ALSO A PROGRESSIVE THING AND IT DENOTES THAT A MAN IS GROWING EVER MORE AND MORE IN THE LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST. IT IS A PROCESS AND THIS IS REFERRED TO AS "PROGRESSIVE" SANCTIFICATION. NOW SANCTIFICATION AFFECTS EVERY PART OF MAN. WHEN A MAN IS SANCTIFIED, THE OLD MAN IS MORTIFIED, THE NEW MAN IS PUT ON AND THE WHOLE MAN IS AFFECTED. WHEN THE WHOLE MAN IS AFFECTED, HE BEGINS TO GROW, BUT IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE NEW MAN WHICH HAS BEEN BORN AGAIN BEGINS TO GROW HE STILL LIVES IN AN IMPERFECT STATE. HE IS STILL CHARACTERIZED BY AN IMPERFECT DEGREE IN CHRISTIANITY. HE MUST STILL CONTEND WITH SIN. I JOHN 1:8,10 TELLS US THAT IF A MAN SAYS HE HASN'T SINNED, THEN HE MAKES GOD A LIAR AND HE IS A LIAR AND THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT IN HIM. HE MUST STILL REALIZE THAT THERE IS A WARFARE BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT, THAT THE FLESH LUSTS AGAINST THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT WARS AGAINST THE FLESH SO THAT A MAN CANNOT. PAUL SAID IN GALATIANS 5:17, DO THE THINGS THAT HE WOULD. EVEN THOUGH A MAN IS IN THE STATE OF SANCTIFICATION, BECAUSE HE IS STILL IN AN IMPERFECT STATE HE MUST STILL BE CONCERNED WITH SUCH MATTERS AS PRAYER, AND CONFESSION. HE MUST STILL BE CONCERNED WITH SUCH MATTERS AS REPENTANCE, FOR "IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."

THIS PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION BEGINS WHEN A MAN COMES INTO JESUS CHRIST AND IT CONTINUES ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE. NEVER, NEVER DOES A MAN IN THIS LIFE REACH A STATE WHERE IT CAN BE SAID OF HIM THAT HE IS PERFECT. YET, WHEN WE TURN TO THE WORD OF GOD WE GO NO FURTHER THAN GENESIS 6:9 BEFORE WE FIND THE SCRIPTURE SPEAKING OF NOAH AS A MAN WHO WAS PERFECT IN HIS GENERATION. NOW IF A MAN NEVER REACHES PERFECTION, BUT THE BIBLE SAYS HERE THAT A MAN IS PERFECT, DON'T WE HAVE SOME PROBLEMS? SOME HAVE SAID THAT IT REALLY MEANS THAT NOAH'S

GENERATION WAS SO BAD THAT IN COMPARISON TO THEM HE WAS PERFECT, BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAID. IT DIDN'T SAY HE WAS PERFECT IN COMPARISON TO ANYTHING. IT SAID THAT IN HIS GENERATION HE WAS PERFECT, NOT "COMPARED WITH" HIS GENERATION, BUT "IN" HIS GENERATION. IN WHAT SENSE, THEN, WAS NOAH PERFECT? THE WORD TRANSLATED "PERFECT" MEANS "COMPLETE, WHOLE, WITHOUT BLEMISH, SOUND, UNINJURED, PERFECT." IT SIMPLY MEANS THAT HIS MAN NOAH WAS A MAN WHO WAS COMPLETE. HE WAS WHOLE IN THE SIGHT OF ALMIGHTY GOD. IN THAT SENSE HE WAS PERFECT, NOT IN THE SENSE THAT HE WAS SINLESS. THE OPENING VERSE OF JOB SAYS THAT JOB WAS A PERFECT MAN. BUT YOU DON'T READ VERY FAR INTO THE BOOK OF JOB UNTIL YOU FIND JOB QUARRELLING WITH GOD. YOU DON'T READ VERY FAR IN THE BOOK OF JOB UNTIL YOU FIND JOB QUESTIONING GOD. JOB WASN'T A PERFECTLY SINLESS MAN, BUT HE WAS "SOUND" IN GOD'S SIGHT. IN MATT. 5 WE FIND JESUS SAYING, "BE YE PERFECT, AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT." WHAT DOES THE TERM MEAN? IT MEANS COMPLETE OR WHOLE. LOOK AT THE CONTEXT. JESUS HAD SAID, "YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN SENT HIS SON ON THE EVIL AND THE GOOD AND HE MAKES HIS RAIN TO FALL ON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST." HE THEN EXHORTS THEM TO BE JUST LIKE GOD. YOU BE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT. YOU LOVE ALL MEN LIKE GOD LOVES ALL MEN. LET THE CIRCLE OF YOUR LOVE, LET THE EMBRACING NATURE OF YOUR LOVE BE COMPLETE LIKE GOD'S LOVE IS COMPLETE TOWARD ALL MEN. THIS IS INVARIABLY THE USE OF THE TERM IN THE N.T. OTHERS LOOK AT 1 JOHN 3:8,9 AND SAY, "BUT MAN WHO IS A CHRISTIAN CAN'T SIN FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT SIN, JOHN SAID, ARE OF THE DEVIL AND THAT MAN WHO IS BORN OF GOD DOES NOT COMMIT SIN. THAT SOUNDS LIKE PRETTY PLAIN LANGUAGE." IT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE, ESPECIALLY IN THE GREEK. IT IS NOT AS PLAIN IN THE ENGLISH. THESE VERBS ARE ALL IN THE PRESENT TENSE AND THAT MAN WHO IS OF GOD DOES NOT HABITUALLY GO ON PRACTICING THE LOVE OF SIN BECAUSE THIS HABITUAL PRACTICE OF SIN, THE LOVE OF SIN, IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH A MAN WHO HAS BEEN BORN AGAIN. JOHN WOULD NOT CONTRADICT HIMSELF IN SO SHORT A SPACE. BACK IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THAT FIRST LETTER, VERSES 7 TO 9, HE WROTE THE WORDS THAT WE QUOTED A MOMENT AGO WHEN HE SAID, "BUT IF A MAN SAYS (A CHRISTIAN SAYS), THAT HE HASN'T SINNED, HE IS A LIAR." RIGHT THERE, HE HAS COMMITTED HIS FIRST ONE. AND HE HAS ALSO MADE A GREIVIOUS MISTAKE IN THAT WHEN HE SAID HE HAD NOT SINNED HE MADE GOD A LIAR AND GOD'S WORD WAS NOT IN HIM. THERE WILL NEVER BE A PERFECT MAN IN THE SENSE OF SINLESS, SPOTLESSNESS UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, BUT MAN CAN BE COMPLETE, MAN CAN BE WHOLE, IN AND THROUGH AND BY JESUS CHRIST.

AS MAN CONTINUES IN THIS PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION, HOW CAN HE KNOW, WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE WHEREBY HE CAN TEST TO SEE, WHETHER OR NOT HE HAS PROGRESSED IN SANCTIFICATION. LET ME SUGGEST FOUR THINGS. 1. A MAN KNOWS HE HAS INCREASED IN SANCTIFICATION WHEN HE HAS DECREASED IN SELF-ESTEEM. A MAN KNOWS HE HAS INCREASED IN SANCTIFICATION WHEN HE HAS INCREASED IN HUMILITY. IN ISAIAH 6, ISAIAH RECORDED HIS SEEING GOD. AS HE CAME AWAY FROM THE MEETING WITH GOD, HE SAID, "WOE IS UNTO ME FOR I AM UNDONE. I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAN LIPS AND I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN LIPS. FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS." WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ISAIAH? ISAIAH WAS SAYING, "I AM UNWORTHY." ISAIAH WAS SAYING, "I AM NOT WORTHY OF WHAT I HAVE SEEN, I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE BLESSING THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO ME IN THIS REVELATION." HOW SIMILAR THIS SOUNDS TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL. IN EPHESIANS 3:8 HE SAID, "UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST." PAUL DID NOT WRITE THE EPHESIAN LETTER SOON AFTER HIS CONVERSION. THE EPHESIAN LETTER WAS ONE OF HIS PRISON EPISTLES. 1 TIMOTHY WAS ONE OF HIS PRISON EPISTLES WHEREIN HE SAID, "IT IS A FAITHFUL SAYING THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS OF WHOM I AM CHIEF." WHAT A TEST THAT IS OF THE NATURE AND THE DEGREE OF OUR SANCTIFICATION. I DARE SAY THAT NOT MANY OF US HAVE EVER EVEN THOUGHT THE THOUGHT MUCH LESS EXPRESSED IT--THAT I AM UNWORTHY. I HAVE GOT BRETHREN WHO WON'T EVEN SING, "AT THE CROSS, AT THE CROSS," BECAUSE THERE IS AN EXPRESSION THERE WHICH SAYS, "FOR SUCH A WORM AS I." "THAT CAN'T DESCRIBE ME," IT IS SAID! BUT ALL THAT IS IS AN EXPRESSION OF DEEP HUMILITY IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND THE MAN WHO CANNOT EXPRESS IT IS A MAN UNSANCTIFIED. IN A MOMENT LIKE THIS, WE MAY WELL THINK IT. IN SOME OF OUR SONGS, WE MAY SING IT, BUT DO WE REALLY MEAN IT? MOST OF US HAVE THE

ATTITUDE THAT WE ARE DOING GOD A FAVOR BY BECOMING A PART OF HIS KINGDOM, THAT WE ARE DOING GOD A FAVOR WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP, THAT WE ARE DOING GOD A FAVOR WHEN WE LAY BY HIM IN STORE, THAT WE ARE DOING GOD A FAVOR WHEN WE TEACH A BIBLE CLASS, THAT WE ARE DOING GOD A FAVOR WHEN WE GO AND VISIT OR DO SOMETHING ELSE. OH, SURELY GOD'S WORK DEPENDS UPON A HUMAN WHO IS WILLING TO DO IT, BUT THE POINT IS THIS BRETHREN, THE SERVICE OF GOD IS NOT A SACRIFICE WHEREBY WE DO GOD A FAVOR, IT IS A PRIVILEGE WHEREIN WE ARE BLESSED TO PARTAKE. A MAN DOESN'T PROGRESS VERY FAR IN SANCTIFICATION UNTIL HE IS WILLING TO SERVE THE LORD IN THIS ATTITUDE.

SECONDLY, A MAN INCREASES IN SANCTIFICATION WHEN THERE IS AN INCREASING HATRED OF SIN. SIN IS THE OPPOSITE OF HOLINESS, AND SO FAR AS I AM ABLE TO TELL FROM THE STUDY OF THE WORD OF GOD, GOD IS NOT ABLE TO MAKE US HOLY WITHOUT MAKING US HATE SIN. THE HATRED OF SIN IMPLIES THE LOVE OF HOLINESS AND THE LOVE OF HOLINESS IMPLIES THE HATRED OF SIN. AND THESE TWO THINGS, THE HATRED OF SIN AND LOVE OF HOLINESS, CAN'T GET ALONG IN PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE. A CHRISTIAN LOVES HOLINESS ONLY TO THE DEGREE THAT HE HATES SIN, AND NO MORE. IT IS WITH THE SAME INTENSITY THAT A MAN HATES SIN THAT HE LOVES THAT WHICH IS HOLY, AND THE STRENGTH OF THESE TWO THINGS WILL ALWAYS BE JUST EXACTLY THE SAME. IT IS IN THIS RESPECT THAT WE FOOL OURSELVES SO OFTEN, THINKING THAT WE CAN LOVE GOD, WE CAN LOVE HOLINESS MORE INTENSELY THAN WE HATE THAT WHICH IS EVIL. BUT IT CANNOT AND IT WILL NOT BE DONE. THE CHRISTIAN HATES SIN AS MUCH AS HE LOVES HOLINESS AND NO MORE. WHEREVER THERE IS THE PROGRESSIVE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION, THE CHRISTIAN IS GOING TO BE HATING SIN MORE INTENSELY AND HE WILL MAKE APPROPRIATE AND PROPORTIONATE GAINS IN HIS LOVE OF THAT WHICH IS HOLY.

THIRD, WHERE A CHRISTIAN PROGRESSES IN SANCTIFICATION, THERE WILL BE A GROWING INTEREST IN THE MEANS OF GRACE. WHAT ARE THE MEANS OF GRACE? THEY ARE ARE NUMEROUS. WE WILL MENTION BUT A FEW. ONE OF THEM IS THAT WE WILL INCREASE IN OUR LOVE FOR, OUR STUDY OF GOD'S HOLY AND ETERNAL WORD. "SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH, THY WORD IS TRUTH." PETER SAID, "AS NEWBORN BABES LONG FOR THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY UNTO SALVATION." THE WORD OF GOD IS ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT MEANS OF PROMOTING HOLINESS. IF THE QUESTION BE ASKED, "WHO ARE THOSE WHO ARE INCREASING IN SANCTIFICATION," THE ANSWER MUST BE, "IT IS THEY WHO DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND WHO THEREIN MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT." THIS IS THE MAN WHO WILL GROW IN SANCTIFICATION.

THAT MAN GROWS IN SANCTIFICATION WHO GROWS IN HIS PRAYER LIFE. ONE OF THE MOST SACRED PLACES TO THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE HIS CLOSET BECAUSE IN HIS CLOSET, ALONE WITH GOD, HE CAN POUR OUT HIS SOUL IN SUPPLICATION AND THERE, ALONE WITH HIS GOD, HE CAN REST ASSURED THAT ONLY THE DIVINE EYE SEES, AND HE CAN KNOW THAT ONLY THE DIVINE EAR HEARS AS HE TALKS UNTO HIS GOD. IF THE CHRISTIAN NEGLECTS HIS PRAYER LIFE OR ENGAGES IN IT IN A HEARTLESS MANNER, THEN REST ASSURED THAT THE SANCTIFYING PROCESS IS GOING TO STOP BECAUSE THE SANCTIFYING PROCESS CANNOT GO ON IN A PRAYERLESS SOUL. WE COULD ADD THE PUBLIC WORSHIP, THE PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, FELLOWSHIP WITH FELLOW-SAINTS, SINGING HYMNS OF PRAISE AND DEVOTION. ON AND ON WE COULD GO, BUT WHEN A MAN INCREASES IN SANCTIFICATION, THERE IS A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN HIS LOVE FOR AND HIS USE OF THESE VERY MEANS THAT HE MIGHT CONTINUE TO GROW YET MORE AND MORE.

FINALLY, THERE IS AN INCREASING SANCTIFICATION WHERE THERE IS ALSO AN INCREASE IN THE LOVE OF HEAVENLY THINGS. I THINK THIS IS VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATED IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL. HOW POIGNANT IS THAT MOMENT WHEN HE SAYS, "TIMOTHY, THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND. I AM ALREADY BEING SACRIFICED, I AM ALREADY BEING POURED OUT." HOW TOUCHING WHEN HE WRITE TO THE PHILLIPPIAN BRETHREN, "I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, BUT FOR ME TO DIE IS GAIN." PAUL WAS LIVING WITH THE REALIZATION THAT THE TIME WOULD SOON COME WHEN HE COULD REACH OUT AND LAY HOLD UPON THAT FOR WHICH HE HAD SO LONGED AND SO EARNESTLY PRAYED. AND AS HE SAW THAT MOMENT COMING, AS HE SAW THE INEVITABLE STROKE WHICH SOON MUST FALL, THE APOSTLE STOOD READY TO LET GO OF EVERY THING THAT WAS EARTHLY. AS HE INCREASED IN SANCTIFICATION THERE WAS A CORRESPONDING LOOSENING OF HIS GRIP UPON THE THINGS OF THE EARTH. PAUL

DIDN'T WANT TO HANG ONTO THEM. PAUL WAS READY TO BID THEM FAREWELL. HE WAS READY TO DEPART AND TO BE WITH CHRIST. HE WAS READY TO GO TO HIS HOMELAND. WHEN A MAN INCREASES IN SANCTIFICATION, HE IS GOING TO INCREASE IN HIS LOVE FOR HEAVENLY THINGS, IN HIS DESIRE TO REACH OUT AND LAY HOLD UPON THEM AND GO HOME. THIS IS WHAT PAUL IS SAYING.

IN COLOSSIANS 3 IN THE OPENING VERSES, I THINK PAUL PUT IN JUST A FEW SENTENCES THE ENTIRE CONCEPT OF SANCTIFICATION. "IF THEN YE BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY." THERE IS THE METHOD, THERE ARE THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION. LET THE CHRISTIAN, LET THAT MAN WHO IS RISEN WITH CHRIST, SET NOW HIS AFFECTION ON HEAVENLY THINGS, REALIZING THAT COMPLETE AND FINAL SANCTIFICATION, NOT TO BE HAD IN THIS LIFE, MAY BE HAD WHEN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE APPEARS AND WE SHALL BE WITH HIM IN GLORY. DO YOU HAVE THAT PROSPECT TONIGHT? IF AT THIS MOMENT CHRIST SHOULD COME, HAS YOUR GROWTH IN SANCTIFICATION BEEN SUCH THAT YOU COULD FACE THE MOMENT WITH ASSURANCE? IF NOT, THEN SURELY WITH THAT YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED, AND SURELY TO REMOVE IT YOU WILL COME TO JESUS TONIGHT. IF YOU HAVE NEVER COME INTO JESUS CHRIST WHEREIN YOU MIGHT BE SANCTIFIED, LET THIS BE YOUR MOMENT. LET THIS BE THE HOUR WHEN YOU COME TO PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, COME TO DWELL IN HIM, AND COME TO PUT ON THE ROBES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GROW IN SANCTIFICATION.