

Sanctification pt. 3
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I'm going to continue this week dealing with sanctification. This will be our third week talking about this. And what I want to talk about today needs to be understood on the foundation of what we've said the previous two weeks. I'm going to eventually say a few things about the believer's relationship to the earth today. But if the things that I say today aren't seen to be firmly rooted in the finished work of the cross, then we would really be better off not talking about it. Whenever you get into issues of what you might call "practical aspects of Christianity", the temptation is always there to turn wisdom into religion. I'll explain more of what I mean in a few minutes.

Let me refresh your memory about the previous two messages. The first week I focused on trying to establish the fact that sanctification has to do with a separation. It has to do with a division. And that division is established in the cross. The cross separated many things. It divided many things and set them permanently apart from one another without any hope of ever mixing or blending. In John 17 Jesus is praying to His Father, and He says "for this reason I sanctify Myself, that they may be sanctified in the Truth."

What does it mean that Christ sanctified Himself? What did Christ separate Himself from? What is He talking about here. We spent one Sunday establishing that, having come in the form of man, having taken that man upon Himself, he brought it to a judicial end through His cross. What do I mean by a "judicial end". I mean He brought it into judgment, into separation from God. He didn't annihilate and dissolve the natural man and the natural planet. But He did something even more severe. He divided it from God.

You see, the cross didn't fix Adam. The cross didn't fix the fallen creation. I think sometimes we think that the cross reconciled Adam to God. But that's not true. The cross did not reconcile Adam to God. The cross put Adam away, and reconciled you and I to God in a new man. We are not reconciled as Adamites. We are reconciled to God as those who are born of a new kind, born from above, old things have been put away, behold the new has come. Do you see? There is no fixing the Adamic world. That's not what the cross needed to do as far as God was concerned. God did not send His Son to fix Adam. He sent His son to be the judgment of Adam.

As far as the adamic kind is concerned, he is judged forever and cannot approach God. The only way for somebody like you and I to approach God is to find at the cross the end of the adamic man, and a way for our souls to participate in a totally new man, a new kind, a new seed. The cross was God's great division. It was a separation between Adam and Christ. **And even though the two may seem to blend together in our unrenewed mind, they are perfectly separated in the mind of God.** Even though we may still be putting off the one and putting on the other as a matter of practical experience, to God these two have been separated as far apart as the east is from the west.

Do you know the Scripture that talks about how our sins are put away from us as far as the east is from the west? God accomplished that by putting Adam away from Himself as far as the east is from the west. So you and I are not redeemed and reconciled Adams. You and I are partakers of the divine nature, born of God's Spirit, translated out of one side of that separation and made to dwell in the other. "You have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and made to dwell in the Son of His love".

That is the fact of sanctification. That is something of what Jesus meant when He said "Father, for this reason I sanctify Myself". "What are you separating yourself from, Jesus?"...the disciples might have asked. "I'm separating myself from you and your world, and going back to my Father." So Philip says, "Wait! Don't do that! Stay with us!". And Jesus says "No, it's actually better that I go back to the Father, because I am making a way for you to be where I am. I am making a way for you to be with me in the Father. You will be no longer of this world even as I am no longer of this world". But Philip panics and says "But we don't even know the way out? Or the way in?" And so Jesus reassures Him, "Philip, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, nobody comes to the Father but by Me".

Can you see what was going on there that night before Christ's crucifixion? Jesus was not just getting ready to fly off to heaven. No, he was bringing the entire world below, the entire man beneath, into His death, and permanently separating it from the Father. **And yet, in doing so, He was providing Himself as an eternal way in, and an eternal door out. He was providing Himself as a habitation for any who would desire to live in and by His life.**

You see, this is why it is such lunacy for Christians to think that they have a life to live for God. This is why it is so silly for us to assume that God wants us to modify our lives and make them fit for His presence. We don't live in His presence. Christ does. And we are hidden with Christ in God. You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. I am in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in you. Hide here in the cleft of my Rock and I will cover you with my hand. And there, when all that you are by nature is out of my site, there you can experience my glory.

But Adam is not reconciled to God. Adam cannot live in God's sight. Adam is left on the other side of the eternal chasm. And so for you and I to know what is real, we must learn Christ. To know what God has done, we must learn Christ. To know who and where and why we exist, and what it means to serve God, we must learn Christ. We must learn to know and live the life that God has restored to Himself. We must abide in the life He has accepted. We must offer Him the fruit of the Seed He has planted for a harvest.

Listen to me for a minute. The greatest thing that God ever did for you is to judge you and separate you from Himself in the cross of Jesus Christ. Only in the complete and utter pitch blackness of the carnal mind could someone not recognize that to be the great love and grace of God. The kindest thing that God could have done for you is to give you a death and judgment in His Son that had a door attached to it. **A separation that became the end of His relationship to you in the flesh, so that it could also be the beginning of His relationship to you in the Spirit. A division that was the end of His relationship to you by the Law, so that He could have relationship with you as a partaker of His life. And end of His**

relationship to you in the earth, so that He could now relate to you in the heavens.

People today are crying out for God to have some sort of relationship with them in the flesh. We want Him to tickle our flesh. We want Him to fix our stuff when its broken. We want Him to prove that He likes us just the way we are. But if we had any light at all, if there was even a flicker of light in our hearts to see, we would fall on our face and thank God almighty that he has ended His relationship to us in the flesh and offered us a relationship with Him in His Son.

This separation is good news. This separation is the love of God. Because in judging the world, He simultaneously offers them salvation. In putting them away, He also creates away to bring them into Himself. Hosea the prophet spoke of it hundreds of years before God accomplished it.

***Hos 5:14** [the LORD says] For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue...**Hos 6:1** Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

He tears us and goes away. He takes Adam away with no one to rescue. And yet, there is a door left open. And we can say, come let us return to the Lord. He's torn us, but he will heal us. He has put us away, and yet on the third day we can rise up and live in His Sight. What a prophecy! What a view of our salvation.

It is the same picture that we saw when we spent three or four weeks talking about the captivity of Israel in Babylon. God casts them out of His sight. God tells them to bow their neck to Nebuchadnezzar. He tells them to go into judgment out of His presence, out of His land, and face their end. And yet, those who will turn to Him, those who will turn in faith to see Him, they will return. They will find the blood covered door left open. They will find what Isaiah calls the Highway of Holiness. And they will return to the Lord. They will cross over the great divide and come home to Zion.

***Isa 35:8** A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. 9 No lion shall be there, Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

God judges a people in wrath by the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, he utterly wipes them out and separates them from his land. And yet a way is made for the great restoration and reconciliation and redemption and resurrection of Israel. A resurrection to Zion, something they have never known. **Not their restoration to a national and natural relationship. But Christ's restoration to His Father, and their participation in that home-coming.**

I'm spending more time on this than I intended, but this is the foundation. Everything else hinges on understanding this separation, and our calling to be separated. First we must understand the division that God established, and only then can we understand what it means to be sanctified. Being separated unto the Lord is first of all a matter of crossing the great divide in the Person of Christ, and living hidden with Him in the Father.

And that led us last week to talk about our journey. The question arises, if we have passed over that great divide with and in the person of Christ, what then is our journey? What is it that must now happen with us? The Bible describes this in many ways. In one place it is called coming to know even as we are known. In another it is coming to apprehend that for which we have been apprehended of God. In yet another it is the inward putting off of what God has put away, and the inward putting on of what God has established. But the language of Paul that is particularly pressed upon my heart right now is "the upward call of God in Christ". The "high calling."

The journey of the Christian soul is never to ascend somewhere that we have not yet come. On the contrary, **the journey of the believer's soul is always to see and apprehend and learn to live in the realm and life and land that is Christ.** There are several Christian books that try to describe the progress of a Christian soul. But many of these books far underestimate what God has already finished, and therefore they far overstate what it is that man is capable of doing. God has finished this division. God has drawn His boundary. Christ has sanctified Himself. He rose from among the dead and ascended. And he left a man and a creation behind. This was finished once and forever.

So as far as the work is concerned, the journey of soul is over as soon as it begins. You and I are *immediately* translated out of one man and into another. We are immediately taken from one kind and creation and translated into Christ Himself. You HAVE died and your life IS hidden with Christ in God. What does that leave for us? What is the growth of a soul? Just one thing. **We see the Place where we are, and leave another behind. We learn the Life that we have, and let the other fall back to the other side of God's great divide. We behold the land of Christ by faith and never look back to Egypt, to Sodom, to our country, kindred, and father's house.** In other words, we become mindful of those things above, and not those things which are on the earth.

This is the upward call of God in Christ. It is a calling into Christ, into the Life of Christ and into the knowing Christ. And the call to move in, if we see what it means, becomes our moving out. And this is why he calls it the high calling, or the upward call. He understood this calling to be, in the truest sense of these words, an exodus from the world below to dwell in Christ above. And all of this was taking place in Him long before his physical body died. To a great degree, Paul was a heavenly man long before his body returned to the dust.

And I want to say something more about this journey today. I have talked about these things in different ways and from different angles several times before. I realize that. But like everything else when you are learning Christ, you think you've seen something clearly...and then the Lord eventually brings you back again for another look. And this time around you see an even greater view. It doesn't contradict what you saw the last time the Lord was dealing with your heart on a particular issue. In fact, it should confirm it. But it also swallows it up into an even greater view. Something else of Christ, some other aspect of Him, comes into your

field of vision. And your heart is further adjusted to the truth. It's a bit like a Chiropractor putting your spine back where it needs to be. That's the way truth works on your heart. You see a greater view of Him and things pop and snap and move into a true alignment. An alignment with the truth.

Well, anyway....the last time that the Lord had my heart looking at this division, this separation, it seemed to me that the primary focus was what I was coming IN to. I mean, I didn't see much at that time about what it meant to come out. The focus had everything to do with coming in. And for certain, without a question in my heart, the coming in is the far greater deal. Coming in to Christ is the greatness of our salvation. You have heard me say before that the greatness of our salvation is not measured by what we come out of, but rather what or WHO we come into.

And that is certainly true. And I'm not questioning that at all. But still...there is the fact that things are left behind. Still, in coming in to the land, and seeing the greatness of the Land and the inheritance through Isaac and all the promises, still there was the fact that Abraham LEFT a country and kindred and father's house. It's the same with Israel crossing the Red Sea, and crossing the Jordan. Without question, the greatness of their salvation was the priesthood and kingdom that they were brought into. The greatness of their salvation was not the dead Egyptians or the defeated Pharaoh. It was being brought into a relationship that God recognized as Israel my son. **And yet**, there is the fact that Egypt was left behind. And there is the constant thorn in Israel's side that has to do with people not truly leaving Egypt in their hearts.

So this time, with me, the emphasis of the Lord seems to be on what it means to leave Egypt behind. This time the spotlight seems to be not just on what it means to be a heavenly man, but also on what it means to ascend with Christ and leave the world below. Paul said of himself that He was crucified to the world and the world was crucified to him. What did that mean to him? How did that work in him?

Now before I say anything else, let me remind you of the warning I gave in the introduction. What I want to say can be easily misunderstood. If we're going to talk about abiding in the heavens and cutting ties with the earth, then it is essential that we are first rooted and grounded in a Spirit-given view of what that entails, and what it doesn't entail. In other words, we have to have seen the judgment, the division that was established by the cross.

The reason I say that is because for about 8 years of my life I did everything I could think of to cut my ties with the earth. I recognized that I was bound to the earth in so many ways. I recognized that my heart was full of pride and greed and lust and all sorts of illicit needs and addictions to things in the earth. And therefore, in an attempt to be more spiritual, you could say in an attempt to be more of a heavenly man, I started to try to cut myself loose from the earth.

So I threw my T.V. away, and never watched movies. I didn't think those things were inherently bad, but I didn't want heart strings attached to the earth. And I chose not to read certain things, or go certain places, or drink various beverages. On top of that, I didn't date girls. I joined the "Bachelor Until the Rapture" club. I fasted food on a regular basis. I fasted sleep. I even tried to fast talking. I won't continue with this story because it only gets more embarrassing.

But here's my point. I had no idea what it actually meant to abide in Christ, to live in the heavens. And therefore, no matter what I did to free myself from the earth, regardless how radical it sounded or how disciplined I was, it never accomplished a single thing. **I only ever replaced one natural thing for another. I let go of one natural thing and grabbed hold of something else natural, but something that I called spiritual. In other words, I stopped doing something in the earth in order that I could start doing something in religion.** And I never made any "progress" because I had yet to see what progress was. I had yet to see God's great divide. I didn't know what the cross accomplished, where Christ was, what it meant that I was in Him, what it meant for me to heed the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

I hope I'm making myself clear. Let me try to say this another way. **It is a foolish and futile thing to try to let go of your relationship with the earth when you haven't even started to see the heavens. It's a pointless thing to try to sever your ties with the adamic nature when you haven't begun to see the life of Christ by faith. What you'll end up doing is swapping one natural carnal thing for another. You'll let go of something you call worldly and grab hold of something you call heavenly...but they will both be worldly. They will both be carnal. Only one will be religious.**

That is why I say that what I what I'm saying here could be easily misunderstood. The Spirit of truth has to define the two realms, the Spirit has to draw the line between what is of Adam and what is of Christ. And then you can begin to understand the inward journey of leaving the one and possessing the other by faith. Without that foundation, you just circle the mountains in the wilderness.

So, I just now said it is foolish to try to break ties with the earth when you haven't seen the heavens. But here's the other side of that. Here's where I'm trying to go today. **It is also foolish, it is also vanity, for us to hold onto the earth when we've begun to see the heavens.** I said a lot of things to get to that statement, but it's not the kind of statement that you can just say without carefully placing it where it belongs and where it makes sense. But sooner or later in growing up in the Lord, it seems to me that the Lord begins to deal with the heart about letting go of the earth.

And honestly, I don't really like to get into specifics with this kind of thing. In my opinion, it has to be something that the Lord makes clear in each individual heart. I only want to say a few very general things. **Truth eventually comes into view in such a way, and to such an extent, that a person begins to recognize where and how the world is pulling us downward.** I'm not talking about bad behaviors and obvious immorality issues. That stuff should be obvious. I'm talking about things that are permissible but not beneficial. I'm talking about things that are absolutely legitimate in the earth, but that begin to feel like an anchor keeping your heart and mind and attention on the wrong life and in the wrong realm.

As we heed the upward call of God in Christ, sooner or later we begin to recognize something of the extent to which we have invested in the earth. We have sown to the earth and reaped a harvest of responsibilities and connections and emotional and relational ties. This is obviously normal for a natural man. But it starts to feel a bit abnormal for one who is going on with the Lord. Light begins to expose these things and call them to your attention. And perfectly normal and legitimate natural things are seen in a different way. They are seen with a different value system. And the

question is not whether this or that is evil. The question is not whether something makes you feel guilty or ashamed or compromising. It's not really that at all. The question is simply which side of God's great divide are these things on. Which side of the line are they a part of, and to which side are they pulling my heart, my gaze, my attention.

What would it be like if all of our investments, I mean the things that really had our heart, our attention, our focus...what if all of our investments were in Christ. What if, rather than reaping from the earth a harvest of responsibilities and concerns and preoccupations and needs, we reaped from Christ a harvest of Truth and reality that made the earth seem comparatively small and trivial.

Do you feel the Lord dealing with your heart to begin to invest less in the world of shadows? Again, I'm not talking about any of the reasons and motivations that may have brought these things to your attention in the past. I'm not talking about guilt or reward. I'm simply talking about the Truth. I'm talking about the great divide that exists between "below" and "above" and how Christ has set Himself apart, sanctified Himself, in order that we might also be sanctified in Him. I submit these things to you for your consideration. And I want to end by reading a quote from a book by T. Austin-Sparks that had an impact on me.

Relationships are entirely changed on resurrection ground. Mary would gladly have touched Him in the garden, would have embraced Him, but He said: "Touch me not..." In effect: "Things are changed; the holding of before is no longer. A different realm has been entered, a different relationship. Yes! still your Lord, still your Savior, still your Friend, but a difference. I am not to be held as though I belonged to this earth; I am not to be taken hold of, as though this were My place." "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father". The first thing in resurrection is the recognition of our heavenly relationship, not our earthly relationship. All that is heavenly now makes first claim and what is earthly, even in a religious way, has to be put back. (There is a good deal of earthly religiousness, and religious earthliness. There is a good deal in religion, that is earthly and of this world: earth bound and of man).

Resurrection union cuts clean and clear of everything that belongs to this world, even though it may be religious. What is only of God has a testimony in this world; it has no other relationship. Its business here is merely to testify in the world, but to have no other kind of tie.

Resurrection represents the completeness of our separation from the world. "If then you be raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above..." In other words, to all that is here: "Touch me not; My Father has first claim." That is a most elementary thing, but it is true. It means that heaven has first and primary claim upon everything, because now all relationships are heavenly, all interests are heavenly.

That is a position essential to God's end. We know quite well, in the practical outworking of this truth, that in the degree in which any believer has a voluntary relationship to this world, or is held by anything of this world, that believer is stunted in his spiritual development. The world is an obstruction to the fullness of Christ. It becomes impossible to go on if there is a bit of the world holding. Putting that round the other way; it is just wonderful, amazing,

and blessedly joyous to notice how those who really do go on with the Lord spontaneously drop the world.