

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 5

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[00:00:01] The topic for this session is sanctification, and it is sanctification as a further and distinct, different fruit or result of the work of Christ.

I would like to start by reading from Hebrews in chapter 10, it says in verse 10, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. So this is sanctified through the offering of the body. Then in verse 14, for by one offering has he perfected forever them that are sanctified. And finally in Hebrews 13, it says in verse 12, where for Jesus also [00:01:06] that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate.

Now these references and the topic in itself pose the question to us, well what actually is sanctification? Generally I very much agree with the positive approach that the speakers took this morning of just presenting the truth. Now with sanctification though, there is the problem that there are all sorts of teachings that are very widespread and increasingly widespread, and in particular one which I think I need to mention. So if you bear with me, I [00:02:05] would like to first tell you what sanctification isn't, and hopefully that will make it easier for us to understand what sanctification is. Now when we ask what does a term mean, the first thing many of us will do is reach for the dictionary. And I have nothing against dictionaries, I have one or two myself. But if we get a doctrinal definition out of a dictionary, we need to check it very carefully against the Word of God, and I'll show you why in a second. If you consult this particular dictionary here, it will say the following. Sanctification is the making truly and perfectly holy what was before defiled and sinful. It is a progressive work of divine grace upon the soul justified by the love of Christ. The believer is gradually cleansed from all [00:03:06] the corruption of his nature and is at length presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Sounds good, doesn't it? If it does, then we have a problem. It's not a good definition. And we have to ask with Galatians 4 verse 30, nevertheless what saith the scripture? Now before I tell you what the scripture says to this definition, I want to tell you about a young man. And this young man is called, was called Henry. Unfortunately the picture I've got from him is one where he wasn't that young anymore. But Henry had a believing mother. His father died early. Through the testimony [00:04:07] of his mother and also regular visits from evangelists, by evangelists, he accepted Christ in his early years as a young teenager. He was shortly after this confronted with exactly this holiness teaching that was outlined in this definition. And he actually

wrote a book to, well he wrote many books, more books than you or I could carry. But he wrote one particular book where he describes what happened to him while he was exposed to this particular teaching and how he then discovered the truth. Now I'll read just some extracts to you from his book. It's actually called Holiness, the False and the True. And in his book [00:05:01] he says how after his conversion when he was still a teenager, he says the following, I became interested in what were called holiness meetings held weekly in the army. That's the Salvation Army, Army Hall. At these gatherings an experience was spoken of which I felt was just what I needed. It was designated by various terms, the second blessing, sanctification, perfect love, higher life, cleansing from inbred sin, and by other expressions. Now he then says a little later, substantially the teaching was this, in order to maintain himself in a saved condition, very dangerous term, the believer needs a further work of grace called sanctification. Now remember again that's what sanctification isn't. This [00:06:01] work has to do with the sin, the root, as justification had to do with the sins, the fruit. The steps leading up to this second blessing are the following. First, you need a conviction as to the need of holiness. Then you need to fully surrender to God. Thirdly, you need to claim in faith the incoming of the Holy Spirit as a refining fire to burn out all inbred sin. And the fourth step is you then need great watchfulness, lest Satan deceive you and introduce again the same kind of evil principle that you had just eradicated from yourself.

Mr. Ironside, and you now know who this Henry was, Henry, Ellen, or Harry Ironside, he then goes on to describe how is this teaching, and actually in [00:07:05] these holiness meetings there were people who gave testimony. He speaks about one woman who said she had now reached it for 40 years, she had not committed a single sin, and she had reached a state of absolute holiness and the whole old nature was gone, so she said. And he shows how this teaching, A, makes you very proud, but B, when you find out it's not true, it makes you very depressed. But he says that he even remembers, he says, I remember how often I prayed to God to give my dear mother the blessing he had given me, and to make her as holy as her son had become. And that pious mother had known Christ before I was born, and knew her own heart too well to talk of sinlessness, though she was living a devoted Christ-like life. By the way, it's a very frequent feature of [00:08:08] Ford's teaching that it's something that appeals to our flesh, like the teaching here, you know, if you go through these steps you can claim I've now become so holy I can't sin anymore. But what happened to him? He says later in his book, nearly 18 months of an almost constant struggle followed. At last I became so troubled I could not go on with my work. Five years of active work had left me almost a nervous wreck, worn out in body and most acutely distressed in mind. I saw only the blackness of despair before me, but yet I knew too well his love and care to be completely cast down. And then he goes on [00:09:04] to speak about how he was delivered from this teaching, and how the light of scripture dawned on him when he discovered the truth of sanctification.

Now I think this experience is a solemn warning, but of course it's not a test of a doctrine. A doctrine can only be tested by scripture, so we'll do that now. The interesting thing is that if you look up the references to sanctification, it's not that you get a long list and in there you kind of find one that contradicts this definition. It's basically every single reference that flies in the face of that definition that we heard earlier. Just look at this. [00:10:01] The very first example is the Sabbath day, and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because that in it he had rested from all his work. Now you tell me how was inbred sin eradicated from the Sabbath? How was something that was sinful before made holy? You find, actually if you go through the elements of the definition, you find none of them in this case. Well let's go on. The next thing won't help the holiness doctrine or movement anymore because if you look at Exodus 19, it talks about a mountain. Mount Sinai and God had said, and sanctify it. Exodus 19 verse 23. And again you will agree that the mountain had no sinful nature that

had to be eradicated and it was not sinful and unholy before. [00:11:03] And the same applies to the altar of which it says in Exodus 40 verse 10, sanctify the altar. I still haven't told you what sanctification is. Most of you will know it, but at least I hope we are more and more convinced that what we heard earlier is what sanctification isn't. Now you find many more verses that demonstrate the same because the next problem you get is that you find that one person can sanctify another. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying sanctify unto me all the firstborn. Exodus 13. Now how again could one man eradicate a sinful nature from another or from a whole group of people? But it gets really tricky now for anyone who believes the holiness doctrine because now you find that, sorry should I say the false holiness doctrine, because you now find that [00:12:03] somebody can be sanctified to do evil. Isaiah 66 verse 17. They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, they shall be consumed together says the Lord. Now that puzzle will also disappear once we have the true definition. But just think of some New Testament references. The Son was sanctified by the Father because the Lord says in John 10, say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and so on. So the Son was sanctified by the Father but also Christ sanctifies himself. And even thinking, even speaking of a sinful nature that had to be eradicated would be would be pure blasphemy. So it can't [00:13:04] be true that that is the meaning of sanctification. You may say well but what about the application to believers? In believers it still kind of has to mean that hasn't it? Well no it hasn't because you find in Corinthians that sanctified believers are not people where there is no sinful nature present anymore but they can even be people who are carnal. Paul says to the Corinthians that they were sanctified chapter 1 verse 1 and two chapters later he says and I brethren could not speak unto you as under spiritual but as unto carnal for ye are yet carnal. Similarly in 1 Peter 1 first Peter says they had [00:14:01] sanctification and then he exhorts them and says be ye holy for I am holy. It sounds like a contradiction in terms but we will find it isn't. Then you find that even God has to be sanctified but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts 1 Peter 3 15 and then we read in Hebrews that the sanctified had actually been made perfect and it says here forever whereas this doctrine that we talked about says once you are sanctified you need to take great care so you don't suddenly fall out of that position. The sanctified are made perfect forever and how? It says here by one offering and this is our subject the work of Christ.

So then what is sanctification? Now sanctification which is use of persons [00:15:02] and things means simply setting apart separating and this means to set apart from the ordinary use and to be for God's own possession and use and enjoyment and if you go through the examples we had you find that this simple definition really clears away all the mist all the fog that we have seen just take some examples we saw that the Sabbath day can't be made holy from say turn from being sinful into being un sinful or holy but what could be done was one day could be set apart for a special use now the same applied to the firstborn they were set apart to serve God same applies to the altar wasn't there for anyone to prepare his meal it was set aside for a special use for God [00:16:01] namely to bring sacrifices to him. Now what other examples did we have? Let's just have a very quick look for example first when we spoke about if you were sanctified those who were sanctified to do evil they simply had set themselves apart from the rest of the nation in order to actively pursue those unclean things. Now if the son is sanctified by the father again it can't mean take away sin but it does mean set apart and even now Christ has sanctified himself he is up there in heaven at the father's right hand and he is the object for us to be occupied with and he has set himself apart sanctified himself in that way so that we can be occupied with him. Now on the references that talk about believers [00:17:09] who on the one hand are holy and on the other hand or sanctified and on the other hand are exhorted to be holy or to sanctify themselves the same word should have said. I will come back in a moment because the problem that would otherwise remain is that you have this apparent this seeming

contradiction take the Corinthians again God Paul addresses them as those who have been sanctified and then he says to them but you are carnal. Peter writes to those who had known sanctification and then he exhorts them and says now be ye holy. Now how does this fit together well sanctification is used in the New Testament in two ways [00:18:07] and that the primary sense in which it is used is positional and that means because of the work of Christ we are set apart. You know when when you believe on the Lord when you are born again when you belong to him one other thing that happens to you that we may not have realized at the time is that God basically does not see us anymore as part of the rest of the people in the world but he says you now belong here and you are set apart. But the practical question is what if that is our position if God looks at us in this way are we then sanctified in a practical sense in our ways and our walk if the world is interested in I don't know the idols of football or cricket [00:19:06] bats or whatever it is or whatever they go after maybe money or something are we sanctified in our practical walk to be that we are conscious to be set apart by God. Now some may use a different word here some may speak about progressive if you want to use the word progressive that's up to you but then you have to explain what you mean by it. I very much prefer the word practical. One thing is our position the other thing is our practice. Now just some examples we touched on 1 Corinthians 1 verse 1 as an example for positional sanctification where Paul addresses them as sanctified and think of them as Corinthians you [00:20:02] know that there were problems in their midst there was a lot of disorder but their position and this is the fruit of the work of Christ is that they were sanctified. Actually we learn a little bit about this in chapter 7 chapter 6 I should just read this verse because it gives you a flavor for this change of sanctification. Paul reminds them there in 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9 of what they had been like he speaks of fornicators, idolaters, adulterers 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9 effeminate abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners and he says they shall not see the kingdom of God and then he says in verse 11 and such were some of you and then he goes on to say [00:21:05] but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified. So you can imagine for these Corinthians who had been actively involved in idol worship and immorality and so forth what it meant for them to know they actually had been set apart they had been sanctified. Now we looked at the three references as well in Hebrews 10 we saw again that it was our position that we were sanctified and it was emphasized in verse 10 we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. There is no question of falling out of sanctification there's no question of having to guard your position of being [00:22:06] sanctified I say position and the assurance given is that we are sanctified once for all but again what was necessary was the offering of Christ so it is another one of the great fruits of that work. Verse 14 for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Now if you are sanctified then you are also made perfect and made perfect forever and finally and that is another very clear allusion to the work of Christ in chapter 13 and verse 12 where it says where for Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his [00:23:01] own blood suffered without the gate. He had to leave the camp the religious camp which was at the time at Jerusalem he had to be outside the camp outside the gate like the sin offering had to be burned outside the camp in the Old Testament and why did he have to do this because he wanted by in this way to bring about this work of sanctification and then the exhortation is well if this is so if he suffered without the gate in order to sanctify the people then let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. Now the other side is the practical side you learn and it's very important to mention this [00:24:03] although strictly speaking the main subject of our conference is the positional sanctification because we're talking about the results of the work of Christ but if through his work we have come into this position then we want to live in this way practically just as someone who is perhaps a prince would be expected to live as a prince to show in his life that he is of royal descent and background. Now on this practical side a few references and again John 17 where the son prays to the father and he says to them sanctify them through thy truth [00:25:01] through the truth thy word is truth. Now this

is practical if you if we read the Bible we will find that the Bible has an effect on us and every time we read the Bible we find we are reminded that actually I don't belong here everything I see around me is different from what I read in this book and you find how this truth this word sanctifies you practically it just brings it home to you you don't belong here you are set apart for a special life and a special use. Now in Ephesians 5 it talks about husband and wife and then it talks about Christ in the church and it shows the love of Christ how he first gave himself for the church but then also how he continues to be occupied with her and he does two things he washes and he cleanses and sanctifies and he does this through the washing of the word. So [00:26:13] you find again a different context but the same principle practical sanctification through the word. Now the next two are exhortations to us to bear this in mind in 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 3 and remember the Thessalonians had were young believers they had just been converted out of idolatry turned their back on the idols to serve God and wait for a son from heaven and Paul says to them this is God's will for you holiness or sanctification. We mentioned 1 Peter 1 verse 16 the exhortation be he holy for I am holy this is not how this is not an exhortation to to be holy [00:27:03] and more and more holy so that in the end God can accept us we know we are accepted we know we are sanctified and that's why we now want to be here living and set apart for God. Now finally you find another reference in 2 Timothy 2 verse 21 and there you have the picture of a great house and there are different vessels and there are some vessels to honor and some vessels to dishonor. And then Paul says you have to actually dissociate you have to purge yourself from the vessels to dishonor so that you can then be a vessel to honor sanctified and fit for the master's use. If you allow me to quote Mr. Ironside once more and I'll sit down on this verse he gives [00:28:06] a nice illustration of a noble sort of household and the master of the house comes home and brings a guest with him and they go to the to the lounge and he wants to get a silver vessel out of the cupboard to serve something to his no doubt equally noble guest and he opens the cupboard and it's empty there's nothing there and he calls the servant and he says where's this vessel I think it was called a goblet or something is that possible goblets okay and I'm not so good with his household things anyhow he calls the servant and says what is going on here why can't I find this silver goblet and the servant says I'm really sorry it's it's in the kitchen and it's there with all the other washing up and it's it's going to be cleaned so the master gets him to clean this [00:29:04] silver goblet and once it's clean and it's set aside from the other from the dirty vessels in the kitchen and it's brought into the lounge it is now a vessel fit sanctified set apart and therefore fit for the master's use now that was the story about the silver goblet and finally in closing three points on sanctification you will find that sanctification is by blood it is by the spirit and it is by the word these are no contradictions just different aspects by blood as we read in Hebrews 13 sanctify the people with his own blood speaks of the means that God used [00:30:02] in order to bring this about to set us aside sanctification by the spirit of which you read for example in 2 Thessalonians 2 says that God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth this is about the experimental side of how it happens there are hundred people in the room they listen to the gospel 99 are untouched and don't believe and one believes what has happened the Holy Spirit has worked in his heart and through the work of the Holy Spirit this one person receives the gospel and is set as part sanctified and finally and we spoke about this there is sanctification by the word sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth and this is the practical side so may the Lord help us to do both to have a deeper enjoyment of our position we are sanctified but also to strive to seek to [00:31:09] reflect this in our lives by showing that we are sanctified