

## 11-6-22 Sermon #42z

This week, as I was thinking about our church, I was pondering how we've been growing in our faith. As Christians, we're supposed to bear fruit, and I believe we have. Seeing the answers to our prayers and knowing that our prayer lives are increasing is evident. Also, the way people have been reaching out to others and hearing how much others are thankful for your love, is so encouraging.

Stretching our faith and becoming more involved in God things does bring joy to God. When we put God first and when we lean not our own understanding, we're trusting that God will protect us.

In Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, God tries to tell us what the greatest command is.

I'll use Mark 12 to remind us of what it says:

**<sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."**

Joshua 22:5 expands on this and says,

<sup>5</sup> But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

These verses are what separates Christians from the world. If we write them on our hearts, they will cause change in our character. The fruit of these verses can be seen in Hebrews 10:19–24:

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Growing in our faith and taking on the character of God, brings so much more joy into our days.

Those last two words in verse 24, “good deeds”, made me think about James 2:

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup>Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Growing our faith happens when we put Godly things ahead of our own interest. We know that God’s ways aren’t the world’s ways.

Accepting Christ into our hearts and becoming adopted into the family of God is very real. Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection is what brings power to us. Accepting Christ into our lives is what brings change into our hearts. The moment we come to believe and are baptized, we’re touched by God and given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Last week I asked the question, “How do we show God we love Him?” I hope you took some time during the week to ask yourself this question. Hopefully you’ve been able to find comfort knowing an answer.

Prior to asking this question, in some previous messages, I’ve referred to the word sanctification. I would like to talk about what Christian sanctification is.

The word *sanctification* is related to the word *saint*, and has to do with holiness.

To “sanctify” something is to set it apart for special use. To “sanctify” a person is to make them holy. It’s about moving away from old ways because we desire holiness more than our own flesh. Jesus has a lot to say about sanctification. In John 17, Jesus prays:

<sup>15</sup>My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Verses 16 says,

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.”

then verse 17 says,

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

In Christian theology, sanctification is a state of separation UNTO God. All believers enter into this state when they chose to be born of God. We see this in 1 Corinthians 1:26–31, which is about sanctification and redemption:

<sup>26</sup> Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”<sup>[d]</sup>

The sanctification mentioned in this verse is a once-for-ever separation of believers UNTO God.

It is a work God performs; it’s an intricate part of our salvation and our connection with Christ.

Hebrews 10 says,

<sup>9</sup> Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will, “WE” have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Theologians will sometimes refer to this state of holiness before God as “positional” sanctification. We can describe positional sanctification as JUSTIFICATION. While we are *positionally* holy (“set free from every sin” by the blood of Christ), we also know that we do still sin. This is why the Bible refers to sanctification as our separation “UNTO” God. Sometimes people will use the words “progressive” or “experiential” sanctification. This verbiage relates to having “OBEDIENCE” to the Word of God in our life. It’s the same as growing in the Lord.

2 Peter 3 says,

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. <sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

This is also known as “spiritual maturity”.

When we accepted God’s adoption, He started the work of making us like Christ, and He is continuing it. This type of sanctification is achieved when the believer earnestly pursues it and is affected by the application of the Word. Progressive sanctification can be best described as the “SETTING APART” of believers for the purpose for which they are sent into the world. Jesus set Himself apart for God’s purpose. We are sanctified and sent because Jesus was.

Sending and sanctifying are inseparable, and this is why we are called “saints” or “sanctified ones.” Our behavior should bear witness to our standing before God in separation from the world. Little by little, every day, “those who are being sanctified” are becoming more like Christ.

There is a third sense in which the word *sanctification* is used in Scripture. This is viewed as “complete” or “ultimate” sanctification. This is the same as “GLORIFICATION”.

Paul prays in 1 Thessalonians 5:

<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Paul speaks of Christ as “THE HOPE OF GLORY” This glorified state is ours when we’ll see the ultimate separation from sin, it’s total sanctification in every regard.

1 John 3 says,

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

The word “sanctification” is translated from both the Greek and Latin to mean “HOLINESS” or “A SEPERATION.”

God is continually guiding us to maturity in a practical, progressive holiness. In the future, God will give us glorification. This is a permanent, ultimate holiness.

These three phases of sanctification are what separates the believer from the penalty of sin (**justification**), the power of sin (**maturity**), and the presence of sin (**glorification**).

I can see evidence of sanctification in our church, especially through prayer and through the congregational care ministry. Last week, after the lunch, I was so uplifted. How all of you are reaching deep into your hearts and trying to show God's love is awesome. Wanting to do things for others and hearing some of you say, that's what we're called to do is such a great example of how Christ is changing hearts.

Hebrews 10:24 is powerful:

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

What a great way to show God we love Him.

Galatians 6:9 says,

<sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Being set apart from this world is hard to do. It's a process that takes time. Being sanctified happens every time we open our bibles. Something new always comes from the pages, and by using our bibles, we'll never stop learning new things. The gospels are God's way of continually filling our hearts with Christ. They open our eyes to see how much love is poured out for us.

If you want to grow in your faith or need to claim victory over something in your heart, Jesus will do this if you allow Him to. If you need help with increasing your FAITH, come forward and say a prayer to the Lord. I would invite you to ask someone to help you with knowing how to become more like Him.

Let's pray