

W429_Sanctification.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and the number 34 of the series entitled The Form of Sound Words. Those of you who are using these tape recordings and have the little card in front of you will see that salvation. Is the one that we should take next. But we are taking today sanctification. And asking you to realize that salvation has been given a longer exposition and we refer you to numbers 43624416. Studies in which salvation is given far more treat than that we can do here. So there is nothing omitted really. It's merely a matter of referring you to a fuller exposition. So today we are looking at another word which is most important and not too easy to understand sanctification. Holiness. They go together. When we think of God, we think of God who is righteous. We think of God who is holy. And in John 17, as my memory serves me right, our savior says righteous Father. Holy Father. Ultimately. I suppose there's no difference between absolute spotless righteousness and absolute spotless holiness. But God asked us to. And give us a little kindergarten. Because we are dealing with terms that are so far beyond our everyday understanding. We do use the word righteous and just in things of daily life, but we seldom use the word holy and sanctify in the things of daily life. And so it's necessary that figures have to be adopted. We might say. Of course.

[00:02:18] That ultimately the white robes of righteousness, which we find mentioned in one part of Scripture and the white robes of those who have washed them white and made them clean in the blood of the lamb in another part of Scripture, they represent ultimately the complete access. The complete acceptance of the believer in Christ. Whether there's any final distinction between righteousness and holiness, we may have to wait and see. That God has been pleased to say that if you contemplate meeting him as a judge with a law court in view, there is no condemnation. And if you think about him. As one who is in his holy temple, there is no exclusion. And one has to do with. The obedience that was necessary to the law, which we never could render. And the other the cleansing and the separation and the difference that had to be put between one thing and another, which is associated with sanctification. If you will turn to the Psalm 51, you may get a consciousness of some distinction there. That's David speaking about himself in that great confession of where he had sin so badly and yet found forgiveness. But you will notice that he says. In verse one. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness. According unto the multitude of thy tender

mercies. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me through me. You notice the two there joined together? Blot out has reference to an account. If you open the book, you'll find it's cancelled.

[00:04:25] The debt's been paid. It's completely blotted out. But the wash me has to do not with righteousness. It's to do with holiness. Uh, there's a feeling of being unfit for the holy presence. But ultimately it's possible. That life. Justification, sanctification. They all meet together as one at the end because life is opposite of death and corruption and justification is opposite to the failure to conform to God's will. And holiness has to do with complete sanctifying separation from evil and to God. Well, let us see whether we can get some guidance with regard to this. The first occurrence of sanctification goes right back to Genesis chapter two and has nothing to do with an individual person. But inasmuch as it's a first occurrence, it might be wise Just to give it a word, give it a moment before we pass to other usages. It says in chapter two of Genesis. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. He sanctified it. He set that day apart and onwards through the Old Testament, right up to the present or right up to near the present time. There was a strong insistence upon keeping the Sabbath day Holy. We belong to a calling where instead of keeping one day holy, we are expected to keep the lot.

[00:06:24] It's not that we have a lower standard, it's that we have a higher one. The. But in these early days when Israel would be in court one day was set apart for God in which ordinary work was not done and so on to make it very distinctive. Another way in which God, through the Old Testament Scriptures, sort, as it were, to teach this very, very difficult subject, was the way he use the word holy in connection with the people of Israel. Now, some of you may, at another time in another study have seen a chart that we have a series of concentric circles. So will you imagine the whole series of circles, one within another? And the first circle is a holy land. For now, the land of Palestine is no different from the land adjoining it in Jordan or Mesopotamia. In fact, it may not be so good for aught I know, a shovelful brought over and sent to one of the laboratories. They wouldn't know it was holy, but it was holy because God had separated that land from all other lands to himself for his own purposes. Well, in that holy land, he put a people called a holy nation. Now you say, Well, if I were a holy nation, save me. Ah, it

wasn't because they themselves were better than you and me. They were separated by God from all the families on the earth for his distinctive purpose.

[00:08:05] Now you say, I see. Well, now this holy nation is living in a holy land. Oh, that's not enough. What's next? God chose out of that holy nation. One tribe, the tribe of Levi. And they were a holy tribe and they were able to have access to God. They could touch the holy garments and the furniture of the tabernacle, which was forbidden to another. But that's not all. Not all. An outer circle. That's holy tribe. Had one holy family. The family of Aaron. And they were the priests. And they went into the Holy Place and ministered in the tabernacle. You say, Oh, it's not enough yet. One more. One man. Now, let's get it. One man. Out of the Holy Family. Out of a holy tribe. Out of a holy nation. House of the Holy Land. One man went into the presence of God once a year, not without blood and an incense lest he die. Did you see the way in which God emphasized that you do not press into his presence without respect? Now we have access. By grace. We are accepted in the beloved. So whatever was demanded in the Old Testament ritual has been completely satisfied by the work of Christ. Now, the word, particularly this word we're dealing with, has as its basic meanings to separate. So should we just see what way that has to have a bearing upon this thought? Leviticus Chapter 20. The biggest chapter 20.

[00:10:16] Wait a minute. What am I. It says here in verse 24 of the 28th chapter of Leviticus. But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land and I will give it unto you to possess it. A land that floweth with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God which have separated you from other people. Now this is the use of the word that gives us the word sanctify and holy. I have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put a difference. Is the word holiness again or sanctify put a difference between clean beasts and unclean. Now God created all the beasts. And if you were to examine a pig. You will discover that its anatomy is nearer to that of the human than any other animal that walks on four legs. That God said the swine and those of its character were unclean. They must not be used in any sacrifice. So is beginning to give them pictures that which distinguishes one from another. You will make a difference between clean beasts and unclean. Between unclean fowls and clean. And you shall not make yourselves abominable. By beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto thee, for

I, the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine. Now, those were altered as time went on.

[00:12:15] The Apostle Paul writing about what? What have we got to do? With regard to clean beasts and unclean beasts. Well, he said, there's nothing clean of itself. It's only because of this typical distinction. So eat asking no question for conscience sake. But if one of your brethren is not so well instructed, he's a bit upset because you do not discriminate or well, for his sake, not your own. Just put that aside. So you see, it was typical. Not. Not in basic. Not basic. Typical. Well, now that's the underlying thought of something which is not acceptable to God. And you'll find that in the Acts of the Apostles, the 10th chapter. Peter has that in mind. Still, this fact that he belonged to the separated nation and the Gentiles were unclean in his estimation. Chapter ten of the Acts of the Apostles, we find a man who is a centurion. His name is Cornelius. He is called a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God all the way. Well, I think that's a good description of if everybody who came to this chapel, myself included, could be described in the Book of God as devout, one that feared God with all his house, gave much alms to the people and prayed to God all the way. Well, he's fairly well off, isn't he? And yet when that man came into the presence of Peter, Peter looked him up and down and he said, verse 28.

[00:14:11] You know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation. That was his attitude up to that moment. But God has shown me. That I should not call any man common or unclean. Well, that shows that he would have called him common and unclean had he not had the vision beforehand. However, we can teach that the church began at Pentecost with Peter, and in Chapter ten, long afterwards, he looked at a Gentile, drew himself away and said, I would have called you common and unclean. Apart from this vision. Well, I don't know. That's not for me to decide. So you see, we've got this aspect now in the Scriptures. Something separated, something dealing with uncleanness, something that has to remember the holiness of the God we serve. Well, now, I don't know whether we can plow into all the different ways in which this is used. I think not. But should we look at 1 or 2 passages now? For instance, let's come to the Epistle, to the Ephesians and see where Sanctification comes in that episode. In the first chapter. It's a part of the original purpose of God in our calling. Chapter one, verse four, according as he hath

chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be. Now, that's the purpose, isn't it? That we should be what? Holy.

[00:15:53] Now without blame. Before him in love without blame is without blemish. Not so much blame, but without blemish. And the word is used in the Old Testament of the sacrificial animals. If you read the description, an animal that was going to be offered to God must be carefully examined by the priest. It must not have any spot. It must have no blemish. It must not have any superfluous parts. It must have anything missing. It must be perfect to be accepted. But how many of us could say that we are in that category? That's be perfect. But here God shows us that we should be. Well, you know how that has been brought about by the work of Christ. We have in chapter two the access, and we have in chapter five another reference to this question of being sanctified. It says that Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Verse six, verse 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse. You see that they go together. Justify and blot out the account. Sanctify and cleanse. Sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. So it's not water now that cleanses you. It's the word of God that cleanses you. And our savior said the same thing to his disciples. Now you are clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you. So the washing is in water that we have in the Old Testament were only a symbol.

[00:17:43] We don't carry the symbol. Now we've got the reality. And if I'm doing my job properly, you who are listening to me are being cleansed by the word. It should have that effect, continuously revealing some hidden spot and revealing the way which God has dealt with it through Christ so that we stand accepted that He might present it to himself, not merely a glorious church, but a church in glory. Come to the same thing, perhaps. Not having spot. So here's a definition of in glory not having spot. Or wrinkle. Or any such thing. Now you can understand the beauty of holiness. A word used in the Old Testament. Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Well, there we have the statement, and this is the very description given of our savior, if you will turn to the. First, Peter. The first of Peter where he says verse 18, chapter one, forasmuch as ye know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Now there's the wonder of it. Without blemish and without spot, he's said of Christ, without blemish and without spot is spoken of as his, of his people, his church.

And it's utterly beyond our ability. To make ourselves acceptable to that standard. Do what we will.

[00:19:45] But what we couldn't do, Grace has done. And so we stand accepted in the beloved. Now, let's take 1 or 2 other passages that might help us. The epistle to the Romans. Don't turn to it because I'm only speaking about that in contrast or comparison with Hebrews. The epistle to the Romans is stamped with the word righteousness that God might be just. The epistle to the Hebrews is stamped with the word holiness and sanctify. The figure of of Romans is a judge and an accuser and condemnation. And a savior. The figure in Hebrews is a temple or a tabernacle and a priest and a cleansing. So here we have in chapter eight of Hebrews. Now the things. Which we have spoken. This is the Psalm. The Apostle is half way through the epistle and he stops the Sabbath because we are very much given to letting it go in one ear and out the other. He says, I want to make it make it clear to you what I've been trying to say. We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary. Now, this word sanctuary is the holy place. It's the same word that gives us the word sanctify. And the sanctuary was a set apart place. No one could enter it or leave it apart from those who were set apart by God. As we've already seen, our Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, when you come across the word true, it doesn't always mean in opposite to that which is false.

[00:21:37] It means opposite to that which is a type. When Christ said I am the true vine. He didn't mean to say that there were no vines growing in the ground in Palestine. There were. But he said there are only two types of me. He said, I am the true bread. But he didn't say there was no manner that fell in the wilderness. He said all your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and they're dead. I am the true bread. I'm the one that's the real thing. That was a type. So he's a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. And so we discover that this refers to the heavens. Chapter nine. Verse one and two. Then verily, the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. Fancy having a worldly sanctuary. That's simply because it was a typo. The Shadow. So there was a tabernacle made and it it tells you about the furniture and about the second veil. But even that worldly sanctuary had to be treated with respect. Verse seven. But unto the second part of that tabernacle went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood. That

was to impress upon this people the holiness of the God they served. And you may know that they even added to this.

[00:23:07] They tied a rope around the ankle of the high priest, so that should he die in the presence of God, they could get him out without themselves becoming involved in the holiest of all. So we have no sort of trifling in the presence of God, no unholy familiarity. And nevertheless, unless we reach the standard, we'll never see him. Makes your heart sink, doesn't it? Until you remember, it's included. All included in the gift of his son. For he has made us meet. For the inheritance of the Saints. Saints in the Light. We may not know what we need to do to be beat, to be complete for the inheritance, but don't let that worry us. For two reasons. One thing, if we did, we couldn't provide it. And the other thing is we never know. But God has done it. It's all in Christ. And so we have that. Well, then one other passage while we're dealing with this Chapter ten. Verse 11 onwards. And every priest standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. And that's the Old Testament type. That's the scriptures speaking about Scripture. That all the contrast this man after he had offered one sacrifice. 14. Forever. You see, that makes it utterly impossible for me or for you. To contemplate union with the Church of Rome. For they maintain that the priest offers a sacrifice to God every time they have mass.

[00:25:09] To be that utter blasphemy. One offering never to be repeated is what Scripture says. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins. Forever. Set down. Now you see, the strong emphasis in Chapter eight was we have a priest who is sitting. Now, why the emphasis upon sitting? Well, it says in the earlier part of Chapter ten. That the ordinary priest never sat down in connection with his work. Never. There was no provision. The only one who ever sat down as a priest. As a son of God. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. From henceforth expecting to these enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering, he hath perfected unto perpetuity. It's the strongest term for eternity that the New Testament knows. It's not merely the word age which is translated forever. He hath perfected unto perpetuity. That's justification. And that's sanctification combined together. And that's the position that every redeemed child of God has by the work of Christ and the love of God. Them that are sanctified. Now, if you will look at verse one, it is an opportunity to correct one little piece in the authorized version, one of Chapter ten. I'll read what it says in the authorized version first. For the law, having a shadow of

good things to come and not the very image of the things can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

[00:27:04] Well, in a measure, if you offer anything year by year, you do it continually, don't you? Well, you might say, Oh, well, this is done to emphasize it, but this is exactly the same construction and word that we've already had just now perfected and to perpetuity. The word continually goes with the word perfect it. Should we need it again for the law, having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, make the comers thereunto perfect and to perpetuity. For then, would they not have ceased to be offered? But they go on being offering so that there were only a type and a shadow. So we've drawn attention to 1 or 2 passages. And although, as I said, it's an exceedingly difficult thing to distinguish between ultimately righteousness and holiness. They may be two sides of one thing. I remember many years ago doing what might have been thought a very venturesome thing in Aberdeen. You know what? The Aberdeen folk speak about themselves, don't you? I offered. So I put a half a crown on on my hand like that in Aberdeen and I said anyone could come and take it but oh they said wait a minute, there's a condition. You can take that off the ground if you can take one side only. I was safe, wasn't I? Even in Aberdeen.

[00:28:40] Well, I believe it's true with regard to righteousness and holiness. They do not really they are not really separated. Ultimately, a person who is absolutely and spotlessly righteous will be absolutely and spotlessly separated under God and clean or vice versa. But God has stooped to give us various images to emphasize various phases. And I come back now to the passage we read earlier in John 13. You remember the difference that I drew between hath been bathed and then rinsed? Let's come back again before we finish this survey and before we turn to or before we actually read that passage again in John 13, I remind you that the same John says. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanseth us from all sin. So there's a provision, right? You don't have to pretend that you're spotless. You're not. But there's a provision, right? So now, once more, we notice. Peter, first of all, said he'd never allow Christ to do such a thing. And then when he discovered the Lord said. You'll have no part with me if I don't. Oh, then he went the other extreme and he said, Oh, no, you're

wrong again, Peter. But there's one thing about Peter. He blurts out the things that we think and don't say. So that's good. So he said, not my feet only, but also my hands are behead.

[00:30:34] He wouldn't mind going through the gain. And again, rather than be separated from his Lord, which was good. I did ask. I did a correction. Jesus said to me, He that hath been bathed. Now everybody's come to Christ has been completely bathed as a part of the process. The washing of the water by the word goes on day by day. But the one complete bathing. Has taken place. That you are in this world. And this world has got plenty of filth about it. And you're walking through it. Cities where odehya need not merely to wash. You see if you get if you get the word. Wash twice. You have to think that a same word in the original. They're not. He that hath been washed completely needeth not save to rinse his feet. But is clean every whit. Isn't it something to be thankful for that we have no dread of standing in that holy presence. We have no need for a cloud of incense. We have no need for the sprinkling of blood. We have no need for the water of separation to be sprinkled upon us. And the contrast is brought about, and I think we'll finish with that by a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he picks up the story from the Old Testament and applies it to ourselves. Chapter Chapter nine, verse 11. But Christ being come and high priest of good things to come. By a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.

[00:32:39] So there's all the types being set aside, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood. He entered in once into the holy place. Having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if it comes if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an sprinkling, the unclean sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh. That's all it could do as a type. How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God? Purge your conscience. See, it tells you that the offerings that were made year by year, Chapter ten, verse two for them, would they not have ceased to be offered because of the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. Our conscience that is cleansed. If God has forgotten your sin, so may you. And God says he has. He cast them behind his back. He's buried them in the depths of the sea and various other figures. So it says here, How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Now, I'm very

conscious that it's a difficult subject, both for me and for you. But as it's a part of our calling and as it a consequence of the work of Christ, give it all the attention that you can so that you make these things your own.

[00:34:30] For it is written without holiness. No man shall see God. It is written. Our God is a consuming fire. And that's written to believers. But we need have no fear. If we are covered. I cleansed as we read in these passages. Righteousness and sanctification are two sides of one whole. White robes of righteousness and white robes of those who will wash them white and made them clean in the blood of the lamb. Show you that ultimately righteousness and holiness have met together and our position in Christ is perfect acceptance. What a gospel. What a position, what a truth to know what an incentive to try to walk worthy of such a calling. But what a need for grace to do it. In this world, not only in this world, but what we are in it. But God knows if we walk in the light as he is in the light. We have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ. I've a feeling that the next word is a continual present, a little bit different from the ordinary present. And the blood of Jesus Christ. God's Son goes on cleansing us. Goes on. Washing the feet. Washing the feet. Washing the feet. But you'll clean every whit. So they are walk washing the feet, be more in harmony with our standing clean every whit as the days go by.