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2 Thm 3:16 *Security*

"PRAYER AND THE WAY TO SANCTIFICATION"

I Thessalonians 5:23

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

Prof. John Baillie -- "Invitation to Pilgrimage" tells how he attempted to occupy a position somewhere between perfectionism on the one hand, and the renunciation of all sanctification on the other.

He adds - I am willing to confess this the most delicate and difficult problem with which I am faced in my personal life.

This is candour and honesty. Yet it is astonishing that with the New Testament open he could seriously consider renunciation of all sanctification.

Never forget, we have a file of terms in the New Testament on the sancitification of God's children. English terms - consecrated - separated - purified.

In addition to these terms we have perfect - perfection - crucify - yield - present - filled - fullness related to the Holy Spirit's ministry.

These represent a whole range of teaching of what God does with us after we gain entrance into the community of the redeemed.

Now all of these terms had a place in the vocabulary of Paul. His great burden is the sanctification of the church.

This burden found expression in his writings from the very beginning.

Here before us, we have a prayer for the full sanctification of Christians.

We cannot afford to treat this lightly.

"May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your Spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Berkely - "And may the God of peace himself make you holy through and through. May your spirit be without flaw and your soul and body be maintained blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Phillips: "May the God of peace make you holy through and through. May you be kept in soul and mind and body in spotless integrity until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Few things:

1. Intercession in behalf of Christians. This plain. He had written out a spiritual birth certificate in Chapter 1. His heart was brimming with gratitude and his mind warm with memories that blessed.

He piles up the happy evidences of it till no proof is wanting. "Having turned from their idols they are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." This is witnessed by their work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope. They get some persecution.

This I know of you, writes Paul, and it fills me with song. I know this by what I saw with my own eyes when I was with you. I know it also from the report of you that Timothy brought back to me.

~~Now~~ - shall such conversion experience be conserved?

If so, then a prayer for their complete and continuing sanctification is not out of order.

2. Intercession on behalf of Christians whose sanctification had already started.

Some ask the question - you may be justified but are you sanctified? Paul would not ask such a question. He taught all those in Christ are sanctified.

To be sure they are justified - forgiven - reckoned to be righteous in view of the atonement. Sanctified, separated from the old life and made to belong to God.

I Cor. 6:11 - "And such were some of you thieves, covetous, drunkards but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified but ye are justified in the name of Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Sanctification is not an experiment.

Principle of sanctification is separation. Renouncing what is known to be

contrary to the life we have received from God.

Process is assimilation - growing likeness to the perfect image of our Lord.

3. Intercession for a pattern - V. 13.

"Living together in peace."

Not all Christians do, but they should.

Bad attitudes in personal relationships - jealousies that rankle and bitterness that fester - are signs the full victorious sanctification is somehow being missed.

V. 14 - Be very patient with all men. Why not? Ill temper in Christians is neither necessary nor nice.

Pastor Bernhard Holland, a Lutheran, served as missionary in India. He tells how shortly after his arrival in that land a veteran missionary helped him with wise counsel. "One thing I want to tell you at the beginning of your work in the Orient. It is this: lose your temper and you lose all. These people of India may not always hold their tempers, but they expect us to keep ours."

Thirty years later, Pastor Holland asked Doctor why this statement was true. His reply, "Perhaps I cannot explain why it is true, but I can tell you that

it is indeed true. My people look down upon a man, especially a man of leadership, who loses his temper, and more than that, we have a peculiar way of withdrawing from a man who gets angry. We feel in a way that he has insulted us, and so we just draw away from him."

Pastor Holland added - "Now I could understand what the Bible means when it says, have nothing to do with a man of anger."

Paul - V. 15 - "Be sure that no one repays a bad turn by a bad turn."

To return bad for bad is animal like. To return good for bad is Christian - Holy.

V. 16 - Be happy in your faith at all times.

An empty woman was transformed became spirit-filled. Heard of an accident in which a woman was robbed of her husband. Writing about the needy friend she said "I do wish I could share all the joy in my heart with her. She deserves it and I have enough for ten people!"

V. 17 - "Never stop praying."

You never stop praying as you never stop breathing. Prayer is the Christian's vital breath. Many of us are irregular and careless about our prayers. Some religious groups require practice of prayer habit. Protestants doubt the value of mechanical devotions. Hence, we have people starving spiritually.

V. 18 - "Be thankful; whatever the circumstances may be."

Luther - "When I cannot pray, I sing."

Thankfulness - wake up to the fact we are indebted to somebody or something for everything.

V. 19 - "Quench not the Spirit."

"Never dampen the fire of the Spirit" as Phillips has it.

"Never despise what is spoken in the name of the Lord. By all means use your own judgement and hold onto whatever is really good."

Whatever we do we must not put the Holy Spirit in a strait-jacket.

V. 18 - "abstain from every form of evil."

When are we going to take the New Testament seriously in such a passage as this?

When are we going to let it sink in.

Prof. Newton flew - "It is not impossible, for one step down from the lofty level of life in the spirit to the fetters and filth of the old life. But it is unnecessary.

and would live in him His Holy Life - the only Holy Life possible to us, as he would often say.

A point!

Dr. Paul Rees - "I shall never forget the morning I spent in my church reading an old dusty book - "The Higher Christian Life". I had struggled with my self-will - temptations - my spiritual life had been a humiliation.

As I pored over that little volume, I saw a new light. The Lord revealed himself as a living all sufficient presence. I learned for the first time Christ had not left us to fight the battle of life as best we could.

He who had justified us was waiting to sanctify us, to enter into our spirit, and substitute his strength, his holiness, his love, his joy, his faith, his power for all our helplessness and nothingness. I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me. It was a new revelation.

"Throwing myself at the feet of the glorious Master, I claimed the mighty promise - "I will dwell in you and walk in you."

As Christ who came to John on Patmos.

New life in Christ - sanctified.

The sanctifying God acted. God in his Holy Spirit was let loose with John.

Charles Wesley:

From all iniquity, from all

In these verses, we see the pattern of Christian sanctity. It is higher than the level of the average Christian. We live below this level and it's subnormal.

We are thought to be alive, but we are partly dead. Our minds are divided, faltering on our loyalties, we need reconsecration to God.

II. CENTRAL CONCERN OF THIS PRAYER

Two realities:

- (1) A holiness which God shares with his children.
- (2) A holiness which sustains his children.

First, "And may the God of peace himself make you entirely holy." Weymouth.

1873 Evan Hopkins said it is like a point of distinction. He had been a Christian 13 years when he heard a sermon on holiness. That night the disclosure of the Lord Jesus Christ was so strong and compelling that he associated it as passing from the wilderness into the Promised Land.

That night he told his wife of the mighty thing God had done. He told her the text that divided his soul was 2 Cor. 9:8. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Mr. Hopkins put it "Christ had indeed become to him "the Fountain Within" springing up. It was not merely the Lord had helped him. It was that he would do all

He shall my soul redeem;
In Jesus I believe, and shall
Believe myself to Him.

But now the central concern of Paul's prayer relates to something more than holiness which God shares with his children.

It relates also to a wholeness which God dynamically sustains in His children.

"An I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Whole - translated - "In the entirety of your being."

God will work out his sanctifying purpose.

Dr. Griffith Thomas - "The spirit is that inmost part of our life which is related to God. The soul is the inner life regarded in itself as the seat and sphere of intellect, heart and will."

"The body is the outward vehicle and expression of the soul and spirit through which we are enabled to serve God."

Not faultlessness - Jude said "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling." That is like Paul - "Preserve you blameless."

It is for the here and now. It is today's faith overcoming the world.
Relationship of living.

Only those who have said yes to the sanctifying God is this made possible.

Each of us must answer for himself. I am persuaded the possibility is there for all of us.

The contact must be between the trolley and the wire. The flowing of the current an hour ago means nothing now if the trolley is "off".

The thing that makes us most thankful is that the blessing lasts. 40 years - 60.

III. THE EFFECTUAL CONFIDENCE OF THE PRAYER

Hear the Scripture.

Phillips - "May the God of peace make you holy through and through. May you be kept in soul and mind and body in spotless integrity until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is utterly faithful and He will finish what He has set out to do."

Moffatt: "May the God of peace consecrate you through and through! Spirit, soul,

and body, may you be kept without break or blame till the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ! He who calls you is faithful, He will do this."

Is there any doubt in our minds that God's calling us to holiness?

God calls us to the practice of holiness. I Thess. 4:3, 7, 8 - "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye shall abstain from fornication." God's plan is to make you holy - the asking of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity."

God calls to the partnership of holiness. I Peter 2:9. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God."

God calls us to the passion of holiness. Phil. 3:9-14. "God has given me that genuine righteousness."

The penetration of holiness - the God of Peace himself makes you entirely holy.

What remains? Our confidence to meet his calling.

My concern - that you take your victory in Christ.

Being cleansed from all sin is a faith gift.

God can do nothing with sin but perpetually to forgive it.

Even - "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Triumph meaning of this prayer

Not sin reigns but grace reigns!

Faithful is he who calls you.

St. Teresa in her proclamation said, "We can never have too much confidence
in our God: as we hope in him so shall we receive."

C. Oscar Johnson - 30 Birch St Louis Mo - My father
 a blacksmith - he never bought ready to wear horseshoes
 He made them, strip of iron in size - white hot -
 tongs, bend it around anvil tapping lightly hammer
 right size - heat & turn ends down for cleats -
 seemed easy -
 one day, not busy - Oscar called
 him to let me make one -
 smile enormous - alright I'll pump
 bellows & you make shoe -
 iron hot - se took, off the forge &
 tried to bend on circular end of anvil - tished
 fanner - twisted - topsided - My father took
 tongs held up "Son I never saw one horse shoe could wear that
 shoe - returned it back - added "lets make one together" -
 conversation back to making pairs - need Gods help