

19.7.2020 – Sanctification

Over the last few weeks, God has been clearly speaking to us about purpose and how our relationship with Him brings a greater awareness of who He is, who we are in Him and the purpose He created for us.

Ps. Graham said “God knew us before He formed us, and He created us for Himself for good, to change the world for good. Our purpose is found in Christ and living on purpose is about being intentional about everything we are and do. He also said that we need to love God with all of our mind (and attention), all of our heart and soul (and affection) and all of our strength (our ability). “Loving God like this, living for God in this way, will surely allow us to discover and walk in our God given purpose.”

Wicky shared a beautiful message last week on how to stay on the wheel in pursuit of the will – the Divine Potter has His hand on our life, He is working out the impurities, the blemishes and the bruises and is creating a vessel that is fit for the purpose He always had for us.

Just as the potter designs each clay pot in different shapes and sizes, God has designed and created each one of us. Everyone has been born with a unique purpose and plan. Everyone has been strategically designed for a particular purpose and God will work with each one of us in a specific way.

While a potter will throw a pot in one sitting, our Master Potter works to shape and mould us our whole lives. He uses many things – circumstances, people and trials. These are all pressures that lead us to His word and drive a deeper knowledge of Him. Just as the potter uses pressure from his hands to shape the pot, God allows the pressures of life to drive us to a deeper dependence on Him and a deeper understanding of who He is.

It is important though, that the pot is centred on the wheel, if the pot doesn't sit on the centre of the wheel, it will be a little off during the whole process, and the pot won't form properly and may not be able to be used for its designed purpose.

One of our major centring points in our lives is when we make a conscious response to follow Jesus. Once we have done this, He begins to form us into the beautiful vessel that can be used for His purpose. This process is called Sanctification.

But what is Sanctification? It can be defined as a process but is more of a journey and is not possible without God. To understand it more fully and how it works in the life of a believer, let us look first at how God's plan for our life develops.

Slide One

According to the Bible, life begins at conception. Both in physical and spiritual terms, an unborn child is the blueprint for a fully-formed human being.



Psalms 139:13-16 “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

1. **Conception:** Life starts at conception. At the moment of conception, DNA from both parents join, photons are released and create a light show. Biblically, light and life are often intricately

intertwined and so, how awesome it is that God creates a literal lightshow in the womb at the moment of conception. At that moment, certain things are determined (and in fact have been pre-determined by God who tells us that He knit us together in our mother's womb) – your eye colour, skin pigmentation, physical features, personality, gifts and talents – who you are begins to be defined at that moment.

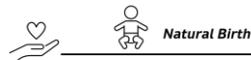
Job 33:4 says “The Spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.”

The Bible affirms that God is the Lord and giver of all life. Human beings are uniquely made in God's image and each individual human being is infinitely precious to God and made for an eternal destiny.

Even our cells have purpose. In the knitting together of our physical bodies in the womb, the skin cells create the skin, the cardiac cells create the heart, the skeletal cells create the bones – these cells are designed for purpose, and the body is an amazing example of God's creation, on purpose, for purpose created by our Abba Father to be precious and beautiful. Each life valuable, and as Christians we should particularly value life – from conception to death every stage precious and honourable.

Slide Two

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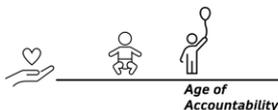
Bios Life: This Greek word refers to the life of the physical body and is where we get the word *biology*.

Psuche Life: The Greek word here refers to the psychological life of the human soul, that is, the mind, emotion and will. It is where we get the word *psychology*.

Psalm 127:3 “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.”

- 2. Birth** – at birth our physical life begins. A journey of discovery of our world around us takes place – our senses are developed (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) – we learn to crawl, walk, smile, laugh, trust, eat. So many new experiences, so much growth takes place as we start to become the unique, individual person we were designed to be.

Slide Three



Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

- 3. Age of Accountability** – there is no age of accountability identified in Scripture as such (as in there is no number assigned) – there is nothing in the Bible that says “Here is the age and from here on in you are responsible for your actions.” The reason for this may be that children mature at different paces. This would be true from culture to culture and from age to age in history.

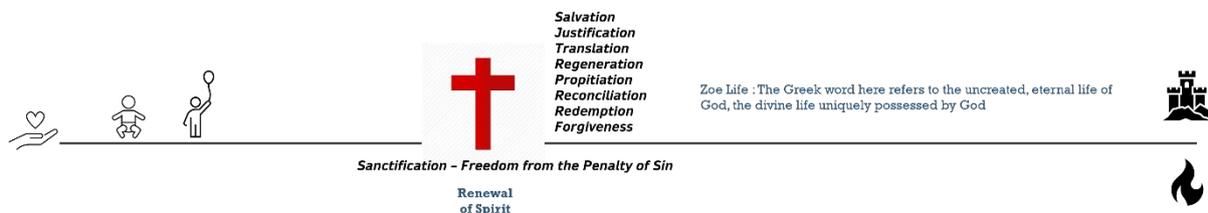


So, the Lord, in His wisdom, didn't define a specific moment. God knows when each soul is accountable. God knows when an awareness of sin commences – it might be noticed by us as an awareness of doing something wrong, of not obeying mummy or daddy or breaking the rules. God alone knows when that occurs in each little life.

From that moment, only Salvation can save that precious life from heading towards a lost eternity. Please hear me, all children are precious to God and He loves them, and so if a child dies at an early age I believe they will go to be with the Father, but it is equally important for us as parents to be teaching our children, from a young age, about who God is, who Jesus is, and how they can have a relationship with Him.

Heaven and hell are real – the end of our natural life here on earth is simply a door – and where we spend eternity will depend on what we decided to do with the Gospel message of Salvation.

Slide Four



John 11:25 "For the death He died He died to sin, **once for all**, but the life He lives He lives to God."

4. **Salvation** – a glorious moment in the life of every believer – and in that moment, when faced with the questions; "Am I a sinner?" "Do I know who Jesus is?" "Do I realise just how much I need a Saviour?" – when we accept that all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (Romans 3:23) and we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour; when we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9 & 10)– at that moment we are saved, forgiven, washed clean, translated from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of His Glorious Light, delivered, redeemed, set free, justified – we become sons and daughters of the Most High God – every sin, every disease, every curse gloriously, completely removed by the blood of Jesus and the power of the finished work of the cross – it is finished, complete, done, paid in full. We will never be any more saved that what we are at that moment. And we received a beautiful print out a few months ago of all the things that take place in that moment and I would encourage us to study and absorb the reality of the Cross often in our walk with God.

5. **Sanctification (Part One)** – at the Cross the first part of Sanctification also takes part. Sanctification is different from Justification in that Justification is to be made righteous through the action of Jesus in taking the place of us on the cross. We are, at that moment, made righteous – to justify takes away our “sinful” label and replaces it with a “righteous” one. This is a one time event, once God justifies a person, the sinful label is thrown away for ever – it literally looks like this – I am Justified through Christ – just as if I had never sinned.

Sanctification, however is both a one time event and a journey of being made holy and set apart for God’s purposes.

The one time event takes place at the Cross – we are sanctified and we are freed from the penalty of sin. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23). This is referred to as Positional Sanctification – we are, as born again Christians positionally set free from the penalty of sin.

However, although we have been freed from the penalty of sin, the power of sin is still in our lives and the second part of Sanctification is an ongoing work to free us from the power of sin in our thought life, our actions, breaking strongholds and truly setting us free for God’s purposes.

Slide Five



John 17:17 "Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth."

6. **Sanctification (Part Two)** Part two of our three part Sanctification journey is known as Progressive Sanctification. It is something that takes place over the rest of our life as a Christian. Sin is still present in our lives, and even as Christians we can make wrong choices. God wants us to choose His way of doing things, He wants to save us from the power of sin, so that sin no longer has control over us.

Sanctification is the progressive disconnect in the life of a believer from sin toward righteousness. The goal is to become more like Christ.

2 Corinthians 3: 18 "But we all, with unveiled faces, beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as the Spirit of the Lord."

A few weeks ago, in the evening service, Cathie shared that there is a spiritual sensitivity that comes from being rightly related to God. Prior to Salvation everything we knew or experienced or understood was natural – from the outside – we were led by our flesh. Nothing can resurrect the Spirit, except God. God makes us alive, being born again means living with a new life order – now being Spirit led, not flesh led.

So Sanctification is a process of being led by the Spirit – who always points us to God’s Word and to Jesus Christ. It is being renewed, daily by the application of the Word and seeing our lives transformed. It is taking our thoughts captive (and seriously doing that) – do we know what it looks like to take something captive? It is aggressive, and quick and final – that thing is taken captive and we need to make sure our thoughts are arrested before we go down the well worn paths of thinking, the old flesh habits of doing – WWJD – may have become a cliché but if we seriously take a moment in our decision making – what would Jesus have me do right here – setting our eyes on Him (cementing, gluing, fixing) not being moved by the circumstances, our emotions, our habits – it take time and practice, a life long process of changing the way we do things. I have decided to follow Jesus – no turning back, a life of laying down my life (my way of doing things), taking up our cross and following Him.

This may mean changing the way we think, speak and do things. Breaking strongholds, addictions, the power of sin in our life. Repentance plays a big part in the process of Sanctification – if we confess our sin to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us – not just talking about the Cross – but when you sin, implies that we will.

So what is the motivation for Sanctification? Why should Christians seek to be more Christlike? Sanctification is not what we *do* to keep God happy. Rather, the process of sanctification ultimately results in a joy that comes from hearing God’s Word and obeying the one who saved us. It only comes about by the power of the Holy Spirit as He transforms our hearts and minds to delight in the Father’s will.

We have to be careful not to fall either side of *Legalism* or *Licentiousness*. *Legalism* states that we can earn God’s love and approval by doing. *Licentiousness* states that because we are saved by grace, the law no longer applies and we can do what we want and find Sanctification outside of God’s word. The **Gospel** states that we are accepted and loved and therefore we obey – out of relationship with our Father, through the finished work of the Cross and the example of Christ and by the Power of the Holy Spirit – our comforter, our guide, our teacher.

Progressive Sanctification therefore then, comes out of relationship with God, getting to know Him and who we are in Him, sitting at His feet, abiding in Him daily. Reading and understanding the Word and applying it in our lives, allowing it to renew our mind and allowing the convictions of the Word, through the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.

Slide Six



1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, not the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

- 7. Perfect Sanctification (Part Three)** The final stage of Sanctification, is achieved at the moment of Glorification, when we are reunited with Jesus in heaven for eternity. This moment

achieves perfect Sanctification where not only have we been released from the penalty of sin, and have lived lives where we have progressively been released from the power of sin, but we are now released from the presence of sin. Sin will no longer be an issue in our lives – we will face Judgement, which is why progressive Sanctification, and repentance are so important as a lifestyle here on earth, and then we will be with him forevermore.

So that is a brief outline of the journey of Sanctification, and there is so much more we can learn and apply – really worth doing a study on this, I have certainly found it very rewarding.

The most important thing to note, is that Sanctification cannot happen without God

Sanctification apart from God is not possible. Full sanctification cannot happen in this life, it is only achieved when we are reunited with Jesus in heaven. Sanctification is not possible merely by our own efforts. It is not our will or determination that evokes transformation and growth, but the loving kindness of our God.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.”

The Word of God should not ever lead to condemnation – for Romans 8:1 says, “For there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” It may lead to an awareness of where we are at and where we need to adjust things in our life – this is conviction and is how God moves us from one place to another. It may lead to Godly sorrow, but this is a good thing, because it will lead us to repentance and a whole heap of other good things. The point is, the Word of God leads – God won’t push, manipulate or control you – but He will, like the good Shepherd He is, lead you to good, green pastures.

Perhaps you have found yourself going a little off centre, maybe God has been wanting to put His Potters Hands on some areas of your life, remove some impurities or blemishes but you have resisted or refused Him – it is not too late.

If we could close our eyes and centre our hearts on God for a moment:

I believe the Word of God has been building and moving on hearts over the last few months, drawing us to a place where we are hungry for His purposes, His way of doing things. Today I believe God wants to meet with us face to face, to draw nearer to His children as they draw nearer to Him. If that is you, if you believe today is the day to make some changes, to do business with God – His way, then in a moment we will invite you to come up to the front and we have a team who would love to pray with you, agree with you and seal this decision in the Holy Spirit.

But first, I would like to speak to anyone here today who has not yet made the decision to follow Jesus. You might be here for the first time, or have been coming a while, and you have heard about Jesus but you haven’t made a decision in your heart that He is the Lord of your life. The great news is, today is the day of Salvation – today is the day of new beginning for you. If you would simply like to raise your hand, whilst every eye is closed, simply say – yes that is me, we would count it a privilege to pray with you.

Pray.

Ask the worship team to come back to the stage. If you would like prayer, please come forward, take this beautiful moment to seal in your heart all that you have heard today.