



Tim Pauley
PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358
304.767.8430
tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

"I Saw the Lord..." (Isaiah 6)

Study 7
Sanctification
(Is. 6:5-7)

As legislators and elected officials, you are dedicated – set apart – to serve the people of West Virginia. Taking your oath of office was your “dedication ceremony” setting you apart for public service. As lobbyists, when you take on a client or became the leader of your organization, you became dedicated – set apart – to serve them and their cause. As a staffer, you are dedicated – set apart – to serve those over you and ultimately the people of our state. When you work in state government, you are set apart to serve the people of West Virginia.

As followers of Christ we are dedicated – set apart – to serve and live for Him. The question we each must ask is “how am I doing?” Isaiah’s vision in Isaiah 6 gives us a vivid picture of what it means to follow God, to have our sins forgiven, and to be set apart to serve Him.

God set Isaiah apart to be a prophet and to proclaim His word to the people of Judah. The spiritual condition of the nation was dire, and Isaiah was in for a long and difficult ministry. To prepare Isaiah for his work, God gave him a marvelous vision of His holiness and glory. Isaiah’s response was immediate and profound:

*⁵ Then I said,
“Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of
hosts.”*

Isaiah recognized his unworthiness so sing with the angels of God’s holiness or to proclaim His word as a prophet. He openly confessed his sin to the Lord, and God’s response was immediate as well:

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”

This is a vivid description of the forgiveness and cleansing from sin God provided for Isaiah. Isaiah was in the temple, where at the altar sacrifice was made for forgiveness of sin. The sacrifice of animals in the Old Testament was a picture pointing to the sacrifice Christ would make on the

cross for us. The fire was burning. The sacrifice was already made. The angel takes a coal from the altar and touches it to Isaiah’s lips. The angel then gives Isaiah what must have been an encouraging message, **“your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”** God forgave Isaiah’s sin through the sacrifice made on the altar. Through God’s ongoing, purifying work Isaiah was set apart and prepared to serve Him. This work of God is Isaiah’s life, and in our lives, is what the Bible calls “sanctification”.

Are You a Saint?

The term “sanctify” and the truths regarding “sanctification” are extremely important for us to understand in our Christian lives. Would you consider yourself a saint? The Bible tells us that all who have trusted Christ for salvation are “saints” (Eph. 1:1, 15, 19, 3:8, 18). Are you a holy person? All believers are called holy (Col. 3:12), and are exhorted to pursue holiness (2 Cor. 7:1). All believers are called “sanctified” (1 Cor. 1:2, 30) and to pursue sanctification (Heb. 12:4). All these terms: saints, holy, and sanctification, come from the same Greek word, which means “to set apart”. We don’t immediately see this in our English Bibles, but all these important descriptions of believer point to the fact that we are set apart, or devoted to God. As we read through the New Testament, we see that the term “sanctification” is used in two different ways. We

must carefully read and study to let the context determine which way the word is used.

Two Aspects of Sanctification

It helps us to understand that the word “sanctify” is used in two different ways.

Set Apart for God

The word for “holy”, “sanctify”, and “saint” simply means “set apart”. The first way “sanctify” is used means **to be set apart for God and for His service**. It speaks of anyone or anything that is devoted to God. It means first a separation from that is earthly, worldly, or profane.

It means secondly to be completely and wholly devoted to God. This is speaking of every believer’s position. It is past tense and takes place when we repent and trust Christ. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30 and 6:1 Paul speaks of all believers as sanctified at the time of their salvation. In this sense, it is closely related to our justification – the judicial act of God by which we are declared righteous and holy before Him. This comes through faith in what Christ did for us on the cross.

Jesus is our example. Once again, we see the glorious truth of the gospel. Jesus suffered and died on the cross so that our sin of lack of devotion and rebellion against Him could be forgiven. Jesus completely fulfilled the requirement of complete devotion to God so that could be credited to us – even when we are not completely devoted to God.

Living Up to Our Position

Our position as Christians is that of complete devotion to God. We are set aside to obey God and to do His will. We quickly realize in our daily lives, we are often NOT wholly devoted to God. We do not completely obey His word and His will. The second aspect of sanctification is our growing daily and consistently in our devotion and obedience to God.

This is a process which takes place over time and will only come to completion when we are in heaven. Peter exhorts believers to grow in this way:

...But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18

The fact that Jesus prays for the Father to sanctify us shows that it primarily God’s work in our lives. While we certainly have a part, we work at

growing relying upon God to provide the power to grow and change.

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

How Do We Grow?

As Jesus prayed for us in John 17, He clearly let us know how sanctification takes place. **“Sanctify them in the truth, Thy Word is truth.”** (17:17). It is through God’s Word that we are saved and set apart for Him. It is through God’s Word that we grow more each day to live up that lofty position.

As we read, study, and hear God’s word proclaimed we learn and understand more about God and His glory, holiness, and majesty. Perhaps our greatest pursuit in sanctification is – like Isaiah – to get a clearer view, a greater understanding of God and His holiness!

We recognize more clearly how awful and heinous our sin is, that it took Jesus dying on the cross for it to be forgiven. We come to realize how sinful we still are and how much we need to grow in our devotion and obedience.

We come to greater understanding of what it meant for God the Son to take on human nature so that He could live a perfect life to fulfill all righteousness and to suffer and die for our sin.

The Holy Spirit uses God’s word to convict us and show us where we need to change and grow.

This is why it so important to spend time reading, studying, and hearing God’s Word. As we spend time in God’s Word, we cannot help but grow to love Christ more. And when we do we will indeed be more and more dedicated to the One we love!

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays

8:00 House Government Org Conference Room (East Wing)

12:00 Noon Treasurer’s Conference Room (EB54)