

**~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:**

I Thess. 5:23, 24: "And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless . . . Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." -- GREEK and R. V.

Many preachers and teachers and honest Christians do not understand that the Bible teaches the need of a second work of grace after regeneration. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians teaches it very plainly. Notice, 1. -- To whom the Epistle was written.

The first chapter makes it absolutely certain that Paul was writing to Christians -- people who had already been regenerated.

Ver. 1: "Paul, Sylvanus and Timothy unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In those days church members were converted people. Ver. 2: "We give thanks to God always for you all."

St. Paul certainly was not thanking God for a great company of unregenerated sinners within the Church.

Ver. 3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of FAITH, and labour of LOVE, and patience of HOPE in our Lord Jesus Christ."

They had the three Christian graces -- faith, hope, love. Ver. 4: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election."

The apostle did not call a great company of sinners "brethren beloved," nor did he tell sinners they were "elected." Ver. 5: "They had much assurance."

The Holy Spirit bore witness to them that they were regenerated.

Ver. 6: "Ye became imitators of us and of the Lord."

So they had selected Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ to IMITATE

Ver. 6: They had "joy of the Holy Spirit."

The Spirit does not give any joy to sinners. He convicts them.

Ver. 7: "They were examples to all Christians."

Ver. 8: "They sounded forth the word of the Lord." "Your faith to God-ward is gone forth."

Ver. 9: "Ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God."

They had a glorious conversion.

Ver. 10: And they were "waiting for His Son from heaven." Sinners are never waiting or longing for Jesus to appear.

Now here are all these unmistakable evidences that the apostle was writing to Christians. If they were not regenerated Christians, there never were any in the world.

II. -- Notice what Paul wrote to these good Christians.

(1) In chapter 3:6 he tells them that Timothy, whom he had sent back to see how they were getting on, had returned and brought him the glad tidings of their faith and love. So they had not backslidden, and the apostle was delighted.

(2) Nevertheless, in chapter 3:10, he writes: "We are night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect that which is lacking in your faith." Why? Ver. 13: "To the end he may establish your hearts UNBLAMABLE IN HOLINESS." In other words he says: "You have exercised faith for regeneration: but I pray

that you may also exercise faith for holiness or sanctification. Why?

(3) Chapter 4:3 gives the reason: "FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION." Regeneration is not all the grace of God's plan for you. It is also His will THAT YOU BE SANCTIFIED.

(4) Why? . Verse 7: "For God called us not for uncleanness, but UNTO SANCTIFICATION."

III. -- What is this sanctification to which God calls us? Notice these definitions of our English lexicons.

(1) Webster: "Sanctify: To make free from sin, to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution; to purify" (John 17:17). "Sanctification: The ACT of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to a supreme love to God."

(2) Century Dictionary: "Sanctification: The ACT of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified and the soul is CLEANSED from Sin and consecrated to God." . . . "Conformity of heart and life to the will of God."

(3) Standard Dictionary: "Sanctification: The gracious work of the Holy Spirit whereby the BELIEVER IS FREED FROM SIN AND EXALTED TO HOLINESS OF HEART AND LIFE."

Now observe --

(a) All these three dictionaries say that sanctification is a work of God, and not something that you can do for yourself.

(b) Two of them say we are sanctified by "AN ACT OF GOD," performed like all acts in an instant of time. Then no one can get it by a slow growth.

(c) One says it is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby the BELIEVER (one already a Christian) is FREED FROM SIN." Then, manifestly, it is a SECOND WORK OF GRACE subsequent to regeneration. These dictionary definitions are in perfect agreement with Scripture and teach a better theology than many preachers. .

IV. -- Notice how the text verifies the teaching of the dictionaries.

"And the God of peace HIMSELF sanctify you wholly" (Revised Version and Greek) . In the Old Testament use of the word "sanctify," viz. "to Set apart from a common to a sacred use," people could sanctify themselves. But in the New Testament use of being cleansed from depravity or inward corruption, "THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF" is the only One who can sanctify. No human individual can do it, no priests or laymen, no college dignitaries can accomplish the task. They can confer degrees of honor, but they stand dumb and helpless before the depravity of the human heart. Only the omnipotent God can say, "Be thou clean," and make it so.

The aorist tense of the verb "sanctify" teaches that sanctification is INSTANTANEOUS. All the Greek grammars teach this, and all the scholarly commentators. Steele: "The aorist tense denotes singleness of action, instantaneous sanctification." Ellicott: "The aorist tense denotes instantaneous perfecting in love."

V. -- Notice how completely God does the work.

"The God of peace Himself sanctify you WHOLLY." The German Bible translates it, "Sanctify you THROUGH AND THROUGH." Then the text proceeds to show how completely: "And may your SPIRIT and SOUL and BODY be preserved entire, without blame."

(a) The "body" can be cleansed from all the abnormal appetites. We were once preaching to an audience of three thousand people at a holiness campmeeting. We asked all to rise to their feet who had been instantaneously cleansed from the appetite for tobacco, intoxicants, and drugs by the Holy Spirit. In a moment five hundred sprang to their feet, and with hallelujahs of praise testified that they had been instantaneously cleansed and the chains of habit had been broken. Thousands of helpless victims of Satan are going down to hell for the want of just such a salvation.

(b) Then the "soul" can be sanctified: the intellects and sensibilities, with all their emotions and feelings and ambitions and hopes and fears. The depravity can be cleansed from this whole realm of faculties, and all can be made submissive to Christ.

(c) Then there is the "spirit," that part of our nature which has direct intuition of duty and of moral obligation and of God. The Holy Spirit can cleanse it from every impulse to disobedience, and make it sweetly and lovingly loyal to all the blessed will of God.

When these three -- body, soul and spirit -- are brought thus into perfect harmony with God, one has the "mind of Christ" and is "blameless." Amidst all the abounding wickedness of this polluted, evil world, the text teaches us that God can "PRESERVE" us, unstained, unsoiled, clothed in the White raiment of holiness. There is a "keeping" grace for those who want to be like God.

VI. -- Notice the promise of the text.

We have seen in chapter 4:7 that "God calls us unto sanctification." In the text, ch. 5:24, He says: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also Will do it." Do what? Why, SANCTIFY You -- the blessing prayed for in the previous verse. What more could man ask? How could God make it any plainer? Two men were talking on this subject. One said: "It took two to sanctify me." "Who were they?" "It took God and me." "What did God do?" "He sanctified me." "What did you do?" "I let Him do it." Many more people would be sanctified if they were only willing and would just let God do it. An Opposing will defeats God and loses the blessing.

Just hear George Fox, the Quaker, testify: "I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul. But I found something within me that would not keep sweet, and patient, and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was still there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave Him my will He came to my heart and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be patient, all that would not be kind, and then He shut the door and He shut Himself in." Jesus, with His preserving grace, was inside, and sin was outside, and the door was shut