

# The Lord Who Sanctifies

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's a big word, but I'll quickly explain it to you. It's easy to understand for all of us. Many of you have probably studied sanctification before. But recently in my Bible reading, and I encourage you, if you're not and you don't regularly sit down to read the scriptures, I would encourage you to do that.

Your elders, your pastors, I use a five-day-a-week Bible reading plan that gets me through the whole Bible in a year. And so beginning of the year, where am I?

Well, mostly in the Old Testament, but there is a New Testament reading each day. But reading through, I'm in Leviticus now, I believe. But as I've been going through those books, especially Leviticus, all about the law that God gave to Moses to give to Israel, this phrase kept coming up into my mind, just sort of leaping out of the page, where God says, I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

I am the Lord. I am Yahweh God who sanctifies you. I'd like to just pray with us as we just start to think about that phrase, I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

Let's pray to him and ask him to do that today. Heavenly Father, as we come to you in your precious word, we are needy people. And only you know for sure how very needy we are.

[ 1 : 23 ] We probably just catch little glimpses at times. But we're here. You have brought us here. We thank you. We don't know what you're going to do in our hearts and minds or spirits, but you do.

And in light of this phrase that you've put upon my heart and just keeps coming up throughout your word, Lord, we would pray that you as God would sanctify us today as people whom you have loved, who you care about.

Lord, you know the spiritual condition of each one. There's probably some among us today that have not yet truly repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

So perhaps today that work of sanctification is actually the beginning of salvation that you would accomplish in their lives today. But for those of us who have already trusted in you, we trust that it will be more growth, more insight, more understanding, more conformity to the image of your dear son.

So whatever the work is you have to do, I pray that we would have hearts ready to listen, to hear the voice of your spirit speaking to us, me included. May you accomplish your will and your work today.

[ 2 : 42 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Consider some of these verses I have printed out there on your notes. Exodus 31 verse 13. Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, Surely my Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

Leviticus 20 verse 8. And you shall keep my statutes and perform them. I am the Lord who sanctifies you. Leviticus 21 verse 8. Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God.

He shall be holy to you, for I, the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy. In Leviticus 22 verse 32. You shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel.

I am the Lord who sanctifies you. I underlined a word in each one of those verses. In the first one, it's Sabbaths. And then it's statutes, which means commands.

God's principles, his commands. The third one is the personal pronoun he, referring to the priests. The priests of Israel were to be consecrated. And then in the fourth verse, God's name.

[ 4 : 00 ] Those four aspects, those four details were means by which God was saying to his people, through these things, I will sanctify you.

Now, what does that mean? What is sanctification? What does it mean to sanctify something or someone? Well, by definition, sanctify means to set apart. It's that simple. It just basically means to set apart something.

So if you have, maybe it's a favorite toy or a favorite tool or a favorite, it could be a favorite pair of shoes, a favorite outfit. You're taking that object and you're setting it apart for just some special use.

Maybe you're the only one that's allowed to play with it. You're the only one that's allowed to use that tool. Or you're only going to wear those shoes and that outfit on a very specific occasion. In that sense, in a sort of a common sense, you sanctified, you set that thing apart for special use.

Now, but religiously or theologically speaking, what does it mean to sanctify? Or what does it mean when God sanctifies something? Well, at the basic meaning, he is taking someone or something and setting it apart for his use.

[ 5 : 12 ] So like the Sabbaths, the seventh day, God rested from his work of creation, and he told Israel in their commands, I want you to set apart or sanctify that day that was supposed to be a day of rest.

Don't do your normal stuff. Don't do the normal work on that day you set that apart. His priest setting apart. The statues were setting them apart, making these people distinct from the others.

When used to describe something or someone who is consecrated to God, like we just sang, take my life and let it be, it also usually carries the meaning or connotation of being perfect or being pure or free from any kind of defect or blemish.

In this sense, it's the idea of a complete moral perfection in thought, word, deed, and so forth. So in the first sense, when you're setting something apart, it's sort of like it's identity.

And you can fill in your blanks there. I think there's a blank in your notes there. It's that the idea of sanctification as identity, this is mine for this special use. In the second sense or connotation, it has to do with that perfection, especially the moral or ethical perfection of someone.

[ 6 : 25 ] This is where something has to become pure. If it's not purified, it needs to become purified in order to be classified as sanctified. So consider this. Historically, in the scriptures, when God brought the Hebrew people, Abraham's descendants, out of their slavery in Egypt, many of them were formerly probably idol worshippers.

They didn't know God. When Moses ran for his life out of Egypt and God met him, and God said then eventually, I want you to go back and bring my people out of Egypt, Moses didn't even know God's name.

He said, who am I supposed to tell them is sending me? And so, you know, a lot of times I think we impose upon Israel a theology at that time that they really didn't understand.

Again, Abraham, when he was called to go out of his home and out from his people, again, probably lived amongst idol worshipers. Many of the Israelites, the Hebrews in Egypt, were probably idol worshipers.

They were probably worshiping the gods of the Egyptians. And so when this god brings them out with a very strong, mighty hand, and, you know, he's clicking off one after another of the gods of Egypt through the various plagues that he brought upon him.

[ 7 : 46 ] And it wasn't just the Egyptians that were feeling them. Most of those plagues the Israelites were feeling as well. And it was God's direct attack on one of their major deities. And so when these people were coming out, they really didn't know God.

They didn't know who God was. They didn't know what he commanded, what kind of relationship they could have with him. Nevertheless, God said, I am taking this people who don't know me. They had a little bit of religious heritage through Abraham, but not much.

I'm going to take these people who don't know me, and they're going to be mine. I'm going to sanctify them. I'm choosing them to be mine.

Maybe you find yourself in a similar place today. Maybe you were forced to come here. You were brought here by your parents or someone, you know, someone dear to you who cares about you.

But maybe you don't really know God. But the fact that you're here under the teaching of his word and hearing the people of God worship him, God is sanctifying you by this very act.

[ 8 : 54 ] He's beginning a process where he's trying to set you apart. He's bringing his revelation to have an impact upon your life. Now, that's not salvation. That's just God working on you.

God doing something distinct in your life to perhaps begin the process that will result in salvation. But this is what God was doing with Israel. He was revealing himself.

He was bringing his law to bear upon their lives. And in that sense, he was identifying them as his own. And so every command from God, their Sabbath days at rest, were designed to set them apart.

And God regularly told them, I am the Lord who sanctifies you. Now, this concept of sanctification can be found throughout the scriptures. It begins in Genesis 2, verse 3, again, when God set apart the seventh day.

But you think of all that God gave to Israel with the tabernacle, the furnishings, the structure, the design, the priesthood, the clothing that the priests were supposed to wear, even down to the very incense that was burned in the tabernacle.

[ 10 : 00 ] Remember, God says he basically gave him some of the ingredients, a recipe for this incense that was supposed to burn, like potpourri in a sense, we might say. It was only allowed to be used in the tabernacle.

But he said, if anybody else used the same mixture to burn in their own homes, they were supposed to be cut off from their people. God was saying, that's mine.

That is sanctified and set apart for my use for the worship of the people. God was trying to identify them as his own.

But the concept of ethical or moral sanctification isn't applied to things like furnishings and clothing and incense. It's only applied to people because those things are not moral in another sense.

But people can be. People do have ethics. People do have morals. And this kind of moral sanctification is required by God of all who would desire to be united with him in fellowship.

[ 11 : 01 ] Since God is thoroughly, perfectly holy, only those people who are also perfectly holy can enjoy fellowship with him. Only they can be reconciled to him.

And thus, therein lies the great need for us to understand this concept of sanctification. How in the world can we, as people who are sinners, enjoy fellowship with such a holy God?

How in the world can we become so sanctified that we can enjoy fellowship with him? How can we become so sanctified that eventually we can even dwell in his very presence forever?

We need to understand this concept. We need God to do his work in our lives to sanctify us. Matthew 5, verse 48 says, Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1 Peter 1, verses 15 and 16 say, But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy.

[ 12 : 11 ] That word we translate holy is the same root word as sanctified. You could translate it as be sanctified. For I am sanctified. I am holy set apart.

Many of you are probably aware of Isaiah's reaction in Isaiah chapter 6, when he had the vision of God's presence in the temple. Or maybe that's Isaiah chapter 6.

You can later, I think it's verse 5, you can read about his reaction. How he says, Whoa, I am undone. I am falling apart in the presence of God. In Revelation chapter 1, verse 17, John the apostle also has a vision of the glorified Christ.

And he fell at his feet as a dead man. You think about, how can a sinner be in the presence of such a holy God?

Well, there are three tenses or aspects, perhaps, of sanctification. These, I have some headings in your notes there.

[ 13 : 19 ] I want to walk through these really quickly before we get actually into 1 Thessalonians for part of our time today. But the first tense of sanctification is what's often referred to as the positional sense.

You see, at the moment of salvation, when a person repents of his or her sin and puts his or her faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, at that moment, God does something that's called justification.

He justifies or he declares the believing, repentant sinner to be positionally righteous in his sight on the basis of that believer's faith in the saving work of Christ alone.

We call this aspect of salvation justification. It is a legal or forensic declaration by God. It's God saying, as judge of all, I declare this person righteous in my sight.

And the believer, along with this legal standing, comes this positional tense of sanctification. If we're declared righteous by God, that means we're sinless.

[ 14 : 23 ] Sin is taken away from us. In that same sense, we are positionally then sanctified. The believer is thereby set apart unto God by virtue of the Holy Spirit's presence, who comes to dwell within us.

We are identified with Jesus Christ as a son or daughter of God. The believer is identified as a saint, a set-apart one, or even as a holy one. And so, thus, this aspect has more to do with our identity in Christ than it has with our moral or ethical purity.

You think what happens at the moment of salvation, yes, God declares righteous, but our deeds may not have changed yet, right?

Our sin, past, present, future is paid for, covered by the blood of Christ. Hallelujah. Okay? But as far as the work of changing to be more like Jesus, it's unnoticeable, perhaps.

Okay? It's just beginning. But we are already then identified positionally with Christ. We're called saints at that point. So, by way of application, when you think about that, who are you?

[ 15 : 35 ] Who are you today? When you consider all the roles or aspects that combine to make up your identity in this world, how does this aspect rank in your sense of your identity, that I am a child of God, that I am a saint, I am a holy one, I am a sanctified son or daughter of God?

How would your family, friends, coworkers rank the importance of this aspect to you, to who you are? How do you practically identify yourself as a sanctified one?

Do you think about yourself as that? Do you try? I'm not saying do you see yourself as sinless. We're not talking about the moral perfection yet, just the identity.

Who are you? Are you thrilled to be a child of God? Do you want others to gladly know that you're a child of God?

Are you embarrassed sometimes to be known as a Christian? Are you afraid to be known as a Christian? You know, one of the very first commands God gives to every believer is to be baptized.

[ 17 : 06 ] My understanding of baptism, by going under the water and coming about, it doesn't change the person, but it's a picture of the change that has already taken place, the work that God has already done.

That's my understanding of baptism. But we are commanded to be baptized as an expression of our faith. What does baptism do? It is a public declaration where you say, I am in Christ.

This is what God has done for me. And so maybe that's an application to start with. Maybe there's someone here that you say, yeah, I'm a Christian.

God has saved me. But you've never obeyed him in baptism. Your position is in Christ, but you're not yet really saying, this is who I am publicly. Maybe you need to follow up with that.

Or maybe this has to do with your testimony before others. Maybe you've been trying to perhaps hide it, or maybe not really be so bold in sharing who you are in Christ.

[ 18 : 18 ] Or maybe you're glad to share it, but when you think about your work or your friendships and how you make decisions in those arenas, you're a friend first, or you're a worker first and a Christian second.

Or I'm an employer first, and then I'm a Christian. No? You see, I think that shows us our priorities. Or a little bit skewed.

No. Ultimately, Christian first. Everything else should flow out of that identity. The second sense of sanctification is what we would say sort of the end.

The end goal is the ultimate sense. Before we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, our salvation must be completed, meaning that every remnant of sin and its curse must be eradicated, destroyed from us.

Even these mortal bodies, which are currently under the curse of sin and carry about our sinful natures, must be replaced with glorified bodies. Our sinful natures must be forever be replaced with the perfect, unhindered, and untainted righteousness of Christ.

[ 19 : 32 ] This new reality is what we refer to as glorification. Okay? And you've studied this before, I'm sure. It's really, that's what we're thinking about. Glorification. We looked at justification in a sense, but this is where we are glorified.

It will be an unchanging reality, not only in position, but also in practice. Finally, when we stand before God, every ounce of sinfulness is going to just be totally destroyed, eradicated from our lives.

We will never have another temptation to sin. Amen? Amen. Okay? Cannot wait to just finally be done with that because then the battle is over. Right? We are with God.

We are like his son. Sin is gone forever. That is glorification. Even our bodies, they're not going to be feeling the pains, the effects of the curse. The curse is going to be gone.

Our old mortal bodies are going to be changed into glorified bodies like the Lord Jesus Christ, and we'll be able to live in those forever. This is our ultimate sanctification. That's when truly we will become holy people.

[ 20 : 35 ] In 1 Thessalonians 3.13, it says, So that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. In Philippians 3, verses 20 and 21, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself.

God will do this work ultimately. So we have the positional sanctification. There's the ultimate sanctification. Let's get really practical. Where we live is in this tense called progressive sanctification.

It's this aspect of sanctification that lies between the initial moment of salvation and the ultimate reality of salvation completed. And it's an ongoing process by which God increasingly sets apart believers, who are still sinners, from this world and Satan unto himself, apart from sinfulness and unto holiness.

Some may refer to this as sort of the experiential aspect. While it is ultimately a work of God, we must also actively cooperate with God in this work of progressive sanctification.

Most of the references in the scriptures to sanctification are to this aspect or this tense of sanctification, this progressive aspect. Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13 say, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work.

[ 22 : 21 ] So this is where he's saying, okay, you have a responsibility to do something. He says, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. What he's saying is, you have to cooperate in this work of God, in the sense of the completion of your salvation.

The ultimate, not, salvation is never by works. Okay, please understand that. It's always by grace. What I'm talking about is not gaining something on our own merit. In fact, instead, it is the living out of what God is doing in this process.

Salvation can be looked at as in a moment, right? But ultimately, we are not in our glorified bodies. Right now, we're not in our glorified bodies. We are not with the Lord. We will be, and God will make sure that happens, but in the meantime, he is changing us.

And that's what this verse is referring to. It's not trying to work to gain something from God. Instead, it's working out, living it out in this fear of God, in this respect and awe of God.

And then verse 13 says, For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure. All right? So we're not gaining something on our own.

[ 23 : 33 ] It's not, okay, God got it started. Now I got to really work to make sure I get saved or make sure I stay saved. No. We need to cooperate with God in his work, for it's God who works in you to even desire that, to give you the will to be conformed to Christ.

And it's God who works in you to do it also. So we see here, we cooperate in the work of God to, in a sense, complete and live out the salvation or to continue to move forward in this sanctification process.

Hebrews chapter 10 has several verses. I think, I don't know if I put these in your notes, but these different aspects or tenses of salvation.

There's three verses. Verse 10 says, By that will, by God's will, we have been sanctified. Now that is in the, in what's called the perfect tense in the Greek. It's the idea there is an action that was completed that has these continued results even to this day.

By God's will, you have been sanctified. It's already accomplished through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. That would be, in a sense, our positional sanctification.

[ 24 : 44 ] God's already accomplished it. It's already a standing we have. It's our identity. Okay? It's also a promise of the ultimate reality. Verse 14 says, For by one offering, he has perfected, again, that perfect tense there, forever.

He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. In English, we look at that as, well, there was the past tense. God did it. He sanctified us.

In the Greek, it's the perfect tense there. But we also see the present participle. We are being sanctified. Both these tenses together in the same verse, God has already accomplished it in the sense of position, but he's working it out in our lives.

Okay? And then verse 29, of how much worse punishment do you suppose will he be thought worthy? Who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, a common thing, and insulted, the Spirit of grace.

So we see there is this progressive sense there. God is still working on us, sanctifying us, and ultimately, he will complete it. And that's what I want us to look at.

[ 25 : 51 ] We want to get some encouragement here from 1 Thessalonians 5. So turn there in your scriptures if you're not there yet. 1 Thessalonians 5. And for you ladies who are studying through 1 Thessalonians, and you're in chapter 5, we're not going to deal with those verses that you're in this week, and hopefully you won't steal too much thunder for your future study.

But maybe when you get that, it will be all the more rejoicing for you. 1 Thessalonians 5. I just want to really focus on verses 23 and 24. This is a benediction.

It's a prayer at the end of this letter that Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church. And there's several prayers in this little letter, but this is the closing one. This is how he begins it.

As a matter of fact, we'll read the whole, the last six verses there. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

[ 27 : 10 ] Amen. Verse 23 and 24, one more time. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. Let's look at some of these phrases here. This God of peace. Why does Paul cite the God of peace?

Why is he praying this prayer of sanctification in light of God's identity as the God of peace? We think about salvation. Of all the things that salvation offers, I think one of the core truths is it brings peace.

It brings peace between God and sinful people. God has made a way to reconcile us sinners to himself as a holy God.

He breaks down every barrier that's in between us, every aspect of sin he takes care of. The whole law that was against us, the writing of the hand and the requirements that were against us, every charge against us.

[ 28 : 27 ] God brought peace, as Colossians 1, 20 says, through the blood of the cross of Christ. God, God, this God of peace is God who offers salvation.

It is only he who can bring peace between sinners and himself. So that's why I believe Paul cites the God of peace. And in light, especially, of this letter of 1 Thessalonians, and there's so much reference there to the coming of the Lord and that great meeting that we will have with him and being prepared for that, if you're worried about meeting God, if you're afraid to meet him someday, then either you're still under the guilt and condemnation of your sin, you never trusted in Christ for forgiveness, or you need some more help understanding how complete God's forgiveness is through Jesus Christ.

because what Jesus offers is a salvation that says forevermore you will have peace with God.

You were an enemy, but God has made you his child. Not to be judged, but to be your father forever.

If you don't have that peace today, then please see Brother Greg here or someone else and just talk it through with them. Let them pray with you and share the gospel with you, share that you can have that peace with God.

[ 30 : 06 ] Now, may this God of peace sanctify you completely. This means may God wholly set apart you from all of your sinfulness and unto himself and holiness.

The idea here is may God finish the work he's already begun in you. May he finish the task. Not you, even though you and I have to cooperate. No, it's may God sanctify you completely.

And then he expands upon that. What does it mean to be sanctified completely? He cites three aspects to our nature, our spirit, soul, and body. Now, I'm not going to get into an argument whether we're made up of two parts or three parts.

Okay? But there definitely is an immaterial part of us. You know, our spirit, our soul, our thoughts, emotions, and things like that, and then our bodies, the physical part of us.

And God says, I want it all. I want to sanctify every part of you. I want every part of you to be holy unto me. Now, this idea of the body being holy was very sort of anti-Greek philosophy.

[ 31 : 16 ] There was a very common Greek or philosophy amongst the Greeks that anything physical was evil. evil. It could not be made holy and you didn't need to try to make it holy.

The only real part of you that was important was your immaterial part. Well, no. Paul is saying here, he's praying, may this God of peace even sanctify your bodies.

What does that look like? A body that's still under the curse of sin and has the effects of aging and death on it? Some may just look at it as our deeds, the things that we do.

Okay? But there are verses that talk to us about our moral purity and how we conduct ourselves in our bodies. Romans chapter 6, we actually turn there, hold your place here, turn to Romans 6 real quickly, I think we have time for this.

Perfect passage that deals with this, the working of sanctification in our bodies. Romans chapter 6, beginning verse 16.

[ 32 : 33 ] Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? May God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered, and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.



I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh, for just as you presented, you know, past tense, just as you presented your members or the parts of your bodies as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

He's just saying, okay, the parts of your body that you used to willingly participate in sin with, God say, no, now you present those parts to me.

You say, God, my brain, all the thoughts that come to my mind, may my brain be consecrated to you, may my thoughts be thinking about what you want me to think about and not the things of this world, the sinful things.

My eyes, the things I look at, and the thoughts that even come after a look, God, may my eyes be consecrated to you. With what I do with my voice, the words I say, even the way I say them, may they be expressions of love for you and love for others, speaking the truth even in love and not being harsh, not being judgmental, not being sinful in my words.

[ 34 : 13 ] every part of my body. See, God wants all of us, and ultimately even our bodies will be changed so that we will never ever be able to use our new body, our glorified body, to sin.

We won't have the desire. But right now we have choices to make. In Galatians chapter 5 talks about this battle between the desires of the flesh, the old nature that still in us, and the new desires we have of the Holy Spirit.

And God is always trying to do this work in us to make us like Jesus. So that the things we say, the thoughts we think, what we do with our eyes, our hands, our feet, every part of our bodies would be pleasing to God.

Whether it's our work or our worship, we're doing it in ways that glorify God. So may our bodies be sanctified, preserved, blameless, meaning that God would, in a sense, keep and guard.

The idea of preservation there, it can very much be like having a guard. Okay? Someone guarding. May God, may you guard my body.

[ 35 : 23 ] Keep me in check so that my body is used for you. God, may you as the God of peace guard my spirit, my soul, that immaterial part of me.

All those thoughts, all of my emotions, the heart of how I relate to you and relate to others. God, that you would purify me in those aspects as well.

That I would really just worship you and not the things of this world. That my affections would be like yours and not like the world's. So this God of peace, may he sanctify you completely.

May you be preserved blameless. The idea of blamelessness there is the idea that no one can grab a hold of something and say, see that right there? That's sinful. He's not talking about absolute perfection.

God will make sure that happens. Okay? But when we think about blamelessness, God is trying to purify us. I don't expect any of us to become morally perfect in this life in every respect.

[ 36 : 30 ] But God is working on it. Okay? He's not going to give up. And we should be striving for that. And then he talks about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, how can a sinner be prepared to meet this God?

Throughout this letter, as Marvie mentioned earlier, at the end of every chapter in 1 Thessalonians, there's some reference to the coming of the Lord.

Whether it's the rapture, us going to meet the Lord in the air, or so forth, or just the return of Christ. But this continual process of practical, progressive sanctification is designed to prepare us to meet our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, even as a bride is motivated to prepare herself to meet her groom.

Ephesians 5, 27 says that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

This is the work of God in us. Now, as men, we may have a hard time, you know, thinking, what's it like to be a bride, getting prepared for the groom? What we have are other things in our lives that we prepare for, but this is a picture that God has for us as his church, that we will be united with him someday.

[ 37 : 44 ] And all those efforts that God is putting into us right now is to clean us from the inside out so that we will be perfect when we stand before our Lord one day.

We will be prepared for that meeting. And then there's the promise. If you're here this morning and maybe you've been struggling, we all have sins that easily trip us up.

The book of Hebrews talks about this. You might call them pet sins, habitual sins, sins that we just have, we just have perhaps a more inclination, a stronger inclination to some sins than maybe our spouse or someone else.

And you may not even understand how some people could be tempted with certain sins and they may not understand you. But we all have them. It's all part of our sin nature. And you may be struggling with something this morning.

You say, oh God, how can I ever, I don't know how I can ever have victory over this. It just keeps coming up in my life and you get discouraged and you're tempted to be defeated with it. Look at this promise here.

[ 38 : 48 ] In verse 24, he who calls you, one who's brought you to himself, is faithful. And he also will do it.

Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 basically says the same thing, being confident in this very thing, that he who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it even to the end of the age.

Our sanctification, though we cooperate with God, it's not up to us. God is always trying to work on us. Every bit of his truth that he brings to bear upon our lives, God is saying, you're in me.

And this is how I want you to become like my son. You are mine. I want to change you. And we must cooperate as the spirit gives us that new desire that we have the battle.

Our flesh wants this, the spirit wants this. We need to give in to the spirit. And that's how God changes us to be, he molds us after the pattern of Jesus Christ. But ultimately, it is his work.

[ 39 : 53 ] he will be faithful to do it. Now, how does he do it? Well, I mentioned the Holy Spirit. And I mentioned this several times, his truth.

In Jesus' what we might call his high priestly prayer in John chapter 15 through 17 before he went to the cross, he prayed, you can just spend some time meditating on his prayers there, but in John chapter 17 verse 17, just a simple verse.

I would challenge you to memorize it this week. John 17, 17. The reference is even easier to memorize, which I like that, 17, 17. He says, sanctifying, Father, sanctify them through your truth.

Your word is truth. The scriptures. How does God sanctify us? Through his word. And the spirit uses his word to bring to bear upon our lives.

And it's living, it's active, it's more powerful than a two-edged sword. It divides, you know, spirit, soul, joints, and marrow. It gets to the heart of who we are.

[ 41 : 05 ] It discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts. That's what God uses to bring about these changes, this sanctification. He uses his word, so we've got to be in it. That's one of the major ways that we cooperate with God is by spending time reading his word, meditating on his word, trying to just say, God, show me how to make this stick in my life.

Sanctify them by your truth. Thy word is truth. And again, the promise. This God of peace is faithful, and he also will do it.

So don't be discouraged. Don't compare yourself with another Christian, God will be intent about walking with the Lord, and God will bring about the changes.

If you know some changes that need to take place in your life, get into God's word. Maybe even seek some counsel from another brother and sister in Christ. Say, can you help me find some verses that deal with this issue? Because I'm really struggling, and I want to have victory over this.

I want to change. I know I need to change. Will you help me? Will you keep me accountable? Will you show me in your word how I can do this? But God will complete it. He will be faithful to do it so that whenever the Lord Jesus does come, we will be ready.

[ 42 : 24 ] Now some of you might even say this, well, if God's going to finish it at the end, why do I bother? I would say, if that is sort of the attitude you may have or question, then you don't really understand what God has already done for you.

And you're not really appreciating or loving him for that because, again, you could go back to Romans chapter 6, because Paul anticipated those kind of questions. Should we just continue to sin so that grace can superbound over our sin?

No. He says, God forbid. May it never be. Don't you know what God has done for you? And don't you want to really be prepared?

When Jesus shows up, how do you want to be found? Do you want to be playing in the mud of your sin?

Or do you want to be living in the victory of sanctification in Christ alone? I know how God wants us to be found. I know it so many times, I myself played in the mud of sin.

[ 43 : 33 ] And I'm tempted every day. And I know you are too. But may these verses today give us sort of that charge, that kick, that impetus to say, oh Lord, help me live for you. And God, I need you, but you are faithful and I can trust you.

No matter what I'm dealing with, I can trust you to help me overcome it. Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you that you are faithful, that you are the God of peace. And there is a war going within us, and you know it.

But you could have just left us to ourselves. But you've placed your Holy Spirit within us to give us new desires. Those of us who are Christians, we have your spirit, and we have your word.

We're so thankful for your word. And we pray this morning, oh Lord, sanctify us by your truth. We believe your word is the truth that we need. So help us to be faithful to you, to cooperate with you, to be submissive to you.

And we thank you for your promise. We know you will finish this work. And that, again, we can sigh a relief of peace knowing that you will make us ready for yourself.

[ 44 : 39 ] God, help us to grow even more today like the Lord Jesus Christ. So we will be better prepared for that meeting and help us also take this joy, this knowledge, and share it with others.

There's so many in this world who are still lost don't recognize how, they don't know how they can have peace with you. And they're living in fear, living in fear of death.

Oh God, we have the good news. Use us as your messengers this week, we pray, for your glory. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.