

**Monday      Week 48      Entire Sanctification**

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Q 189 Why did Paul believe the Holy Spirit was at work in the Thessalonians?

A. Paul knew about their faith and joy, and that they followed the true God.

Ivan had gone to war in World War I for the Russian army. He had been captured by the Germans and was in prison. A Christian lady came by the prison and gave him a Gospel tract. When he read it, he realized he was a sinner. He asked God to forgive him of his sins and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. The lady came back and gave him a New Testament. He read it and grew in his faith. After the war he went home to his Russian village. His family watched his life. "He's different," they said. "Maybe he's lost his mind. Maybe the war was too much for him." They saw that he didn't live like he used to live. As time passed, they listened to what he said about Jesus. They believed he was a true Christian. Ivan was able to lead his family to Jesus because his life had been changed by God.

Paul was encouraged about the Thessalonians. After they heard the Gospel their lives were changed. They followed God instead of idols. They were joyful in serving Jesus. Paul was convinced that the Holy Spirit was at work in their lives. They were true Christians.

Thinking Deeper

Jenny, a teen age girl, came with her family from Russia to America in 1929. Theirs was a Christian family. One by one she and her sisters had given their hearts to the Lord. When they came to America they looked for a church to attend. Their priority in the land of opportunity was to find a place to worship God in spirit and in truth. They did not want to become part of the world, which was so alluring. They chose to find God's people, where God was working, and where they felt his Spirit moving. When they visited the large city churches, they were disappointed. These people did not remind them of the Russian Christians, who were separated from the world. They searched for two years before they found a group of Christians that reminded them of the earnest Christians back in Russia. How happy they were to find sincere believers!

Paul was happy that the Thessalonians were sincere followers of Christ. Yet Paul was somewhat unsettled about the Christians. He was concerned that they might give up their faith, or that something would cause them to lose their love for Christ and for other believers. This letter was written out of concern that these Christians needed more than they had. Paul knew what it was. They needed to have their hearts made pure.

**Tuesday      Week 48      Entire Sanctification**

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:8-13

Q 190 What was lacking in the faith of the Thessalonian Christians?

A. They needed their hearts to be established unblameable in holiness.

After a message at church, a boy went to the altar at the front to pray to be saved. He went home from church and sometime later his younger brother talked to their parents. "I know he went to the altar, but it didn't work," he commented. The younger brother didn't see what he expected to see in a Christian. Sometimes children do not understand what it means to be a Christian. Sometimes they do. They see when someone doesn't act like a Christian. And they know that Christians should live in a way that pleases God.

When Paul wrote to the Christians at the church in the city of Thessalonica, he wrote that he was praying for them. He was praying that they would have holy hearts. If someone has a holy heart he will live a holy life. The Bible says "keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." Good things come from a good heart, and evil things come from an evil heart. Ask God to give you a holy heart so that you will live a holy life.

Thinking Deeper

Jenny and her sisters from Russia were Christians who had come to America to find religious freedom. They diligently searched for likeminded followers of Christ. Eventually they became part of the Free Methodists where they heard about entire sanctification. When the girls heard the message about heart purity they came to the altar, seeking God's best. After praying in faith, they trusted God for His great work of giving them pure hearts. The minister, on hearing their testimonies, was grateful for the grace working in them. "These young ladies are spoiled for the world," he said. He was right. The long lives of those sisters were marked by dedication and service to God.

Paul's prayer was that the Christians at the city of Thessalonica would have their hearts made "unblameable in holiness." He knew that the establishing grace that comes from a heart made pure by God's gracious work was important for them. He made it a matter of prayer. God's purpose for His people is that their hearts are made perfect in love. That is the heart of entire sanctification. When a person "loves God with his whole heart, soul and mind, and loves his neighbor as himself," he is exhibiting the character of the sanctified life. Paul prayed for that kind of life for the Thessalonian Christians.

## Wednesday Week 48 Entire Sanctification

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Q 191 To what did God call His people?

A. God called his people to holiness.

It had rained in Kansas for several days. A girl and her younger brother saw a small pool of water. It looked like fun. First they waded in it. Then they started splashing. Before long, they were both lying down in the water. But they stirred up the muddy bottom of the pool. The water was dirty brown. And their clothes, which had been nice and clean became muddy. In fact, both of them were caked in mud, even on their faces. When they came home, they had to be hosed off. They were not allowed in the house with so much mud on them. It took a lot of scrubbing to make them clean again.

When God calls people to follow Him, he calls them not to be dirty with sin, but to keep themselves clean. He is not talking about clean clothes but about clean hearts. God has not called us unto uncleanness. He has called us to be holy. If you follow Jesus, you will follow a clean and holy life. Otherwise, you are not a follower of Jesus. Jesus came “to cleanse us in His own blood.” When you know you have some uncleanness in your heart, go to God in prayer. Ask Him to make you clean. “Create in me a clean heart, Oh God” (Ps. 51:10).

### Thinking Deeper

Pietism was a movement that began among Lutherans in the seventeenth century. It gained popularity because the church seemed to be focused on liturgy but lacking in practical Christian graces. Later, John Wesley was influenced by pietistic thinking in his formulation of the doctrine of Christian perfection, commonly known as “holiness” in our day. If you search the literature on pietism, you will soon find that pietism is considered to be less than desirable. Some consider it to be heresy. Calling for Christian graces to be lived out in one’s practical life is seen by some as diminishing grace. This fits nicely with the current emphasis on Reformed Theology, but, as Wesley said in dealing with similar objections to holiness in his day, “what shall we do with our Bibles?”

There is no question that the Bible demands holiness. “Be ye holy” wrote the inspired Peter. “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord,” affirmed the writer of Hebrews. And Paul wrote, “God has called us...unto holiness.” It is probably true that some proponents of pietism got it wrong and emphasized human efforts instead of God’s grace. But it is also true that the grace described in the Bible teaches us that we should “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” The church today needs less profanity and more piety.

**Thursday    Week 48    Entire Sanctification**

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24

Q 192 To what extent will God sanctify His people?

A. God will sanctify them wholly, their whole spirit, soul and body.

Amanda Smith wanted God to make her holy. She was praying to be sanctified. She was a wash woman, so she got her cleaning supplies and brought them to church. She put her brushes and cleaning rags on the altar. Then she put her soap supplies on the altar. Then she put her wash tub on the altar. “What else do you want, Lord?” she prayed. She felt like the Lord answered, “Now, Amanda, crawl into the tub.” God wanted all of her. Not just her things, but her whole self.

God wants all of you. Not just your spirit or just your body. He wants to sanctify every part – your “whole spirit, soul and body.” God wants to make us His through and through. Some people want to give God everything except one special thing they want for themselves. But God wants everything. When He has everything, then He can bless everything. Give God everything so you can have God’s blessing in every part of your life.

Thinking Deeper

A deep division has happened among some Christian groups over the issue of Lordship Salvation. Some who hold that Jesus will not be savior if he is not Lord have been banned from certain popular venues. Interestingly, these groups have a Baptist/Reformed theological framework which has historically downplayed the doctrine of entire sanctification. At heart of the division is the eternal security position that allows for people who have been saved to live in open sin and still be on their way to heaven. The Lordship salvation side says that if they live that way they were never saved.

The Wesleyan position on sanctification answers this issue before it comes up. When a person is saved, he is initially sanctified. That in itself excludes a life of sin. The further work of inner cleansing, called entire sanctification, comes when the earnest Christian sees the self-principle reasserting claim to rights. Entire sanctification deals not with open sin or rebellion. That was done at the Cross at salvation. It deals with the inner struggle of self being yielded completely to God. At the point of crisis, an eternal “yes to God” is settled. The process of continual sanctification follows as that “yes” is daily applied to the issues of life. Have you said that eternal “yes”?

**Friday      Week 48      Entire Sanctification**

Review the Week's Questions

- Q 189 Why did Paul believe the Holy Spirit was at work in the Thessalonians?  
A. Paul knew about their faith and joy, and that they followed the true God.
- Q 190 What was lacking in the faith of the Thessalonian Christians?  
A. They needed their hearts to be established unblameable in holiness.
- Q 191 To what did God call His people?  
A. God called his people to holiness.
- Q 192 To what extent will God sanctify His people?  
A. God will sanctify them wholly, their whole spirit, soul and body.

Duncan Campbell was wounded in a war. He was lying on a field when a Canadian soldier rode by on his horse. When the battle was over, the Canadian came back and put Duncan on his horse. As they were riding, Mr. Campbell was praying. He had been saved, but somehow felt unfit for heaven. He remembered a prayer he had heard his father pray. "Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be." God answered that prayer. Duncan Campbell was wounded, suffering, bumping along on the horse. But he felt clean in his heart. He felt like God had filled him with the Holy Spirit. He was completely in God's hands.

God can make his people holy. He can make you holy. Whether you are young or old, you can have a holy heart. Jesus said, "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Ask. He will give you a holy heart.

Thinking Deeper

In the Old Testament vessels that were to be used in the temple were set apart for temple use. They could not be defiled by other uses. They were also to be clean. That is what God wants to do with those who are his vessels for Christian service. He wants us to be set apart for His use, and to be pure. So God admonishes us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." When someone is sanctified he is set apart (consecrated) specifically to God. He is also made pure.

How are we made pure? "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). We cannot make ourselves pure. It is true that we are to "cleanse ourselves," but that is not by our own means. There must be a cleansing agent. When you have grease on your hands, it does no good to rub your hands together. You must apply detergent, which chemically releases the bonds that holds the grease to your skin. Similarly, we are to bring ourselves to the "cleansing stream" where we find that "the blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanseth us from all sin." When you come to God in faith for cleansing, be assured that it will be done. "Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it."