

## Content yet longing for more: the holy dissatisfaction that accompanies sanctification

- **Introduction**
  - Ryan
  - Close your eyes
  - Think of the last time you sinned.
  - Think of your overall description for how you feel about life...what one word would best describe it:
    - working hard, disappointed, frustrated, content?
  - Open eyes
- **Identify the problem**
  - In talking about his view of his life in relationship to sin, Paul states:
    - “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.” Romans 7:19
    - “Wretched man am I.” Romans 7:24
  - We talk about these two things often in church – our sin and how we feel about it.
    - Matt Fearey, May 2010, Why fight sin?
    - Dave Mitchell, October 2009, The Search for Contentment
  - Why? It is most of our understanding of our life. We tend to split it up our picture of life like this:
    - Pre-Salvation
    - Salvation
    - The final day we are with God without sin and in glory
    - The middle???
  - The middle sometimes gets classified as “other”. Not really part of the process, but something we have to go through to get to the other side.
  - Abigail and work.
  - We feel this way about the middle. It's something we just want to have done, because we don't often times see the purpose it has for us. We get stuck in Romans 7:19 and 24.
  - This morning I want us to examine this picture and get a better understanding of where we really fit into this, better define this “middle” section.
  - And I want us to get to where Paul gets in Romans 7:24B-25 & 8:18,23:
    - Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24B-25)
    - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God....And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:18-23)
  - **I summarize Paul's statement as this - We should be content, yet longing.**
  - Sadly, Paul wasn't bringing up a problem in chapter 7 only to solve it in chapter 8.
    - Option 1, study through chapters 1 through 8 to understand how Paul go here
    - Option 2, look at Order of Salvation – Ordo Solutus

- **Order of Salvation – Ordo Solutus**
  - Romans Road - a shortcut to see that we need God for salvation right in Romans
  - Through the preaching of the word we realize:
    - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)
    - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. " (Romans 6:23)
    - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)
    - if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)
    - For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)
    - Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)
  - Repent, Have Faith and are Converted
    - "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" Acts 17:30
    - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" Mark 1:15
  - Justified
    - "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness" Genesis 15:6
  - Now we understand that we were also:
    - Elected
      - "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world" Ephesians 1:4
    - Called
      - "And those whom he predestined he also called" Romans 8:30
    - Adopted
      - "he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ" Ephesians 1:5
    - Regenerated
      - "born again" 1 Peter 1:3
      - "created...in true righteousness and holiness" Ephesians 4:24
  - And God intends to finish the process:
    - Glorification
      - "and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Romans 8:17
  - This can all happen in a twinkling of an eye – why we believe in deathbed confession
  - Parable of the wages Matthew 20

- **What is Sanctification?**

- Most of us are stuck in between this work already done for us in Christ and by God in his grace, that occurs in our union with Christ, and the final outcome of Glorification. We call this place Sanctification:
  - “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.” 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- The most common meaning of sanctification in this context: “to be made holy” - “holification” or “jesusification”. A process defined as:
  - “growth in moral likeness to God, improvement of character, fulfilling the ethical norms of Scripture in heart and life” Robert Culver
- Many scriptures requiring us to be more holy, more like Jesus:
  - “and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.” (1 Thessalonian 3:12-13)
  - For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; (1 Thessalonian 4:3-5)
  - For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. (1 Thessalonian 4:7)
- We cannot escape the fact that we are to grow and become more and more holy and consequently, more like Christ.
- This is where we drop into Paul's feelings in Romans 7.

- **Sanctification is not completed yet**
  - One aspect of sanctification has the idea of being “set apart”, “to be made holy”
    - Used even by the secular Greek culture, usually in pagan worship
      - prostitutes & holy men
    - We see this in the christian useage
      - Moses sprinkling Israel with blood
      - Gold & Vessels in temple
  - Not a moral or ethical issue
    - positional
    - completed – past tense
  - to be specially His as a possession and whose service he may command
  - Some verses:
    - Paul...unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2)
    - But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:11)
    - And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Heb. 10:10).
  - Problem if we confuse this type of sanctification with the on-going type
    - ours isn't complete – this is
  - In talking about this aspect of sanctification, John Mueller said:
    - “Sanctification embraces all acts of divine grace by which the Holy Spirit turns a person from sin to holiness [which]...in its wider sense includes every work of God by which he separates a sinner form the lost and condemned world.”
- **Sanctification will not be completed in your lifetime.**
  - As we look at scripture and the verses about holiness it is easy to see where this concern comes from:
    - Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)
    - let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)
    - You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)
  - The short answer is yes, you have to be perfectly holy to be with God.
  - But there is no indication that we will be able to complete this process in our lifetime.
  - Scripture says no one can say they are sinless:
    - Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"? (Proverbs 20:9)
    - Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)
  - And Paul talks about his sanctification as a continual process:
    - “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (Philippians 3:12)
  - Paul partly alludes to this in our Romans 8 verse.

- **God works out your sanctification.**
  - Scripture is clear that the entire process of salvation is God's act and work in our life:
    - For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)
  - And in case we aren't sure that includes sanctification lets look at 1 Thess. 5:23:
    - “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.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
  - The entire process is something God does. And he does it in many ways:
  - Christ EARNED it for us:
    - And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, (1 Corinthians 1:30)
  - Christ is our EXAMPLE for us:
    - looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)
    - For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)
    - whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:6)
  - He gives us the Holy Spirit
    - according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (1 Peter 1:2)
    - Fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
    - But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-18)

- **You cooperate in your sanctification**

- Passively

- Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Romans 6:13)
- I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

- Actively

- if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:13)
- Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

- It effects your whole person:

- Mind
- Intellect
- Knowledge
- Will
- Spirit
- Physical Bodies

- We do this by:

- Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)
- For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
- And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)
- For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge (2 Peter 1:5)

- There are non shortcuts:

- Trust and Obey, for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

- Last note – this is designed and should happen in community:

- And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24)

- **Putting it all together**
  - William Wilburforce
    - 18-19 century Politician
    - 'Amazing Grace' movie recently
    - *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of This Country Contrasted With Real Christianity*
    - Christianity is a scheme (divine plan) "for justifying the ungodly" by Christ's dying for them "when yet sinners"—a scheme "for reconciling us to God"—when enemies; and for making the fruits of holiness the effects, not the cause, of our being justified and reconciled.
  - Christianity is one big package of salvation.
  - Go over from the beginning...I like to use the picture of a **seed** through this whole process.
  - We can be content yet longing if we understand this big picture
  
- **Personal Application**
  - Myriad because this is just a filter