

Holy Spirit Today (4): Sanctified By the Spirit

(Ephesians 5:15-18)

I. Introduction

- A. I guess you are wondering why I have this spotlight up on the stage
 - 1. I will use it to spotlight people that I want to single out for special tasks
 - a. We have jobs we need doing, so I'll set some people apart for the tasks
 - b. Most of us like being put-on-the-spot, singled-out and set-apart, right?
 - 2. Of course, I'm won't single you out with spot... unless you fall asleep
 - 3. We generally dislike being singled out and put on the spot like that
 - a. We visited a church where they read visitors cards and had them stand.
 - 1) Then they asked, "*Why don't you tell us a few things about yourself*"
 - 2) I was glad we didn't fill out a card! (*Read names who don't sign card?*)
 - b. The last thing I wanted as kid was to appear to be different from others
 - 1) I dressed like my friends (Levi cords, solid T-shirt, blue golf jacket)
 - 2) Why? I would've said, "*I gotta be me.*" Really, I had to be "*them.*"
 - c. We never outgrow the desire to fit in; we don't want to be singled-out.
- B. But Christians have been singled out and set apart by the spotlight of the Spirit
 - 1. Paul highlights the spirit's spotlight in his words in **Ephesians 5:15-18**
¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live -- not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Paul is talking in this context about Christian living
 - a. He begin chapter, "*Be imitators of God as dearly loved children*" (**5:1**)
 - b. He then stresses the practical issues of living in the spotlight
 - 1) We must avoid things like sexual immorality and sinful talk (**5:3-7**)
 - 2) If we live in the spotlight, we will avoid deeds of darkness (**5:8-14**)
 - 3) He speaks to wives, husbands, children, slaves, masters (**5:21-6:9**)
 - 2. In the middle of this text on ethics, Paul brings up our topic of the Spirit
 - a. Don't be drunk on wine; that leads to the sinful living mentioned earlier
 - b. They were to be filled with the Spirit—which leads to the holy lifestyle
 - 3. When we meet Jesus at cross and accept His mercy, we're filled with Spirit
 - a. The Holy Spirit in us sets us apart just as if God's spotlight singled us out
 - b. There is a technical term that describes this truth—**SANCTIFICATION**

II. The Work of the Holy Spirit Is Sanctification (1 Peter 1:1-2)

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

A. **First**, God has “chosen” us by His foreknowledge (“*elect exiles*” in ESV)

1. This idea of “*election*” or “*predestination*” has caused much discussion.
 - a. How does God choose us **and** allow us free will to choose Him?
 - b. Many have simply thrown out one or the other, free will or election
2. We must embrace both—maybe its best to draw analogy to Israel in OT.
 - a. Israel was chosen nation; Jew was chosen by being born into Israel.
 - b. Today the church is chosen; we become chosen when born again.
3. But salvation is still God’s sovereign choice—he took the step at cross

B. **Second**, the blood of Jesus redeems as we are “*sprinkled by his blood*”

1. Strange, blood sprinkled on things or people was seen to purify them
 - a. The Hebrew writer points back to that OT blood ritual (Heb 9:21-22)
²¹ *In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies.* ²² *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*
 - b. He sees that as a shadow of what happened in Jesus at cross (Heb 9:28)
²⁸ *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*
2. Peter reminds us that we have been called to “*obedience to Jesus Christ*”
 - a. Earl Lavendar tells of teaching class “*Story of Christ*” to Muslims at LU
 - 1) They are drawn to Jesus, but don’t see the connection to Christianity
 - 2) Told by friends that Jesus died forgive so they can live like they want
 - b. Peter points to sprinkling of the cross, but “*for obedience to Jesus Christ*”

C. **Third**, we are also saved or chosen by the “*sanctifying work*” of Spirit.

1. This is also rendered “*sanctification*” (ESV) or “*being set apart*” (NET)
 - a. It’s the same word as “*holy*” (*adjective*) or “*saint*” (*one who is sanctified*)
 - b. Something or someone is sanctified when set apart for God’s purpose
 - 1) In the OT, the tabernacle and its furnishing were holy—set apart
 - 2) The ground on which Moses stood at burning bush was holy ground
2. We’re chosen by God, sprinkled by the cross and sanctified by the Spirit
3. Spirit within shines the divine spotlight to set us apart as holy men/women

III. Sanctification: Both Event and Process

- A. In one sense, the sanctification event takes place when we are saved (**1 Cor 6**)
1. Paul gives a list of sins that characterized the pagan world (**6:9-10**, ESV)
Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
 - a. The Corinthians had once been guilty of those things (**1 Cor 6:11**, NET)
Some of you once lived this way. 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.
 - b. Obviously from this text, some there still struggled with these acts
 - 1) Their relationship to sin changed—washed, sanctified and justified.
 - 2) Here sanctification (set apart) took place at justification (*saved*)
 2. When we come to Christ, Spirit shines God’s light on us to set us apart
 - a. The Spirit comes within us—filled with, baptized in, gift of the Spirit
 - b. His presence shines divine light that sets us aside as belonging to God
 3. And according to Paul, we then have the responsibility to live that way
- B. So sanctification is also the **continuing process** of living this holy life
1. Paul prays we’re sanctified “*thru and thru*” (“*entirely*,” NRSV) (**1 Th 5:23**)
²³ *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - a. These people were **already** saints, but they needed to be sanctified more.
 - b. As we allow the Spirit to bear fruit in us, we continue to be sanctified
 2. Paul connects this sanctification to our moral choices (**1 Thess 4:3-4**)
³ *It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,*
 - a. What is God’s will? That we are sanctified in our sexual morality
 - b. The opening verse here highlight the ongoing process (**1 Thess 4:1**)
Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.
 - 1) They were living for God, but they need to do so “*more and more*”
 - 2) They are already sanctified but *they need to continue that process*
 3. Paul connects **sanctification** to the **moral choices** we make in our lives
 - a. Implication of the Spirit shining divine light was a sexually pure life
 - b. To follow prevailing world morality would be to deny the Spirit (**4:7-8**)
⁷ *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

C. Paul calls this process of sanctification “*the fruit of the Spirit*” in **Galatians 5**

1. Paul is contrasting salvation by grace with the heresy of the Judaizers
 - a. Salvation by grace is not a works-based legalism like Pharisees (**5:2-4**)
 - b. But this grace is a way to righteousness through the Holy Spirit (**5:5**)
But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope
 - c. What counts is not rules but “*faith expressing itself through love*” (**5:6**)
2. But living that faith requires living by the Holy Spirit, not “*flesh*” (**5:16**)
¹⁶ *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*
 - a. He stresses how flesh (“*sinful nature*”) and Spirit are “*contrary*” (**5:17**)
 - b. He gives another list describing “*acts of sinful nature*” or “*works of flesh*”
3. Our lives are rather to be marked by the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22-25**)
²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* ²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.* ²⁵ *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*
 - a. This is the ongoing process of sanctification—living holy life in Spirit
 - b. We do that by keeping step in the Spirit—marching to His cadence
 - c. It’s “*fruit of the Spirit*” because He empowers us in our **sanctification**

IV. Conclusion

A. Being spot-lighted and set-apart makes us uncomfortable—easier to blend in

1. But God through His Spirit has sanctified, set you apart to live a holy life
 - a. But everyone has sex out of marriage, commits adultery, accepts homosexual
 - b. Everyone gets drunk, goes to wild parties, and blows up in angry fits.
 - c. Everyone hates their enemies, is jealous of others, greedy & materialistic
2. Yes, that’s our world. It was Paul’s world; look at lists in **1 Cor** and **Gal.**
 - a. But the spotlight of God’s Spirit has set us apart to be very different.
 - b. We were sanctified when we made this commitment of faith.
 - c. And now we must live out that holiness in a continued sanctification.

B. The spotlight of the Spirit is on you—live in the light (**Ephesians 5:13-18**)

¹³ *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,* ¹⁴ *for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”* ¹⁵ *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,* ¹⁶ *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* ¹⁷ *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.* ¹⁸ *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

C. Be filled with the Spirit; renew your commitment to sanctification... wake up!