

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD #6

Introduction

We continue with our teaching series on
“The Power of God’s Word” and what God’s Word will do for us...

Last time we saw how the power of God’s word can give us Victory over Satan;
tonight I want to show you how the power of God’s word can give us...

“Victory Over Sin”

Testimony

When I look back on our first church experience after we were saved, I can tell you that we heard about how God would forgive us of our sins every week; but I cannot remember one single message once on how we could walk in victory over sin.

We actually expected to sin!
The motto was that we will sin every day in thought, word, and deed.
But it’s OK because God will forgive us.

Now after walking with the Lord almost 50 years, not much has changed:
Our current Christian culture preaches a lot about the forgiveness *of* sin; but very little about how we can have victory *over* sin.

Let me state this theologically:
We preach a lot about *justification*; not much about *sanctification*.

There is much teaching and preaching on the subject of *justification*; which is how God *saves us*. There is not so much teaching and preaching on the subject of *sanctification*; which is how God makes us *holy*

I. On the Subject of Sanctification

A. The Real Lord’s Prayer

1. All of us know the “Lords’ Prayer”; we can recite it by heart. But what we call the Lord’s Prayer really should be called the “Disciple’s Prayer”; because it is how Jesus taught us to pray.

2. The *real* “Lord’s Prayer” is recorded in the 17th chapter of John’s Gospel; it is the prayer Jesus offered up to His Father just before He was taken away to trial. And here is what He asks His Father to do for all those who would believe in Him...

John 17:17

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Here we have the primary prayer Jesus prayed for you and me and for all His people...

B. But What Does It Mean?

1. Let me give you some definitions:

Sanctification, in its simplest meaning, is the setting apart of a person or a thing from a common to a holy use.

The Biblical Illustrator

2. This is what happens to us when we are saved; we are “set apart” from the world; we are separated from one world unto another.

3. In the eternal sense, Jesus’ death on the Cross at once sanctified all who would ever believe on Him unto salvation.

Hebrews 10:10

By the will (of God) we have been sanctified (some versions say “made holy”) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

a. This means that Jesus died “once” for “all” who had ever or would ever believe on Him!

b. Legally speaking, we enter into that “sainthood” the moment we are born again; but it only *begins* there.

John Calvin

“Sanctification is not instantly completed in us on the first day; we make progress in it through the whole course of our life.

4. Our justification takes place in an instant! But sanctification is a lifelong *process*!

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Sanctification is the process of God's grace by which the believer is separated from sin and becomes dedicated to God's righteousness. It is accomplished by the Word of God (John 17:7) and the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:3-4); sanctification results in holiness, or purification from the guilt and power of sin.

5. This is the testimony of all the saints down through history...

Albert Barnes

“Sanctification in the heart of a Christian is progressive. It consists in his becoming more like God and less attached to the world; in his getting the ascendancy over evil thoughts, and passions, and impure desires; and in his becoming more and more weaned from earthly objects, and attached to those things which are unseen and eternal.”

C. Sanctification is Not an Option

1. If I had any word of warning for American Christianity it is this: our sanctification is not an option!

a. You cannot think to be born again and continue to practice your sin at the same time.

2. Jesus prayed to His Father that we would be sanctified, or “made holy.”

a. The Apostle Paul prayed the same prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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.

b. Paul prays for we would be completely sanctified or made holy; that we would have victory over sins of the spirit, the soul and the body.

Easton's Bible Dictionary

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the whole nature more and more under the influences of the new gracious principles implanted in the soul in regeneration. In other words, sanctification is the carrying on to perfection the work begun in regeneration, and it extends to the whole man.

3. Do not mishear me; I am not speaking about thinking you must come to a condition of “sinless perfection”; the mistake some have made in saying they are sinless; or have grown beyond the point of falling.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8

- a. Only Jesus is without sin!
- b. But God has called us to holiness!

4. Many run around “looking for the will of God” for their lives. Here it is...

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

**For this is the will of God, your sanctification:
that you should abstain from sexual immorality;
that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel
in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust,
like the Gentiles who do not know God.**

5. What a word for our day!

- The news that 1000’s of Catholic priests and now, 100’s of Southern Baptist pastors have been caught in sexual immorality
- The surveys that show the #1 struggle among Christian men is pornography

6. God has a message for His people. Put these 2 verses together.

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

a. The great theologian Charles Hodge saw the seriousness of this:

Charles Hodge

“Only the pure in heart shall see God, and without holiness no man shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Now no thinking person can ponder all this without feeling something of the influence that these truths are fitted to produce.”

7. The “influence” here is the power of God’s Word to bring us to the fear of the Lord and to give us victory over sin!

John 17:17

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

II. The Power of God’s Word Gives Us Victory Over Sin

A. Know Your Old Testament! (Especially Psalms and Proverbs)

1. It is notable that most of what the scriptures say on this subject is in the Old Testament; which, sad to say, today many never read.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

a. “All scripture” refers to both Old and New Testaments; most of the New had not been written yet!

2. In the Psalms we read...

Psalms 17:4

By the word of your lips I have kept myself away from the paths of the Destroyer.

a. The “Destroyer” refers to the Devil; his “paths” refers to his ways; but the Psalmist says that he has kept himself away from the devil’s path by the power of God’s Word. This would include God’s commandments in the Law:

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

b. The Law has no power to make us right with God; but it does show us what is right and wrong; i.e. coveting is a sin. David said...

Psalms 37:30-31

**The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice.
The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.**

3. Are you a Christian young person surrounded by sexual temptations? Are you wondering how to holy?

Psalm 119:9

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word.

a. If you have a heart for holiness, there's no way to win if you are away from the Word.

Psalm 119:11

Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

B. In the Proverbs

1. This book of wisdom, all 31 chapters, contain the counsel of a father to his son.

Proverbs 2:1-5

**2 My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
4 If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
5 Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.**

Proverbs 2:6-9

**6 For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;
8 He guards the paths of justice,
And preserves the way of His saints.**

**9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice,
Equity and every good path.**

2. All these verses refer to receiving the Word of God into the heart, treating it like treasure; with this result...

Proverbs 2:10-11

**When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, to deliver you
from...**

**12 To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse things,
13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
15 Whose ways are crooked,
And who are devious in their paths;
16 To deliver you from the immoral woman,
From the seductress who flatters with her words,
17 Who forsakes the companion of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.**

- The way of evil (v12)
- From the man who speaks perverse things (v12)
- From those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness (v13)
- From the immoral woman and the seductress who flatters with her words (v16)

3. Here is a word of warning I have given to many young men...

Proverbs 6:26 NASB

**For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread,
And an adulteress hunts for the precious life.**

III. Conclusion

A. Review: What We Have Said

1. Jesus primary prayer was the Father would sanctify us; that we would be set apart and made holy.

a. We need to remind the Church in America of this:

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

b. Never make light of this message. Paul goes on...

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives us His Holy Spirit.

2. That God makes us holy by the Truth, which is the Word of God; so there is power in the Word of God to give us victory over sin!

Charles Spurgeon

“Learn, my brothers, how earnestly you ought to search the Scriptures! See, my sisters, how studiously you should read this Book of God! If this is the truth, and the truth with which God sanctifies us, let us learn it, hold it, and stand fast in it. To Him that gave us the Book let us pledge ourselves never to depart from His testimonies.”

“The truth, when fully used, will daily destroy sin, nourish grace, suggest noble desires, and urge to holy acts. O sirs, I do pray that we may by our lives adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Some do not so. I say this to our shame and to my own hourly sorrow.”

3. There is no heaven without holiness; there is no holiness except by the Word of God, which gives us victory over sin. So the choice is clear...

Derek Prince

“God word will keep you from sin; or sin will keep you from God’s word.”

Closing Prayer and Ministry

SUPPLEMENTAL THOUGHT

Charles Spurgeon

The one point of failure to be most deeply regretted would be a failure in the holiness of our church members. If you yourselves act as others do, what witness do you bear? If your families are not graciously ordered; if your business is not conducted upon principles of the strictest integrity; if your speech is questionable as to purity or truthfulness; if your lives are open to serious rebuke-how can God accept you or send a blessing on the Church to which you belong? It is all falsehood and deceit to talk about your being the people of God when even men of the world shame you. Your faith in the Lord Jesus must operate upon your lives to make you faithful and true; it must check you here, and excite you there; it must keep you back from this, and drive you on to that; it must constantly operate upon thought and speech and act, or else you know nothing of its saving power. How can

I speak more distinctly and emphatically? Do not come to me with your experiences, and your convictions, and your professions, unless you sanctify the name of God in your lives. O brethren, we had better quit our professions if we do not live up to them.