

RESTORATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Prophetic Insight

2/21/19 "Therefore we must pay much more careful heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away"

Sanctification = Suffering + Patient Endurance

We want to remind you of the very necessary elements of **suffering** and **patient endurance** that accompany the life journey of the Kingdom-minded as they love and serve our King, Jesus. When you read the Psalms of David or the biblical records of Job, Joseph and others in the Older Testament who sought to please God in their obedient trust, you really get a glimpse into the suffering, patience and perseverance of those who were determined to keep trusting and serving God. It's through their indispensable understanding of God's interaction with the Israelites He treasured in the Hebrew Scriptures that James and Peter build off as they remind us in the Newer Testament (James 1:2-4; 1Peter 1:6,7) to rejoice in our suffering and trials.

Seeking Our Lord More Than Things (by Oswald Chambers)

"Are you seeking great things for yourself? Not seeking to be a great one, but seeking great things from God for yourself. God wants you in a closer relationship with Himself than receiving His gifts, He wants you to get to know Him. A great thing is accidental, it comes and goes. God never gives us anything accidental. There is nothing easier than getting into a right relationship with God except when it is not God whom you want but only what He gives. If you have only come the length of asking God for things, you have never come to the first strand of abandonment, you have become a Christian from a standpoint of your own. "I did ask God for the Holy Spirit, but He did not give me the rest and peace I expected." Instantly God puts His finger on the reason—you are not seeking the Lord at all, you are seeking something for yourself. Jesus says —"Ask and it will be given to you." Ask God for what you want, and you cannot ask if you are not asking for a right thing. When you draw near to God, you cease from asking for things. "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." Then why ask? That you may get to know Him." (emphasis added)

If we don't absorb into our very being the suffering and patient endurance of the people God chose to carry out His will in the Older Testament, then the entire process of the Holy Spirit's **sanctification** in the Newer Testament is discounted and dismissed — as has been the case with the vast majority of so-called "Christian" faith communities. Too often within this easy-believism, self-absorbed framework which has so pervasively crept into Christianity, undergoing suffering and trials is something to strenuously avoid. And the way things currently stand, those within Christianity who *do* see others going through very difficult situations respond as Job's buddies did, looking for some hidden sin. But sanctification cannot take place without suffering and patiently enduring trials which are sent or allowed by our all-sovereign Father. It's through these difficulties which call for absolute trust that authentically test our faith's genuineness (see 1Peter 1:6,7).

Or, are we "good-time Charlie" Christians who believe only as long as things go the way we want or at least are situations we can reasonably handle ourselves? But as we learn from the example of our Older Testament predecessors, when we think we can handle something through our own efforts, we'll fall. In contrast, our Father is looking for us to totally give over to Him any control of our life and circumstances. That kind of trust as His little children recognizes

that He has the right to do whatever is necessary in our lives to deepen our intimacy with our Lord Jesus and to prepare us for His use. And it's through suffering and patient endurance that the Holy Spirit continues His transformation process in us to mold us into vessels being set apart as holy to serve our Father and to grow more into the character of Jesus our Lord. That's why Paul commends followers of Jesus for their perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials they were enduring (2Thessalonians 1:4). And he adds in the next verse that their enduring trust in the midst of their trials *"is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering."*

The intellectual, man-centered, self-gratifying bent of Hellenism has permeated much of Christianity, whether within Roman Catholicism or Protestantism at large. The doorway to this evil perversion of God's Word was opened centuries ago through the anti-Semitic attitude of Hellenist theologians against both the Jews (labeled as "Christ-killers") and against the truth of the Older Testament (demoted to a "Jews-only" tabloid). Sadly for us today, neither the sons of Israel nor the Hebrew text were considered necessary to understanding and fully appreciating the Newer Testament. While Roman Catholicism officially promoted the concept of suffering within the lives of its practitioners, their suffering here on earth was considered as participation in payment of the penalty for their sins. Yet that view of suffering nullifies the whole scriptural framework of God's grace — the truth that NOTHING we can do will add to the completed work of Jesus through His death and resurrection. His full payment for our sins is received totally by trust. This trust becomes real to us when we hate the detestability of our sins, turn our hearts away from their grip, and turn to Christ in trust for forgiveness and reconciliation with God our Father. At that point we are born from above as the Holy Spirit indwells us as Christ's own. Can you see how blasphemous against Christ the teaching is that we can do ANYTHING to add to the completed work of the shed blood of Jesus to pay the penalty for humanity's — and our — sin?

Yet, nullification of Christ's completed work on our behalf wasn't the only fraudulent pit dug by the anti-Semitic theologians who directed the course of Christian beliefs and practice over the centuries. Since the Reformation five hundred years ago, many Protestant denominations and sects have focused on justification as some divine technical step which one must agree with in order to be "saved." Again the roots of anti-Semitism discounted the pattern that was set before followers of Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures. Being wholly available to our Lord and "set apart as holy for God's use" — which is sanctification — was discarded as unnecessary for salvation. Yet James and other Scripture writers point to being sanctified as THE evidence and verification that a person has embraced the true Gospel and has been born of the Spirit of Christ.

For example, Paul can call the Thessalonian followers of Jesus his brothers beloved by the Lord *"because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth"* (2Thessalonians 2:13).

We are "sanctified" by the truth of Christ's death for us (Hebrews 13:12), and through His indwelling Spirit we "walk the walk" as our love-grounded response of obedience to our holy Father (see Romans 15:15,16). In the daily context of following Jesus as our Lord, willingly yielding to the indwelling Spirit is a transformational relationship involving our ongoing obedient trust. All too often, Protestant doctrines have emphasized a knowledge of the truth but have relegated obedience to the truth to a virtual scrapheap of "works." However, from our Father's perspective, knowing what the truth is but neglecting to do the truth twists the authentic Gospel and allows for a perversion of grace to abound. Somebody's sold much of Christendom a bill of worthless goods.

Here's an explanation of the New Covenant in union with Christ that may be familiar to you. Compare the covenant relationship of spiritual intimacy with Christ to a marriage between a man and a woman:

Justification represents our Father's response to the commitment you make to Christ by His grace on the day you are born from above (in our analogy, the vows you and your betrothed make on your wedding day).

Sanctification is the ongoing perfection of love and sacrifice through your obedient trust which, again by His grace, makes your relationship with our Lord Jesus through His indwelling Spirit all the more spiritually intimate. (In marriage it's the ongoing deepening of love and forgiveness of each other, which reflects the ongoing work of the Spirit in each of you. You're able to perceive each other through the loving and forgiving eyes of Jesus rather than through any painful history or grudges.)

Salvation is culminated as your life journey on earth ends and you are welcomed into heaven as your name is proclaimed by Jesus before His Father and the heavenly host (Revelation 3:5).

We hope you're able to see your life in intimate union with your Lord Jesus through His indwelling Spirit as you love and serve your King in His Kingdom purposes for your life. Too much of today's Hellenized Christianity relegates response to Christ to participating in a religious system of some sort, practicing good deeds, and refraining from doing certain activities — whichever ones fit your own definition of "sin." There's a huge gap here between Scripture's truth and man's counterfeit! That's why wanting to please your heavenly Father by being set apart for His use — your ongoing sanctification — is the only way to cross that divide. Through His indwelling Spirit you are empowered to resolutely fulfill your Father's will, become more like your Lord Jesus, and live the way of our Lord through His leading.

A serious thought to consider:

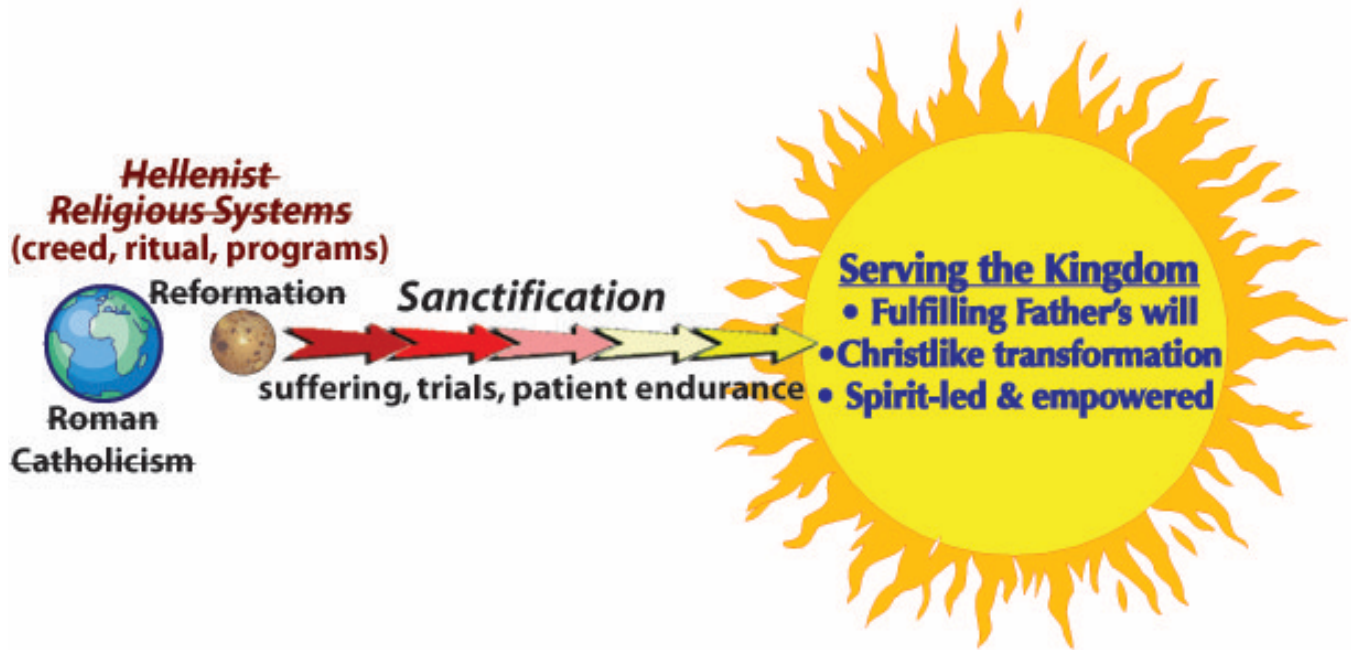
Sanctification is meaningless without the authority of the Bible. Our Lord Jesus Himself proclaimed definitively that all the Law and the Prophets are summed up in loving God and loving your neighbor — the foundation of the Hebrew Scriptures by which He flawlessly lived. But if you have no idea of **God's perspective** as to what's good and what's evil (which are clearly spelled out in the Law and the Prophets of the Older Testament) then you create your own **society-filtered** definitions and practices of good and evil — which pretty much describes the sin-saturated "tolerance" mantra of today. The degree to which people diminish the **authority of the Bible** is the degree to which they avoid the **suffering, trials and persecution** that are an integral part of our ongoing **sanctification**. For those who fail to grasp the authority of the Bible and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to guide them, the following affirmations about suffering don't make sense:

•"Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin" (1Peter 4:1). What do you think Peter is saying here?

•"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which are the called-out ones" (Colossians 1:24). If our Lord Jesus has fully paid the penalty for our sins, what is Paul referring to that is "lacking"?

We've also attached a two-page illustration, "*The Sanctification Spiral*," which may help you be either convicted or encouraged in how essential suffering and patient endurance are for your own sanctification during your life journey in union with Christ. Use this link to it for your browser: <<http://www.restorationministries.org/download/sanctificationspirial.pdf>>

We realize we're citing an essential biblical truth in the face of centuries of anti-Semitic Hellenism that has influenced generations to ignore or even discount the importance of the Older Testament to their life as followers of Jesus. As much as Protestants like to believe that a doctrinal abyss lays between them and Roman Catholicism, neither religious system is that differ-



ent from the other.

We don't need to remind you how cold and antagonistic this nation has become in regard to the innate dignity of every person. But the death of a democracy certainly doesn't mean it's the demise of our Lord's Kingdom. And out of His loving compassion the Hebraic Restoration is our heavenly Father's blueprint for Kingdom living.

Mike & Sue