

The Iron Men of Fellowship of Champions

Colossians 1:28-29

Lesson 12

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Opening Prayer

Colossians 1:28 (NOTES)

- “We proclaim Him” - Paul is saying that he, Paul, and those who proclaim the true way of salvation, which is the Gospel of Christ, proclaim Him. There is nothing and no one else to proclaim.
 - 2Co 2:2 “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”
 - Ac 4:11-12 (Peter remarked) “11 [Jesus] is the stone, which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”
- “admonishing every man and teaching every man” - Admonishing (exhorting, pleading) to convict the lost to repent and turn in faith to Christ. Admonishing the saved to disciple and sanctify them into the image of Christ.
- “every man” - Notice the use of the phrase 3 times in this verse. In sharp contrast to the Gnostic error, Paul includes "every man". Paul proclaims the Gospel to all men, not just a few privileged spiritual elite who are somehow blessed with special powers to discern and understand esoteric religious ideas.
- “so that we may present every man complete in Christ” - That is saved and conformed to the image of Christ at His coming. Perfect.

Discussion:

- What is “sanctification”?
 - Literally, it means “to be set apart for a purpose.” The sense of this context is “to be set apart for the purposes of God.”
 - Sanctify, saint, and holy are all forms of the Greek word "hagios."

- To sanctify is to declare something sacred for a specific purpose or use.
 - Sanctum or sanctuary is a place so set apart.
 - Saint is a person so set apart by God.
 - Hallowed is a thing so set apart.
 - Holy is the state or condition of a thing or person so set apart.
- Sanctification in the context of Scripture refers either to a one-time, setting-apart event, or to an ongoing process of setting someone apart for God.
- Explain these two aspects of sanctification - one-time (positional) and on-going (progressive):
 - First, the one-time event. The one-time event is the initial converting act of the Holy Spirit, who exchanges a person's old nature with a new nature. This initial act is referred to as regeneration, or being born again. And through regeneration, one is transferred (set apart) from the family of Satan (the world) to the family of God (Kingdom of Heaven).
 - Co 1:13 "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"
 - 1Pe 2:9-10 "9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."
 - Ep 2:19 "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household."
 - This act of the Holy Spirit is unilateral, and requires no action on the part of the converted (the Reformed view, known as "monergism").

- This is in contradistinction to the belief that one participates in one's initial regeneration (the Arminian view, known as "synergism").
 - Regeneration is brought about through the preaching of the Gospel, and not by any work of the person being converted.
 - 1Pe 1:23-25 "23 for you have been born again not of seed, which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory is like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you."
 - Tt 3:4-6 "4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
- Second, the ongoing process of setting someone apart for God. In this sense, sanctification sets a person apart for God through a progressive work whereby one is conformed to the image of Christ through the decrease of sin and the increase of righteousness in one's character and life.
- Is this process unilateral? If so, unilaterally and exclusively conducted by God? Or, unilaterally and exclusively conducted by the believer? Or, unilaterally and exclusively conducted by something or someone else?
 - Or, does the process involve multiple parties and things? Yes. Sanctification is a progressive work of the triune godhead.
 - Father – He 12:10 "10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness." Jo 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."

- Son – 1Co 1:30 “But it is due to Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” Eph 5:25-27 "25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
 - Holy Spirit - Ro 15:16 “to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” 2Th 2:13 “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”
 - Ti 3:5 (see above) 1Pe 1:2 “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”
 - Progressive sanctification also uses the agency of the Word (Jo 17:17 above), agency of others in our lives (“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” 1Co 11:1), and the agency of trials and circumstances (b. Ja 1:2-4 “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”).
- Is sanctification passive or active? Do we have a role to play in it, and if so, what role do we play? Believers are ACTIVE not PASSIVE in sanctification.
 - God sanctifies us in the same way He saves us (by His Spirit). However, man must cooperate with the Spirit of God to accomplish the goal of Christ-likeness. We cannot sanctify ourselves, yet Scripture does not allow us to be passive observers. God works to accomplish His purposes in the believer, and the believer works out his salvation.

- Ph 2:12-13 “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.”
- This understanding of the roles God and believers in sanctification makes clear that one must be born again, and respond with penitent faith (working out one’s salvation).
- Christians are Responsible to Follow Christ’s Example.
 - Jn 13:14-15 “So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”
 - 1Co 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
 - Eph 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”
 - Eph 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
 - Ph 2:5-8 “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”
 - 1Pe 2:21 “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.”
- Believers Are Exhorted to Direct Action. Commands in Scripture which apply to the Christian do, indeed, communicate the will of God. As such, they are not merely advice. However, they do not imply our ability to obey them apart from God’s power in us.

- The issue for Christians is to recognize that such commands in Scripture both tell us the major elements of God's will for our lives and indicate that God is at work to accomplish them in us. Once again, faith becomes the issue.
 - Ro 12:1-2 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
 - 2Co 7:1 "... let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God."
 - He 12:14 "Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

Colossians 1:29 (NOTES)

- "For this purpose I also labor, striving" - For what purpose is Paul laboring and striving? Despite the work of the Gnostic heretics who are leading people astray from the Gospel and thus, depriving some of them of salvation and sanctification, Paul is working against these false teachers, and even Satan who is at work in them. Paul strives, not only in Colossae, but everywhere he goes to present every person he meets, or even touches through a letter, complete (saved and sanctified) in Christ. The labor of the proclamation of the truth is Paul's ministry. He is calling the Colossians to accept his ministry and reject the ministry of the Gnostics. Its power is from God.
- "striving" - Literally "agonizing" (Gr. - agoniz-omai) is the intensity of Paul's fight for the souls of men.
 - Lu 13:24 (Jesus) "Strive [agonize] to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."
 - 2Ti 4:7 (Paul) "I have fought [agonize] the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

- “His power” - What power works mightily within Paul? The power of the Holy Spirit of God. Not power through the special knowledge of the Gnostics, not the power of any aeon-super angels, but the power of the Spirit of Christ. God has not shunned the earth and its inhabitants as evil untouchables, as taught by the Gnostics (who declare all matter, including human flesh, to be evil), but became one of us to save us, taking upon Himself the flesh of humans. Moreover, God lives within our bodies by His Spirit. Matter, flesh is not evil in itself, as the Gnostics taught.
- 1Co 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body."
- "striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." - Paul allows the Holy Spirit free reign in his mind, and through his actions and words. But Paul doesn't sit back and wait for something to happen either. Paul devotes himself fully to the task, a battle-scarred soldier, committed to his Captain's cause.

Application: Were there any new concepts you picked up today? Is there anything you have trouble accepting in these doctrines? Did anything stand out that may prompt you to do further study? Do you feel confident that you can explain the doctrines of deity and trinity to your family, other believers, nonbelievers?

Closing Benediction: Jude 1:24-25 *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

Closing Prayer

Small Groups

- Discuss current Scripture reading assignment.
- Prayer:
 - Anything praiseworthy.
 - Areas of accountability.
 - Other prayer requests.