

September 23, 2024

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH - PART 3

Early last Sunday morning, I was still in bed when I realized God was speaking to my heart. My thoughts centered around a vehicle being driven down the highway when it ran out of gas and the engine died. The vehicle coasted for several hundred yards before it came to a complete stop. This has happened to me a few times, and I remember letting the vehicle coast as long as possible hoping to get closer to a gas station. If a hill or overpass was ahead, the vehicle would not be able to climb it because the engine was dead and could not propel the vehicle.

My thoughts then turned to an old man of God I knew who came to Christ in the 1940s. At that time, he still ploughed with a team of mules, but instead of the traditional gee and haw commands, his mules had learned to respond to his words of profanity. The day after receiving salvation, he was working his mules who refused to respond to his gee and haw commands. Frustrated, he began to holler at them using profanity as he had done in times past. When he realized what he was doing he was horrified and sought out his new pastor. The pastor told him it was because he was saved, but not sanctified yet. He and his pastor began to pray until the Spirit of

God came upon them and the man never had a problem with profanity again. This man lived the entirety of his life free from sin, believing God had sanctified him that second day after his salvation the day before.

It is amazing how when the Lord shows you things like this, he also gives understanding of what you are seeing. I had been at a loss on how to explain how the work of sanctification comes to a believer. I understood in my spirit what I wanted to say, but did not have the words to express it. For years I have seen the fallacy of teaching sanctification as a progressive work. Just as the Apostle spoke of those who are *“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* II Timothy 3:7, those who believe they are in the process of sanctification never arrive at being sanctified. More than this, however, the word of God is clear that our sanctification is the initial work of salvation, and not something to follow after. On the other hand, I felt checked describing sanctification as an instantaneous work received at the moment of salvation. While I know this is true, I also know that it gets people expecting it to come like some sort of spiritual lightning bolt. I have seen many whom I had no doubt truly received Christ and were completely transformed, but still seemed to be troubled by certain things of the old life for a short period of time.

Our sanctification is described multiple ways in the word of God. The book of Hebrews describes it as *“...having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience...”* Hebrews 10:22. John the Baptist

described our sanctification when he said, *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29. Neither of these statements are describing the deeds of sin but rather are speaking of the source of sin in the human heart. Jesus told us that people commit the deeds of sin because they are enslaved to a master called Sin which dwells within them. John 8:34. The Apostle Paul also mentions this source of sin as he tells of his struggles under the Law before coming to Christ, saying, *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* Romans 7:20. Some people refer to this source of sin as the “sin nature.” Whatever you call it, it is the sin that entered into the world through Adam’s transgression Romans 5:12, and its entrance made us all to be sinners Romans 5:19, even before we ever committed the first sin.

This sin master is like a generator in the human heart that generates sinful thoughts, desires, and actions. Great effort and energy are often spent seeking to rid oneself of the things it generates. A person may feel successful at times, but then the generator kicks in and fills the heart again with the things Jesus said defiles a person. Mark 7:21-23. You could call it a “Sin Engine” which we received from Adam, and it constantly pollutes the human heart.

As the Lord dealt with my heart Sunday morning, I realized more than ever before that this “Sin Engine” is what Jesus Christ came to take away. Paul spoke of this saying, *“...our old man is crucified with him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should*

not serve sin." Romans 6:6. In redemption, the "Sin Engine" does not just run out of fuel, but it is destroyed by the work of Christ. When it is destroyed, or "*taken away*," by the power of the blood of Christ, it can no longer generate sin in your heart.

The vehicle in this illustration I received from the Lord, is the old life of a person who comes to Christ. The things the Bible says will "*shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*" are the hills and overpasses. Once the engine dies, the vehicle can no longer climb such things. If you can commit adultery or fornication, lie and deceive, manipulate, steal, and rage against others, your "Sin Engine" is alive and well. On the other hand, when the "Sin Engine" is destroyed by the blood of Christ, there still may be learned behaviors of the old life which will cease over the days or weeks to come as your vehicle coasts to a complete stop. The Sin Engine can no longer generate sin in your heart, so as your vehicle comes to its place of rest in Christ, habits and learned behavior of your old life simply come to an end.