

Zechariah 13:1-6 When God Gives Victory (part 3: Sanctification)

Our overall theme is victory. God will give victory to his people. As we saw last week, victory does not come without repentance. And, as we will see today in 13:1-6, victory will not come without cleansing. As long as the problem of sin remains, we can wash our bodies with water all day long, till the cows come home. There must be real cleansing if we will have peace with God. The blood of bulls and goats can never cleanse in this way (Heb. 10:4). And I believe Zechariah knows this truth as he looks forward to the day when a **“fountain (will be) opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness”** (13:1). This cleansing, in the NT is called sanctification. A very simple meaning of this term is to “set apart” as clean. From time to time when I clean the dishes, Kristen will come behind me, take a look at a fork or a spoon or a plate and say, *“you missed a spot. Clean it again before you put it the cupboard.”* In the same kind of way, God SANCTIFIES his people. He “sets them apart” as his special people.

And He doesn't MERELY set them apart. He does something to them as well. What does he do? He cleans them. He washes them. V. 1 says, he opens a **“fountain . . . to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”** As the letter to the Hebrews says, **“Without holiness, no one will see the Lord”** (Heb. 12:14). This is why it is no good for God to just “set apart” a people and not cleanse them from sin. Think about nice chinaware with real silverware that has been sitting on a shelf for years. And then, some very important person comes to the house for dinner. What good would it be for me to show my good dinnerware if I did not wash them and shine them and make them beautiful? . . . In the same kind of way, this is what Zechariah is saying as he prophesies of the days to come. This is none other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Look back to v. 10: **“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and please for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him . . .”** This is true REPENTANCE! To look upon the Son who was “pierced”; the one who died on the cross as God's sacrifice. And what is the result of that sacrifice? Look at 13:1: **“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”** The result is cleansing from sin. This is the doctrine of sanctification.

I have two parts to this sermon. The first is doctrinal. In other words, what can we learn from this text about the doctrine of sanctification. What is it? The second part is practical. What are the results of sanctification? How do we know we are sanctified, or “being sanctified.” Under this first part I have 3 truths: 1: Total, 2) Continuous, 3) Work of God.

1. Sanctification includes total cleansing. Sanctification is complete; it is total. I get this throughout the text. The first is the picture of the fountain (v. 1). Do you remember my illustration last week of the bucket bath vs. the shower. With my bucket baths in Mexico, there was only a small amount of water for bathing. But, when I moved into the city the following year, I had a shower where the water was plentiful. In the bucket bath I was limited in how much

water I could use and I'm sure I failed to wash everywhere. But, not so in the shower where I could spend more time with more water to wash my entire body. In the same kind of way, the blood of Jesus washes me completely; no more sin, no more wrath of God poured on me. In 1 John 1:7 the Apostle John says, **"the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin."**

Look also at vv. 2-3: **"And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness."** In order for someone to be clean before God ALL sin must be removed. Thinking back to our dinnerware, what if I were to clean 3 of the 4 plates, could I say my dinnerware is fit to serve my guests? NO. In this prophecy, Zechariah says ALL idolatry, ALL the false prophets, ALL the spirit of uncleanness will be removed.

If you haven't noticed, the sins mentioned here are the worst of sins. These are the sins that plague Israel throughout their history. But, Zechariah says, "in that day" these sins will be forgiven. And, these sins will not even be remembered. Such are the days of the Messiah; such are the days of the New Covenant! In Is. 43:25 God says: **"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."** Jer. 31:34 God says, **"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."** One of our favorite hymns, "It is Well with my soul" says, **"My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more."** In the OT, people of faith were forgiven, but not through the ineffectual sacrifices of bulls and goats. They were saved as they looked forward, by faith, to the cross of Christ. On the cross, before breathing his last breath, what did he say? "IT IS FINISHED!" This is why the Apostle Paul could say to the Corinthians and to us: "1 Cor. 6:11: **"And such were some of you. 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."** Today, if you are in Christ, if you have believed in him, if you have received him, ALL your sins are washed away, past, present, and future sins. And, there are no sins too great that his blood cannot cleanse!

2. Sanctification is continuous. In other words, it does not stop. The fountain does not run out. Back to my bucket bath illustration. Those brief warm showers were good. But, they do not compare to the hot shower that continues. When we lived in Russia, in the summer, we often went to Moscow. And right off Red Square, near an underground shopping mall, there was a HUGE fountain. It seemed as though every child (and adult) could fit in that fountain. The waters were clean, warm, and abundant. And everyone who jumped in, was satisfied, refreshed, and cleaned up from a continuous flow of water. So it is with the fountain in v. 1. Now, the fountains of this world will run out. But, the fountain of the Gospel will never run out. Do you remember the woman at the well from John 4? Jesus visited a famous well in the Land of Samaria in the middle of a hot day. And there came a woman, a very sinful woman upon whom the entire town looked down upon (which is why she came in the middle of the day when no one would be there). And Jesus, using the picture of the water from the well, said, **"Everyone who**

drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). He says, the one who drinks of the water I will give "will never be thirsty again." In other words, the water I give will be continuous; it will last forever. How can this be? Well, under Mosaic law/covenant, how often were animal sacrifices given? Too often to count. There were daily, weekly, monthly, yearly sacrifices. The people continued to offer them; in the old covenant they never stopped. In and of themselves, they were not complete. We might say, "the thirst never went away." But, it is not so with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

Look with me to Heb. 9:11-14: **"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God."** And then in 10:11-14: **"And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."** Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the eternal fountain! And since his sacrifice is an "eternal" sacrifice, the power he gives to cleanse (the Holy Spirit) is also eternal.

(Now, before moving on, I must give some clarification between "justification" and "sanctification." So far, when I speak of sanctification being complete, it sounds very much like justification. What is justification? Justification is God declaring someone not guilty in a court of law because someone else has paid their penalty. And this is what we have in the cross of Christ. In the Grand Courtroom, we are "justified" before God. We are not guilty. Our sins are not put into our bank account. They are laid on Christ. And He gives us his righteousness. So, what is the difference between justification and sanctification? Well, justification happens once. The judge says "not guilty." And, we will hear nothing else about this case. Well, sanctification happens at a point in time. But, sanctification continues. This means sanctification is also a process. Think of a point on a graph from your math class. This is justification. But, with sanctification picture a point, but with a continuous line going forward. This is why the Apostle Paul can say, "You were sanctified. You were justified . . ." I think of baptism vs. the Lord's Supper. Baptism happens once. But, we continually take the Lord's Supper. So, it is with sanctification. We are "sanctified." By the blood of Jesus, we are cleansed. But, through the power of Holy Spirit, we continue to be cleansed. As Christians, we ARE washed in Christ. We ARE set apart. We ARE "righteous." But, by the Holy Spirit, our washing continues.)

3. Sanctification is a work of God. I will be very brief here since we spoke of this last week. But, if we will be cleansed, if we will be sanctified, it will be because God does the washing! In 12:10: “**And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy . . .**” And in 13:2-3: “**And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names from the idols from the land . . . And I will remove the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness . . .**” So, with this in mind, HOW does God cleanse us? Yes, it is by the blood of Christ. But, how are we sanctified? How are we actually made “holy”? How are we “washed?” You know the answer. We are sanctified by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit. And we continue to be cleansed; we continue to become more holy by the power of the Holy Spirit. This means our salvation from start to finish is a miracle. It is the work of God. God keeps the fountain flowing! Sanctification is complete. Sanctification is total. Sanctification is a work of God.

Now, let’s finish with the practical. What are the results of true sanctification by the Holy Spirit? I will mention 4 truths from our text.

1) The one who is sanctified takes the killing of sin seriously. Look at v. 3. “**And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the Lord; and his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies.’**” How striking are these words? “In that day” Zechariah says that even families will kill their own if they prophesy falsely. They will not put up with such sin. In a general way, this is what the church of Jesus Christ does with unrepentant sin. No, we do not have the authority given to us by God to put someone death. But, we are given the “keys of the kingdom” to excommunicate because we take sin seriously. When there is repentance, there is no need for such measures. But, when sin continues in our midst, we must be ready and willing to take action.

In a more specific (individual) way, this text pictures the heart of the Christian, the heart of the one being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians HATE sin, any sin. This means that if you are a Christian, what is normal is for you to do whatever it takes to get rid of your sin. This is what you are “set apart” to do. It isn’t just your position in Christ (justification), it is the ongoing process of killing sin. In our text, how difficult would it have been for a parent to kill a child for sin. That’s his point. It is hard. But, it is what Christians do! Day by day, we fight sin. We read the Word. We speak with God’s people. We hear preaching, etc. And little by little, we grow in godliness as we kill sin. We see this kind of language in the NT. Paul says: “**For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**” This is what Zechariah sees coming in the days of the Kingdom of the Son, the days of the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, you WILL kill your sin. And if you, or me, any who names the name of Christ does not see growth in godliness over time, we all must beware.

2) The one who is sanctified continues in humble repentance. Look at v. 4: “**On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak**

in order to deceive, 5 but he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.’ Here we see true repentance; a humble repentance. The false prophet says, “now that truth has come, I know I have sinned. I have been an imposter. Now, just let me work as a farmer. This is the experience of every Christian (humble repentance).

3) The one who is sanctified displays a willingness to receive correction. Look at v. 6: **“And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back? He will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’** Here we see the wounds of a false prophet who has turned from his sin. The repentant person says, “my friends gave me these wounds.” Here we see a person who has seen their sin, and then, with great humility receives correction. Now, there are real wounds on the back given by friends. But, these wounds come with the greatest of grace. This is what we see in the Church of Jesus Christ, whether it be through the preaching of the Word or the words of instruction given by brothers and sisters in Christ. How willing are you to receive correction?

4) Those who are sanctified never forget the grace of God in doing this great work. To remind us of this truth, let me finish by reading 1 Cor. 6:9-11 **“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. 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.”**