

“Of Sanctification” part 3, WCF 13.2

2021.01.17 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

WCF 13.2

II. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man;(g) yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part:(h) whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.(i)

(g) I Thess. 5:23. (cf. 5:12–28)

(h) I John 1:10 (cf. 1:5–10); Rom. 7:18, 23 (cf. 7:14–25); Phil. 3:12 (cf. Php 3:7–16).

(i) Gal. 5:17 (cf. 5:13–26); I Pet. 2:11.

•**Sanctification a work of God, and therefore comprehensive/complete, 1Thess 5:23.**

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Okay. Good morning all.

We are in Westminster confession chapter 13 of Sanctification.

We're important that we study this and take it to heart it is we live in an age that tends towards antinomianism legalism as always a problem, that's. Trying to have justification without Christ and or sanctification without Christ, but antinomianism is also a problem that's trying to have Christ without holiness Christ without godliness Christ without growth that does not happen in scripture or in reality so good for us to be studying sanctification so that if you haven't been particularly concerned with holiness.

That you will hear from scripture that you ought to be and that that concern comes by Christ's grace out of love for him by his spirit applying into you and then if you have heard or perhaps even in your own self been discouraged in the pursuit of holiness as if growth is not possible or maturing is not possible or putting sin to death is as not possible.

I often run into that even among people who have been in. Supposedly reformed churches then this ought to be hopefully and encouragement to you that it isn't not only is it possible it's inevitable if you cling to Christ that that which you knew in yourself to be impossible he is the one who is doing and then you'll have your eyes opened to to see the work that he does and be thankful for it.

There's a very. You know, there's always this temptation to be self-deprecating which we do want to be self-deprecating but you don't want to be sanctification deprecating you don't want glory for yourself so you don't attribute goodness to yourself, but if the Lord is really working in you and working for you and you don't acknowledge that to give him the glory for it then that also is falsehood and robbing him of praise so if we understand.

Sanctification. Nation well then we will be able to identify it rejoice in it and yet not exult in ourselves, but rather exalt in Christ and His glory. So to come this week to you paragraph two and if you've got you know, one of the back in the back of the hymnal Westminster Confession 13 Paragraph 2, or if you've got one of the sheets off the back table, could we have someone just read the paragraph there?

Charlie, please. Continue. And flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit begins flesh. Thank you sanctification every aspect of who we are our hearts are thinking our speech or behavior and every aspect of those things. So there's the extent of what is being sanctified and that is everything but then the extent of or the completeness of the sanctification it's.

Stealth how sanctified are at each of those things none of them are completely sanctified in this life is always imperfect in this life. So to. You know, a very important distinction in the first two parts there and then if this is taking place in every part of who you are but it is not complete in any part of who you are then you're not surprised to find out that you are constantly battling in every part of who you are by the spirit against your flesh and you need to be battling the spirit is battling the flesh is battling and you need to pick a side and join the battle you.

Are conscripted into this war. You don't get to not participate non-participation is automatically a yielding to and a fighting on the wrong side and not just the wrong side morally but if you're a believer the losing side you want to side with Christ the victor the spirit who will complete his work for his honor because it is right and also out of joy that it will last succeed.

Now, you can see the GH and I if you're just starting out reading. I hope you do have a page if I need to make more pages. I try not to waste paper but I try to print enough that everyone can have a page. You just starting out reading when you come to this sanctificationist throughout the whole man and then you have the G in parentheses that tells you to look down.

At the lines below the paragraph where there's g and then there's some Bible references and then H and then some Bible references and that H is for the part that is from yet imperfect in this life to in every part and and then I is for the the third part there now these are called the scripture proof texts the idea of proof texting has fallen on hard times because there are a lot of people who have used texts that don't prove what they.

Think that the they want to say so you'll run into people who will tell you something theologically or spiritually and they'll quote a Bible verse in the Bible verse will have some words in common with whatever it is the whatever the point is that they're making but then then you actually read the passage and the verse that they quoted doesn't mean it all let their claiming that it meant that is not proof texting that is failed to prove texting.

The the pastors who put this document together there are very self-conscious about wanting everything that was in the confession to be demonstrably from the Bible this is why if somebody says oh you treat your confession like the Bible either you're doing it wrong or they are not understanding you if you look at the first chapter of the confession as we did a long time ago now as we've you know, Picked up this study whenever we finished something else the whole point of the first chapter is that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority for faith and practice and that the confession has to be subjected to it and is correctable by it and is only valuable in as much as it's a faithful exposition of the scripture.

But one of the things that that gets contemporary modern today readers of the Westminster confession trouble is that we don't know our Bibles. Many of you are experts to some extent in one thing or another and you it sometimes have to interact somebody with somebody who has a hobbyist understanding or I read four web pages about it and I know everything now understanding of whatever your actual field of expertise is and they will, you know, they will say things that sound so so intelligent to them and, It's difficult to interact because there's so much background knowledge that is necessary and that's kind of how it is where they contemporary proof texture coming to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

This was written. In a season in the history of the church in which people knew their Bibles. When that's one of the reasons why I've put the the passages in parentheses down here, if you look at GH and I the parentheses aren't there in the original Westminster confession. I'm giving you a chunk to read and understand in context of the broader letter and of the Bible as a whole in order to understand what that proof text proves.

Because sometimes the contemporary reader will come and they'll look at the proof text and they'll say oh well that doesn't say what they're saying up there in the paragraph in the confession. And they think that they've just disproved the scripture proof text. The problem is the scripture proof text was written for people who know, you know that first Thessalonians 5:23 comes in the context of the Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians as a whole.

And in the Bible as a whole often, there'll be a proof text that is related to another part of Scripture which alludes to one of those passages especially, you know, proof texts from the Old Testament that have been used in the New Testament. And and there will need to be understanding not only of the original context but also of how it's used elsewhere in the Bible and the context of those places and how all those things fit together.

All that to say if you are studying your confession and you see the proof text and it seems to you that it doesn't prove the line that that verse is attached to a commend to you more study before you decide that the divines were playing fast and lead. S to twist the scripture to say what they wanted and that and that we who you know, maybe have read through our Bible a couple of times and have certainly not sat under preaching and teaching throughout the whole Bible even one time somehow were able to recognize how poorly they were using a scripture.

So when he says this sanctification is throughout in the whole man, he refers us to first Thessalonians 5 verse 23, but I would like for. Us to read first Thessalonians 5 verses 12 through 28, so if I could get someone to do first Thessalonians 5 verse 12 through 15 Asa.

Please someone to do verses 16 through 22 Charlie someone to do verses 23 through 28 Peter and just to give you within the book of first Thessalonians as a whole where we are he has spent the last half of chapter 4 addressing what had you know, what is going on with believers you have passed away have they missed out on the return of Jesus is that somehow a judgment against them indicating that they weren't believers when we when we thought they were that was, A big problem for them and then in five one through eleven having dealt with the fact that no those who died in the Lord are resting with him and will be resurrected, in fact they'll have you know, the first place in the pecking order at the resurrection and return of Christ and then five one through eleven indicates that.

The work will be completed the day will come the certainty of the completion of everything and now at the very end of the letter he's meeting them where they are in the midst of this where we are between our conversion and the resurrection if you're still alive is in the process of being sanctified for which God has given us leaders in the church for which God has given us all of our brothers and sisters in the church for which God has given us particular means of grace and said that's the part that Our volunteers are going to be reading for us they say please.

Yes love their work be it peace and we urge you brothers and monish the idol encourage the faint heart help the weak be patient with them all see that no wonder pace anyone evil. But always seek to do good to one another. To everyone. 's always praying without ceasing give thanks in all circumstances.

For this is the will of God in Christ. Jesus for you do not quench the spirit do not despise prophecies, but test everything whole fast, what is good abstain from every form? I mean the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may or whole spirit soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming over Lord Jesus Christ, he who calls you his faithful who will also who also will do it brethren pray for us we have all the brethren with the holy kiss.

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Okay, thank you, so you have the. The recognizing and respecting those who are laboring who God has assigned to particular work in the church this is one of the many reasons that you honor and respect are elders here is because they are elders in part as part of Jesus' plan for getting us to where he will have us at the end this completely sanctified that we shall be at the last but we also.

We also interact with one another if we see someone who is an idol we warn them or encourage them exhort them if you see somebody who's weary in their sanctification you've noticed that for like three Sundays in a row you ask them how they're doing, they're like well I'm okay.

I'm sustained by grace and you can hear and I can hear in myself sometimes for weeks at a time at spiritual physical mental, they're all connected but that weariness and we have a role with one. Another perhaps the most difficult one is to be patient with all you have to be patient with one another because none of us are sanctified yet, you know, we're all sinners.

Yeah the Pharisees asked Jesus, why do you eat what or this is disciples? I think they ask better at different times, why are you eating drink with sinners and the answer when we reading our Bible is that's the only kind of people there to eat and drink with right the Pharisees thought that maybe they were exceptions they were wrong.

It's the only kind of people to have church with too and so we have to have patience with one another because we are always falling short and we'll will from time to time give it give offense and if we're all committed to being patient then the offenses don't disrupt the fellowship, they don't disrupt the role that God has given us and one another sanctification he expands on that further and verse 15, yeah, especially don't.

You know, don't forget that we are all in a battle to the end together and and if you do get sinned against don't respond to it means of grace. Verse 16 through 18 are covered over covered over in love if you can don't respond is not right don't respond with evil you either cover over in love or you can work it out.

Matthew 18 style means of grace versus 16 through 21 you've got rejoicing praying giving thanks recognizing that it's the spirit who uses all of these things and especially verse 20 and 21 preaching. And you hold fast to that which is from the scripture one of the things that Paul's commended the Thessalonians for is that when they received the word from Paul and those who are with him, they received it not as the words of men but as it really is he said the words of God, so you got that big chunk of the means of grace and then here verse 22 really goes with verse 23 for your proof text this sanctification is throughout in the whole man, that's what that's what is being proven here, he tells him abstain from.

Every form of evil. Evil evil thinking evil feeling evil decision-making evil motives evil words evil desires for evil things evil actions and every kind of every one of those that is a huge command there's a huge instruction, you know, you you come away like this almost saying exceeding broad is the law of God.

Abstain from every form of evil and immediately he goes into the blessing at the end of the letter now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit soul and body now we don't have time to get into the the nuance of spirit and soul the Bible is not tricomists it's dichotomous for those to whom those words mean anything but.

Spirit as in in in terms of.

The spiritual part of you body in terms of your corporeal part and soul which is often used of you as a whole so he's using the three here not to give a a new option on how the Bible describes how people are constructed he's emphasizing the absolute completeness of the sanctification that the living God has committed himself to accomplishing in every single one.

Who is his in Jesus Christ why? May your whole spirit soul embody be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That that purity that has been commanded beginning in chapter four and that work when thinking from the middle of chapter four to the middle of chapter five that God is doing in his church until the return that will be completed because it is God himself who is committed himself to it it is Jesus who has earned it and he cannot fail to receive what he has earned what he has won, so the command that we're given in verse 22 abstain from every form of.

Evil. All by the means that we're given in verses 12 through 21, we are reminded and underlined to us the resources by which that happens verse 23 the god of peace himself is going to do this because when Jesus returns you the work will have been done yes. Dave.

With. A church who define that many ways in fact are as reform people are perspective on what that means is quite different from many others and you know, I think our children and even ourselves we encounter this with people, you know, where they define evil as. Going to a movie here.

Or you know, taking a blast of alcohol and so how do we combat that you know? The same from every. Good parents of evil alright, so kids who can remember what our good works.

I can't remember it word perfect so. Mean there's a lot of a lot of pieces in the definition, but the the piece that. That I'm asking the question for is only such as God has defined as good right so. Liberty of conscience is liberty from the commands of man, but it is liberty for you know, what I'm not going to be able to find it then as liberty for what I think would be helpfully called.

Entire captivity of conscience. That it is God who defines what a good work is only such as God has commanded so when it says abstain from every from every form of evil it doesn't leave up to us what a form of evil is and you especially can't start you know can't start saying that things that Jesus did were evil are you just undead your salvation?

Right, so if Jesus drank and if Jesus at a party after everyone had well drunk according to the people who were there made a hundred and fifty gallons more. You know, providing alcohol and imbibing alcohol even among those who have a tendency to overindulge. I doubt that the wedding in Cana was the first time ever that all of these sent entirely sanctified people with respect to how much alcohol you should drink at a party gathered.

Right? So you've got to be careful with what with what you do you have to define right and wrong according to the Bible and not according to what we in our weakness and we in our foolishness feel like could really be a. Tough thing or a harmful thing or a spiritually compromising thing.

Now, it is good to love your brother and not want to be spiritually compromising and to have him in mind and to restrain your own liberty in order not to make him to stumble. There are other parts of scripture that teach those things but you have to say everything that Scripture says about it and not then go beyond Scripture to say things that Scripture contradicts in places.

The movies one I I think is a little more difficult. Because scripture does have a lot to say about what we set in front of our eyes and how easily our minds are affected and our desires are inflamed and whom you take for your companion a movie is a very immersive experience.

You are allowing into your head and control of your faculties a to a much greater extent when you watch something that's been carefully musically scored and all the lighting has been painstakingly framed by frame been decided to communicate things that the writers and directors and producers and actors have all poured in a decades of experience and skill to try to communicate.

Yeah. I'm just saying there's there's Bible application is a movie evil yeah in and of itself there's nothing evil about a you know, moving picture with sound and light. But there's there's Bible considerations. You know, I don't want to lighten abstain from every form of evil just because there are people who will point at particular things as if they are automatically evil categorically without doing the difficult work of saying, The let's take everything the Bible says about this and try to apply it here.

The alcohol one is impossible to get out of right because if you do everything the Bible says about alcohol, you'll be like wow great for joy and cementing relationship and the heart of man and relieving the sorrow of the brokenhearted and all of these other things that the Bible says you're not going to be able to say, you know, the the liquid in that glass or the taking of it is evil when if you do like a whole Bible study of alcohol you say my sin, or my brother's sin could really distort the use of that, but there are.

Certainly really really good purposes for which God has created it and I'm not going to call it itself or the use of it evil. Yes, brother Jeff.

But. Being of sound mind and body as much as I think I am. I see confusion in that because when there are passages, you know, where you go to followers and wine are they mock a strong drink is raging whoever is whoever's deceived thereby is not wise. Who have low who has sorrow who have contentions who have abling who have wounds about calls who have redness of eyes, they that carry long at crime they that go to seek mixed wine look not thou call me lying when it is red.

Was colored in cup. Or the silver right my father used to make muscular wine.

And I can smell that stuff tomorrow away and I look at the countless homes that are destroyed by alcohol my wife has an uncle that's been his life in prison because of alcohol I had friends growing up they grew up without a father because they had a double barrel shotgun shot in his chest because of alcohol I think about the, People today that are sorrowful because they're right from the husband or their sons their daughters never came home because they're drunk person.

And this is where I think it gets me a little bit conscious like I said gosh which they own us upon us as we are to be walking in spirit. I don't have the conscience to turning alcohol. I have children. I have. A prohibition that I believe that is.

Right in Christ for me and I know okay, so.

I. Can't go against them. I can't go against my aunt should I and so so, you know, that's that's why I think it. What people? Staying at.

And maybe that's because our society has a whole has shifted away, you know, they told me something this morning. I did not know and I'm a history guy that we understand for we hope in God. I don't know that that's amazing that I'm most not just because I do and I never knew.

Put our society as a whole of the shifting so I think that we don't like you said earlier that the Westminster divines they were saturated with God's tweet we're not and so I think that makes a little more difficult for us and we get stuck on these things about what is permissible.

What's not?

Okay, um, so each of those that you quoted there are very important things about the relationship between alcohol and and our sin for instance the deceived by in the in that first text very important things so when you know when I'm you know, very different than you obviously when I'm teaching my children how to drink, you know, I'm talking about.

You know different stages in you know, the the you know from relaxation to enebriate inebriation and recognizing something there. Terry and long act and all of the the different instructions there. The. The degree of harm that a sin can cause does increase its heinousness. But it it increases it does indeed increase the heinousness of that sin and you know drunkenness is is something that takes down inhibitions and the sin comes out and it disables the mind and you know, there are you know, so the Bible speaks very very strongly against drunkenness.

Yeah, there's nothing cute or commendable about coming close to it, okay so we can we could discuss interpretations of passages. You know, one of the worst things that someone could do would be to come away saying well, I still don't see it in the Bible but Pastor says, it's okay, so I can drink now.

That's somebody you know, if you were to do that or if you're boys were to do that, you know, they would be violating conscience and that's a sin even if the action in and of itself was not sinful the way they got to it and what they are doing in the way they're interacting with God about it is makes it sinful you should never do anything that you are not personally convinced from the Bible is righteous.

Not even just because somebody else that you happen to know you're be fairly confident that they're that they're theological knowledge or their Bible knowledge is more than yours or their spiritual experiences is more than yours don't look at something somebody else does and say oh well, I'm not condensed from the Bible it's right, but they do it in their way ahead of me and grace so I'm not as well do it.

That is that is not you know if. If you do what you think is wrong or what you are not convinced is right that's a sin but we've got a stop now because and it's important to spend time on things like that that's fine as long as y'all aren't racing to finish the confession and you know, however many weeks I don't mind working through things that are important but in the context of just understanding that whole first clause this sanctification is throughout in the whole man.

The command to abstain from every form of evil that you only define as evil what what God defines there but that is a huge command but it comes with the promise and the blessing 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 what that means is.

You're never just working on one part of your remaining sin. All of your remaining sin is your enemy you are constantly in battle against all of it but the Holy Spirit your divine ally is constantly in that battle he is leading you in every part of how you think how you feel how you make your decisions the actions that you take so never off duty never just kind of well.

I'm just kind of focusing on this one area, there may be things that the Lord has brought to your attention that our greater. Degrees of focus but never like take that as an excuse for not paying attention to other parts of of your spiritual life. Right well, hopefully we'll get to the second clause of paragraph due next week, let's pray.

Our father in heaven how we thank you for this certainty that those whom you have. Loved in Christ and chosen in Christ and called in Christ and joined to him by faith in Christ that you are certainly working in every part of who we are to make us to be like Christ.

So that when he returns we body and soul will be perfected in him and with him we pray Lord that you would grant to us to respond in the way that your word teaches us to you that these guarantees would not make us lazy, but that if we are lazy we would warn ourselves and if we see our brother lazy.

Would obey this commands to warn him? And that we would be invigorated by the certainty that you are doing this work in every part of who we are. Granted to us we pray for your glory in Jesus name. Amen.