

Salvation—Sanctification (22nd)

(Today we continue studying the *experimental* aspect of sanctification in the life of the believer as he lives on earth and his final and complete sanctification in glory.)

There are, I believe, two other topics regarding sanctification that have not been considered and they are (1) our worship in the sanctuary of God, the assembly of the saints, and (2) our final state in glory whereby our whole body, soul, and spirit are fully sanctified. Yes, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,” I John 3:2. Nevertheless, we wish to experience with all the benefits of a glorified being that level of sanctification for which we have longed so many years struggling in this sinful world and sinful condition. May the Lord bless us to pause for a few minutes and consider these topics.

Before looking into the worship in the sanctuary of God, I want to say that my intentions are not to present myself like a Puritan usher moving among the congregation with a long pole endeavoring to bump someone on the head for some infraction of public worship. No, my desire is to encourage, support, and exhort each of us to strive for a more perfect form of worship. Please know that I am equally guilty (maybe more-so) of many of the things mentioned here. I believe there are many who desire to give God the proper honor and respect due unto Him that are so numbed by the world and society around us that we have grown too casual in our worship. I certainly do not pretend to have all the answers but I do desire to encourage all of us to a more sanctified attitude and approach to our worship services.

Since the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament was the sanctified place of worship and the house of God in the New Testament is the congregation of the Lord (I Timothy 3:15), I believe we can profit by gleaning from the Old Testament worship service. While doing so, please keep in mind that as we see the glorious beauty and demeanor of the tabernacle/temple, the priesthood, the congregation, and worship in the Old Testament that in comparison to the worship of the New Testament the Old is described as weak and unprofitable, Hebrews 7:18. Therefore, the New Testament worship should be more glorious, more beautiful, more honorable, more sobering, and more intentional than that of the Old Testament.

Some may think it strange to associate beauty with sanctified and godly worship. When David brought the ark of God into Jerusalem and addressed Israel regarding the worship of the Lord, he said, “Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness,” I Chronicle 16:29. Later, on one occasion when Jehoshaphat addressed Judah he stated, “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever,” II Chronicle 20:21. Additionally, the phrase “the beauty of holiness” is found in the book of Psalms: “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness,” Psalm 29:2. Again in Psalm 96:9, “O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.” This teaches us that our worship is to be beautiful. Yes, it is holiness that is to be central in our worship, but I believe there is emphasis to be placed on our attire as well. To further strengthen this I believe this can be seen when the Lord instituted the priesthood in the tabernacle/temple worship. The garments of the priests were to be for “beauty and glory.” Notice Exodus 28: 2, 40: “And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.” Then, “And for Aaron’s sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.” Not only were the garments of the high priest to be for glory and beauty, but the garments for the other priests were equally for beauty and glory. I Peter makes it plain that true believers under the new covenant are identified as priest. “Ye also, as lively stones, are

built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” And again, “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,” I Peter 2:5, 9. Therefore, since the Old Testament priesthood was for glory and beauty, and it was weak and unprofitable in comparison to the New Testament economy, it stands to reason that our worship ought to more glorious and beautiful in “the beauty of holiness.” Furthermore, I believe an argument can be made that we ought to give our best attention in our dress when we appear before the trice Holy God of Heaven and earth in our worship services, and that we ought not present ourselves in a casual way spiritually or physically. People generally dress according to the occasion and present themselves in the most positive way for special events, but there is no other event (in my opinion) more important than worshiping in the house of the Lord. It matters not whether it is Sunday morning or evening, Wednesday evening, or any other day; the congregation is still the same and it is the same God that is to be honored and respected. It goes without saying that the minister is to set the example because if the minister presents himself in a casual and indifferent fashion the people are likely to act accordingly. Psalm 50:2 says, “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.” And Psalm 96:6 declares, “Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.” Then the classic passage of Psalm 27:4 testifies, “One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.” Even the Lord admonished Job accordingly: “Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty, Job 40:10.”

Obviously, to dress-up and to adorn one’s self for vain glory and attention is exceedingly sinful and must be avoided at all cost. Fancy showmanship and a haughty conduct must be excluded not only for all occasions but is not to be found once in the assembly of the saints, and if needful this should be addressed by fellow believers or from the pulpit. Also, that no one should be expected to purchase expensive attire beyond their means; however, one should desire to don himself in his finest in presenting himself before the Creator of heaven and earth.

Hebrews 10:19-22 says, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Without addressing the different ideas that may be considered with this passage, I believe it is obvious that New Testament worship is under consideration, whether it is public or private worship. If no other passage were supplied, this should be enough to teach us that we are to engage in sanctified worship in the house of the Lord. When people are walking in after worship is started, walking about and talking, greeting others, and looking about to see what others are doing or who is coming in, this can hardly be classified as sanctified worship. It appears to be no different than any other public function. In fact, many public functions have more respect for the demeanor of the audience than many professed worship services.

Allow me to digress and address another caveat: modern technology. Cell phones, iPads, and notebooks containing the Scriptures, commentaries, dictionaries, and other wonderful aids in studying the Word of God are a tremendous blessing. They can be used to record and/or broadcast the services and perform other useful tasks. This being said, I suggest that to use them in the audience (especially the cell phones) to replace the Scriptures in the form of a book is often more of a detriment than a benefit. For example, if I am using my cell phone and (assuming that the phone is on silent) it begins to vibrate indicating that a message of some kind is being received, it is going to (1) break my concentration in worship, (2) cause me to wonder what is the content, (3) who sent it, and (4) what is the message, to say the least. Though someone may submit the argument that they can ignore it, I believe the majority are like me. It is difficult enough to maintain a sanctified worship because of our sinful nature alone besides

having to deal with additional distractions. We should do as much as lies in us to not only avoid being distracted but also strive not to distract others.

Additionally, when people go to the theater, sports functions, parades, or some other activity of interest, they normally arrive early so that they will not miss anything. Equally, they generally remain seated throughout the event lest they miss some vital point.

Beloved, we are not simply attending a public function; we are entering into “the holiest.” We are entering into the presence of God. Yes, God is everywhere, but like the tabernacle and temple of old, the congregation of the Lord is His special place. God meets with His saints in the assembly of the saints in a way that He does not show Himself in any other place.

Let me be clear. I am well aware that there are situations when it is essential that certain duties and function are needful to be carried out, especially with infants and aged saints. Nevertheless, we are to enhance sanctified worship; not hinder it.

I regret that our time is up for today. I verily thought I would cover both topics in this one podcast, but that is not the case. The Lord willing, I will conclude the topic of sanctified worship in the assembly in our next session, as well as consider our final and total sanctification in glory. Farewell.