

Fil-Am Community Church
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THE SANCTITY OF CHRIST FOLLOWERS
Col. 3:1-14

Good morning. We're on the third part of our series on "Christ Alone". We looked first on the Supremacy of Christ, and then on the Sufficiency of Christ, and today, we're going to look at the Sanctity of Christ Followers.

Sanctity is another word for Holiness or Purity or Sacredness. I could have used any of these words for simplicity's sake but I have to maintain the alliteration of the titles in this series. You know, Supremacy, Sufficiency, Sanctity. Until I realized that since we've been dealing with the book of Colossians and there's just one more chapter left, how about we go all the way and talk about chapter 4 as well? And that presented a problem to me. Chapter 4 is about prayer. I'm going to deal with prayer but how should I title it? Sanctity will be nice but I'm using it already. Maybe you can help. Any ideas?

How about "Simplicity?" Because prayer doesn't have to be convoluted and complicated. What did Peter say to Jesus when he was drowning? "Lord, save me!" Anyway, we'll see how the message will go next week.

Let's go back to Sanctity or Holiness. Do you know that when you became a Christian, God has declared you holy? There's a term for a holy person. What is it? Saint! So, if your name is Charlie, you are St. Charlie and the women around you are your angels. Ok, I'm getting corny. But you get the point. The Apostle Paul, in fact, called early believers whenever he wrote

to them “Saints” like here in the book of Colossians in chapter 1:2, *“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.”*

That’s from the KJV, right, St. RJ? And from the NIV 1984, take note, RJ, *“To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:”*. And so, “saints” and “holy brothers and sisters”, I will add, are synonymous. What this means is that positionally, we are already holy and blameless in the sight of God. In fact, in Ephesians 1:4, it says, *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”* Christian, note that even in the beginning of time God had already ordained you to be a holy and blameless child of his. You’re not only on your way to heaven, as far as God is concerned, you’re in heaven already. There is a reserved seat for you.

So, positionally, you are a saint. But, and this is the big but...behaviorally, are you a saint? Am I a saint? That is what I want to talk about this morning. If we are saints, then we need to exhibit the traits of a saint. Truth to tell, no one in this room can say that they are a saint through and through behaviorally. As long as we are in this flesh, we are easy preys to the enemy. We get tempted and fall easily.

This morning, I’d like to share with you what, according to Paul, we can do to become saints in thought, in word, and in deed. You see, more than anything else, this is what God wants to change in us. God wants to change our characters, not cars. Our attitudes, not our assets.

So, this morning, I’d like to share with you three things we can do to get on with God’s agenda of changing our characters. Shaping and molding us to be like Jesus.

If I want to be a saint, I must

I. THINK LOVELY THOUGHTS

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

What are you thinking? Perhaps, “I hope his message is not long.” That’s not a lovely thought. Or maybe “I’m going straight to the table after this to be the first in line for food.” That’s not a lovely thought either. “Pastor Rolly’s shirt is nice.” That’s a lovely thought.

Folks, my point is, we must fill our minds with thoughts that are pleasant and pleasing to the Lord. So, let me ask you? What is inside your mind? If people could read your mind, would they see something beautiful there? Or would they go “yuck” at the things that you are hiding in your mind? Let’s say someone invents an x-ray that could see what’s inside the mind. Then he wants to show the world his great invention and so he rents an auditorium and all of us are there. Then he asks, “Would someone come forward to have his mind x-rayed?” Who among us here would be brave enough to volunteer? I think that machine would be a big flop.

Folks, there’s an x-ray technician up there and his name is God. God knows your thoughts. Nothing can be hidden from him. It displeases him to see the bad things we keep in our minds.

We must renew our thought lives because we are new creatures in Christ. “The old has gone, the new has come” Paul says in 2 Corinthians. We have no business dealing with our old way of thinking anymore. Unfortunately, many of us are in the habit of entertaining unpleasant thoughts in our minds. Let me give you three of these:

1. Shameful Past, Guilt – you’re not proud of what you were or what you’ve done. The memories keep coming back to you like an old movie. It condemns you. Prevents you from moving forward. Friend, if you’ve already

asked Jesus forgiveness for your sin, don't try to replay it in your mind anymore. When you gave it to Jesus, he erased it. He came to rub it out, not rub it in.

The main reason he came to earth was to die for your sins and forgive you. The Bible says, "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.*" (Eph. 1:7)

2. Worry, Anxiety – do you know that worrying is a sin? It is, because you're showing that you lack faith in God. "God, I don't think you can handle this and so I'll handle it myself." But can you really? How come you're worried? Worrying is a waste of time. A woman said, "I've had a lot of trouble -- most of which never happened!" And a wise man said "Worry is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere."

3. Lust, Obscenity – it will surprise you to know that many Christians, especially men, are in bondage over this thing. Sexual addiction is a real menace to society and must be stopped before it destroys lives and marriages. A pastor who was interviewed on the radio said that his addiction to sex as a young man led him to molest a girl in a park. And he was already a Christian. He was arrested and it was there in prison that he recommitted his life to Jesus.

How is your thought life? If you're not proud about it, here's Paul's practical advice: "Set your mind on things above." The New Living Translation says, "Let heaven fill your thoughts." What he is saying is "learn to concentrate on things that are eternal not temporal." In the first place, you have been raised with Christ, you are heaven-bound and so you must practice thinking about things that are heavenly.

Folks, be careful of what your thoughts dwell on. If it's a thought that is malicious, unwholesome, or dirty, vanish the thought right away.

The Bible says, "*whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*" (Phil. 4:8)

Be careful also of what enters your mind. Garbage in, garbage out, the saying goes. Stay away from dirty web sites or movies or TV programs or magazines. Anything that has the appearance of evil. The psalmist says in Psalm 101:3, "*I will set before my eyes no vile thing.*"

There's a hit movie that's out there right now. I don't know whether you've seen it already. An old tale that has been given a new twist. I'm talking about the Beauty and the Beast. What's bad about it? It promotes the gay agenda. Now, I've always said that we love our gay friends. I have a gay cousin. What we cannot agree with them is the homosexual lifestyle. Anyway, there's a scene in the movie where the beast is kissed by a man. That, of course, is not in the original story. This has prompted even a know gay advocate to write an article blasting Disney for such distortion. He realized that Disney is supposed to produce family-friendly movies. So, if you haven't seen the movie, don't. Eza wanted to see it. We explained why she couldn't see it and she said, "Just cover my eyes when the scene comes on."

Now, Paul continues to say in verses 3-7 that we should kill off all those things that are not beneficial nor profitable for us. That was our way of thinking before. Now, it must be replaced with something entirely new. Replace those dirty thoughts with the Word of God. Make it a habit to read the Bible everyday. Joshua 1:8 says, "*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to*

do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

Memorize scripture and put it into action.

Psalm 119:11 says, *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* To improve your thought life, just discipline yourself.

That’s the key.

If I want to be saint I must think lovely thoughts. I must also

II. SPEAK LOVING WORDS

“But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Now, Paul deals with our tongues. What we say. What comes out of our mouths. James has a mouthful to say also about the tongue. In James 3, he describes the tongue as just a tiny member of the human body and yet wields a lot of influence. He says it’s like a rudder that can turn the ship in whatever direction it wants. He also says that it can do a lot of damage if not put under control. Like a tiny spark that can start a forest fire.

He recommends and rightly so, the taming of the tongue, the mastery of the tongue.

Paul talks about four areas that can easily ensnare the tongue.

1. Anger, Rage – obviously, Paul is talking here about unhealthy anger. The kind of anger that makes you want to get back at the other person with words that would hurt. Some of us get angry at the slightest trouble. We’re impatient with people, with things around us, with our children, spouse, and even ourselves.

Just check yourself when you're driving. When you're in a hurry and someone in front of you drives ever so slowly like he is in a park, don't you feel like shouting at the person behind the wheel? I do.

Let me tell you a true story. I heard it on the radio. There was a man who left his office in a very bad mood because of an argument with a co-worker. So he drove out of the parking lot to cool off. Then he stopped at a traffic light. Suddenly, the driver behind him honked his horn twice. Immediately, he got off his car, dashed toward the hapless driver, and lashed at him angrily. The driver put up his hands and said nervously, "Uh-oh, I'm sorry. But your bumper sticker says, 'Honk twice if you love Jesus.'"

Anger is a natural reaction to a difficult situation. But as the Bible says, "In your anger, do not sin." Control your anger. Don't let anger control you. Don't say something you'll regret later on. Because you can't take back your words.

2. Malice, Slander – have you ever been slandered? Has someone said nasty things about you that weren't true? It hurt really bad, right? Even if those things were true, they still hurt, right? I'm sure you don't want others to experience the same thing. Paul says that we should be careful to not hurt the reputation of others. In short, don't gossip. Don't talk unnecessarily about people.

How do you know that a conversation is about to go downhill? Let me give you two telltale signs. First, gossips suddenly lower the tone of their voice. "Hoy, alam mo" "Hey, you know." Then, the other person instead of going "No, let's not go there" instead says "Yeah, what's news." In fact, Proverbs 16:28 of the KJV refers to a gossip as a "whisperer." (Prov. 16:28)

Second, gossips usually start with a warning "sa atin-atin lang ito, ha" "this is just between you and me." And afterwards the other person goes to

another person and says, “sa atin-atin lang ito, ha” and to the next person and so on and on.

Why not spread a good word about someone instead? Tell others how great your friend is. Praise your mate or your children to others. Let others know how someone is a blessing to you. “Ate Maria, you’re a blessing to me especially when you laugh. It makes me happy.” “Kuya Rey, you’re a blessing especially...”

In this church, let’s recognize gossip for what it is. Turn it off immediately when you see it rear its ugly head. Gossips destroy churches. Praises builds churches. Amen?

3. Filthy Language – what’s worse than swearing when you’re angry? It’s swearing when you’re not angry. There are people who never say a sentence without a cuss word. Just watch some of the movies they make in Hollywood. If you take out all the swearing and the cursing, what is left? Unmeaningful dialogue! Of course, I’m exaggerating. But you know what I mean.

Filthy language, however, is not just cuss words. It could also be critical words. Like when you say, “Tingnan mo syang maglakad. Sakang.” “She walks like a duckling.” Or “Para namang kamatis ang ilong non” “That person’s nose looks like a tomato.”

What can you say about a person who swears all the time? Or is critical of others always? That person needs to gargle with Listerine. Of course, that wouldn’t help. It may take away bad breath, but it wouldn’t take away bad language. You see, what needs to be cleansed is the heart. Jesus says, “whatever is in you heart determines what you say.” (Matt. 12:34)

Use language that can build others up. Encourage them with your words. Proverbs 16:24 says, “*Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*”

4. Lying – I wonder if there’s anyone here who never lied. If you say you never, you just lied. Lying, you see, is a very interesting phenomenon. It shows up at different times in our lives, in different occasions, in different situations, in various relationships.

When we lie, we offend God himself because He is a God of truth. The Bible says that God cannot lie.

Numbers 23:19, “*God is not a man that he should lie.*” So, God wants us to be truthful too. If we want to become like Jesus, we need to follow his example.

Let me share with you the famous American fibs:

- The check is in the mail.
- I'll start my diet tomorrow.
- We service what we sell.
- Don't call us. We'll call you.
- Money cheerfully refunded.
- One size fits all.
- This offer limited to the first 100 people who call in.
- Your luggage isn't lost, it's only misplaced.
- This hurts me more than it hurts you.
- I just need five minutes of your time.
- Your table will be ready in a few minutes.
- Let's have lunch sometime.
- It's not the money, it's the principle.

Folks, we need to be conscious of what comes out of our mouths. Is it helpful or harmful? Is it beneficial or baneful? Most importantly, is it glorifying to God?

If I want to be a saint, I must think lovely thoughts, speak loving words, and lastly, I must

III. DO LOVING DEEDS

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Again, Paul points out that if you’re a child of God, you’re expected to live a holy life. You are holy because God set you apart. For his own use. He wants to use you to bless others. And the way you can bless others is by doing good things for them, being nice to them, making them feel important, loving them like you’ve never loved them before.

Paul compares our new life to like getting new clothes. Before, we wore ragged clothes, they’re filthy, they don’t even match. So, God says, “My child, those clothes look awful on you. And they stink. A skunk wouldn’t even dare get near you. But, you know, I love you just the way you are. With all your dirt and disheveled clothes. I’m glad you want to change. Come now, let me give you a hug.”

Friend, God loves you just the way you are. Whatever your past, whatever your present, all your sins and mistakes, and foolish deeds, God loves you. He wants to hug you and whisper in your ears “I love you.”

If you’re a Christian, he has given you a new set of clothes. You’ve just put away your old clothes of guilt, worries, lust, anger, malice, slander, lying. What you ought to wear now are the clothes of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

All these traits are the same exact traits that Jesus displayed when he was on earth. He was patient with people. He endured opposition. Then, he showed compassion and kindness to everyone, even to his enemies.

He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He forgave sins. That's why he can say "love your enemies." "Give to the one who asks you."

He was gentle as he went around dealing with people but strong in his convictions. He never condemned anyone except for the religious hypocrites. His humility was shown in the way he always wanted to serve others. He says, "the son of man came not to be served, but to serve."

Another set of clothes consists of bearing with each other and forgiving each other. They always go together. You know, each one of us is unique. That makes 7.4 billion unique people in this planet. No one is an exact copy of the other. Since we are all different, with different tastes, temperaments, personalities, we must learn to bear with each other. And because of our differences, we naturally clash with each other at times. But Paul says, forgive! Don't let those differences become a hindrance to relationships. Remember, Jesus forgave you. Because he wanted to have a good relationship with you.

Now, you must not forget the most important piece of clothing. Which is love. You must love in the same way God loves you. Unconditionally. Without strings attached. The trouble with us sometimes is before we love, we ask, "what's in it for me?" Then, there are those who can't love because they're afraid. "I might not get loved in return." Then, there are those who don't love because they have an attitude. "How can I love a fool like him?" And still there are those who don't love just because they don't want to love. "I'm not my brother's keeper."

Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Treat your neighbor the way you would like to be treated. Live by the golden rule.

You know what, the greatest expression of God’s love is when he sent Jesus to die for your sins and mine. One sin was enough to send me to hell. But no matter how many sins I have, God still loved me. He let his own son Jesus die on the cross, and his blood was shed so that my sins can be forgiven. Jesus took the penalty of my sins. Then, he rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Now, I can look forward to a life of eternity in heaven.

Folks, God wants us to realize that we can’t change on our own. We need the power of Christ to change us from the inside out. And as we cooperate with God as he changes us, let us think lovely thoughts, speak loving words, and do loving deeds.