

Fil-Am Community Church

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Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 7:1

“Sanctification”

Good morning! It's good to be back. We missed you all. Finally, it's home sweet home. We've been away for two weeks and I thank God we made it back safe and sound. Thank you all for your prayers. We had a great and successful ministry in Bohol. There were almost a thousand people who received medical and dental treatment and medicines, vitamins, rice, and a whole lot more. Thanks to all of you for your support. Now, I know why Kuya Elvin and Ate Bebutte and Tita Nelly keep going year after year after year. It makes a difference in people's lives. And in my case with my wife, it made a difference in our relationship. It's just so wonderful to spend time together without the kids always in tow. And we praise God for my parents and Nanay Monet who carefully looked after them.

This morning, we're continuing our series on the fundamental doctrines of our faith. Last week, Pastor Dave touched on Salvation, a very important teaching that every Christian must understand. And every non-Christian must know. The doctrine of salvation is also known as Justification, the doctrine that says God pardons, accepts, and declares a sinner to be "just" on the basis of Christ's righteousness. Now, the sibling of Salvation is Sanctification which is our topic today. The doctrine of Sanctification refers to the change brought about by God in a believer, begun at the point of salvation or justification and continuing throughout the life of the

believer. Thus, sanctification begins at the point when one is born again and continues while the Christian is still on earth. When he dies and enters heaven, sanctification is completed and he experiences glorification. That's when he receives a glorified body as the Bible says.

Our text this morning is from 2 Corinthians 7:1 and I want us to read this together, *“Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”* This is from the NIV 2011 version.

Now, every time in the Bible you see the word, therefore, you ask yourself the question what is the therefore there for? You look at what has been previously said. The apostle Paul is building a case, he is pointing us to this climax on the basis of just what's gone before. So, in the verses just preceding this statement, the last part of chapter 6, the apostle Paul has talked about the great promise God makes to a believer. God has said if you will live a separated, dedicated life to me, I'll walk with you, I'll be in you, I'll manifest myself to you in a very real way. And there's the keyword, “separated”. Sanctification, therefore, refers to being “set apart” to God for special use or purpose or “to make holy and sacred”. This is why the HCSB or Holman Christian Standard Bible version uses “sanctification” in place of “perfecting holiness”. It says, *“Therefore, dear friends, since we have such promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, completing our sanctification in the fear of God.”*

Now, with regards to “perfecting holiness”, is Paul saying you can achieve perfection on earth? Not at all. Yet certain Christian denominations actually teach this. However, this is not possible. We can be perfect only when we get to heaven. Sanctification is a process and is completed only once we reach heaven.

Sanctification involves walking with God in this world. There is no higher standard of living possible for a human being than to walk with God in this world.

Remember when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden. The Bible says that the Lord walked with them in the cool of the day. Before sin came between man and God, man had the glorious privilege of fellowship with the eternal God, the God who created this universe. So, Adam walked with God before sin separated him and his God.

We are also told in the Bible about a man named Enoch.

The Bible says that Enoch walked with God. Because of this the Bible tells us what we must do on our part in order to walk with God.

So, we come to the two aspects to the doctrine of sanctification. There is God's part in the matter and then there is man's part. In 1 Cor. 6, I want to just show you God's part in our sanctification. There is a sense in which the Bible teaches us that as a born again child of God we have already been sanctified. We are already set apart unto the Lord.

1 Cor. 6:11 says, *“And that is what some of you were. 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.”* So far as God's part is concerned, at the moment of your salvation, you were sanctified, you were set apart.

In Jesus Christ we are sanctified - that's our position. If you know anything about the Corinthian believers you know that their life is anything but a sanctified life. They were saints by position, but they were not saints by their practice.

So, what Paul is writing to them about in 2 Cor. 7:1 is how, in a practical way, they could be what God has already made them in Jesus Christ. I'm really interested in that. I want to know how practically I can be what God wants me to be as a believer. That's why this first verse of 2 Cor. 7 is so very important. It's one of the most important verses in the entire Bible when it comes to explaining how to go about living for Jesus, being what He wants you to be on a daily basis. I want us to just take that verse, analyze it, pick it apart and understand every phrase and every

aspect of it. Let's look at it and I think you will notice that in this matter of living a sanctified life for the Lord Jesus there are two things we need to understand. The first one is about Separation from Sin and the second one is about Consecration to Christ.

Let's look at what a sanctified life means. First, it means

I. Separation from Sin

To live for Christ means that we are to be separated from sin. When you are saved, the Bible teaches that you are a brand new person in the Lord Jesus. You must then begin to go through a process of getting things out of your life that ought not to be there. You remember when the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus stood in front of that tomb and did what only Jesus do to an individual. There was Lazarus - dead. He had no life whatsoever. Yet, the Lord Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." When he did, life began to generate in the body of Lazarus again. Lazarus came forth with a life that had been given to him by Jesus. The Bible says he came out with his grave clothes. Lazarus had to get rid of those grave clothes.

Now, here's a person that has just been saved. They are a brand new child of God. Chances are when you just get saved, you still have some grave clothes. You need to get those grave clothes off. You need to get some things out of your life. You may never have thought of them before in that light. You may never have even considered the fact that these things ought not to be in your life.

Now that you've been saved you have a different perspective altogether. That's the importance of a new Christian getting in a Bible-believing church. Getting in a fellowship of Godly believers so he can witness their lifestyle and have some guidance and help. That's why you need to get under the preaching of the Word and good Bible teaching so you can see the things that ought not to be in your life and the things that ought to be in your life. There is to be an altogether change of attitude concerning sin in the life of a Christian. In one sense of the word, until you get saved

you never really see sin in its true perspective. It is only when you come to the light that you can see things the way they are.

I want you to notice what he says about sin in this verse. Notice how he says sin is characterized. He says, *“let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit”*.

See that word, contaminates? Sin is a contamination.

The KJV refers to it as filthiness. The NASB calls it defilement. That's God's assessment of sin. That's how God looks at sin. God calls sin a contamination. It's filthy. Man's opinion and God's opinion of sin are sometimes very different. You want to call it just a little adjustment on your taxes. God calls it stealing. You want to call it just a little diversion. God calls it drunkenness. You want to call it a harmless flirtation. God calls it adultery.

There was this government official who was caught in an adulterous relationship. Instead of admitting that he sinned, he tried to justify his act by saying that he found his “soul mate” in his mistress. It doesn't matter what you say about sin. What matters is what God says about sin. God says it is rotten. God says it is vile. God says it is filthy and every believer ought to be very careful to get all filthiness out of his heart and life. If you and I could really see sin the way God sees sin, we'd hate sin the way God hates sin.

We ought to see sin like God does. If we did, we would see it like a sharpshooter sees a mad dog loose in a kindergarten. If we could see sin like God sees it we'd see it like a doctor sees cancer running wild in your body. It is not that God wants to destroy your joy. It is not that God is trying to take the fun out of your life. But, God knows that sin is a vile, wicked spiritual disease that can lay hold of your spirit and your soul and wreck and ruin your life. So, God says in His Word, "Christian, clean all the filthiness out of your life." Sin will defile your life just like it will defile the life of a non-Christian. Being born again does not change the

devastating effect of sin in a human life. Being saved doesn't mean you will never sin again. It means that you have the power to choose not to sin again. When you do not exercise that power to sin again, the Bible teaches that that old sin can stain your life.

We must also understand how the Bible catalogs sin. He says, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. The Bible categorizes sin in two areas. He talks about sins of the body or the flesh.

There are some Christians that don't understand that there are certain sins of the flesh that need to be cleansed out of their lives. Maybe we need to take a little inventory of your life for the benefit of some young Christians. Let's just talk about your eyes and what the Bible says about your eyes. Be very careful what you allow your eyes to see. This means you need to be very careful of the movies you see. You don't want any filth to get into your life by the eyegate. You ought to be very careful of the kind of television programs you watch. You don't want any filthiness to come in through your eyes and stain and contaminate your life. And, of course, be careful with the places you go to on the internet. Just one careless click and you'll be thrown into a world of evil and fantasy where you may never be able to come back.

So, don't let your eyes feast on things that are not worth anything good. You can't live clean and dedicated and pure for Jesus if there is anything in your eyes that ought not to be there. You ought to be like Job in Job 31:1 where Job says, "*I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.*"

You just dedicate your eyes to Jesus and say, "Lord, I'm not going to watch anything that I ought not to watch with these eyes."

What about your ears? Better be careful what you listen to. Don't get any music in your ears that's displeasing to Jesus. Music has tremendous power. Aristotle said music has the power to form character. There is a cause - effect relationship. Jesus said what you think ultimately determines what you do and what you become. It's important what you listen to.

When I was in college, I was fond of a singer in the Philippines named Boy Camara. I liked his songs. Usually, he composed and sang love songs. He even played the lead role in the musical “Jesus Christ Superstar” when it was staged in the Philippines. Then, he came out with an experimental album. The music was soft-rock and the songs dealt with various aspects of life. All were good but there was one song that really affected me. The title was “Try a Little Suicide”.

The melody was good but every time I listened to it, I got depressed. The more I listened to it, the more I got depressed. At the time, I just got turned down by a girl and so just imagine what I wanted to do. I came back to my senses, however, and threw away the album. That’s what music can do to you.

Be careful what you listen to with your ears. Be also careful what you say with your lips. The Bible says the Christian ought to let no corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth. Use some words that are decent and fit. The Bible says let your speech be seasoned with salt, seasoned with grace. Ministering grace unto those who hear.

I don't think there should be any crudeness in the language of a child of God. Nothing even suggestive. Nothing that would give anybody any doubt whatsoever that you are totally dedicated and separated to the Lord Jesus.

The Bible says we are to rid ourselves of all the filthiness of the flesh. But it also says we ought to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the spirit. What does this mean?

There are some Christians who feel very smug because they don't have to deal as much with some of the sins of the flesh as other young Christians do. So, they become very smug. They allow the so-called spiritual sins to linger in their hearts. These sins of the Spirit are more difficult to deal with because they are not as obvious as the sins of the flesh. Yet, when you study carefully the life of Jesus and the words that Jesus said, you will find that when he was dealing with those who had

the problems of the sins of the flesh, He was very tender and very delicate. Yet, on the other hand, when he confronted the Pharisees who were guilty of the sins of the spirit, he was very strong and very severe.

For example, the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus. Jesus handled her with grace and love and forgiveness.

Yet, the very Pharisees who had brought her to Jesus, who were guilty of the sins of superiority and the sins of spiritual pride, Jesus just cut them to pieces with his language. He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone, he said. I think the sins of the spirit do more harm sometimes than the sins of the flesh. I think about those who have malice, ill-will in their heart toward someone else. Someone has done them wrong at church. They won't even speak to them. Can't say anything kind to them. They harbor that old malice and resentment in their heart.

A judgmental spirit. Some Christians become spiritual detectives, snooping on the lives of other believers. The Scripture says, let us cleanse ourselves. It is talking about self-cleansing. It's not your job to go around with a can of spiritual Mr. Clean, trying to clean out everybody else's life. That's between them and the Lord. It's not your responsibility.

I know some folks in churches like that. They have spiritual pride. They have a "holier than thou" attitude. Because they've been Christians so long they think they're on a higher spiritual level. One time, I attended a strictly fundamentalist, KJV-only church. The worship leader said to me, "We are sold to the KJV because we believe it's closest to the truth. Just look at those who read other versions like the NIV. Look at the conduct of their lives." They are not guilty of the sins of the flesh, but they are guilty of the sins of the spirit.

Now, how do you purify your life? How do you keep your life clean? Let me suggest a few things. One of the things you need to do is get into the Word of God. It

is the Word that brings conviction concerning sin. 1 John 1:10 says, *“If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”* It is the Word of God that brings conviction of sin. It is the Word of God that turns the spotlight on your heart. That's why you need to be in God's Word every day. The Bible says pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is among other things to keep himself unspotted from this world.

We are living in a very muddy world. You cannot walk in our kind of world and not get some of the mud of the world on you. So, there is that constant process of going to the Scriptures and seeing the way it really is. It's not a once and for all thing. The Bible does not teach eradication of the sins of your life. The Bible does not teach sinless perfection in this life.

It's like cleaning the house. You'll go in there one day and say, "This house sure is dirty." You'll get the mop out and mop the floor. You will have it shining and looking so good. Then you'll go in there with a dust rag and dust, dust, dust. You'll spray and shine, shine, shine. You'll work real hard and spend a whole morning and you will have that house looking spick and span and shining. You'll say, boy, I'm glad that's done. I've got my house clean. I'm through with this housecleaning business. But you aren't. About a week later you are going to walk by that table and rub your finger and say, oh, it's dusty again. Housecleaning is a constant process because you are constantly dealing with dirt.

It's the same way in the Christian life. That's why you need to be in God's Word every day - to see if any of the dirt of this old world has got on your life. As the Word convicts you, you can come to God and you confess it. You say, "Lord, I'm so sorry. This is wrong in my life and I never realized it was wrong until I saw in the Scriptures that it was wrong. So, you confess, you agree with God about your sin. You call it what God calls it. The reason people don't cleanse sin from their lives is they don't want to call it what God calls it. When you start calling sin what God calls

it, you'll start seeing sin the way God sees it and then you'll be ready to get sin cleaned out of your life. Let us cleanse ourselves. How do you get yourself clean? You get yourself clean just exactly the way I get my suits cleaned. I wear my suits and they look pretty good. One day I look and see just a little dirt spot there. Then I look on the trousers and see dirt I didn't realize was there. I realize this thing is dirty. I have to get my suit cleaned. So, I carry my suit to a dry cleaner.

A couple of days later I pick it up. I take it home. I say, "I cleaned my suit." What do I mean? I didn't actually clean it. I took it to someone who could clean it. That's what 1 John 1:9 is all about. *"If we confess our sins - that's our part – we take them to the cleaners. He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

You need to take your soul to the spiritual drycleaner everyday of your life. You ought not live a day with any known, conscious, unconfessed sin in your life. Separation from sin. That's the first part of what it means to live a sanctified life. The second part is

II. Consecration to Christ

This is the other side of the same coin. One side says, "Separate". The other side says, "Consecrate." You see, if you know only one side, then you're no better than the Pharisee who deals only with what you ought not to do. You become legalistic. You are defining the Christian life on the basis of the things you don't do.

Think with me now. What's the difference between a Christian and a fence post? You say, "A Christian is somebody who doesn't drink." Neither does a fence post. So that won't do it. A Christian is somebody who doesn't do drugs. A fence post doesn't do drugs. I have never seen a fence post stoned. A Christian is somebody who doesn't run around and commit adultery. A fence post doesn't. In fact, it can't run around. What's the difference between a Christian and a fence post?

It's not what the Christian doesn't do, it's the thing the Christian does. It's the

thing the Christian is, that makes him different from a fence post. He has life, a fence post doesn't. He reads the Word. A fence post can't. He witnesses for Jesus. The fence post doesn't witness to anybody. He loves God and his neighbor. The fence post doesn't have any feelings. So, there has to be a positive aspect to living the Christian life. Jesus told the parable of a man who got the unclean spirits out of his life.

Yet, he didn't put anything in their place and they came back with seven more spirits worse than themselves. Their condition was worse off than it was before.

There are some Christians who get saved and get some things out of their life that ought not to be. But they don't fill their lives with any positive holiness, any positive consecration. Sooner or later, because they don't fill their lives with the right kinds of things, they lapse back into the old life and they have lost their testimony.

That's what happened to me after I got saved. Because I didn't immediately get into God's Word and fellowshiped with other believers, I went back to my old ways. Those who knew me didn't think I was a Christian. Good thing God loves me and put me back on the right path.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:15, *"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do"*. Now, don't let that phrase, be holy, scare you. It just means moral consecration. It simply means that every day of your life you ought to be trying to live more and more like Jesus. Someone said, "We cannot be sinless in this life, but we can sin less in this life."

Consecrating yourself to Christ means dedicating yourself to him so that he can use you to bless others. You empty yourself of your old self so that he can fill you with his Holy Spirit. In this way, the life of Christ is evident in your own life. His holiness is reflected in your own life. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

When Jesus was on earth, he ministered to people. He gave them hope. As Christians, that is what we ought to do as well. That is what we did when missionaries from our church and other churches went to Bohol to provide medical care. Poor, destitute people were instilled with hope. But one episode resonates with me. One lady approached Anabel. Anabel asked whether she needed to see any doctor. No, the lady said. She just needed prayer.

She said she walked several miles just to be there. She had heard about the medical mission and that it was a project of born-again Christians. She left home at 8 am and arrived about 10 am. All because she just wanted to be prayed for. The lady is suffering from lupus, a serious disease characterized by inflammation and damage to joints, skin, kidneys, blood, the heart and lungs. She had lost all hope but the mission gave back hope to her. After being prayed for, she left quietly. Folks, when we are consecrated to Christ, we allow him to use us for his purpose.

This morning, I hope we can be like Christ. I hope we'll allow God to do his sanctifying work in our lives. In the end, God gets the glory as we cooperate with him.