Sanctifying Grace

Story

My name is Keith Taylor, and the title of this talk is Sanctifying Grace.

All grace is God’s grace, and as we have learned we experience that grace in many different ways as we continue on our spiritual journey. On Friday we learned from Jeff Belt that prevenient grace is at work in our lives from the moment of conception to the moment we say yes to God and beyond. Then Dave Warner taught us that through justifying grace we can accept for ourselves the relationship God offers us through Christ. Greg Inboden then blessed us with the means of grace that help us celebrate and strengthen our relationship with God while Matt Vanwinkle talked about the obstacles to grace, are attitudes and actions, that hinder our relationship with God and with our neighbor. But gave us a bright spot by adding, that through the cross, Jesus Christ has overcome every one of those obstacles. My, that is a lot of grace, and we need it all. And sanctifying grace is no different.

Sanctifying grace is the gift of God providing the desire and the power to grow in our relationship with God- forever. (Repeat) Just as our physical birth begins the physical process of growth and maturity, so spiritual birth (justifying grace/conversion/salvation/ being born again) begins the process of spiritual growth toward maturity (sanctifying grace/growth in grace). In other words, sanctifying grace is the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit working in and through the heart and life of every believer. (Repeat)

Sanctifying grace is the process of opening ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us. It is the divine energy that transforms our heart and life and makes us RIPE for glory. Yes you heard me “RIPE”

R= restoring our relationship with God and others. (Repeat)

1. We cannot earn God’s love by changing our ways. Rather, we change our ways because God loves us and gives us the grace to make a fresh start, day by day, hour by hour.
2. We receive God’s Spirit “bearing witness with our spirit” that we are beloved children of God (Roman 8:15-17). Our knowledge of our identity as children of God forms the foundation for all other relationships.
3. In medical terms, one could say restoration is the process of spiritual growth and the recovery of our health, since we were once sick with sin.
4. (My Salvation Story)

I= Imparting new life, new light, new strength, and anew heart. (Repeat)

1. Justifying grace is the moment when the righteousness of Christ in imputed to us. This means we are declared “not guilty” because of all that Christ did for us on the cross- we experience a change of status.
2. Sanctifying grace is the process by which the righteousness of Christ is imparted to us- it becomes a part of us, and we experience a change of heart.
3. Day by day we become more like Christ in our attitudes and actions (Ephesians 3:14-19)
4. Having been born again through justifying grace, we grow and mature spiritually through the work of sanctifying grace.
5. (My Emmaus Walk Experience)

P= Perfecting us in the image of God and the likeness of Jesus Christ.

1. Conversion is process. It happens once, but not all at once. It is a lifelong process of dying to what is evil and rising to what is good and true (Christ in us).
2. The gifts of the Spirit are given to help us grow and build up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12-14).
3. As a Christian matures, his/her life displays certain qualities known as the fruit of the Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22)
4. Perfecting involves pruning (John 15:2) The Bible tells us that every vine and fruit tree requires pruning, and so do we. A life in grace is a life in process, and some of this process is painful.
5. Christian perfection is both instantaneous and progressive. The Greek word for *perfect* can also be translated as “mature or complete”. Just as a person can be mature or complete as a five-year-old, the same person years later can be quite different and still be a mature or complete fifteen-year-old, or a mature twenty-five year old, or a sixty-five-year old etc. To be perfected in love is both God’s call and God’s promise- in Christ you can be perfect, mature, and complete today and continue to grow in grace and be more like Christ next month.
6. Sanctifying grace is the doctrine of “the more”. God has more love, more power, more peace and more joy in store for us.
7. The means of grace are means of growth. Sanctifying grace is our deepest joy and our greatest good in all our relationships.
8. (Communion Story)

E= Equipping us to do the work of Christ in the world- to be the hands and feet of Christ.

1. Sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit empowering us to see and serve Christ in the least and lost of our city, state, and world. Matthew 25:31-40 we read 31“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

1. The Holy Spirit equips us with gifts for ministry. (1 Corinthians 12:4-5) Every person is gifted, and every gift is needed if the whole will of God is to be accomplished (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
2. The Holy Spirit equips us to obey the Great Commandment and Great Commission
3. This is the Great Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind…love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37 & 39
4. This is the Great Commission: “Go…and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18-19)

How do we grow in sanctifying grace?

1. Growth I grace is a natural process. Jesus told us that a life in grace is as natural as the life of a branch connected to a healthy vine. (John 15:1-12)
2. We abide in Christ (prayer) Through prayer and worship we open ourselves to God; we are rooted and grounded in love and intimately connected to Christ (John 15:4)
3. Christ’s word abides in us (study) In study we give our minds to God and grow in the mind of Christ (john 15:7; Phil. 2:5-8)
4. We bear much fruit for God’s glory (action) In Christian action we give our hands to God and participate in the work of Christ (John 15:8) These works includes works of mercy (providing food, water and clothing. Matthew 25:35) and works of justice (release to captives, freedom to the oppressed etc. Luke 4:18)
5. We open our hearts to receive grace as a gift.

Romans 5:5 says “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” We do not earn it or deserve God love; we simply open our hearts to receive it.

1. We share grace in the body of Christ (community). Through participation in the gathered community and small accountability groups, we receive strength and nurture- just as a branch does from the vine (John 15:5) We come alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:5), lean the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-12), and help one another remain rooted and grounded in God’s love (Ephesians 3:14-19)
2. We respond by full participation in the mission of Christ in the world.

For three days we have prayed for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us with the fire of love. We have learned that God wants a relationship with us even more than we want a relationship with God. We have also learned that God’s role in sanctifying grace is to fill us with the Holy Spirit and fire and our role is to open our hearts and walk in the Spirit with Christ day by day. And in a little while we will learn about small groups called “group reunions” and how they will play an important part in our daily walk with Christ as a means of sanctifying grace.

And so, sanctifying grace works in our lives each and every day, helping and prodding us to be Christ in the world that desperately needs to know him. Open yourselves to this grace.

De Colores

Scripture References:

Romans 8: 15-17

Ephesians 3: 14-19

1 Corinthians 12-14

Galatians 5: 22

John 15: 2

Matthew 25: 31-40

1 Corinthians 12: 4-5

Romans 12: 6-8

1 Corinthians 12: 7-11

Matthew 22: 37, 39

Matthew 28: 18-19

John 15: 1-12

John 15: 4

John 15: 7

Philippians 2: 5-8

John 15: 8

Matthew 25: 35

Luke 4: 18

Romans 5: 5

John 15: 5

Ephesians 2: 5

Philippians 2: 1-12

Ephesians 3: 14-19