

Our Savior's High Priestly prayer can be divided into three main sections—His prayer for Himself (vv1-5), His apostles (vv6-19), and those who would believe on Him through their ministry (vv20-26). He basically offers four petitions on behalf of His people—He prays for their preservation (vv11-16), sanctification (vv17-19), unification (vv20-23), and glorification (vv24-26).

And thus, having seen His prayer for Divine Preservation, we come this morning to our Savior's second petition, and the theme of Christian Sanctification. And there are four things about this sanctification that I want to mention—It's Meaning, Means, Merit, and Motive.

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Means
- III. Its Merit
- IV. Its Motive

I. Its Meaning

1. The first thing we need to do is, define what exactly is meant by the term sanctify—"Sanctify them by Your truth..."
2. Most of you are aware the NT speaks of sanctification as a past fact and a present reality—Christians have been and are being sanctified...
3. With regards to our initial sanctification, this takes place along with regeneration and entails being separated from sin as a master...
4. 1Cor.6:11—"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God..."
5. Thus, every Christian has been sanctified—he has been separated or delivered from sin as a way of life or master...
6. But this then leads to present or ongoing sanctification, which is synonymous with personal holiness and purity...
7. Heb.2:11—"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren..."
8. Now obviously, our Savior is praying for this second aspect of our sanctification—progressive or continual sanctification (as His disciples were already initially sanctified)...
9. Now, the Greek word rendered "sanctify" literally means—to set apart for holy purposes and/or to make holy...
10. Thus, essential to the concept of sanctification are the two concepts of CONSECRATION and PURIFICATION...
11. [1] Consecration—by this is meant—we are continually set apart from this world, for holy and divine purposes...
12. Gen.2:1-3—"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made..."
13. Here is the first time our Bible uses the word sanctify or sanctified—it refers to God consecrating the weekly Sabbath...
14. God chose one day in seven, as holy—it was uniquely dedicated to God—the weekly Sabbath belongs to God...
15. Ex.29:43-45—"And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God..."
16. Here we find the idea of sanctification in terms of consecration or dedication—the tabernacle, altar, and priesthood, were all sanctified...

17. Now, I took the time to show you this aspect of sanctification, largely because their are those who understand sanctification in Jn.17:17 as referring to consecration and dedication...
18. And the primary reason they suggest this is because of v18—"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world..."
19. That is—set them apart from the world, consecrated or dedicated them for holy purposes, and sent them into the world...
20. Thus thus, it's possible that our Savior means by sanctification, the Father consecrating them as messengers of the gospel...
21. Personally I don't think this is the primary meaning of the word sanctify in this context, simply because, when it's used in that way, the apostles were set apart (sanctified) "for the gospel" not "by (through) the gospel"...
22. And yet, this aspect of consecration or dedication is always present in some measure, in this concept of sanctification...
23. Christians have been consecrated, they have been separated from this world, and they are being separated from it...
24. [2] Purification—by this is meant—we are increasingly conformed into the holy and moral image of Christ...
25. Taken in this way, sanctification is largely synonymous with holiness and personal purity—of Christ-likeness...
26. Our Savior was sending them as His ambassadors into the world, and He needed them to be morally pure and clean...
27. Eph.5:25-26—"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word..."
28. Here "sanctify" and "cleanse" are synonymous, and refer to a moral cleansing of the heart, by the word of God...
29. Thus, by sanctification is meant—the ongoing process of showing us our remaining sin, correcting us, and conforming us into Christ's image...
30. These are the three steps to purification, and they take place over and over again, every day, until our death...
31. [a] Conviction—the Holy Spirit uses the word as a mirror, to reveal or show us our remaining moral corruptions...
32. For example, think of a child who plays outside in the dirt—the first thing the child needs is knowledge of their filth...
33. Thus, conviction is absolutely essential to sanctification, but conviction must be distinguished from condemnation...
34. When the Holy Spirit shows a Christian his sin, He always reveals that sin, in all of its filthiness, as pardoned...
35. [b] Correction—mere conviction with out correction, will never bring about Christian sanctification or purity...
36. The Holy Spirit shows us our sin, but He also shows us the path of righteousness—He turns our feet to the commandments...
37. Dear brethren, there is no true sanctification or holiness, apart from a heartfelt obedience to God's commands...
38. Ps.119:59-60—"I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. A made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments..."
39. [c] Conformity—this is the goal of sanctification—to become like Christ—humble, holy, loving, and patient...
40. The Holy Spirit works within our hearts, positive graces, that enable us to grow in moral likeness to Christ...
41. We increasingly become humble like Him, patient like Him, loving like Him, wise like Him, and merciful like Him...
42. At the end of the day, sanctification has as its end, Christ-likeness—He is the goal or completion of sanctification...

43. Thus, every day the Holy Spirit shows us our sin, corrects us (or turns us to the commandments), and conforms us into Christ's image...
44. Lesson 1—Christian sanctification is limited—that is, true Christian sanctification is limited to true Christians...
45. True sanctification (holiness), is not merely outward conformity to a certain standard, but heart purity that shows itself on the outside...
46. Perhaps another way of putting this would be—true sanctification is foremostly something God does to and in us...
47. V17—"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"—that is, God Himself does the work in us by the word...
48. Now, we know brethren, that this in no way suggests Christians do not work in the process of sanctification (we are repeatedly commanded to work, obey, strive, etc.)...
49. And yet, all these (our working, obeying, and striving), are only the evidence of God's work in us and to us...
50. Lesson 2—Christian sanctification is certain—here our Savior that His Father will sanctify His beloved people...
51. Thus, every Christian without exception will be sanctified, though not every Christian will be sanctified at the same pace...
52. Lesson 3—Christian sanctification is necessary—the fact that our Savior prays for our sanctification, implies we need it...
53. And we in the context, there are several reasons suggested behind this necessity—[a] it glorifies Christ in this world (v10)...
54. [b] It promotes our joy, v13—"But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves..."
55. [c] It renders us effective missionaries, v18—"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world..."

II. Its Means

1. Our Savior identifies the means through which we are sanctified, both in v17 and v19—"by (through) the truth..."
2. In other words—it's through the means or agency of the word of God, that Christians are sanctified or made holy...
3. The Holy Spirit effectual uses the word of God, as a means to create or cultivate holiness and purity in our hearts...
4. Thus, I want to take a few minutes and examine a few key texts that underscore this truth, and then suggest a few ways the word serves as a means of our sanctification...
5. Ps.19:7-9—"The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether..."
6. Most of you know, that this Psalm describes two forms of revelation—vv1-6 general and vv7-9 special revelation...
7. These are NOT two opposing revelations—but comprise ONE revelation given in varied clarity and clearness...
8. David uses 6 terms to describe the word—law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and the judgments of the Lord...
9. These all view the word of God from a specific perspective—they each view the word from a certain perspective...
10. David also provides 6 descriptive terms to describe the word—it is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and righteous...
11. But for our purposes this morning—notice the effects that this word has upon a soul—converts, makes wise, rejoices, enlightens, and warns (v11)...

12. The word of God is the means whereby we are converted, made wise, given joy, encouraged, strengthened, enlightened, warned, and motivated to endure...
13. V24—"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb..."
14. Acts 20:32—"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
15. These are Paul's words to the Ephesian elders—he's exhorted them to take heed to themselves and the flock (v28)...
16. He's left them with a great responsibility—they must feed the flock of God and protect them from their enemies...
17. How are they to do this—what means, what tools, what instruments are they provided with to fulfill their calling...
18. V32—"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
19. The apostle commended them, to God and to the word of His grace—it's as if they needed no more—God and His word...
20. Notice—he refers to the word as—"the word of His grace"—that is—the word that communicates grace to our hearts...
21. I say this because—this word of grace is—"able to build you up"—that is—strengthen, mature, and sanctify you...
22. 1Pet.2:1-3—"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious..."
23. Peter describes all Christians as "newborn babes"—that is—we are ALL to resemble newborns in terms of hunger...
24. Every healthy newborn baby, comes from the womb crying for milk—they long (desire) for their mother's milk...
25. The milk of the mother is the means through which the baby is nurtured and grows—without which he dies...
26. Well—this is similar to the word of God—the word is milk through which Christians are strengthened and grow...
27. [1] The word is a LAMP for our path—that is—the word of God shows us how to live and what pleases God...
28. Ps.119:105—"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"—it teaches us what God commands...
29. It's in the word that we learn what true holiness is—where we learn what God commands and what pleases Him...
30. Without the word, we have no knowledge of these things, for it's in the word that we learn the truth of God, man, Christ, salvation, and eternity...
31. [2] The word is BREAD for our souls—that is—the Spirit nourishes and strengthens the soul with the word...
32. Matt.4:4—"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God..."
33. The Spirit feeds the soul with the word—strengthening and motivating it to comply with God's holy commands...
34. [3] The word is a SWORD for our enemies—that is—the Spirit uses the word to fight against sin and temptation...
35. Eph.6:17—"Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"—the Spirit uses the word to cut off offending right hands...
36. The word is our only weapon against our enemies of sin, Satan, temptation, doubts, lies, and discouragement...
37. Thus our Father sanctifies us by making the word effectual to our souls—He sanctifies us by or through the word...

38. Dear brethren, there is no true sanctification or holiness apart from the word—we are regenerated and sanctified by the word...
39. Now, if this is true, then what does this say to us this morning—[a] Christians must be in the word—we must hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on the word...
40. [b] Christians must pray that God would bless His word—we must plead that He would make it effectual to our hearts...

III. Its Merit

1. By "merit" I mean the cost or payment behind our sanctification—based on what merit does God sanctify us...
2. V19—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, (here's the purpose) that they also may be sanctified by the truth..."
3. We must understand Christ's sanctification as mere consecration, as there's no way He could be made holy (He was perfectly holy)...
4. Our Saviour set Himself apart, in His incarnation, perfect life, but especially in His sacrificial and atoning death...
5. John Calvin—"Though this sanctification belongs to the whole life of Christ, yet the highest illustration of it was given in the sacrifice of his death..."
6. Thus, when Christ says "for their sakes I sanctify Myself"—He's referring to the cross where He was set apart for God...
7. Heb.10:10—"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all..."
8. Though Paul here speaks of the past aspect of sanctification, it's evident all sanctification is because of Christ...
9. Simply put, Christ purchased a salvation, that includes salvation from the penalty, power, and presence of sin...
10. 1Cor.1:30—"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption..."
11. Righteousness refers to our justification which includes the forgiveness of sin (or salvation from sin's penalty)...
12. Sanctification refers to moral renewal—the purification of our souls (or salvation from sin's power and pollution)...
13. Redemption refers to the future aspect of salvation—the glorification of our bodies (or salvation from sin's presence)...
14. Each of these aspects of our salvation, are all found IN CHRIST—He purchased them with His atoning death...
15. Let me briefly suggest three things about Christ's sanctification, as found in v19—It's willful, sacrificial, and intentional...
16. [1] Willful, v19—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself"—He Himself came into this world, lived, and died...
17. [2] Sacrificial, v19—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself"—He sanctified Himself in the place of His people...
18. Our Savior had no need to sanctify Himself—His sanctification was not for His own benefit—but for ours...
19. Our Savior's sanctification was a payment for sin—the guilt of our sin was placed upon Him as our Surety...
20. [3] Intentional, v19—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth..."
21. Our Savior's suffering was to an end—He paid the ransom that our sins demanded that we might be liberated...
22. It was because of our sin (both our federal sin in Adam and personal sin), that we are by nature in sin's prison...

23. Christ's death was the payment (or the ransom), paid to God, that liberates us from sin's penalty and power...
24. For example—think of a criminal who spent his adult life stealing, robbing, lying, deceiving, and murdering...
25. Justice would demand two things—that he be imprisoned for his crimes, and eventually put to death for them...
26. This is true of all men by nature—because of our sins against God's law, we are imprisoned and waiting execution...
27. Our bondage to sin (which includes our native moral filthiness), is a punishment from God because of our guilt...
28. Dear brethren, surely we know, man's problem is not merely the guilt of his sin, but also (equally) the filth of his sin...
29. Thus, Christ set Himself apart as our atoning sacrifice to pay for our sin, and liberate us from both its penalty and power...

IV Its Motive

1. Here I want to suggest that in v19 we have not only the merit but primary motive for Christian sanctification...
2. V19—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth"—Christ's sanctification is a powerful motive for our sanctification...
3. Put another way—we should pursue sanctification (holiness), because of what Christ paid for our sanctification...
4. A holy life is precious because of its cost—Christ died not only for our justification but also for our sanctification...
5. Here, dear Christian, is one of the best motives for sanctification—Christ willingly, sanctified Himself for your sake. Amen.