

Gal. 5:24-25 (WCF 13:1) "Dead and Alive"

For the Children: When people are not interested in a certain subject, they are said to be "dead" to it. When they are interested, they are said to be "alive" to it. For example, a boy who loves cars might be bored in a school lesson, not paying attention, dead to it all – until the teacher mentions cars. Suddenly the boy is all ears, he comes alive to what's being said. God's children are to be both dead and alive. Dead to sin – not interested in it; but alive to the things of God, to what we read in the Bible about what the Lord Jesus has done to save us and how we should live in a godly way. **Questions:** What is sanctification? Where does our sanctification come from? Are there any things we can do to help us live a more holy life?

Introduction:

First Point: Crucifying the Flesh

- 1) The Body of Sin Destroyed: Christ's work on the cross put an end to the guilt and power of sin over the believer. In addition, His doing of all sanctification required of us is counted as ours ("definitive sanctification). And His resurrection guarantees that we receive spiritual life and resurrection. Our sanctification is therefore due to Christ. His work also makes it inevitable that all for whom He died will be called, regenerated, justified and sanctified.
- 2) Union with the Cross: Faith united us with Christ and His work on the cross. Participation in His work of putting an end to sin is described by Paul as "Having crucified the flesh." The "flesh" is the old, sinful nature hostile to God. The tense implies a decisive break with sin, a "clean break" that began when faith joined us to Christ
- 3) Crucifying Daily: However, the old nature still clings. The decisive rejection of sin also needs to be repeated daily. Our sins need to be more and more put to death in practice, as they are in principle in Christ. We need to resist the old selfish way of life more and more and to keep repenting of sin. See Mk. 8:34. The term "crucify" is suitable because it indicates a decisive end to shameful behavior – but an end that can be painful for us. It implies that we should not try to "negotiate" with sin. Meditating on this language and the work of Christ that lies behind it should help us in that rejection of sin

Second Point: Walking by the Spirit

- 1) The Spirit's Role in Sanctification: Christ sent His Spirit to continue His work and apply Him and His benefits to those for whom He died. Christ's work cannot be in vain. Sanctification, as a work of the Spirit, is therefore inseparably connected to justification
- 2) Not Without Holiness: WCF 13:1 states that no one will see the Lord without the practice of true holiness. This does not mean that we save ourselves by our own holy works. Rather, that the saving work of Christ always results in sanctification. Sanctification is therefore not an "option" for the believer
- 3) Living by the Spirit: Sanctification is a life-long, progressive reality. The emphasis in v. 25 is on that continuity, whereas v. 24 is on the decisive break from sin and its result. Hence v. 25 speaks of "living" and "walking." "living by the Spirit" speaks of His ongoing leading, guiding, strengthening and comforting of us – which enables us to practice holiness. The Spirit creates new desires within us for good and against evil. He enables us to act on those new desires. This is by God's gracious initiative – He "quickens" us more and more
- 4) Walking by the Spirit: At the same time, that quickening results in our action/response – as a "togetherworking" of the believer and the Spirit. We therefore "walk," meaning we "keep in step" with the Spirit who initiates and directs our life. The "walk" is the habit of resisting sin, putting it to death, and pursuing holiness. Thus we demonstrate the life the Spirit has put within us – in every area of life. This requires self-examination, meditation on these truths – especially on the work of Christ - and prayer