

Being Sanctified by the Spirit

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Hebrews 12:14 is one of the most sobering verses in the New Testament. It says, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”¹

“The sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”²

What does the writer mean by this? It is clear that when he says “no one” he means no one. It is clear that he means that no one will see God who has not experienced sanctification. Since that is true, that makes the question of what is sanctification a question of eternal importance.

I trust you will agree that if your eternal destiny hangs upon something called sanctification, then we would be foolish to not be interested in knowing what exactly sanctification is.

So what is it? What is sanctification and who is responsible for it?

2 Corinthians chapter three and verse 18 answers these questions for us.

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”³

But the verse begins with a “but.” “But we all...” which means we cannot simply jump in right here. We must dig deeper by going backwards into the context. So follow with me beginning in verse one of chapter three.

“Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?”⁴

Paul says, “Are we like the false teachers in your midst who need letters of commendation affirming their genuineness? No, we don’t need those kinds of letters.

¹ Hebrews 12:14.

² Ibid.

³ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:1.

We don't need letters of commendation, letters affirming our ministry, letters from men because we have letters from God and they are human letters.

Verse two.

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.⁵

Paul says, "We don't need letters written by men to affirm the genuineness of our ministry because you are our letters. Your changed lives are letters of commendation, not written by men, but written by God."

And then Paul brilliantly transitions in verse three from the letters of commendation that the false teachers were criticizing him for not having to talking about the letter of the law, letters from God written on tablets of stone.

And now he is going to give us a great contrast between the law and the Spirit.

Verse four.

"Such confidence we have through Christ toward God."⁶

What confidence? Well, the confidence that:

"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant."⁷

New covenant in contrast with old covenant, new covenant brought about by the Holy Spirit in contrast with old covenant fixed upon the law written on tablets of stone.

... who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?⁸

Paul calls the law the ministry of death. Why? Because the law kills spiritual life. The purpose of the Old Testament law was never to give spiritual life. It was to expose a

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:2-3.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:4.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:5-6.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 4:6-8.

man's spiritual death. It was to expose a sinner's need for a Savior. It was to expose our helplessness to live up to the law. The Old Testament law can do nothing in its power to sanctify us.

That is why Legalism is so treacherous and kills believers and kills churches, because you can't become holy by keeping the law. That was Paul's point in Romans chapter seven. He says, "The law doesn't help me become holy. The law provokes me. The law provokes the sinful flesh within me by saying, 'You shall not covet,' which means that my sinful flesh is, 'Oh, yeah? You tell me I can't covet. I am going to covet even more now,' because that is the issue in the human heart."

The law provokes the rebellion that is inherent within each individual sinner. So legalistic systems of becoming holy don't work. First, because the law is powerless to change the heart, but, secondly, because the law provokes the rebellion of the human heart.

So if there is going to be spiritual life, something has to change in the heart.

And so Paul gives these letters of contrast. He says, "If the law was glorious," and it was. Don't get me wrong. The law was glorious. It came with glory. It came from God. If that law was glorious, so much so that Moses' exposure to the God who gave this law assumed upon himself some kind of a visual glory, a glow about his face that required a veil to cover it, not because it would have killed the Israelites to see it, but the text says so that Moses could hide the fact that it was fading. And so he says, "If this law which was glorious or this law is glorious, which it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?"

If the ministry of death was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry of life? That is his point.

Move on. Verse nine.

"For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory."⁹

This is the same way of saying the same thing he just said in verses seven and eight.

"For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it."¹⁰

So the law was glorious. It had glory, but in comparison to the glory of the new covenant given by the Holy Spirit of God, it really has no glory. The law has no glory because in comparison it cannot do what we need someone to do for us. And that is change us from the inside out.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:9.

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:10.

“For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.”¹¹

The glory on the face of Moses faded away. And that was symbolic of the fading quality of the law, to be replaced by an enduring glory brought about by the Holy Spirit of God.

“Therefore having such a hope,”¹² verse 12.

What hope? The hope in glory that remains, not in the glory that fades.

... we use great boldness in our speech, and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.¹³

Now Paul is using veil in many different ways here, but he is drawing attention to the veil that Moses wore to hide the fading quality of the glory that was upon his face and transitions, then, to the spiritual veil that blinds the eyes of the Jews whose hearts were hardened.

“Their mind were hardened,”¹⁴ verse 14. And so until this very day when the Old Testament is read to them, they do not see Christ. They cannot see Christ.

We who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit can look back into the Old Testament and we can see Christ all over the place. We can see him portrayed in all of the Old Testament sacrifices. We can see him clearly predicted by Isaiah the prophet in chapter 53 of the suffering servant, the one who would give his life on behalf of many.

But the religious Jew who is without Christ cannot see that because there is this veil that remains unlifted, verse 14, “because it is removed in Christ.”¹⁵

So until they come to Christ, the veil remains. The blindness remains until they can come to Christ.

Verse 15.

“But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart.”¹⁶

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 3:11.

¹² 2 Corinthians 3:12.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 3:12-14.

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:14.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:15.

To this very day in every Jewish synagogue on the face of this planet when the old covenant is read to them a veil remains that cannot be removed apart from Christ. There is a spiritual blindness. And unless the Holy Spirit by his sovereign power causes their hearts to turn to the Lord, the veil will not be taken away.

So, Paul says, “Moses is read [and] this veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”¹⁷

Why? Because the veil is removed in Christ. The blindness is removed by Christ.

Verse 17.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”¹⁸

“Now” verse 17 begins.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”¹⁹

See, the law brought slavery and death, but now, Paul says, the Spirit brings freedom and life. The law could not change the heart. It was never designed to do so. It was designed by God to confront man with the depth of his sinfulness to cause him to flee to something greater than the law who could free him from the bondage of the law which could only be one who faithfully obeyed the law which is Jesus Christ who came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. So the law is fulfilled in Christ and that is why Christ is the only one who can remove the veil.

So the law could not change the heart. It was not designed to do so, but the Holy Spirit, the agent of the new covenant will change hearts through the power of the gospel. And it is this gospel centered sanctification that now Paul dwells upon in verse 18. So look at it with me.

Here we see five truths concerning the doctrine of sanctification that God wants us to understand, five truths concerning the doctrine of sanctification that you and I must understand.

First, sanctification is a present reality for every believer standing holy in the presence of God. That is the first truth concerning the doctrine of sanctification. Sanctification is a present reality for every believer.

Paul says, “But we all...” All means all. So sanctification is a present reality for every believer standing holy in the presence of God in Christ.

Every word in that statement is necessary. So let me say it for a third time.

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 3:15-16.

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:17.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Sanctification is a present reality for every believer standing holy in the presence of God in Christ.

Look at the verse.

“But we all, with unveiled face...”²⁰

Paul continues his comparison of all Christians, we all, with Moses. By using Moses’ experience as the key to understanding the experience of Christ.

“But we all, with unveiled face...”²¹

This speaks of a veil that was once lifted and remains lifted. So we all as believers in Christ we have an unveiled face. Now that means a number of things. It means that the glory that we experience in Christ is not a fading glory that needs to be hidden by a veil. But it also speaks of the fact that we now through Christ, through the gospel are given spiritual ability to see the glory of Christ. There is no veil when the Scripture is read. We understand the Scriptures. Certainly they are difficult at times and require a great deal of study, but, according to 1 Corinthians chapter two the person who has the Holy Spirit also has the ability to understand the Scriptures because we have the author of Scripture living within us.

So, “we all, with unveiled face...”²²

This is a present reality for every believer. We are already sanctified. We are already standing in the presence of God as Moses was standing in the very presence of God receiving his law so we, in Christ, stand in the presence of God. We don’t come here this morning to find God. We come because we have been found by God. We come because we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And this is by his grace that we see this. It is not because we are smart enough to see it. It is not because of anything within us. It is because of the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, God.

So the sanctification of the Spirit is both positional and progressive. Now let me explain to you what I mean by that. This first truth pertains to the believer's position before God. That is why I used the word “standing.” Sanctification is a present reality for every believer standing holy in the presence of God in Christ. It is our legal standing before God. It is our position before God in the courtroom of heaven. We are holy. We are sanctified. Present reality. That is positional truth, positional sanctification.

We have already been set apart unto God and therefore we are already holy in Christ.

Let me give you some other biblical support for this.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

1 Corinthians 1:30.

“But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus.”²³

Don't be pompous and proud of your human philosophy and wisdom because you aren't even in Christ by your own choice. You are in Christ by his doing. It is “by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”²⁴

Paul says you are in Christ and Christ is your sanctification. You are holy already in Christ. That is why I said last Sunday night as we were talking about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the goal of the Christian life is to become in practice what we are already in position. We are already holy in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:11.

“Such were some of you.”²⁵

Talking about after a litany of sins and sinners. Paul says, “Such were some of you,”²⁶ past tense. “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”²⁷

Paul writes no one can enter the kingdom of God if he is one of these sinners and he labels a number of sins that are mentioned there in 1 Corinthians six.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.²⁸

Those are depressing, condemning verses. But they don't end there because then verse 11 says, “Such were some of you,”²⁹ past tense. “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”³⁰

What is he saying to these redeemed sinners? He is saying, “This is what you were. That is what you were. This is what you now are. You are holy. You are sanctified. You are united to God in Christ. That is positional sanctification. And that is the reason why the

²³ 1 Corinthians 1:30.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:11.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:11.

³⁰ Ibid.

Bible calls us as believers saints. The Bible doesn't call us saints because we always act like that. The Bible calls us saints because that is our position before God, literally set apart ones, holy ones like Paul writes in Romans one.

“Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints.”³¹

I love the way Paul words that. He doesn't say, “Called to be saints,” he says, “Called as saints.” You are already saints, now act like it, is what the rest of the exhortation or part of the letter teaches.

So sanctification is, first, a present reality for every believer standing holy in the presence of God in Christ. That is our position. Before God in Christ we are united with Christ so God when he looks at us sees us in Christ, not separated from Christ anymore, in Christ. So he sees us as holy, as holy as his Son. Ok? That is positional sanctification. That is why we are called saints.

Now the next four points deal with what we call progressive sanctification. That is, the outworking of holiness in our lives, in the experience of our earthly life. That is progressive sanctification, becoming holy in our experience, in our attitudes, our actions, our thoughts and so on.

So let me give you the second truth. Sanctification requires the believer's ongoing activity of beholding the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Sorry if you were looking for three word truths here, three word phrases. It is not going to happen this morning. You have got to really think this through with me. So the second truth: Sanctification requires the believer's ongoing activity of beholding the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...”³²

It is that second phrase I want us to deal with.

“...beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...”³³

That teaches us that sanctification require the believer's ongoing activity of beholding the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Now Satan doesn't want this. Satan does not want us to focus on Christ. He much prefers that we focus on ourselves. He much prefers that we focus upon our own struggle with sin than to focus on Christ, the one who has the power to deliver us.

³¹ Romans 1:6-7.

³² 2 Corinthians 3:18.

³³ Ibid.

Look at chapter four verse four. Paul says, “If our gospel is veiled,”³⁴ if there is a veil before some people’s eyes, it is because they are perishing. It is because they are unbelievers. They don’t know Christ therefore they don’t know the Holy Spirit. Therefore the veil remains.

But there is another reason the veil is there, verse four.

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”³⁵

Satan right now is blinding the minds of unbelievers so that they will not see the beauty of Christ, so that they will not see how glorious Jesus is as the answer to their sin problem, so that they will not see him as the image of God.

I believe that even after salvation Satan still wants to accomplish this in our lives. We have been delivered from darkness. But if he can cause us to shift our focus from the light of the glory of God in Jesus Christ to the darkness of our own sin, he has us trapped because there is no victory there. There is no victory in meditating upon sin. There is great victory in meditating upon Christ and thinking upon him.

Isn’t that what Paul is saying in verse 18?

“...beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...”³⁶

As if you are looking in a mirror and you are seeing the glory of the Lord. Well, who is the glory of the Lord? The glory of the Lord is Christ who is the image of God.

So sanctification, that progressive sanctification in our lives, requires the ongoing activity of beholding the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

What does that mean? It means that I must consciously think on Christ. I must consciously—in the language of the writer of Hebrews chapter 12—fix my eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith.

See, verse one of Hebrews 12 says, “Lay these things aside.”

Verse two, then, so you lay the sin aside. What do you replace it with? You replace it with a focus, an undying focus on Christ.

What does that mean? Well, it means in the language of Jerry Bridges, I must learn to preach the gospel to myself every day. It means I have to think on Christ. I have to realize who he is, what he has done to deliver me from my sin.

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:3.

³⁵ 2 Corinthians 4:4.

³⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:18.

If all I do is focus upon how much I fall short of the glory of God, I will have no power to change. But if I focus upon the one who has already overcome the power of sin, then I find power to change. See how that works?

“...beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...”³⁷

Third truth: Sanctification is a life long process of transformation, not an instantaneous event. I will qualify that in a moment once you get it. Sanctification is a life long process of transformation, not an instantaneous event.

Now there is a sense in which part of it is instantaneous and we talked about that in truth number one, positional sanctification. We are holy. We are set apart by God to God. We are holy. That is an event, ok? Conversion is an event. It is not a process. Salvation is an instantaneous event, John three, when the Holy Spirit blows like the wind, spiritual life into the spiritually dead corpse called sinner and conversion takes place.

But now talking about becoming holy in our lives, we have to understand, thirdly, that sanctification is a life long process of transformation, not an instantaneous event.

Look at the text, verse 18.

“...are being transformed...”³⁸

We are being transformed. This is from the word from which we get our word “metamorphosis.” This is a transformation from the inside out. This is the caterpillar becoming a butterfly. This is a total change, total transformation.

It is used in Romans 12 which we read earlier in the service, verse two.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”³⁹

Be transformed. Be metamorphosized by the changing of your mind, “...so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”⁴⁰

So transformation, Paul says, is a process and it is a process requiring an agent to work within us. The agent of transformation is the Holy Spirit.

Being transformed is different than being conformed. Being conformed is something you can do in your own power and primarily, if not exclusively, is limited to the externals. You and I, if we want to, have the power, have the gumption, have the will power,

³⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:18.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Romans 12:2.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

whatever you want to call it, to conform ourselves to be like other people or what other people expect us to be like, correct?

You can do it. I can do it. We know it.

We don't have the power to transform ourselves from the inside out. See, and this is why legalistic systems of sanctification are so dangerous. Legalistic systems of becoming holy dwell on what man can do in his own strength and in his own pride.

“Oh, you want me to be like that? I can do that. Oh, you have a list of rules and regulations of what it means to be a Christian? Oh, I can do that. I might have to change a few things externally in my life. I might have to change my appearance a little bit. I might have to change some of my activities a little bit. But I can do that.”

And so it is achievable. And that is why it is so appealing to the flesh. It is not appealing to the Spirit. It is appealing to the flesh.

The Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the only one who can change us from the inside out. He is the only one. And isn't it immensely encouraging to know, then, the truth that we who know Christ have the Holy Spirit living within us?

So the very one that can transform us is the very one who lives inside of us. We are being transformed, Paul writes.

So as we behold the glory of Christ, as we focus on Christ, as we fix our eyes on Jesus, we are changed within by the power of the Holy Spirit whose goal it is to make us like Christ.

We could say it this way, that now that we are redeemed in Christ, the Holy Spirit's goal is to transform us to be a reflection of the image of God that was lost in the Garden of Eden through the fall.

What does the image of God look like? Well, chapter four verse four.

“...the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”⁴¹

So what does it mean? This is mind blowing. What does it mean that in redemption God is restoring within us the image he stamped upon us that was lost in the Garden of Eden, distorted by sin? It means he is peeling, layer, by layer, by layer off of our hearts causing an inner transformation to occur so that we reflect Christ who is the image of God. We become like Christ.

I don't become like you. You don't become like me. We together become like Christ. See, that is sanctification. And that, folks, is going to happen until we see Jesus. It is not going to end before then.

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 4:4.

1 John three.

“We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him...”⁴²

And so we were saying fixing our eyes on Jesus...

“...purifies himself, just as He is pure.”⁴³

So it is another way of saying he who fixes his eyes on Jesus becomes sanctified, becomes holy.

You see, sanctification is a life long process from the moment of conversion to the moment of our face to face encounter with Jesus either by rapture or by death. So from now until then, from now until we are raptured or from now until we die we are to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ so that the Holy Spirit within us may transform us from within to reflect the image of God that was lost and destroyed and distorted by sin. And we reflect Jesus to a lost and dying world.

That is the third truth.

The fourth truth I have already hinted at a number of ways, so we will not spend a great deal of time there. That is not to diminish its importance.

Number four. Sanctification moves us toward Christ likeness from one level of glory to another.

Look at the text.

“[We] are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.”⁴⁴

I already answered the question: What is the same image?

Chapter four verse four it is Christ. It is the restoration of the image of God that was distorted by the fall. So sanctification moves us toward Christ likeness from one level to glory to another, “into the same image from glory to glory.”⁴⁵

So this term “image” or “likeness” perhaps in some of your translations, it does not convey the idea of every believer becoming identical to each other in appearance. It means that all who are led by the Spirit of God to obey Jesus Christ, to obey the gospel, to fix their eyes upon him, are being transformed into his image. That means, then, that

⁴² 1 John 3:2-3.

⁴³ 1 John 3:3.

⁴⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

as believers we are people who are gradually moving from one degree of glory to another. That is what he means when he says, “from glory to glory.”⁴⁶

It is like the psalmist in 84:7.

“They go from strength to strength, Every one of them appears before God.”⁴⁷

“From glory to glory...”⁴⁸ levels of glory, levels of progress, levels of Christ likeness.”

I say it that way to, again, emphasize that sanctification is progressive. It is not instantaneous. I wish it was. You wish it was. It is not. It is progressive. It is a life long process of change.

But, praise God, we are not fully responsible for it. We do have responsibility and we have looked at that, beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But the ultimate responsibility is God’s which brings us, then, to our fifth truth.

Sanctification is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit. Now I added that word “ultimately” on purpose to show that it is not only his work. We have a responsibility in sanctification. Otherwise we would not have multiple commands to be holy, to flee from sin and pursue Christ. But the word “ultimately,” again, reminds us that we don’t have the power to change our selves from within. We have the power to doctor ourselves up eternally, to look like a Christian, to act like a Christian, to talk like a Christian. We do not have the power to change our heart’s desires and motives and affections so that we really want the things that God wants. And, thus, there are many, many people in professing Christianity who perhaps grew up in systems of legalized sanctification who think themselves to be Christians because they have achieved a certain level of external conformity. And yet when they look deep within their own hearts, there is a lack of a desire and affection and motive for that which is what God wants.

So the question is: Do we, in the very core of our being, have what God wants? Do we have what Jonathan Edwards called religious affections? Do we have God centered affections, desires, motives? And only you can answer that question for yourself. I can’t answer that. I can only answer for myself.

So sanctification is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why in Galatians chapter five when Paul gives a list of the virtues that the Holy Spirit brings about, he calls them the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, this is what the Spirit produces. This isn’t want you produce in your flesh. If you want to see what you can produce in your flesh then you read the list that pertains to the works in the flesh and that you see. But if you want what the Holy Spirit produces, then you have to have the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Psalm 84:7.

⁴⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

That is why Paul writes in Ephesians chapter two and verse 10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”⁴⁹

It is the Holy Spirit who brings about this change in our lives.

Now this is very encouraging to me and I hope it is to you, because the Christian life is very, very difficult. Don’t let anyone ever tell you it is a life of ease. It is not. It is very difficult. To be aware of one’s own sinfulness and to consciously turn away from it and to consciously fight against the sin nature at every waking moment is difficult. And at times we may be tempted to throw in the towel and ask, “Is it really worth it?”

And I say to you, “It is worth it.” And I say to you, “Do not give up.”

And I am convinced, I am absolutely convinced from Scripture that if we are truly saved, God will not let us give up.

Philippians 1:6 Paul said, “I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”⁵⁰

Who began the work? God.

Who will finish the work? God.

How will this be accomplished? It will be accomplished by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit within us as we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That is sanctification and that is what we need, the writer of Hebrews says, if we shall ever see the Lord.

Father, we pray, oh we pray, strip our hearts and minds of every speck of man centered, flesh gratifying achievement or conformity to others, conformity to the world, conformity to man made rules and regulations. All these are part of what Paul called the ministry of death. Oh God, I pray that if there is a man, woman or child here today whose confidence is not in the Spirit and not in the glory that remains, but in a temporary glory, their own glory, their own pride, their own religious achievements, their own supposed righteousness, oh, by the power of your Spirit, would you remove the veil that Satan has placed before their mind? Cause them to seek Christ and love Christ and turn to Christ. Oh God, we thank you and praise you that you have the power to change our hearts. And it is the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers in Christ who is employed with the task of transforming us. We are to be responsible to flee from sin and pursue righteousness. We are responsible to repent of dead works and ungodly thoughts and attitudes and actions. But it is the Spirit of God and only the Spirit of God who can change the deepest desires, affections, motives of our hearts. So, Father, please cause us to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, that the image of Jesus will be produced in our

⁴⁹ Ephesians 2:10.

⁵⁰ Philippians 1:6.

lives not for our glory—for we cannot take credit for something that we cannot do—but for the glory of Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen.