

Theological/Missiological Synopsis in Relation to the Model of Sanctification

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I. Introduction

We have lived in the age to be needed a theological movement to restore the traditional as well as the evangelical theology in the Scripture, rather than a brand new theology nor a parochial theology. When we see the approaches or methodologies of Western theologies since 1960s, we have felt strongly a necessity to proclaim again what the "true theology" is toward them according to the Word of God. It seems that many modern theologies have lost the desire and seriousness of salvation. With their wrong hermeneutical principles they have affected the tendency of modern theology of mission.

Undoubtedly, in the field of theology/missiology, "the desire of salvation" must be a *fundamentum* for all mission works. The issues which we must be born again through the work of the Holy Spirit and bear good fruits in the life are not just for becoming moral and ethical beings but ultimately for entering the Kingdom of God, i.e., salvation by the grace of God.¹ According to Harold Netland, unfortunately, there is "a widespread perception that theology is not only largely irrelevant to missions but can actually be counterproductive in world evangelization."² Edward Rommen already has been warning long years ago, however, against the tendency of "de-theologizing of missiology." He challenges the missionaries to have careful reflection on theology based on biblical principles both in theory and practice.³ In other words, both Netland and Rommen are pointing out "a loss of ability both to think theologically and to keep this theological focus as the integrating center for all of life."⁴

¹ Chul-Ha Han, "The Immediate Task of ACTS' Faith Movement, Paper, 1988.

² Harold A. Netland, "Theology and Missions: Some Reflections on an Ambivalent Relationship," *Trinity World Forum*(Spring 1994).

³ Edward Rommen, "The De-Theologizing of Missiology," *Trinity World Forum*(Fall 1993).

⁴ Harold A. Netland, "Theology and Missions: Some Reflections on Ambivalent Relationship," 2.

Above all, "the desire of salvation" must be in the center of theology as well as missiology. Justification and sanctification are very closely related to God's redemptive history. In this paper, the author will indicate the importance of salvation as theological/missiological central axis for the mission community through the issue of sanctification with the Word of God.

II. The Nature of Sanctification

In order to seek the meaning of sanctification, we need to examine the origin of the term. The first, there is a separateness in God who is the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity. In the Old Testament, *qadosh* means "to be holy," "to set apart to consecrate" for putting someone or things into a state of holiness, consecration, and inviolability, e.g., 'the Holy Place', 'the Holy of holies', 'Aaron's garments', 'the Sabbath day' and 'the priests and Levites'(Ex 29:21; 31:13; Lev 21:23; Ez 31:13, etc.).⁵

Hagiaso in the New Testament is to sanctify, to consecrate, to hollow, and to be set apart unto holiness or moral goodness (Rom 6:19, 22; 1 Cor 1:30, 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Tim 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:2). Above all, it is a separation from all that is earthly and sinful. In other words, a Christian's way of life is that he or she should live differently from earthly things.

Israel was called the "holy nations" as the people of God, and the underlying idea was that of separation from other nations: "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord"(Isa 52:11). Peter refers to his readers as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God"(1 Pet 2:9). Paul exhorts the believers that "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are temple of the living God"(2 Cor 6:11-16). Christians in all nations should be seeking to be separated from the worldly things and

⁵ William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 313.

their wicked influences since every culture is including evil and wicked factors from the Christian perspective.

The second is that sanctification also embraces freedom from sin. It must be effective in an individual Christian's real life. The Lord is completely free from sin. He is Light, and there is no darkness in Him. Before we believe in God, we were under the reign of sin. That is, all human beings were the slaves of sin: "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness"(Rom 6:20). Jesus said that "Whoever commits sin is the servant of sin"(John 8:34). Sin reigns, controls, and masters whenever everyone has no faith in God.

So deeply planted are the roots of human corruption, that even after we are born again, renewed, washed, sanctified, justified and made living members of Christ, these roots remain alive in the bottom of our hearts and, like the leprosy in the walls of the house, we never get rid of them until the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. Sin, no doubt, in the believer's heart, has no longer dominion. It is checked, controlled, mortified and crucified by the exclusive power of the new principle of grace.⁶

Undoubtedly, Christians are no longer under the power of sin. Paul declares, "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace"(Rom 6:14). Sin no longer reigns over those who within the sphere of grace (Rom 6:17). A Christian is dead to the rule and the reign of sin(Col 3:3) because of a complete event, once and for all, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this sense, baptism is a representation of union with Christ in his death and resurrection; "having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead"(Col 2:12; Rom 6:4).

It is clear that union with Christ also involves our suffering with him in order that we may be glorified with him (Rom 8:17). Jesus said that "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). Paul confessed a similar thought; "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his

⁶ John Charels Ryle, *Holiness*(Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1991), 5.

death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:10-11).

Although a believer is no longer under the dominion of sin, he or she still has within him or her the remains of sin and corruption. That is why even Christians put on the flesh; "for the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want"(Gal. 5:17). In other words, the carnal mind is still alive and attracted to earthly things. Christians cannot help live in the struggle and tension.

The Pauline statement that in Christ the old has passed away and the new has come is an eschatological statement. "The new aeon, which has dawned with Christ, brings a new creation, the creation of a new man." This must be understood within Paul's total eschatological perspective. The "new creation" obviously does not refer to a renovation of the physical world; this new creation awaits the eschatological consummation (Rom. 8:21).⁷

The continuous elimination of sin and conformation of the image of Christ are the main concern of sanctification in the Christian's life. It seems that there is a difference between the reign of sin and surviving sin. Even though sin no longer reigns in the life of individual Christian, it is surviving in his or her mortal body, *sarx*. Sin is not dead although he or she became a new being. In other words, Christians "no longer live in the flesh and therefore are not to walk according to the flesh."⁸ Paul urges, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires"(Rom 6:12). Peter also teaches that "as obedient children, not to conform to the evil desires we had when we lived in ignorance"(1 Peter 1:14).

The third aspect is the active performance of holiness in this life. As a matter of fact, holiness is more than just mortifying the flesh and getting rid of corrupt nature. The will of God for His people is to reflect as well as to conform the very image of Jesus Christ. Paul sent the letter to the Christians in Ephesus to put off the old self and immediately to "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"(Eph 4:22-24).

⁷ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 480.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 494.

In seeking this positive aspect of holiness, Peter suggests to add diligently goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love to our faith(2 Peter 1:5-7). A Christian who has been raised with Christ must set his or her heart on things above, not on earthly thing, and put to death whatever belongs to his or her earthly nature, namely "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry"(Col 3:1-5).

The fourth is that it is impossible to do these things by oneself, by any works of law or by our own strengths. In other words, sanctification is not a means to be able to justify oneself before God. For Christians, it is a way and a responsibility to please God as a token of gratitude for God's grace through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the constant provider of the spiritual life, as truly as food is the maintenance of the body. It should be obvious that "the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is one of the outstanding evidences of the salvation of the individual and also the means by which God can effect sanctification in the experiential and progressive sense."⁹

We cannot obey the law in the exercise of our natural strength, and continue to do so. We, however, are called upon to use and exercise the power that is in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who helps do; "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express"(Rom 8:27).

The Spirit of Christ dwells in the truly spiritual believer. Christ is not only in heaven, but also within us, as really and truly inhabiting our bodies as we do, and it must be believed by personal faith in order to secure our abiding in Christ. He manifests Himself within us and establishes the confidence. Peter encourages us that the life of godliness is available for us in and through the power of the Holy Spirit(2 Peter 1:3). For our best discipline, above all, we must keep in mind that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness(1 John 1:9).

⁹ John F. Walvoord, "The Augustinian-Dispensational View," In *Five Views on Sanctification*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1987), 214.

III. Reasons for Holiness

For Christian's life, there is no more practically important subject than the holiness of God and of His people. We can have some reasons from the Scriptures for why we must reflect such a theme. The first, one of primary reason is that God Himself is holy and commands holiness in our lives. This is an obligation on all Christians to pursue holiness. Jesus Christ also commanded to the followers, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"(Matt 5:48). Paul gave an admonition to the Thessalonians, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified"(1 Thess 4:3), and he called Corinthians, "those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy"(1 Cor 1:2). Without being holy, no one shall see the Lord God(Heb 12:14). Christians must realize the seriousness or desire of salvation in relation to holiness. In this sense, sanctification involves a Christian's ultimate act of worship by offering himself or herself to God.

The second reason is that we must bear witness for one's salvation with holiness in this life. How do Christians show the evidence of salvation experienced in Jesus Christ? Since we believe that God is holy and righteous, we know that "everyone who does what is right has been born of Him"(1 John 2:29). Holiness is the visible witness to be able to distinguish Christians from the corrupted world. Without the evidence of fruit, we cannot know whether it is a grapevine or a fig tree.

The third, we give the evidence of our love to God, when we keep Christ's commandments. Holiness, one of his great commandments, is separation from the world and obedience to Christ; "If you love me, you will obey what I command. . . . He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him"(John 14:15, 21).

The fourth reason is that holiness is the most effective way of influencing unbelievers in terms of mission strategy particularly in the two-thirds world. Peter was emphasizing on it in his epistle; "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though

they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us"(1 Peter 2:12).

The fifth, Paul exhorts Timothy to exercise and discipline himself unto godliness(1 Tim 4:7-8). We should give attention that the relationship between being patient and being holy is inseparable one another. Christian's daily life must be disciplined with endurance for holiness, for the Lord who is holy, blameless, pure, and set apart from sinners(Heb 7:26) was patient until the death for the glory of God.

III. Working out Holiness in the Life

Biblical faith is not a variety of rational idealism since the God in the Bible is not a rational principle. Faith preserves the soul in the whole life with God. Faith holds the soul in its godly sense and comfort of it. Through this faith, we can overcome the world; "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God"(1 John 5:4-5).

Faith is certain that God is true in all things whether He commands or forbids, whether He promises or threatens; and it also obediently receives His commandments, observes His prohibitions, heeds His threats.¹⁰

Faith is the "key to appropriating God's provision for successful Christian living. . . by faith we are justified and receive the life of the Spirit."¹¹ Repentance grows out of faith that we can gain Christ's righteousness, and be renewed by repentance through the work of Christ. Both repentance and forgiveness of sins "are conferred on us by Christ, and both are attained by us through faith."¹²

And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a repentance and a faith, which are, more especially, necessary at the beginning: A repentance, which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness; and which

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institute of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, Vol. 1(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 575.

¹¹ J. Robert McQuilkin, "The Keswick View," in *Five Views on Sanctification*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 167.

¹² John Calvin, *Institute of Christian Religion*, 592.

precludes our receiving that kingdom of God, which, our Lord observes, is "within us;" and a faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"¹³

Repentance and faith are essential conditions on the way of sanctification. This truth must be proclaimed through the work of missionaries on the mission field, prior to all kinds of mission projects, for this is the only way to live eternally for all people in all nations.

God's design and desire for His people from the beginning is to live in holiness. Paul teaches that God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight(Eph 1:4). Holiness or sanctification includes necessarily the ethical aspect. It consists not only in a special relationship to God in order to restore the *imago Dei* but also in a particular moral quality.

The purpose of God was nothing short of entire holiness. It means the continued transformation of moral and spiritual trend in *coram Deo* so that the life of the believers may not fall short of God's glory in processing making them holy. Paul writes clearly it for us, "from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth"(2 Thess 2:13). He is saying definitely that "God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life"(1 Thess 4:7).

Sanctification is the work of God in and through us. People cannot make themselves holy. As the Holy Spirit is the Author of regeneration, the Spirit is the Author of sanctification as well. While holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit, it also involves a human response; "Dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God"(2 Cor 7:1).

We, Christians, must offer ourselves "in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness"(Rom 6:19). That is, human beings have a responsibility to response to God's deed for holiness. Sanctification must be experienced here and now through the

¹³ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 5(Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publisher, 1991), 157.

sanctifying work of the Spirit with repentance and through the belief in the truth(2 Thess 2:13). It means an actual transformation in the process of the Christian's life. We must keep in mind that "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose"(Phil 2:12-13). This must be interpreted with the relationship between God's provision and human response rather than the cooperation as if God did His part and we ours.

In sanctification also, the Scriptures affirm that God is the sanctifier and that He accomplishes in individuals what they could not accomplish by themselves. At the same time, however, the Scriptures are just as clear that people are responsible for responding to the truth of God and to the work of the Holy Spirit, which permits God to work out His program of sanctification.¹⁴

All working out of the Christian life will be effective when God is working in us with the obedience to God's will. Earthly people give much time to their pleasure. Worldly people apply their energies to the things of the world. Their hearts are trained in covetousness(2 Peter 2:14). They spend money in their private happiness. As the process of sanctification, however, Christians must seek humbly God's will even in using money, time and materials.

IV. Incentives to Sanctification

The Lord promised to help every believer seek after holiness. To believers, a principle of new life has already been implanted. When we were converted, God placed the seed of spiritual life through being given the "new spirit" by Jesus. For unbelievers, it is impossible to live in a spiritual procedure, because they have no new spirit to incline them that way.

The work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification is "not merely the negative work of mortification of the flesh(Rom 8:13), but also the production of a positive likeness to

¹⁴ John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 225.

Christ."¹⁵ Literally regeneration is the change of the direction of one's life from a bent toward sin to a tendency to live righteously through the power of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration means to become a new person, to have a new disposition, and to take a new attitude toward holiness. The new life in Christ is oriented toward godliness when people become a new creation(Gal 2:20).

Although regeneration is instantaneously complete, it is not an end in itself. As a change of spiritual impulses, regeneration is the beginning of a process of growth which continues throughout one's lifetime. This process of spiritual maturation is sanctification.¹⁶

Jesus Christ showed an example how we live in this earthly life with the Sermon on the Mount what is called the Beatitudes. Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer and at the same time, He is our Example too; "To this you called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"(1 Peter 2:21), and Jesus says that "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"(John 13:15).

Humility exemplifies the first pattern of Jesus Christ. Jesus called the disciples and said, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"(Matt 20:28). While Duan Elmer deals with the effectiveness of overseas ministry, he indicates three competencies in achieving effectiveness; satisfactory personal adjustment, positive interpersonal relationships and task accomplishment. According to Elmer, the most important competency is interpersonal relationships with the host country people.¹⁷ It means presumably that this competency must include the concept of humility and trust. Humility will be the most effective means for communicating the Gospel in any society since humility is based upon serving others as Jesus Christ has set an example(Phil 2:5-8). God hates pride in His presence while gives grace to the humble(Pro 3:34).

¹⁵ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985), 875

¹⁶ Ibid., 945.

¹⁷ Duane Elmer, "Trust: A Good Start on Cross-Cultural Effectiveness," *Trinity World Forum*(Spring 2000), 1.

The second is unselfishness. Jesus Christ subjected himself to every inconvenience in order that he might serve others. He did not please himself(Rom 15:3). In Mosaic law, there was "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise"(Ex 22:24-25). To the contrary, Jesus says the "New Law" in the Sermon on the Mount(Matt 6:40-42).

The third is prayer. In fact, prayer was the habitual pattern of Jesus in his daily life. Jesus himself taught the Lord Prayer(Matt 6:9-13). He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane with sorrows and tears, and even on the cross. The writer of the Hebrews believed the power of Jesus' prayer; "During the day of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission"(Heb 5:7).

Prayer encourages God's people to be able to live in holiness. King David was requesting earnestly to God; "Create me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me"(Ps 51:11). Jesus asks us, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation"(Lk 22:40; Matt 6:12-13). Prayer also leads us into companionship with God as well as confirmation of God's fatherhood. Prayer is the most valuable resource for the mission community including the national believers in terms of "Prayer Mission."¹⁸

The fourth is that the Word of God brings the believers into contact with God's holiness, revelation, presence and power. The believers in Jesus Christ could endure in truthful word with weapons of righteousness and in the power of God(2 Cor 7:7). God's Word is the "helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit" against the devil(Eph 6:17). This is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes(Rom 1:16). The Word of God is the Word of life to save the sinners who will perish. A righteousness from God is revealed in it(Rom 1:17), and it is able to make believers wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ(2 Tim 3:15).

Paul tells us the spiritual pedagogic messages that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"(2 tim 3:16-17). The

¹⁸ Chul-Ha Han and Hung-Ho Chong, *Theology of Prayer Mission*(Seoul: ACTS, 1999).

living and enduring Word of God gives us a great power. We can overcome temptation with the Word of God. It is most powerful weapon in spiritual warfare. Even Jesus Christ defeated Satan with God's Word at the time of temptation(Matt 4:1-11).

The fifth is dedication to be very important matter for victorious spiritual living. According to Ryrie, the "scriptural picture is an initial act of dedication which includes all of oneself for all of one's life."¹⁹ Apostle Paul appeals to the Christians to dedicate their lives for the glory of God(Rom 6:13). Because dedication is related to the filling of the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the Spirit. Definitely there can be no real experience of the vital work of the Holy Spirit without continuous dedication. In other words, "dedication allows the Holy Spirit to fill the life of the believers."²⁰ Paul urges to Romans; "in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual worship"(Rom 12:1; cf. 1 Cor 6:19-20).

V. Conclusion

The whole life of regenerated person is in a continual fight of spirit against flesh and of the new against the old one; "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict each other"(Gal 5:17). In other words, the "conflict is the result of our new being *in Christ* and yet, at the same time, living *in the world*."²¹ Walking in the Spirit involves walking in tension between the Spirit and the flesh.

For regenerated person, there is a struggle not between reason and flesh like unregenerated one, but between the Spirit and flesh. A Christian's life includes implicitly the tension, what is called the "spiritual warfare", between a citizen of the earth and a citizen of God's Kingdom(Eph 6:12; Phil 3:20). Accordingly the process of

¹⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life*(Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 81.

²⁰ Ibid., 83.

²¹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander(Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 61

sanctification is inseparable from personal commitment and continual obedience to God with repentance.

Through this continuous and lifelong process in Christ, we have hope to reach the full glorification to be liberated from the earthly bondage and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children(Rom 8:21). Undoubtedly the "final goal of sanctification can be nothing other than the glory of God."²² In reaching the perfect and total likeness to Christ and to God, this "perfection will be the final stage in the history of the image of God, for in the life to come, God's people will perfectly image Him and Christ, who is 'the exact representation of his being'(Heb 1:3)." This is the ultimate goal of sanctification or the life of Christlikeness; "What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming"(2 Peter 11-12).

The purpose of missionary work is to proclaim the necessity of salvation to the sinners in all nations. In the centrality of salvation, there is the "God who has kept coming to the rescue of his people, who has taken the initiative to save."²³ Repentance, above all, was the prominent message of Jesus Christ as well as the apostles(Mk 1:15; Lk 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30).²⁴

The concept of sanctification represents to sanctify from sins. In this sense, sanctification is the Christian's spiritual warfare fighting against sins, living with his or her faith to be saved by God's grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Every culture has sinful factors in the community and society. Preaching repentance, therefore, is the most important means for awakening the necessity of sanctification. Repentance must not absent from the ministry of God's workers in the relation to the process of sanctification.

²² Anthony A. Hoekema, "The Reformed View," in *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 88.

²³ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*(Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 83

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

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