

Pastor's Pen

Is He writing to you?

"To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 1:7

When you write an email or letter, you usually are writing it to an individual or group of people you know. When you are pouring out your heart, it is usually to someone you know very well. The Apostle Paul wrote 13 letters in the New Testament. Four of the letters were to individuals, and nine were to the churches. I want you to understand that in all nine letters to the churches, he begins His letter the same; he addresses the Church in each one of those cities and, in 7 of those letters, he addresses it to the saints of the Church.

Why is this important? I submit to you that what Paul wrote was for the children of God, those who had made Jesus Lord and Savior of their lives. We know that every Word in the original letters that Paul wrote was God-breathed, inerrant, and infallible (*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."* 2 Timothy 3:16). So, God has given us Paul's letters in the New Testament so we can live lives that are holy and pleasing to Him. They are meant to feed the sheep and not the goats. While God uses His Word to bring people to saving faith, its primary purpose is for the sanctification of believers. Our responsibility as members of His Church is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We spread the seed, and God determines the quality of the soil. When an individual comes to Christ, they become part of the universal Church, the body of Christ, and the local Church where they serve God and their fellow saints. So, is Paul writing to you? Are you a faithful member of Grace Harvest or another local Bible-believing church? Are you one of the sheep that belong to Jesus, or are you a goat trying to blend in. Is the Church just something you do or something that you are?

"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Your shepherd,

Pastor Mark

Grace Gems

What is sanctification?

- Nathan W. Bingham

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 35), sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

The basic meaning of "sanctify" is to set apart to God, for His use. But God works in those whom He claims as His own to conform them "to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). This moral renovation, in which we are increasingly changed from what we once were, flows from the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:20, 21). God calls His children to holiness, and graciously gives what He commands (1 Thess. 4:4; 5:23).

Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth. In regeneration, God implants desires that were not there before: desire for God, for holiness, and for glorifying God's name in the world; desire to pray and worship; desire to love and bring benefit to others. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit "works in you, both to will and to work" according to God's purpose, enabling His people to fulfill their new, godly desires (Phil. 2:12, 13). Christians become increasingly Christlike, as the moral profile of Jesus (the "fruit of the Spirit") is progressively formed in them (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; 5:22-25).

Regeneration is a momentary act, bringing a person from spiritual death to life. It is exclusively God's work. Sanctification is an ongoing process, dependent on God's continuing action in the believer, and consisting of the believer's continuous struggle against sin. God's method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but human effort dependent on God (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10-14; Heb. 12:14). Knowing that without Christ's enabling we cannot do good works, but also that He is ready to strengthen us for all we have to do (Phil. 4:13), we "abide" in Christ, asking for His help constantly—and we receive it (Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:1).

The standard to which God's work of sanctifying His saints is directed is His own revealed moral law, expounded and modeled by Christ Himself. Christ's love, humility, and patience are a supreme standard for Christians (Rom. 13:10; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Believers find within themselves contrary urgings. The Spirit sustains their regenerate desires and purposes, but their fallen instincts (the "flesh") obstruct their path and drag them back. The conflict of these two is sharp. Paul says he is unable to do what is right, and unable to restrain himself from doing what is wrong (Rom. 7:14-25). This conflict and frustration will be with Christians as long as they are in the body. Yet by watching and praying against temptation, and cultivating opposite virtues, they may through the Spirit's help "put to death" particular bad habits (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). They will experience many particular deliverances and victories in their battle with sin, while not being exposed to temptations that are impossible to resist (1 Cor. 10:13).

Quote of the Week

"When a person becomes a Christian, he doesn't just join a local church because it's a good habit for growing in spiritual maturity. He joins a local church because it's the expression of what Christ has made him—a member of the body of Christ."

-Mark Dever



Weekly Gatherings



Bible Classes

New Testament
Sunday School
Sunday Morning @ 9AM



Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM
Men's Bible Study



Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM @ Royall's
Every other Thursday @ 7PM
@ Patrick's & Cox's



Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team and forgot to sign up, please contact the team leader at the appropriate email address.



Youth Study

Wednesdays @ 6:30PM
Youth Study



Service Times

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Children's Church @ 10:30AM

Giving from service on 05/30/2021

General Offering6,103.60
Building Fund 1,003.60
Uganda 140.00

Total \$7,247.20
Attendance 176
Sunday School 97
Online 21

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org
Security-security@ghbcva.org



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