

Living the Essentials of the Faith: Everywhere, Everyone, At All Times
RAISE – Revelation, Anthropology, Incarnation, Sanctification, Eternity
Sanctification Part 1 –Where do we go from the cross?

Key Concept: Our response to the gospel of Christ meets God’s ongoing work of redemption in the church’s commitment to exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Summary: The life, death and resurrection of Jesus are not the end of the Christian life but the beginning. As believers we hope not merely to be saved from sin, but to be saved for a purpose; that we may be God’s agents in the ongoing work of redemption of the world. We call the reclamation of the world sanctification.

Sanctification is the process of conforming to Christ that occurs **AFTER** the work of salvation has been accomplished. Whereas salvation, or atonement, is completely the work of God, in sanctification the redeemed people of God are allowed to participate with the Holy Spirit in transforming God’s creation.

In the Old Testament, God saved and established a nation of people through the Exodus and the giving of the Law. So too, Jesus saved and established a nation of people through His life, death and resurrection. In the Old Testament, after God rescued His people and gave them an identity, He gave them the opportunity to participate in the spreading of this new Kingdom of Israel through the conquest of the promised land. In the same manner, after Jesus has rescued us from sin and death and given us an identity as His disciples, He also gives us the opportunity to spread this new Kingdom of Heaven through the conquest and conversion of the world.

The purpose of Jesus’ time on earth was the establishment of this Kingdom of Heaven (also named the Kingdom of God). Reconciliation between God and humanity entails more than merely the forgiveness of our sins; it also requires a new way of life and living that centers on our restored relationship. The Kingdom exists wherever this life is lived out in community.

The Kingdom of Heaven is often in opposition to the kingdoms of earth. As members of the Kingdom of Heaven, we are called to live radically different from the rest of the world. The Kingdom can only transform the world inasmuch as it is distinct from the world. All the greatest tragedies of the church are easily traced to this one failing, that the church abandoned God’s project of the Kingdom of Heaven, and chose instead to attempt to remake the nations of this world in God’s image. But to pray “Thy kingdom come” is precisely to pray that the kingdoms of this world would pass away.

The Kingdom is God’s eternal plan and reality for the world. What we erect now in the Kingdom – sharing the gospel, raising disciples, worshipping God, and spreading peace, justice and compassion – will last beyond even the return of Christ and the creation of a new heaven and earth. While the Kingdom is only completed with Christ’s return, we are fully capable of living in it, and expanding it, today. We are both ambassadors and craftsmen of the eternal.