

Set Apart for a Purpose

Written by By Bill Emmerling Pastor-Gallup Christian Church
Friday, 19 October 2018 08:47



“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

John 17:17-18 (ESV)

In Jesus' final hours, He prays for His disciples (those who follow Him with their lives). We can learn from this prayer Jesus' priorities from what he asks of His Father in Heaven.

In our modern world, we seldom use the term “sanctify” or “sacred,” and it would help if we understood it better. To “sanctify” something is “to set apart for a sacred [holy] purpose,” “to make it free from sin.” Yet this still leaves the word a little foreign to us. Therefore, let us consider a similar example from the medical world as an analogy.

We generally think of germs as being bad, possibly causing illness and death. Therefore, when surgery is performed or perhaps when someone is sick, we seek to STERILIZE those things that come in contact with wounds, incisions and the ill. We seek to eliminate ALL germs by sterilizing the object by boiling, steam, alcohol, radiation and other means.

In a sense, being SANCTIFIED is like being STERILIZED of all sin rather than germs. However, the purpose of sterilizing our sin is not to protect God, but to protect us, as God's presence and purposes cannot tolerate SIN. If we are not cleansed from our sin, it means OUR destruction, not God's. So, when we are set aside, sanctified in truth, our sin is removed that we might be

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welcome in God's presence, and that we might be used by Him. Notice His word, His Truth, sanctifies us.

Jesus also says that His followers are sent into the world. They are to be separate from the world, contrasting the world in that they are to be sinless (only possible through Jesus' sacrifice). They are also to be sent **as Jesus was sent by the Father**. Jesus states in John 3:17 his reason for being here:

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

While we cannot save the world, Jesus has already done this. We are sent into the world to continue Jesus' mission by pointing people to him.

In John 17:19, Jesus states that He consecrates Himself, that we may be sanctified (set apart) in the truth. The language points to Jesus setting Himself apart, most likely by allowing Himself to be crucified, that we might be set apart from sin, for God's purposes, specifically, sent into the world, to proclaim the saving work of Jesus.

Jesus sacrificed Himself to save us, yet He also sacrificed Himself, that we might accomplish what we are sent to do. Our lives in all things are to bring God and Jesus glory, and point people to Jesus.

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