

The Image of God and the Sanctification of Man (The Ministry of the Spirit is a War Time Ministry)

The Ministry of the Spirit

August 2, 2026

INTRO ...If I say—"The Powerful Ministry of the Holy Spirit!"—What do you think of?

The Holy Spirit's Ministry of Sanctification

1 Thess 4:1-3 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

...A first-order topic for young Christians (Thess. = perhaps Paul's 1st Letter to Christians less than a Year Old!!)

1 Pet 1:1-2 ¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

1 Pet 1:15-16 "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

Heb 10:14 ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Sanctification (Gk. Hagiasmos) [hagiazō (to make holy); from hagas (holy)] = *purification*, — *holiness*, *sanctification*. (Strong's Dict.) ["sanctify", consecrating, making holy ...these are "**process-words**" ...these are "**change-words**", "**transformation-words**"

...It is from this Change-Concept that we get all the rich Biblical Imagery of: "**The Potter & the Clay**" ... "**The Refiner's Furnace**" ... "**The Disciplined Athlete**"

...It is Easy to Lose Sight of the Goodness of God—in places like Furnaces, Potter's Wheels, & Gymnasiums!

Heb 12:3, 7 ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

... "Sanctification" can have what feels like HOSTILITY in it!

⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ...but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

...Holiness (imaging) is the Aim! ...but that "**imaging is NOT Automatic**"

The Theater of This Sanctification

The Fallen World Setting

"Genesis 3... shows us the origin of the world's darkness and how it unfolded... When we turned from God and lost that relationship, all other relationships fell apart. Because we rejected his authority everything about the world — our hearts, emotions, bodies, our relationships to other people, and our relationship to nature itself—stopped working as it should. The Fall of humankind means that the original design of the world is broken." **Tim Keller**, "Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering", p. 114

...It helps our "Humanity" (our compassion, our self-expectations) if we understand this "**2-Version Creation**" -

(1) God Sovereignly Ruling a Non-Fallen World ... (2) God Sovereignly Ruling a Fallen World (Sin, Satan, Corruption, decay/death, judgment)

...In BOTH we live in the shadow of God's Sovereign Rule! ...But there is an impacting toll on our humanity!

Job 3:3, 11, 23-24 "Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, 'A man is conceived.' ...¹¹ Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ...²³ Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? ²⁴ For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water." [This from Job who gets one of the Highest Commendations from God in all the Bible!]

Ecc 4:2-3 And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. ³ But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun." [This from the wisest man on earth and the builder of God's Temple!]

Jer. 20:14, 18 "Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! ...¹⁸ Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?" [This is a "Corrupted World Moment" for Jeremiah ...YET, he already knows— Jer 1:4-5 "Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ⁵ 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'"]

?? - What is to be done with this "bent, twisted, distorted" version of creation? ..."REDEMPTION/RESTORATION"

Redemption's Chapter [a slow process that leads to a New Creation] => A DECISIVE ACT —followed by a "Now-Not-Yet-Chapter"— followed by a NEW CREATION

"There is a way that theologians think about life in the here and now that is very helpful and can impart to us realistic expectations. Everything we say and do, everything we commit ourselves to, and every situation, location, and relationship we experience is experienced between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. ...Knowing that you are living between the already and the not yet tells you where you are located in God's story of redemption. ...Already God has given us his Word as our guide. Already he has sent his Son to live, die, and rise again for our salvation. Already he has given us his Spirit to live within us. But the world has not yet been restored. Sin has not yet been completely eradicated. We have not yet been formed in the perfect likeness of Jesus. Suffering, sadness, and death are not yet no more. ...It is hard to live in the middle, but that is exactly where we live. We live in a world that is still sadly and terribly broken. ...When you start unpacking what life is really like between the already and the not yet, you gain perspectives that are enormously helpful for understanding the things you need to face..." **Paul Tripp**, Marriage, p. 19

This "Already-Not-Yet" is the Arena of The Spirit's Ministry of Sanctification! ...and... This Chapter has been 'Uniquely INVADED' (in a new way) by the Holy Spirit's Outpouring!

2 Cor 3:7-8 ⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?

... **Mt. SINAI was a Powerful Upgrade** (over what the Patriarchs had in relating to God)!! ...But **PENTECOST is an Even Bigger upgrade of God's Power & Presence in Our Lives!!**

Rom 8 provides a contrasting commentary on this New Chapter that has Dawned!!

Rom 8:1-4 ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life **has set you free** in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Mt. Sinai Introduced "RIGHTEOUSNESS" (The LAW) but it did Nothing to Man!! ...Mt. Sinai did not "upgrade" our humanity—it simply clarified God's Righteousness ...Leaving us CONDEMNED (clearly aware that we fall short!)

...BUT something was going to happen in God's NEXT CHAPTER that is an "Upgrade" to Mt. Sinai ...It is the "OUTPOURING of the Ministry of the Spirit in the LAST DAYS"

2 Cor 3:16-18 ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **freedom**. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

(1) Transformation Dawns When FREEDOM is Available! There is a "Day of FREEDOM" (and it is not like the days that preceded Pentecost!—ie, Expect Something Different!!)

...Even the Story of Mt. Sinai—Begins with FREEDOM from Egypt!!

...Jesus Ministry (Anointed by the Spirit)—Begins with FREEDOM!

Lk 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

NOTE: This is an UPGRADED Freedom—but in this "Already-Not-Yet" chapter it is still not an ULTIMATE Freedom ...Rom 8:19-22

(2) Freedom's Movement Comes from Spirit Empowerment/Enablement—not mere Self-Determination! [This is Not a "Mt. Sinai Pep-Rally" to awaken Human Effort, Dedication, & Determination (which doesn't work according to Rom 8.)

2 Cor 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **freedom**.
...For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Rom 8:12-15 ¹² So then brother, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba Father!'

This "Now-Not-Yet" REDEMPTION Chap. Is a WAR CHAPTER! ...Putting to Death = Warfare!!

Eph 5:18 "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit
...at Mt. Sinai there was Only a "DO NOT" ...but Now there is a "BE FILLED w/ the SPIRIT"

I wonder how many modern Christians have a LOW VIEW of FREEDOM?!! ...The Christian Life is about forgiveness, comfort/care from God, Going to Heaven..... But, maybe not so much about "FREEDOM here & now—followed by TRANSFORMATION in the here & now!"

"The church has been appointed by Christ to be 'a royal house of priests' (i. 6; v. 10), to mediate his royal and priestly authority to the whole world. Through the church he is to exercise his sovereignty over the nations, smashing their resistance to his rule and releasing their subjects for a new and better loyalty (i. 5; ii. 26 f.; xi. 15 ff.; xii. 5; xv. 3–4; xvii. 14; xix. 11 ff.). Through the church he is to mediate God's forgiveness and lead the world to repentance (iii. 7–9; xi. 13; xiv. 6–7; xx. 1–6)." **G.B. Caird** (quoted in *New Studies in Biblical Theology – God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood* (NSBT))

(3) There is a New Day of TRANSFORMATION!

...It was NOT Automatic for PAUL's Disciples—or PETER's Disciples (1Pet.) ...it is
Not Automatic for Us!

2Cor 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into
the same image from **one degree of glory to another.**

Transformation Expectations

- (a) Transformation is an Incremental Process ... "transformed... from one degree of glory to another"
- (b) Transformation is Redemptive & Restorative (think Genesis 1-2) ...it is "RETURNING to the Original Story"—ie, Revealing the Glory of God!" ...IMAGING the Creator ... "showing forth the excellencies of Him" (1Pet 2:10)
- (c) Transformation Needs to "SEE SOMETHING" Powerful, Impacting, and Infecting!
("Beholding the glory of the Lord")

**...The World was Designed for the Powerful Influence of the Presence of God! ...Transformation
NEEDS the Powerful Influence of the Glory of God**

The Bible Knows of No Such Creature as Those who are "CASUALLY ACQUAINTED—but
RADICALLY TRANSFORMED"

"Beholding the glory of the Lord" ...Does Something Powerfully Transformative to Us!! ...it
injects Humility ...Gratitude ...Smallness ...Wonder ...Amazement ...Faith ...Courage ...Clarity
...Correction ...Conviction ...etc.

...These are the 'Amino Acids & Protein Building Blocks' of Growth & Transformation!