

“Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth” (John 17:17)

This is a short verse, but it has great meaning. Having used the latter half of this verse as the name for our Church, it may be beneficial to understand how we understand this phrase. This verse should not only speak to us, it is in the word of God for every Christian. Lets take a minute and go through the understanding.

Sanctify them

Our Lord Jesus Christ is praying for His disciples here. However, we are included in the prayer (John 17:20). The Greek word for “*sanctify*” comes from the root word “hagiazō” with a primary meaning to be set apart. The word “*saint*” is also derived from the same root word. When Christ was praying to the Father to “*sanctify them*”, He is praying for us to be set apart unto God for His holy purposes. What are they set apart from? The world! The world is against them since they have been saved, they no longer belong to this world. Therefore, Christ says “*They are not of the world, even as I am not of it*” (John 17:16). This world is not our friend, and the world will respond to us with rejection, hatred and judgment. Once we are saved, God has done a work in us to set us apart. God has made us holy by saving us out of the world and imputing His righteousness to us, regenerating, indwelling, and filling us with His Spirit. However, this verse is also saying that God is going to distinguish us from the world.

How are we distinguished?

If I look at a believer and an unbeliever, on the surface I may not be able to tell the difference. Well, one may wear a cross, and that may or may not give it away since crosses are common. One may dress in such a way which is not appropriate and I may make assumptions which could be wrong. In reality, I cannot see what is in a person’s heart. How can we know that a person is set apart from the world for God’s holy purposes? Some watch what we do. If the works we do are compatible with what others think they should be, they will say we are Christians. This still may not tell us if the person is set apart for God’s purposes. Religious people are practicing conduct all the time. They clean the outside of the cup well, but inside is just as dirty as ever. Jesus was not fooled by this religious crowd of Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, He told them to their face that they were hypocrites (Matt 23:28). They were like whitewashed tombs, they were like a brood of poisonous snakes, but at the same time, they highly respected by the people. Everyone thought they were the closest people to God on the earth.

Christ is praying that we may be separated from the world, and he doesn't leave it to us to define what this sanctifying means. Since God already saved us out of the world, and out of Adam, we are separated positionally, but experientially we may still feel very much attached to the world. If we are to separate ourselves, we need to have the standard by which we are to judge our separation. How are we to be sanctified then?

By the Truth

The means by which the sanctification is to occur is the truth. How are we distinguished? By the truth! In the times in which we live, Christians are seeking to be sanctified by many other ways. God desires us to conduct ourselves according to what He has accomplished in us. We are set apart unto God for His holy purposes. Now, we are to conduct ourselves in a way that recognizes His work in us. We are to orient to the truth, the reality of who and what we are. God made us new on the inside and that is the truth. You may not feel like a "new creation in Christ", but you are. You may not know what God has done in your life, but it is your responsibility to take in the truth. You have a responsibility to submit your thinking to God and allow Him to transform you by the truth. You cannot be transformed if cling to your thoughts in Adam. From the perspective of the world, what makes you different? You don't have wings, you cannot fly, and you cannot physically do anything different. What makes us different? The truth is the answer to this. Our thinking the truth is unique.

"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor 2:14).

Unbelievers cannot think the thoughts of God. They have no idea who God is or what He thinks or requires. The only ones who know God on this earth are believers, and that is because God has done a work of salvation in us to set us apart from the world. We are different, but not in the way many are trying to make a difference. Many are trying to show their differences by how they look, or how they speak; but we are different because of what we think. The truth of God is what transforms our old thinking of Adam into the mind of Christ. What is this truth?

Your word is truth

The truth of God is found in His word. When God speaks, he reveals Himself. If God never spoke, no one would ever know anything about their creator. However, God has spoken and He has preserved His thoughts for us in writing. Many have claimed they have the truth. Cults and organizations have all said they alone have the truth. Even many Christian organizations have declared that they alone have the truth. God

tells us where truth lies, "*your word is truth*"! If we are to learn truth, we must focus on His holy word. Many are looking away from the word for truth. They are focused on tradition, human experience, and emotion. Some are focused on hearing from God by listening to prophecies, tongues, visions and dreams. It seems unnecessary to say this, but I must, God's word is His own revelation. His word is His story about who and what He is. Stop listening to all those sources who claim to know who and what God is and get it straight from God. Truth is found in the word of God.

Putting it all together

God has His people in the world. These people He has set apart for Himself for His holy purposes. They will be distinguished or set apart from the world by means of the truth, and that truth is found in His word. These people will be different, not in how they look, but in how they think. Their thoughts are not of this world. Their thoughts are what eye has not seen nor ear heard, or has ever entered into to the imagination of man (1Cor 2:9). The word of God has become the reality of their thinking by means of the transformation of the Spirit. Many claim to know God, but when it comes to the word of truth, they have no idea. If their knowledge of God does not come from His own revelation, they can be deceived. Let us look to the word, focus on the word, submit to the spiritual realities in the word and we will have the mind of Christ. Word-is-Truth Christian Church is committed to these principles and we have been set apart unto God for His holy purposes. Join us as we allow to word to transform every area of our lives. "Your word is truth"!

Pastor Douglas E. Presley
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