

Title: Sanctification by God Leading Us

Text: Exodus 13: 17-21

Date: June 24, 2018

Place: SGBC, NJ

Exodus 13 begins with God telling Moses to sanctify the firstborn to him, “they are mine.” This whole chapter shows us something of sanctification.

Sanctification—holiness—is the doctrine where so many turn believers from Christ back to the law; from Mt. Zion back to Mt. Sinai; from liberty back to bondage. But sanctification is all of GOD, apart from our works: by God the Father electing a people by which he set us apart unto himself as his own possession, by Christ Jesus the Son of God fulfilling God’s will and perfecting forever all them that are sanctified by his one offering and by the Holy Spirit regenerating us in the new birth through “*the hearing of faith*,” the hearing of the gospel of Christ, not by the hearing of works.

This time, we see “Sanctification by God Leading Us”

Exodus 13: 17: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18: But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. 19: And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. 20: And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21: And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from* before the people.

Proposition: God keeps his people sanctified unto him by leading us by day and by night by Christ our risen Head through the Holy Spirit.

KEPT IN THE WAY OF HOLINESS BY GOD LEADING US

Exodus 13: 17: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them...

When God freed them, he began leading them to himself to his land that he promised to give them. When born of the Spirit, God translates us into the way of holiness and begins leading us to him in his holy habitation, that land GOD has promised his people.

Hebrews 10: 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15: *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16: This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

God makes his covenant of grace with each of his people by the Holy Spirit bearing witness in our hearts that Christ sanctified us as he justified us on the cross. God writes on our new heart the law of sanctification and justification by Christ, the law of redemption by Christ, the law of repentance from dead works and faith in Christ. So we cease working for forgiveness and begin being led to holy God in his holy place in the land of promise.

Hebrews 10: 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near [to holy God in the holiest of holies in heaven] with a true heart [a holy, sanctified heart] in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Before we arrive in the promised land, we must go through this wilderness called life. But God leads his sanctified child in the way of holiness.

Isaiah 35: 5: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6: Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7: And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes. 8: And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness;

Christ is the Way of Holiness in which we travel through this wilderness.

Isaiah 35: 8: ...the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those:

Christ is the Way of holiness only for those he has made holy in his blood and the Spirit washes in regeneration.

Isaiah 35: 8: ...the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

We are fools by nature, still full of sin in our flesh, but we shall not err because we are led by his guiding hand.

Isaiah 35: 9: No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there;

The devil cannot harm us in Christ the Way.

Isaiah 35: 9: ...but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

We shall not run in haste and fear of the enemy, but we shall walk calmly because we are protected every step of the way.

Isaiah 35: 10: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Christ said he will lose none of those he ransomed by his blood. By his comfort we shall be comforted and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

CHRIST LEADS US

Exodus 13: 21: And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Christ is not only the way, he is the one who leads us. The pillar of a cloud and the pillar of fire is Christ. Our risen Redeemer leads his dear children alone.

Isaiah 48:17: Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Isaiah 4:2: In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 3: And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: 4: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. 5: And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence. 6: And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

Psalms 23: 1: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

Christ shall not forsake us in the way—"He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

Nehemiah 9:19: Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go.

Christ has sworn, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That is the promise of our Redeemer who shed his precious blood for us.

Psalms 27:10: When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

Christ leads all us Jacobs all the way at every moment and keeps us at all times.

Deuteronomy 32:10: He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Therefore brethren let us not live in this world clawing to get gain like the rest of the world. He says

Hebrews 13:5: *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6: So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

THE LORD LEADS IN THE BEST WAY

Exodus 13: 17: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18: But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea...

Christ intercedes for us to be kept.

John 17: 9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine... 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

And it is the risen GodMan our Head that keeps his people sanctified from the evil.

Exodus 23: 20: Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

That means he does not always lead us the nearest way—“*God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.*”

How often do we desire something to happen now? We want the nearest way, fastest. But in his good providence God does not lead us the way we think we should go. He is keeping us sanctified from the evil because he knows what each of his children will do—“*for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.*” If God had led them the nearest way they would have been attacked by the Philistines. God knew as soon as they saw war, they would turn and run back to Egypt. Therefore, though it be long, Christ leads us the way best for us—“*But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea.*”

When I first began to think the Lord would use me to preach, I asked a pastor what to do. He said, “Don’t tell a soul. Wait on the Lord.” The LORD took me the long way. It was 5 more years before I preached the first time and 8 more years after that before the LORD called me to pastor. The LORD knew I was a novice. He knew if I was attacked, I would go backwards. So he did not take me the way that was near. He took me the long way to teach me to trust him, to preach Christ and him crucified and to wait on the Lord to work in his people. It was the right way. Brethren, do not become discouraged when he takes you the long way. He is keeping you sanctified from the evil.

Also, often the Lord takes *from us* that which is dearest to us and it causes us much sorrow. When our children were very little, I would see them take hold of something and I would take it from them. They would cry. But I knew it would harm them; that is why I took it away. They always came to me with both arms out, crying, and I would take them up and comfort them. Brethren, we often grip God’s gifts and let go of the Giver. So God takes away that which is so dear to us. We cry! But he knows it would harm us. So he takes it away to keep us running to him alone. Then he takes us up and comforts us. He is keeping us sanctified from the evil.

Psalm 121: 3: He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4: Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5: The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand. 6: The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. 7: The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8: The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

So brethren as we journey through this wilderness, remember the words of our Lord,

Isaiah 43:1: But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. 2: When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3: For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4: Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5: Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6: I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7: *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

KEPT UNITED TO OUR BRETHREN

Exodus 13: 18:...and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

The LORD keeps those he has separated sanctified and united to each other. In this world, the closest thing we have to Christ in body, to touch and hold and express our love towards, are brethren in Christ.

This harnessed state of Israel alluded to the church of God in this world, which is described as an army with banners coming up out of the wilderness (Song of Solomon 6:4; 8:5). But the margin here reads by “five in a rank.” They came up as soldiers in ranks. But the word is in the passive participle. They were harnessed not by their own hands, but by the hand of God their Deliverer. Five is commonly used in Scripture to represent grace (Five Offerings — Five Feasts).

Brethren, we are a people harnessed by grace, harnessed by our God, brought out of bondage and harnessed as a band of soldiers, but we are not soldiers who fight the battle! Yes, we must fight the good fight of faith. We are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. But the victory was won for us by Christ our Redeemer, who brought us out of the house of bondage and death long ago when he destroyed Satan and led captivity captive, as the Captain of our Salvation!

At times the Lord leads us face-to-face with the enemy. He did that to Israel at the Red Sea. We behold our utter weakness. But that is when the Lord uses our brethren, as he did Moses, to remind us to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Then the Lord makes us behold his strong hand as he fights for us and makes us overcome

Exodus 14:19: And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

The pillar of fire was darkness to the Egyptians, though it was light to Israel. So Christ is the salvation, joy and comfort of his people, and a stumbling-stone and rock of offense to those who believe not. There is nothing common or universal about the work of Christ. What he does he does for his elect alone, and he does effectually. So Christ keeps us sanctified by teaching us to fear him and not anything or anyone else.

Deuteronomy 1: 29: Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30: The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31: And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place...

And in all this the LORD uses our brethren to whom we are harnessed to remind us of this good news. When one is troubled and doubting, the LORD has strengthened another to speak a word in season to the troubled brother. Next time, it will be the other strengthening the other. Oh, how good to be united to brethren in the Way of holiness!

CHRIST IS THE WAY OF HOLINESS INTO THE PROMISED LAND

Exodus 13: 19: And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Genesis 50: 24: And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25: And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 26: So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Joseph was not buried in a tomb but in an Egyptian sarcophagus. He was second in command in Egypt behind Pharaoh so it was probably gold and ornate sarcophagus. It was kept visible so that the children of Israel could see it or at least see where it lay. So every time they looked toward Joseph's coffin they remembered his promise, "*God will surely visit you.*" For all those 430 years in bondage in Egypt, that coffin kept them in remembrance and cheered their hearts to wait on the Lord to come and deliver them. Then 430 years to the day, just as Joseph promised, the Lord visited them and delivered them out of Egypt. So they did as they swore to Joseph they "*carried up his bones away hence with them.*"

Brethren, Christ promised us that he would come again and deliver us from this world.

Colossians 3:4: When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Hebrews 9:28: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

But we have something far better than what they had! We do not have a coffin but an empty tomb! The Son of God, Christ Jesus succeeded in redeeming every chosen child the Father entrusted to him. And because Christ fulfilled his covenant promises to the Father, the Father also fulfilled his covenant promises to the Son. Christ is risen, the glorified GodMan with all power in heaven and in earth. As we journey through this wilderness of Egypt that empty tomb keeps us in remembrance and cheers our hearts to wait on our Lord to come and deliver us. But when he comes, he will be the one carrying our bones out of this Egypt into the promised land.

Job 19: 25: For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: 26: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Philippians 3:21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3: 2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Psalm 17:15: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Romans 8:29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Corinthians 15:49: And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

In that day when the journey is over we will say as the Psalmist said of Israel, *Ps 107:7: And he led [us] forth by the right way, that [we] might go to a city of habitation.*

Amen!