

**Totally Transformed**

Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-24

Code: 49-22

We come now to Ephesians chapter 4. We are going through the book of Ephesians, and we are in chapter 4 again. It's the same text that we looked at last week, but we were unable to finish it, so we'll do that this morning: Ephesians 4, verses 17 to 24. And I'm going to read it, and then we're going to look again at these wonderful words of divine revelation.

"So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Now we here have a comparison between the people before salvation and the same people afterward. Before salvation—and this is true of all unconverted people—they walk "in the futility of their mind . . . darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God," ignorant, hard-hearted, callous, "given . . . over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." Verse 22 says this "former manner of life" is one that is "being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." That is the diagnosis of everyone prior to salvation. When salvation comes, as noted in verses 20 and 21, everything changes. Verse 23 says, "That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind . . . put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." The difference is the salvation that is the theme of verses 20 and 21.

And we saw last time that when Paul says, "Learned Christ," he's talking about salvation. You learned because the gospel is truth that you have to hear and learn. Faith comes by hearing the word concerning Christ, Romans 10:17. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, as we pointed out last week, that you have to "learn of Me." John 6:45 talks about [how] the Father has taught us. So coming to eternal salvation is a matter of learning the truth; and when that truth is learned, there is a transformation that is monumental, and that is the transformation that is described here.

It's important for us to understand this because there are so many people apparently confused about who is a Christian and who is not. And some people would assume that if you go to a Christian church, or something that proports to be a Christian church, that is enough. If you have good feelings about Christ, if you've prayed a prayer to Him, if you've "made a decision," you are automatically a Christian.

But the definition here of salvation is far more careful than just those musings about Jesus that may have engaged a person for a moment or at some point in their life to cause them to pray a prayer,

because what you have here is spiritual transformation. Salvation is a transformation. It is the divine miracle that transforms the sinner into the saint. It is what Jesus was talking about when He said you can't enter the kingdom of God unless you have been born again. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation; old things have passed away, and new things have come." It's essential for us, because this is such a constant question that people ask, to understand how we know when someone is a Christian. It's essential for us for the sake of others and for our own sake as well.

So Paul is showing us a dramatic transformation here. This isn't the first time he did that in Ephesians. Go back to chapter 2. Very much in a parallel fashion, Paul begins chapter 2 by saying, "And you were"—and again, this is prior to salvation—"dead in your trespasses and sins." And when Paul talks about the condition of the unregenerate, he talks about them as "dead" in the sense that they cannot respond to God or divine truth. They're "dead in . . . trespasses and sins." And then he goes further to describe them as—saying they "walked according to the course of this world"—and that refers to the evil system that dominates human life—"according to the prince of the power of the air" who operates that system, namely Satan, who is also "the spirit . . . now working in the sons of disobedience." So here is the description of the unconverted person: dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this satanic system that occupies the world under the sovereign power of Satan, who works not only over them but in them as sons of disobedience.

And then in verse 3 he says, "We too all formerly lived in" that same condition—"in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." So there you have that very detailed description of every human being who is unconverted. And then you have the salvation note in verse 4, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This is the transformation of salvation.

As a result of it, go down to verse 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Dramatic change from all those connotations and directly identified categories of sinfulness in verses 1 to 3. We pass into the section on salvation, and out of it we arrive at verse 10, and we have a new creation. This is God's masterpiece—that's what the word "workmanship" indicates—"created in Christ Jesus," and the result is "good works." This is a dramatic change; this is a miraculous change.

And I told you last week, and I'll point at least to one text from the Old Testament, that this is the way salvation has always been described. Go back to Ezekiel 36. You can turn to it, or you can just listen. Ezekiel 36, verses 25 to 27, is a statement about what happens to someone when God saves them, because salvation was the same throughout all of human history and is described in terminology very much like Paul uses in Ephesians.

Ezekiel 36:25, talking about the time that God saves His people, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." This is not just a forensic declaration of justification, this is a transformation. This is such a change that it is described as using clean water to clean "all your filthiness," and additionally to free you from your idols so that you have singular devotion and worship to the Lord.

"Moreover," verse 26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove

the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” It isn’t that something is added; something is removed, and something replaces it. And what replaces the heart of stone is a new heart and a new spirit.

And then in verse 27, “I will put My Spirit, [My Holy Spirit,] within you,” and the result: “cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.” That is salvation. Salvation is a washing from filthiness and from all other gods. It is the giving of a new heart, the removal of the old heart. It is planting the Holy Spirit. It is causing us to walk in God’s statutes and to observe His ordinances. This is transformation. We looked at many other Scriptures last time to demonstrate that from the Old Testament.

So as we come back to Ephesians chapter 4—let’s go look at it again—we are seeing something that is consistent with the way salvation is described in Scripture, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now Paul begins in verse 17 by saying that we no longer walk “as the Gentiles . . . walk.” We can’t live the way we used to live; we can’t. It’s not right, and it’s not even possible. Did you get that? It’s not right, and it’s not even possible. We don’t walk as the *ethne*, as all human ethnicities walk. We don’t live the way they live; we aren’t characterized by the things that characterize them.

Now let me just say as a footnote, the descriptions of people before they’re converted in Ephesians 2 and 4 sound extreme, and they are extreme. And it doesn’t mean that everybody lives those out to the maximum extreme possibility of evil. Not everyone is a mass murderer; not everyone is a serial rapist. Not everyone is like that. But everyone falls into those categories to one degree or another; it’s only a question of degree, not nature.

And why is that? Why is it that everybody isn’t as extremely evil as is possible? The answer is because God has put restraints in life. The restraints in life: one, the law of God written in the heart, which informs man even though he doesn’t know the Bible, about what is right and wrong; and a conscience that wounds him if he violates that law in the heart. That’s a restraint. Family is a restraint. Government is a restraint. The threat of punishment is a restraint. The threat of death is a restraint.

So not everybody is as bad as they could be, but everybody falls under the same definition. And the main issue is indicated in verse 18—all of this is true because they are “excluded from the life of God.” They do not possess divine life; they do not possess “the life of God.” Mark that because that is very, very, very important. That’s part of them being dead in trespasses and sins: the absence of the life of God.

But again, back to verses 20 and 21, you see the picture of salvation: learning Christ, being taught about Him, the truth in Jesus which is the gospel—direct reference to salvation. And in that saving work, I want you to see what happens. In that saving work Paul uses three infinitives to reveal the nature of the transformation, three infinitives. One is in verse 22: “Lay aside”; the next is in verse 23: “Be renewed”; and the next in verse 24: “Put on.” Three infinitives to reveal the essential nature of this transformation. It is a laying aside, it is a putting on, and of being renewed. This is not exhortation, by the way; these three infinitives describe the transformation by God, the Holy Spirit, through the saving gospel of Jesus Christ in the life of a sinner. This is the work of God.

Now look at verse 22, “In reference to your former manner of life, you [laid] aside the old self.” This is

a reality: “You [laid] aside the old self.” What is “the old self”? What you were, the composite of your invisible nature. Why did you lay it aside under the power of God? Because you heard the gospel, and you were taught the gospel, and you saw it as the truth, and you believed it. God opened your mind, opened your heart, gave you life, gave you understanding; a divine miracle took place. You heard the gospel, you learned the gospel, and you laid aside the old self.

That’s a powerful statement, very powerful statement: You laid aside the old self. Then in verse 24, you “put on the new self.” This is transformation, and this is what salvation is. It isn’t that when you were saved you were repaired. It isn’t that when you were saved you were realigned. It isn’t that when you were saved that you have an old self, and added to the old self is now a new self, and so you have the old self and the new self competing. No. You put off the old self; you put on the new self. The old self is not repaired; it’s not realigned—it’s removed; it’s removed, and it’s replaced. This is very, very important for you to understand. If you are a true believer, this is what has happened to you.

Now let me take you to Colossians 3, which I read earlier, to give you some further insight into this. Colossians chapter 3, Paul is essentially saying the same thing. But let’s just capture a few of his phrases. He describes this transformation in this way, verse 2—1, 2, and 3—let’s just go to verse 3: “You have died.” You *have* died. You have *died*. Now, you can’t get a more extreme reality than death; and that’s the metaphor he uses to describe what happened to your old life. Your old self died.

And then verse 1, “You have been raised.” You have died, and you have been raised. The old died, and there was a new creation resurrected. Another way to say it is down in verses 9 and 10: “You laid aside the old self with its evil practices”—you laid aside the old self, and when it went, all its evil practices went as well. And verse 10, you “put on the new self, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.” In other words, the new self is godlike.

So “you have died”; parallel to that, Paul says that would be, you laid aside the old self. “You have been raised”; parallel to that, you have “put on the new self.” “Have died” corresponds to “laid aside”; “been raised” corresponds to “put on.” Those four verbs basically tell us what salvation does: It is a death and a resurrection. It is the removal of an old self, which is replaced by a new self. This is powerful language. This gets to the core of the identity of a Christian.

Let me show you Paul’s language with regard to this in the sixth chapter of Romans, Romans chapter 6. And the language is consistent and particularly definitive here in Romans 6. The transformation—look at the beginning of the chapter, verse 2: “We . . . died to sin.” We died to sin. Look at verse 4, “We have been buried with [Christ].” And then verse 5, “If we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” Again, the language is the language of death and resurrection. It’s the language of going out of existence and a new reality coming into existence.

If you look at verse 6, in our death, what happened? The old self died, “was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with.” It’s gone. The old self is gone, completely gone—strong verb there. It’s done away with so much so, “that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.” What happened at salvation is a real death in which the body of sin was removed, and a real resurrection in which we were raised from the dead to a new self that possesses—listen carefully to this—eternal life, eternal life. Verse 8 sums it up: “If we have died with

Christ, we believe that we also shall live with Him.” “So,” verse 11, “consider yourselves to be dead to sin . . . alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

This is the language of transformation, and this is what you have to understand because there seems to be so much confusion about who’s a Christian and who’s not. This is not only confusion in the minds of people who are trying to evaluate others, but confusion in the minds of people who aren’t sure what their condition is. Where you have salvation you have, at the end of verse 4, “newness of life,” Romans 6:4.

You literally have to see it this way, all right? When Jesus said He’s coming to the world to die, “God [sends] His Son to die, and whoever believes in Him shall have”—what?—“everlasting life.” So that’s not something in the future; you have that now. You possess everlasting life. That is not a duration; that is not a quantity of life, that is a quality of life, that is a kind of life. That is the life of God in the soul of man.

Can I say this to you and have you understand it? Your conversion was a far greater transformation than your death will be because you’ve already received a new nature; you’ve already received a new self that will live forever, a new self that has been created in righteousness, holiness, and truth. I think we have to understand that. It’s not that when you were saved, the Lord helped you live a better life; you went through a death and resurrection. It’s not just a better life, it’s a transformed life.

Go down to verse 16, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart.” And that obedience is expressed by Paul as putting off and putting on. “You became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness,” “slaves of righteousness.” Look down in verse 22, “[Being] freed from sin and [a slave] to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.” If you have been saved, you possess now eternal life, you possess now eternal life.

This is an amazing thing for us to understand. In the language of Ephesians 4, you have put off the old self, put on the new self, and are renewed in the spirit of your mind. You don’t think the way you used to think. You could parallel that with having a new heart and a new spirit. It’s not just that God treats you differently, you are different; you’re a new creature.

Colossians 3:10 says you have been literally created in a true fashion to be like the image of the One who created you. This is not a psychological change; this is not just the fact that you think a little bit differently about theology and life. This is a change, Ephesians 4, that literally alters your mind—“renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Not just your mind; you might think that’s just kind of how you think on the surface. So the Holy Spirit goes deeper than that—“the spirit of your mind,” all the way down to the fountains of your comprehension and your reason.

I read an article this week that said, after a survey of 600 pairs of Christian parents, that 4 percent of Christian parents have a Christian worldview; 4 percent of parents who say they are Christians have a Christian worldview. You know how I feel about surveys to start with. But you’re trying to tell me that 96 percent of people who have been created anew, who have been given new life, who are the

possessors of eternal life, who, in the words of 2 Peter 1:4, are “partakers of the divine nature,” those who possess everlasting life, those who have been renewed in their minds—you’re telling me that 96 percent of them see the world the way they saw it before? Not possible.

Now they may not know all the elements of Scripture that help them understand and discern everything in the world, but to say 4 percent of Christian parents have a biblical worldview—you’d better check your definition of “Christian” because when you were saved, you put off the old self, you put on the new self by the power of God, and deep down in your mind you were transformed; and you don’t think the way you used to think about anything. “The new self,” Ephesians 4 says, “in the likeness of God,” “in the likeness of God.” Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:16, “[You] have the mind of Christ.” I think Christ has a biblical worldview—just saying.

So there, in that fourth chapter of Ephesians, we are told that we have been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth and in the very likeness of God. This is the total transformation. Again, it’s not addition. You aren’t what you used to be, and something was added to it, and now you’ve got a war between what you were and what you are. No, your inner person, your inner man, your new self replaces the old self.

Look at 1 John chapter 3 because I think John helps us to see the distinctiveness that transformation brings. First John 3:7, “Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous.” Not hard, is it? “The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” His righteousness is like God’s righteousness because he’s been created in Christ Jesus; he’s been created in the likeness of God; he’s been created in the image of the One who created everything.

On the other hand, verse 8 says, “The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him”—God’s seed—“and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” The old is dead; the new has come. “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” It’s not that hard to distinguish, people.

“What do you mean? You mean they never sin?” No. They don’t practice unrighteousness. If you practice unrighteousness, you give evidence of being “of the devil.” If that’s the pattern of your life, then you’re not converted, whatever you think you may have prayed or whatever emotional connection you thought you had with Jesus. The children of the devil and the children of the Lord are easy to distinguish: One practices sin; the other practices righteousness. In other words, the dominating pattern of the life is sin, or the dominating pattern of the life is righteousness. And it’s not just that Christians are, for some external reason, better or able to stay away from sin because they work harder at it. It is that they stay away from sin because they have been recreated in righteousness, holiness, and truth.

Now I know what you’re thinking; you’re thinking, “But wait a minute, I’m doing a little inventory, and I have to confess that I sin.” And I’m glad you did. “But how do I understand that? How am I to understand that? This seems really black and white.” So let’s go back to Romans 6, and I want to help you with that.

Romans 6. Paul will not—listen carefully—will not locate sin in the new self. He will not locate sin in the new self, and his language is explicit about that. He knows the new self is created in righteousness and holiness and truth. The new self is the creation of the Holy Spirit—it's regeneration; it's a new birth; it's created to be in the image of God. The new self partakes of the divine nature. The new self possesses eternal life. You're not going to get eternal life in the future; you have it, you live it. It is your life; it is the invisible part of you that is the recreated miracle of divine, sovereign grace that has made you in righteousness, holiness, and truth.

We say, "Well, I'm glad to hear that. But what about sin?" Paul will not locate sin in that new self. In chapter 6 of Romans, Paul says this, verse 11, "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, alive to God." That's the creation. "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you may obey its lusts." Paul locates sin not in the new self, but in the mortal body—the part of you that is not eternal, the part of you that is material and mortal. And he always is careful to do that, so that the reality is this: You are a new creation, partaker of the divine nature, possessing eternal life; you just happen to also be connected to mortality, and that's where sin lies—in your mortality, the part of you that can die. The inner part of you can never die; that's why it's called eternal life.

Now I want you to notice the careful language of Paul. Go to chapter 7 of Romans. We're not surprised at all. If we come down to verse 14, and we read this from Paul, personal testimony: "We know that the Law is spiritual." In fact, he says back in verse 12, "The Law is holy, the commandment is holy, righteous, and good." He knows that. "We know the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin." He locates the sin issue in the flesh, which is like the mortal body of chapter 6.

And this is how it reveals itself: "What I'm doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I'm doing the very thing I hate. If I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing the Law is good." "Something's wrong; I don't like it. I am a new person; I am a new creation. My physical death will be less of a change than my conversion was, because I've already been fit for eternal heaven because I've been given eternal life, which is the life of God. So why is there all this struggle?"

So in verse 17, notice how Paul distances his new self from it: "So now, no longer am I the one doing it"—no. The new I says the law is spiritual; the new I says the law is holy, the commandment holy, righteous, and good. And maybe says with David, "Oh, how I love Your law." So it's not I doing it, verse 17, "Sin which dwells in me."

Sin's still around. Verse 18, "I know nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." There we go. It's in the mortal body; it's in the flesh. Your mortal body and your flesh is dying. Amen? Correct? This is the part of you that still bears the Curse, and it shows up because "the willing is present in me"—that's the new self—"but the doing of [it] is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. . . . I'm doing the very thing I do not want, I'm no longer the one doing it."

Isn't that interesting? He says, "It's not the real me." He's not being irresponsible; he's just parsing out spiritual reality and saying, "Sin is so alien to me, I hate it. It's not what I love, it's not what I want, it's not what I desire. But it's still there in my mortal body, in my flesh; that's where it resides. So I find"—in verse 21—"the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man"—there it is, there's that new self—"but I see a different law"—where is it? It's "in the members of my body"; it's in my flesh, it's in my mortal body,

and it wages “war against the law of my mind” and makes me “a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.” Again, he keeps saying, “It’s not me. It’s not the new self; it’s not my heart, it’s not my new heart; it’s not my new spirit. It is in my flesh; it is in the members of my body; it is in my mortality; it is in my members, my fleshly, mortal faculties.”

Verse 24, he shows his frustration by saying, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” And again he says it’s the body. You know in ancient times, very often when somebody killed someone, as a punishment they would take the murdered corpse and strap it to the murderer, and it wouldn’t take long before the body decayed and brought about a horrendous death to the killer. Paul feels that way. He is full of divine life, but there’s a corpse strapped to him. Now, he knows he’ll triumph, so he says it in verse 25: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” “He will free me from this corpse. He’ll free me from this corpse.”

But notice how verse 25 continues: Not yet. “So on the one hand I myself with my mind,” my renewed mind, “am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.” Hasn’t happened yet, right? “I know it’ll happen, I know Christ will deliver me, I know someday it’s going to happen. Someday I’m going to get rid of this wretched sin that attaches itself to me.”

And oh, by the way, in chapter 8, verse 1, I know it’s not going to condemn me, for “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Why will we never be condemned if we’re in Christ? Because Christ was condemned in our place. And so we struggle, and we will struggle all our life long.

Sometimes young people say to me, “Do you ever get victory over besetting sins?” Sure. As you grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, you’ll sin less. But I warn you: Though you sin less, you feel worse. Paul has this horror of sin because his inner man is righteous, and he sees sin against that backdrop. I think Paul, and any believer, is far more sensitive to sin than an unbeliever because an unbeliever has nothing to compare it to. Unbelievers don’t fight the battle with the flesh; they’re all flesh. And the old self and the flesh are very compatible partners.

So the good news is you will sin less as you grow, but you’ll feel worse because the less you sin, the more you become like God: The more you hate sin. And in your maturity you will hate your own sin a lot more than somebody else’s. So Paul recognizes the reality of sin, and he knows there’s going to be a triumph. When is that triumph going to come?

Go to chapter 8, verse 23. Verse 22 he says all of creation is groaning under the Curse. Verse 23, “We ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit”—because the Spirit is in us, and the Spirit has dispensed into that new inner self love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control—fruit of the Spirit. We have those. We have the divine nature. We have eternal life, the life of God in our souls. We are the temple of the Trinity. Because of all of this is in the new self, “We groan within ourselves”—there’s an agony in living—“waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons”—what do you mean, Paul?—“I mean”—“the redemption of”—what?—“our body.”

And again, that’s all that we need. We’ve already been transformed. When you die, it’s not a transformation of your inner person; it’s the subtraction of your sinful flesh. When you see a coffin, I know they always dress people up. But what you’re really seeing is nothing but flesh, nothing but mortality, nothing but the occupying part of humanity that holds sin and fights against the new self.



So we rejoice when someone goes to glory, not only because they're in heaven but because they've left the body behind. And there will be in the future a new body, a resurrection body—right? 1 Corinthians 15—that'll be like His glorious body. There'll be no battle in heaven between the glorified body and the glorified soul. So we are “waiting,” he says in verse 23, “eagerly for . . . the redemption of our body.”

When you think about heaven—and we've sung about heaven this morning. When you think about heaven, it's not so much about seeing Aunt Alice, although you might be able to find her up there if she's there, and it's not so much about the beauty and the splendor of it, as it is that the struggle with sin is over. It's over. It's over—the redemption of the body.

In the meantime, this is how we need to think about ourselves. We need to think about ourselves as new creations created in the likeness of God, in the image of the one who created us. We have, in our salvation, been enabled by the Holy Spirit to put off the old and put on the new. We have a renewed mind. We now love righteousness, holiness, and truth.

But how do we gain victory? How do we get the upside of the struggle between the new self and the flesh? Well I think, first of all, you have the power to do it in the resident Holy Spirit—right?—and in the power of that new life, which is created in righteousness, holiness, and truth. The power is in the very essence of that life and in the Spirit who dwells within you. You also have the additional power that comes from the Scripture: “Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not”—what?—“sin against you.” You have that new nature, you have the Holy Spirit, and you have the Word of God. But I'll tell you what it comes down to: It comes down to obedience.

Just as a fact: Over 400 commands are found in the epistles of Paul, over 400 commands. There are 50 commands to the believer in the book of James alone. It's not difficult to figure out that the Lord has given you the steps to spiritual victory in the commands. Obey the commands. You have the nature to do it, you have a renewed mind, you have the Spirit to enable you, and you have the Word to strengthen you. Keep the commandments. Keep the commandments. That's what it is to live on the victorious side.

And just to seal that as we close, when Jesus stood on the mount and was departing and gave what is the Great Commission, His last words—most people's last words are usually significant; His the most significant of all. And what did He say? What did He say? “Go into all the world, make disciples, baptizing them”—and then He said this—“and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have”—what?—“commanded you.” That is the path of sanctification: It's about obedience. It's about obedience.

So you shouldn't be looking for some mystical sort of personal, spiritual elevation that might come to you in some moment; it's just about obedience. Jesus said, “Here's My orders: Teach them to obey everything I've commanded you, everything. And I promise you this: Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. I'll be there.”

Sanctification is in the power of the Spirit, by the power of the new creation, by the power of the Word of God, a believer obeying the commands of Scripture. That's why Jesus said what He said in His final words. That is the path of sanctification.

Father, we thank You that You have given us such a clear word. Thank You for the beauty of salvation, its extent, its character, its nature. Thank You for transforming us. And we know that the life we have is eternal; it can never end. The Holy Spirit in us is the seal, the guarantee, the down payment on eternal glory. We know that there is a reward waiting for us in Your presence, which will never fade away and never be removed and never be given to someone else because You have already made us for heaven. We are new creatures.

I pray, Lord, for the application of those commandments that face us all through Scripture, that we would be diligent to obey them, knowing this is the way of sanctification, this is the way to please You, and this is the way to bring joy, satisfaction, and usefulness into our own lives. Accomplish Your will in us, we pray in the Savior's name. Amen.

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