

PREACHING SANCTIFICATION IN WAYS THAT HONOR GOSPEL PREDOMINANCE

National Worship Conference 2014

Thursday, July 24, 2014

10:30 AM or 2:15 PM or 4:00 PM



This *Is* Still Wittenberg, Toto!

Lutherans need not (must not!) leave behind any of our gospel predominating, law/gospel discerning, *simul justus et peccator* recognizing preaching distinctives when we preach sanctification!

That is not baggage we drag along. That is our unique contribution to the field of sanctification preaching!



PREACHING SANCTIFICATION IN WAYS THAT HONOR GOSPEL PREDOMINANCE

Focus #1: Helping Soldiers Fight the (Dual Nature) War

Focus #2: Empowering the Bride in Her New Identity

Focus #3: Helping Royal Priests Live Out Their New Identity



PREACHING SANCTIFICATION IN WAYS THAT HONOR GOSPEL PREDOMINANCE

Focus #1: Helping Soldiers Fight the (Dual Nature) War



O Wretched Man That I Used to Be???



"Of course, all of us are fallen creatures. We sin from time to time." (Bruce Wilkinson, *Secrets of the Vine*, p. 36)

[After quoting Philippians 3:5,6] "But by the end of this life [Paul's], we glimpse a rare thing indeed: **a man who had been pruned until there was nothing left of his self-life**" (emphasis author's, *Ibid.*, p. 84).

- Influence of Wesleyan perfectionism!
 - This thinking infects much of Evangelicalism far beyond "holiness groups."
 - Romans 6 taken at full face value - Romans 7 explained away!
 - Caution for Lutheran overreaction: ignoring/downplaying Romans 6!
- Consider the potentially deadly results of failing regularly to help God's people see themselves as *simul justus et peccator* until the day they die!

"O Wretched Man That I Still Am!"



I see my heart's condition now,
My heart's diverse affections.
Why do I love the things you loathe;
I'm torn in two directions:

Now prodigal, now Pharisee.

O God, be merciful to me;

Who else but you can help me!

- *In Hopelessness and Near Despair*,
Christian Worship Supplement 738, Stanza 2
 - Jaroslav Vajda's masterful reworking of Luther's *From Depths of Woe I Cry to You*

Here's why we stress this!

- Two directions the sinful nature in us is drawn!
- One often supported by "church culture" the other by the prevailing culture

Genesis 6:5

The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רָבָה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יֵצֶר מַחְשַׁבֹת לִבּוֹ רָע כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

Can You Fix It?

Critical to growth in maturity: an ever-deepening grasp of my natural heart's depravity!

The Beating Heart of Sanctification: A Daily Return to Death & Resurrection of Baptism!

• "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

The Beating Heart of Sanctification: A Daily Return to Death & Resurrection of Baptism!

- **Lutheran Emphasis: Daily Going Back to Move Ahead!**
 - The key for growth in sanctification **is NOT**:
 - doing something we haven't done
 - second decision (Jesus as "Lord" not just "Savior," "really" giving ourselves to Jesus as Master, etc.)
 - gaining something we don't have
 - second blessing (Spirit's full measure – now able to be serious about holiness)
 - The key for growth in sanctification **IS**: growing in the grace of what is **already ours** in Jesus!
 - one tends to put focus on us (law - human activity – becomes central – church easily becomes pressure cooker)
 - this seeks to keep focus on Jesus (gospel central – God's promises/activity - church conduit of power in means of grace)
 - John the Baptist's ministry philosophy applied to living a sanctified life: "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30).

Lutheran Sanctification Tug of War

There are those who believe that since the law always accuses (*lex semper accusat*) the less the law is used the better since urging with law imperatives simply puts Christians back under the guilt of the law.

Two competing emphases within Lutheranism seek to pull us in opposite directions when it comes to preaching sanctification.

There are those who believe that we are far too hesitant to give specific direction and so they urge us to provide abundant instruction in holy living often prescribing what love looks like in minute detail.

Each "side" starts with a legitimate concern for us all to ponder, but then takes that concern so far as to flirt with antinomianism or legalism. One underplays the reality that we are **peccator** the other that we are **justus**. **Both** do harm to the gospel and to genuine growth in sanctification.

The Edges of Antinomianism: Failing to Deal Fully with the Reality That We Are **Peccator**

- Antinomian evidence?
 - Little/no mention of God's wrath
 - Law as curb (threat, warning) curbed (Raabe: Law's "future tense")
 - Law as mirror is perfunctory (cliché) and/or merely symptomatic
 - Old self is scolded/shamed but not crucified
 - Imperatives in sanctification not heard (sanctification Schwaermer!)
 - Little to no specific direction given
 - Preaching from 2nd half of Epistles avoided/distorted

The Edges of Legalism: Failing to Deal Fully with the Reality That We Are **Justus**

- Legalism evidence?
 - God's wrath feels like primary motivation
 - Law as curb (threat, warning) sounds like condition on gospel
 - Law as mirror spoken as if believers had no new man!
 - Note: sanctification legalism often can be antinomian in curb/mirror!
 - 3rd use predominant use of law (teaching/preaching imbalance)
 - Truant law imperatives without indicative gospel chaperones
 - Detailed (merely human?) directions - new man no room to breathe
 - Gospel becoming cliché or perfunctory
 - Worst case: generic/cliché gospel with concrete/specific law

Insights for Preaching Sanctification



- Spend a moment answering this question:
 - What insights for preaching sanctification have you gained from dealing honestly with helping Christians fight the dual nature war?
- Questions on this first section of the presentation?

PREACHING SANCTIFICATION IN WAYS THAT HONOR GOSPEL PREDOMINANCE

Focus #2: Empowering the Bride in Her New Identity



The Importance of a Strong Base

Three time all-star third baseman Aramis Ramirez credits a strong base for the all-star year he is having as a hitter in 2014. In 2013 he was plagued by lower body injuries.



This Is Your & Your People's Base for Sanctification

"... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Ephesians 5:25b-27).

- *God's image (lost in preaching?) restored in its vertical dimension!*



Building and Rebuilding the Base Is the Heart of Sanctification Preaching: Never Tire of Teaching Them the Glory of Their Identity



- "Some Sunday mornings the minister should take the congregation by the hand and with them step off the dimensions of their inheritance as children of God. Some of them have been 'preached at' for years but have never been given a peek into the treasury, much less to run their fingers through the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 71,72).

Why is it *never* wise for the preacher to assume his people have a "firm enough" grasp on this base? (Beware the "information only" confusion!)

The Gift of God's Image: God's Eternal & Unchanging Thought!

Quick preaching insight: ponder how this helps us understand the law's demand for perfection!



- "God made man in his image. This was not the result of a momentary mood. It was his counsel from eternity. This thought filled eternity. And even if man has thrown this precious gift away in ingratitude, has left God's image and become God's enemy, God still has not given up his thought. He made man in his image and does not look at man differently, even after the fall. In accordance with the changed circumstances, he must deal differently with his image. He seeks to restore it. But it remains his image. In the beginning it was made by a creative act of God. Now it is 'made' by the unspeakable sacrifice of God's Son and is 'made' by the untiring working of the Holy Spirit" (John Meyer, *"The Image of God, Genesis 1," Our Great Heritage*, Volume II, 190).

The Beautiful Twin Purpose of the Image

- The **vertical** purpose of bearing the image of God: to enjoy delightful fellowship as perfectly loved creatures of our Creator
 - Hinted at in Genesis 3:8
 - Seen in what Old Covenant (Ex 24:9-11) and New Covenant (Mt 26:26-29) give back to us.
 - Clear in what awaits us in the final Eden (Re 22:1-5).
- This purpose of the image – lost in the fall – is given back to us in Jesus! (2nd Article restores 1st Article relationship!)
 - Jesus the essential (not created) image of God (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3) becomes our brother with the created image intact!
 - Lives 33 years of displaying image in our place!!!
 - Dies as if he had lost the image!!!
 - Father declares us not guilty (Romans 4:25 – holy, well-pleasing in his sight) thereby restoring to us the gift of his image in its vertical dimension!
- This vertical purpose of the image is our identity!**
 - Consider how hard it is to remember what really gives us our identity!
 - Consider the impact on sanctification when that conviction wavers!



Identity Protection Insight #1: Proclaim Christ's Active Obedience!

Isaiah 50:4–9

⁴ The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.
⁵ The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears,
and I have not been rebellious;
I have not drawn back.
⁶ I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.

⁷ Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
⁸ He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
Who is he that will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up.

Identity Protection Insight #1: Proclaim Christ's Active Obedience!



- “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 26-27).
- Why is it so critical for genuine growth **in sanctification** that we proclaim regularly the glorious truth that we already bear Jesus’ record of perfect fear, love and trust in his Father that fulfilled every commandment of God?

All His Is Mine and All Mine Is His!

“Who then can fully appreciate what this royal marriage means? Who can understand the riches of the glory of this grace? Here this rich and divine bridegroom Christ marries this poor, wicked, harlot, redeems her from all her evil, and adorns her with all his goodness. Her sins cannot now destroy her, since they are laid upon Christ and swallowed up by him. And she has that righteousness in Christ, her husband, of which she may boast as of her own and which she can confidently display alongside her sins in the face of death and hell and say, ‘If I have sinned, yet my Christ, in whom I believe, has not sinned, and all his is mine and all mine is his,’ as the bride in the Song of Songs (2:16) says, ‘My beloved is mine and I am his.’” (Martin Luther, *“The Freedom of a Christian,” Luther’s Works*, Volume 31, 352)



- Text after text in the Synoptic Gospels suddenly begins to open up with additional rich gospel proclamation when the active obedience of Christ is pondered!
- Caution: what you think is gospel preaching will easily be heard as third use of the Law! (WWJD)

Jesus’ “Calculated Risk”!

- “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:11)
- A big part of helping Christians grow in sanctification is helping them (us) find the courage and strength to live as “aliens and strangers” (1 Peter 2:11) who are in the world but not of it.
- Consider how urgent this courage to live as “aliens and strangers” is becoming in the United States today!
- How will you help them find this strength???



Identity Protection Insight #2: Show the Bride Her Passport!

Philippians 3:17–4:1 (NIV84)

¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

⁴ Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!



- What a bold but important point for Paul to get across to the **Philippians!**
- Longing to belong – hard wired into us by God!
- Horribly distorted in sinful world!

Identity Protection Insight #2: Show the Bride Her Passport!

Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.

You have made us for yourself [O Lord], and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

(St. Augustine, Confessions, I, 1)



"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far" (Philippians 1:23).

The Valid-Passport-Assuring-Sanctification-Encouragement of the Supper

"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:39).

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet passing points to that glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great marriage feast of bliss and love.

• ("Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face," *Christian Worship* 315, stanza 6)



Identity Protection Insight #3: Woo the Bride to Greater Faithfulness to Her Perfectly Faithful Husband

This, my friends, is **not** a sanctification encouragement tool!
We are **not** driving beef to the butcher!

A Lutheran pastor is seeking to empower/direct a loved child's (bride's) obedience not force/demand a slave's obedience.



Identity Protection Insight #3: Woo the Bride to Greater Faithfulness to Her Perfectly Faithful Husband

"Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house. The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord" (Psalm 45:10-11).

As preachers of sanctification, you, my brothers, are the spiritual father urging the bride to delight in her husband!



Wooing the Bride to Greater Faithfulness: What Does This Mean in My Sermon?

- When preaching biblical narrative, ask yourself: does my sermon give evidence that God is (always) the hero?
 - "That's just not me!" – or worse!
- Even though I must crucify the old self, can they tell I am standing by their side bleeding myself and bleeding with them?
 - See Galatians!
- Can my people hear my love for them or is my impatience with them drowning out the wooing?
 - Warning: 1530
- Can they tell I love them more than church's corporate structure?
 - Careful during the "season" of the church year called "budget"
- Have I sent them home vowing to try harder or rejoicing in the power of grace?
 - Chapell's "bottom line" question – coming soon to a slide near you!
- Have I considered Colossians wouldn't have read chapters 3-4 without chapters 1-2?
 - Use both magnifying glass – textual exegesis - and fish eye lens – contextual re-sewing of what was "cut out" (pericope) from its setting



Insights for Preaching



- Spend a moment answering this question:
 - What insights for preaching sanctification have you gained from empowering the bride in her new identity?
- Questions on this second section of the presentation?

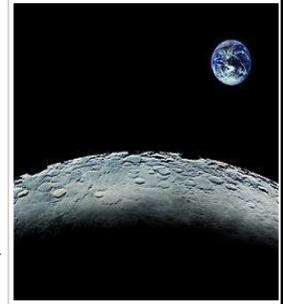
PREACHING SANCTIFICATION IN WAYS THAT HONOR GOSPEL PREDOMINANCE

Focus #3: Helping Royal Priests Live Out Their New Identity



Psalm 8:3-6a

When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful
of him,
the son of man that you care for him?
You made him a little lower than
the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
You made him ruler over the works
of your hands.



The Double-sided Glory of *All* Our Vocations as Royal Priests of God!

- Matthew 25:34–40 (NIV84)
- 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'
- 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?' 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"
- 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

- Galatians 2:20 (NIV84)
- 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Notice the unique glory revealed by each of these passages!
"The Good News is that the scattered Church takes her place day by day in the world's businesses, schools, and playgrounds, where the world desperately needs her to be. The Bad News is that once there, she is capable of forgetting who she is" (Paustian, 7).



The Beautiful Twin Purpose of the Image

- The **horizontal** purpose of the image: to be glimpses of God as we care for his creation and the other creatures he places around - especially other creatures created to possess his image.
 - This purpose found already as God takes counsel with himself in Genesis 1:26
 - Repeated in the blessing God spoke over the crown of his creation in 1:28.
- Here God hands to those created in his image privilege of being his visible agents on earth!
 - God's general *modus operandi* is not miracles (which he can, use as he pleases!) but the order of creation he has set in place.
 - This provides us the privilege of being God's "masks" in every God-given calling!
- This purpose – also lost in fall – is restored to us in Christ and is being renewed day by day (Colossians 3:10).
 - Priesthood of all believers (broader concept)
 - Lived out in our God-given vocations (specific applications)
- **This horizontal purpose of the image is how we live out our identity!**



Holy Priests Offering Holy Service: 1 Peter 2:4-5

• πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι **λίθων ζώντων** ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἐκλεκτὸν ἐντιμον, **καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες** οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς **ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον** ἀνεγέγκαι πνευματικᾶς θυσίας **εὐπροσδέκτους** [τῷ] θεῷ **διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.**

- As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Key Things to Note:

Most important calling is the call to faith! ("Call" as "vocation" only once – 1 Co 7:20.)

All godly callings are "high and holy" because they come from God and are filled by those washed in the blood of Christ!

Washed in the blood of Christ our fruits of faith are well pleasing (needed balance to the truth of Isaiah 64:6)

Sanctification Preaching Emphases That Empower and Direct God's Royal Priests

Notice what each of these passages adds for preaching insights as we seek to empower and direct God's people in living sanctified lives in the midst of their God-given vocations:

- **Romans 12:1** Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. (Compare Numbers 28:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 10:31)
- **Ephesians 2:10** For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Compare Psalm 139:16)
- **Ephesians 4:7** But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.
- **1 Peter 4:10** Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- **Ephesians 6:18-20** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.



Sanctification Preaching Emphases That Empower and Direct God's Royal Priests

Notice what each of these passages adds for preaching insights as we seek to empower and direct God's people in living sanctified lives in the midst of their God-given vocations:

- **Matthew 10:42** And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward. (Compare Matthew 25:35-36.)
- **Matthew 16:24** If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
- **Colossians 4:5-6** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.



The Challenge of Saying Two Things!

- Professor Mark Paustian, in **"Unleashing Our Calling,"** highlights saying "two things" (both/and) so we don't miss Scripture's breadth. Here are some samples of "two things" that need to be said in our preaching on vocation:
 - Hold high **both** serving God in royal priestly callings **and** serving God in representative (public) ministry callings.
 - Don't over apply 1 Timothy 3:1 (πιστός ὁ λόγος. Εἰ τις ἐπισκοπῆς ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ). Remember the disciples' favorite argument!
 - Don't bring representative ministry down (a unique calling from God) but raise all godly vocations up (also unique callings from God).
 - Hold high **both** serving in/through church/school **and** serving him out there in the world. Don't foster Lutheran monasticism!
 - Hold high **both** serving God **in** all godly vocations (be a fair and honest banker!) **and** serving God **through** all godly vocations (be prepared to give an answer). Avoid "evangelism reductionism."



Insights for Preaching



- Spend a moment on this question:
 - What insights for preaching sanctification have you gained from helping the bride to live our her new identity as a royal priest (God's mask!) wherever she is?
- Questions on this third section of the presentation?

Do You Want Your People to Be Careful To Devote Themselves to Doing What Is Good?

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good" (Titus 3:5b-8a).



The Bottom Line Question!

- "When my listeners walk out the doors of this sanctuary to perform God's will, with whom do they walk? If they march to battle the world, the flesh, and the devil with only me, myself, and I, then each parades to despair. However, if the sermon has led all persons to God's grace, then they may walk into the world with their Savior – and with fresh hope. Whether people depart alone or in the Savior's hand marks the difference between futility and faith, legalism and true obedience, do-goodism and real godliness" (295).

