

Title: All of Me to All of Him Until He Comes

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Date: November 26, 2017

Background. As we have seen throughout this epistle, the theme of 1 Thessalonians is that Christ is returning. But until He returns, God's will is that Christians actively pursue holiness and Christlikeness. We must not let worldly distractions prevent us from Christian growth. We must lean into Jesus and surrender the totality of our lives to Him.

Main Idea. Only God Himself can empower you to live a holy life as you anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ.

Key Word. Again we see Paul use the word 'sanctification' in 1 Thess. 5:23. It means *to declare holy, to consecrate, to separate from things that are dirty or profane*. Paul says it is God's desire that we become "completely sanctified." While most Christians affirm that it is practically impossible to become "free of sin" in our earthly body, Christians still must strive for holiness and sanctification with all of their hearts.

Group Questions

1. How would you define Christian sanctification to a non-Christian? How is it different from self-righteousness?
2. When does the work of sanctification begin? When does it end?
3. Explain how God is involved in the work of sanctification. What role do you play?
4. What is the difference between positional sanctification and progressive sanctification? In other words, what does it mean *to become what God declares I already am*?
5. What guarantee does God make to His people about sanctification? Does such a promise allow for Christians to take their sanctification for granted?
6. Has someone that you respect as a spiritual leader ever asked you to pray for him or her? How did that affect your opinion of that person?
7. What can the modern church learn from Paul's admonition to greet one another with a "holy kiss"? What are today's acceptable tokens of friendship and love?
8. Why did Paul command the church to read this letter? Do you think Paul was aware that he had written inspired Scripture?
9. With the context of the book in view, describe some ways that the people might have responded after hearing the letter read?
10. How does Paul's reference to grace in the final verse reflect both Paul's life and his ministry? And our lives and ministry?