**WORDS OF SALVATION (#6)**

***Sanctification (The Cure Had Begun)***

C. S. Lewis, one of the greatest authors of the 20th century, never had any children. He married late in life and his wife died just four years later. But Lewis loved children and used his incredible talent to write many books for their enjoyment, but also for their education, both morally and spiritually. He wrote a series called *The Space Trilogy*, and another seven volume series called *The Chronicles of Narnia,* for which he became famous, selling over 100 million copies. You have likely heard of his first book in that series, for it was made into a major motion picture in 2005 called *The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe*. But it is the third volume I wish to tell you about today. It was called *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader*. It describes the conversion, and sanctification, of Eustace Scrubb.

Eustace was the irritating cousin of the main characters Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. He did not believe in Aslan (the lion who represents Christ), but his journey eventually leads him to conversion, and from there to greater and greater faith through the many trials that confronted him. His struggles led to a powerful transformation in him (see James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-4). Lewis beautifully describes this new life when he says of Eustace:

“It would be nice and fairly nearly true, to say that 'from that time forth, Eustace was a different boy.' To be strictly accurate, he *began* to be a different boy. He had relapses. There were still many days when he could be very tiresome. But most of those I shall not notice. The cure had begun.”

Let me tell you something, in that great book Eustace was me. And if you’re honest with yourself, Eustace was you too. When I was converted to Jesus I “was a different boy.” But, as with Eustace, to be strictly accurate, I “began to be a different boy.” I had relapses into sin. I must have been very tiresome to God, and others. But, thanks be to God, “*the cure had begun*.”

Sanctification is both a momentary and lifetime experience. I’m instantly “*washed… sanctified… justified*” at baptism (I Cor. 6:11). But then I must “*add to your faith*” the characteristics that make up a mature Christian: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Without continuous growth my faith will grow weak (Rom. 4:19), then die (Jam. 2:17). The process of growth is called a number of things in the New Testament, but the one I am focusing on is sanctification.

I look at my life in three stages: past, present, future.

1) I *was* *saved* and sanctified at a moment of time in my past. I became a saint, a Christian when I repented and was baptized (I Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:26-27; Mk. 16:16).

2) I am *being saved* and sanctified through my present walk of faith. Christianity is a day-by-day transformation (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:16-18).

3) I *will be saved* and fully sanctified when I reach my heavenly home. *“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul”* (Heb. 10:39). “… *I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, therefore there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness…*” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Since most of you reading this are Christians and therefore in the *present* tense of this sanctification process, I’m asking you to prayerfully consider the “tion” suffix in the word sanctifica*tion*. The word is made from the Latin adjective SANCTUS (holy), plus the Latin verb FACERE (to make). The suffix “tion” means “the act of.” Thus the word comes to mean “the act of making one holy.”

So that leads me to ask myself, and you, this critical question: Do you feel at this moment that God is in the act of making you “*a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work*?” (2 Tim. 2:21) Do you see yourself as part of a sacred fellowship called “*a holy priesthood*” and “*a holy nation, His own special people*” (I Pet. 2:5,9)?

If you’re like me you cringe at such a thought, thinking yourself unworthy of such a designation as holy and special. The word “holy” should belong to words like “*holy scriptures*” (Rom. 1:2) and “*Holy Spirit*.” How can I think myself worthy of being called holy? Because God does, that’s how! “*He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”* (I Pet 1:16).

If we live our lives feeling unworthy and unholy, we will live unworthy and unholy lives. Let me illustrate. Three times I have walked the battlefield of Gettysburg. Knowing 51,000 casualties were counted from July 1-3, 1863 it is little wonder Mr. Lincoln would speak of these few acres of soil as “hallowed ground.”

“We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.”

His speech was meant to inspire the nation to preserve the union and give freedom to all men. Spending time there makes you feel the sacredness of those who would die for a cause they believed in. But it also causes you to then live up to the ideals for which they “gave the last full measure.” It makes you proud to be an American and to have a burning desire to live worthy of the name.

Just so, God calls us to tour the hallowed grounds of our heritage. The life and death of Christ, along with the faith of our fathers who lived and died for the cause of Christ, creates in us a burning desire to “*be* ***holy*** *in all your conduct*.”

Like Eustace Scrubb, “the cure has begun.” Live holy. – Rick