

FIFTH CLERGY TALK

TALK #12 SANCTIFYING GRACE

Overview of All Talks

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience; it is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver 1/15 of the Emmaus talk—one message, fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. In general, 2/3 of your presentation will come from the outlines; the remaining 1/3 will come from your original insights and personal experience.

The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The expanded outline intends to provide a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

This presentation is allotted a maximum of 20 to 25 minutes. Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

Overview for Speaker

Sanctifying grace is the focus of the final clergy talk. In this talk you will briefly review the main point of each of the previous clergy talks. This information will be made available during the team formation process and should be included in the preview of the talk for the team.

Sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit perfecting *in us* what God has done *for us* through Jesus Christ. Our participation in this relationship with God is made possible by prevenient grace and made real by justifying grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. This talk should make clear to the pilgrims that sanctifying grace is not a different kind of grace. There is one grace, and all grace is of God; Christians experience the grace of God differently according to their individual needs at various stages of the spiritual journey.

Sanctifying grace produces both the desire and the power to give God our undivided attention—our whole heart—and our entire life. It enables us to mature as sons/daughters of God and to be Christ-in-the-world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer would say it is the process whereby we exchange cheap grace for costly grace; in other words, we leave our comfortable place in the pew to actively take up the cross of authentic discipleship. Our focus shifts from being self-directed to being led by the Spirit of God. With Christ, we take our place on the front lines of issues that affect all of God's children and the world God created for us. It is not purely a human effort because the power of the Holy Spirit equips us for every good work and act of obedience. Good works are not an attempt to justify our relationship with God but a response to the love we experience. Sanctifying grace is the journey toward wholeness and holiness made possible by the working of the Holy Spirit. This grace imparts to us the very mind, heart, and hands of Christ so that we can love our neighbor as ourselves.

This talk is scheduled for Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

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Expanded Outline: SANCTIFYING GRACE

Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Introduction (1–2 minutes)

Choose a story or experience from your own life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult the Weekend Spiritual Director or Community Spiritual Director. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention of pilgrims and move them into the theme of how sanctifying grace works in our lives. For example, you might do the following:

Option 1: Describe an experience of sanctifying grace in your life. How did this experience move your relationship with God from one of imputed righteousness to imparted righteousness?

Option 2: Share the life story of someone else that illustrates the main theme of the talk.

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is SANCTIFYING GRACE.

I. All grace is God's grace. (2–3 minutes)

- A. We experience the one grace of God in many different ways as we continue on our spiritual journey.
- B. Prevenient grace is God's activity from the moment of our conception to the moment we say yes to God, and beyond.
- C. Justifying grace is the gift of God by which we accept for ourselves the relationship God offers through Christ.
- D. The means of grace help us celebrate and strengthen our relationship with God.
- E. Obstacles to grace are attitudes and actions that hinder our relationship with God and with our neighbor. Through the cross, Jesus Christ has overcome every obstacle.

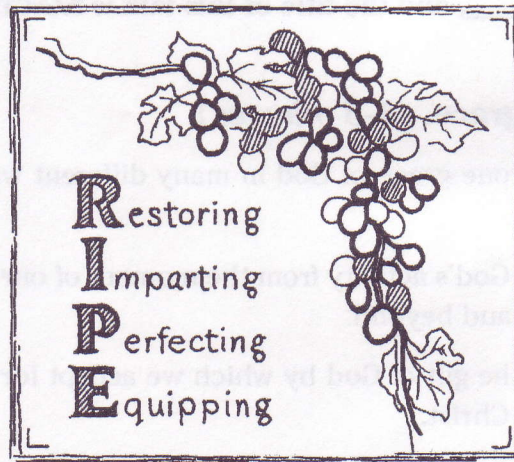
II. Sanctifying grace is the gift of God providing the desire and the power to grow in our relationship with God—forever. (2–3 minutes)

- A. Just as physical birth begins the physical process of growth and maturity, so spiritual birth (justifying grace/conversion/salvation/being born again) begins the process of spiritual growth toward maturity (sanctifying grace/growth in grace).
- B. Sanctifying grace is the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit working in and through the heart and life of every believer.
 - 1. Grace is God's active love—toward me.
 - 2. Grace is God's love in action—toward others and toward the world God created.
 - 3. Our response to grace involves both love and action.

III. Sanctifying grace is the process of opening ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us. (10 minutes)

Sanctifying grace is divine energy transforming our heart and life. It makes us *ripe* for glory.

[Show a visual like the following.]



[Illustrate the following points with examples from your own journey.]

R = restoring our relationship with God and others

- 1. We cannot earn God's love by changing our ways. Rather, we change our ways because God loves us and gives us the grace to make a fresh start, day by day, hour by hour.
- 2. We receive God's Spirit "bearing witness with our spirit" that we are beloved children of God (Rom. 8:15-17). Our knowledge of our identity as children of God forms the foundation for all other relationships.

3. In medical terms, one could say restoration is the process of spiritual growth and the recovery of our health, since we were once sick with sin.
4. Personal illustration of restoration

I = imparting new life, new light, new strength, and a new heart

1. Justifying grace is the moment when the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* to us. This means we are declared “not guilty” because of all that Christ did for us on the cross—we experience a change of status.
2. Sanctifying grace is the process by which the righteousness of Christ is *imparted* to us—it becomes a part of us, and we experience a change of heart.
 - a) Day by day we become more like Christ in our attitudes and actions (Eph. 3:14-19).
 - b) Having been born again through justifying grace, we grow and mature spiritually through the work of sanctifying grace.
3. Personal illustration of grace imparted to us

[Example: When we were born into our family of origin, the family name and certain characteristics were imputed, or handed down, to us. As we grow and mature, we live into those characteristics that are imparted to us—they become our own.]

P = perfecting us in the image of God and the likeness of Jesus Christ

1. Conversion is a process. It happens once, but not all at once. It is a lifelong process of dying to what is evil and rising to what is good and true (Christ in us).
2. The gifts of the Spirit are given to help us grow and to build up the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12-14).
3. As a Christian matures, his/her life displays certain qualities known as the fruit of the Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22).
4. Perfecting involves pruning (John 15:2). The Bible tells us that every vine and fruit tree requires pruning, and so do we. A life in grace is a life in process, and some of this process is painful.
5. Christian perfection is both instantaneous and progressive. The Greek word for *perfect* can also be translated as “mature or complete.” Just as a person can be mature or complete as a five-year-old, the same person years later can be quite different and still be a mature or complete fifteen-year-old, or a mature twenty-five-year-old, or sixty-five-year-old, etc. To be perfected in love is both God’s call and God’s promise—in Christ you can be perfect, mature, and complete today and continue to grow in grace and be more like Christ next month.

6. Sanctifying grace is the doctrine of “the more.” God has more love, more power, more peace, and more joy in store for us.
7. The means of grace are means of growth. Sanctifying grace is our deepest joy and our greatest good in all our relationships.
8. Personal illustration of perfecting

E = equipping us to do the work of Christ in the world—to be the hands and feet of Christ

1. Sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit empowering us to see and serve Christ in the least and lost of our city, state, and world. Read Matthew 25:31-40; feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and the prisoner—these are all essential activities of a Christian.
2. The Holy Spirit equips us with gifts for ministry (1 Cor. 12:4-5). Every person is gifted, and every gift is needed if the whole will of God is to be accomplished (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11).
3. The Holy Spirit equips us to obey the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
 - a) This is the Great Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind . . . love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37, 39).
 - b) This is the Great Commission: “Go . . . and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18-19).

IV. How do we grow in sanctifying grace? (5 minutes)

A. Growth in grace is a natural process.

Jesus told us that a life in grace is as natural as the life of a branch connected to a healthy vine (John 15:1-12).

1. We abide in Christ (*prayer*). Through prayer and worship we open ourselves to God; we are rooted and grounded in love and intimately connected to Christ (John 15:4).
2. Christ’s word abides in us (*study*). In study we give our minds to God and grow in the mind of Christ (John 15:7, 10; Phil. 2:5-8).
3. We bear much fruit for God’s glory (*action*). In Christian action we give our hands to God and participate in the work of Christ (John 15:8). These works include:
 - a) works of mercy (providing food, water, and clothing, Matt. 25:35ff)

b) works of justice (release to captives, freedom to the oppressed, etc., Luke 4:18)

B. We open our hearts to receive grace as a gift.

Romans 5:5 says, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” We do not earn it or deserve God’s love; we simply open our hearts to receive it.

C. We share grace in the body of Christ (*community*). Through participation in the gathered community and small accountability groups, we receive strength and nurture—just as a branch does from the vine (John 15:5). We come alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5), learn the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:1-12), and help one another remain rooted and grounded in God’s love (Eph. 3:14-19).

D. We respond by full participation in the mission of Christ in the world.

V. Closing (3–5 minutes)

A. For three days we have prayed for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us with the fire of love. We have learned that:

1. God wants a relationship with us even more than we want a relationship with God.
2. God’s role in sanctifying grace is to fill us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Our role is to open our hearts and walk in the Spirit with Christ day by day.
3. Small groups are an important means of sanctifying grace for disciples—from the time Jesus called the first disciples to this very day, small groups are an essential means of grace.

B. In Emmaus, small accountability groups are called **group reunions**. When we meet with a small group, we follow the order on the group reunion card, which you will find on your table. Please take your card now and look at it with me as we introduce you to this essential means of sanctifying grace. Group reunions are the Emmaus community’s primary means of support on the journey toward spiritual maturity.

[Briefly introduce the three sections on the group reunion card: piety, study, and action. Remind pilgrims of the importance of participating in a small accountability group. Do not go through the entire group reunion card; a lay speaker will cover this later.]

De Colores!

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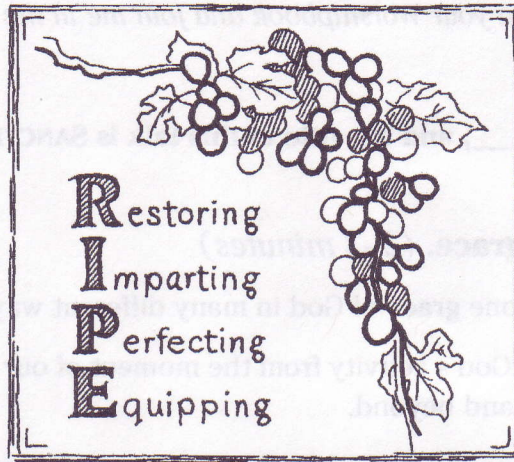
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4. Personal illustration of restoration

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2. Sanctifying grace is the process by which the righteousness of Christ is *imparted* to us; it becomes a part of us, and we experience a change of heart.
3. Personal illustration of grace imparted to us—a real change

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- B. Group reunions are the Emmaus community's primary means of support on the journey toward spiritual maturity.

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De Colores!

[Faint, illegible text from the reverse side of the page is visible through the paper, including phrases like "Christian perfection is both instantaneous and progressive" and "The Holy Spirit equips us to obey the Great Commandment".]