**Wesley Academy 3**

**Theology of Sanctification**

The main point of Wesley's theology is sanctification, while the most important point of Luther's theology is justification. For Wesley repentance is like the porch of religion and justification by faith is like the door of religion and sanctification by faith and love is religion itself. For Wesley believing in Jesus the Christ gives us the grace of justification and imitating the Jesus the Christ gives us the grace of sanctification. Sanctification means to become a little Jesus through imitating of Christ. The Korean protestant church lost almost 144,000 members like Revelation of John during last ten years because of weakness of sanctification which imitate the heart and life of Jesus even though the Korean protestant church has strength of justification, assurance of salvation.

Wesley preached in London about holiness as sanctification for our salvation. For Wesley sanctification is a process of salvation. Both justification and sanctification are soteriological stages: justification means initial salvation and sanctification means final and full salvation. For Luther and Calvin sanctification is Christian life after salvation. Wesley mentioned this issue in his sermon, "On God's Vineyard":

But two difficulties arose: first, the churches were so crowded that

many of the parishioners could not get in; secondly, they

preached new doctrines-that we are saved by faith, and that 'without

holiness no man could see the Lord'. For one or other of these

reasons they were not long suffered to preach in the churches.

They then preached in Moorfields, in Kennington Common, and in

many public places. The fruit of their preaching quickly appeared.

Many sinners were changed both in heart and life.

That was why Wesley and Methodists moved to Bristol to bring outfield preaching (open air preaching).

For Wesley sanctification has two dimensions: the first is holiness of heart, which is connected to piety and the purification of sin, and the second is holiness of life which is connected to love and mercy. For holiness of heart, Wesley highlights the fact that individuals can achieve liberation from all our sins, including inner sin and actual sins, to achieve entire holiness. According to Wesley, actual sins are forgiven at the moment of justification. However, inner sin still remains in believers, even though it does not dominate, rule or control them. Thus, even believers have to repent for their inner sin until they are cleansed by the grace of perfection which saves Christians from all sin. For Wesley, perfection is attainable in this life.

We need continual faith and repentance. In his sermon "On Sin in Believers," Wesley built upon an assumption that believers who are justified are not wholly sanctified. At the moment of justification, the believer is delivered from the dominion of actual sins, but although the power of inner sin is broken, it is not destroyed. Therefore they are still sinners who need continual repentance.

Thus he emphasized continual repentance and faith for the gradual work of sanctification in his sermon "The Repentance of Believers." For Wesley repentance of believers means an inward change, a change of mind from sin to holiness. Through faith the repentant believer is saved from the sin that still remains in his heart: self-will, pride and temper. By faith believers receive not only mercy but also grace that purifies the heart and cleanses the hands. By faith we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life. Wesley believed that repentance focused on the pessimism of human nature, but that through faith, believers could see the optimism of grace. So Wesley made a very clear comparison between repentance and faith:

By repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and

cleaving to our words and actions. By faith we receive

the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts and

cleansing our hands. By repentance we still sensible that we

deserve punishment for all our tempers and words and actions.

By faith we are conscious that our advocate with the

Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually

turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us.

By repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no

help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but grace to

help in every time of need................

Repentance says, 'Without him I can do nothing': faith says,

'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.'

For practice of personal holiness of heart in terms of works of piety there are so many means of grace: prayer, reading and meditating the Bible, fast, holy communion and so on. In his sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" he explains works of piety as follows:

But what good works are those, the practice of which you

affirm to be necessary to sanctification? First, all works of piety,

such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet;

receiving the Supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures by

hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting

or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

But most important means of grace are prayer and meditating the Bible. We can understand two kinds of prayer historically: vocal and silent prayer. Vocal prayer is related to the spiritual power and silent prayer is linked to the personal transformation. The best Biblical meditation is Lectio Divina historically. The method of Biblical meditation which Wesley emphasized with Richard Baxter and Bishop Hall is very similar to Lectio Divina.

However, Wesley also emphasized holiness of life in terms of imitating Christ's life and action as well as holiness of heart in terms of imitating Christ's heart and mind, emphasizing the need for works of mercy. While Wesley believed that justification could be achieved by faith alone, he believed that to achieve sanctification we need faith, love and good works. For Wesley salvation includes both justification and sanctification.

In his sermon "The More Excellent Way" Wesley introduces two ways of sanctification: the lower path and the higher path. He wrote:

From long experience and observation I am inclined to think that

whoever finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, whoever is justified,

has then the choice of walking in the higher or lower path. I believe

the Holy Spirit at that time sets before him the more excellent way,

and incites him to walk therein, to choose the narrowest path in

the narrow way, to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness,

after the entire image of God.

The lower path focuses on avoiding evil to achieve holiness on gaining the mind of Christ in terms of personal holiness through works of piety, whereas the higher path focuses on walking as Jesus walked in terms of love through the works of mercy. The higher path, which he terms "the more excellent way," is a pure love of God and a humble love of all human beings for God's sake.

In his sermon "The Scripture way of Salvation" works of mercy are explained in detail:

Such as feeding hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the strangers,

visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted;

such as the endeavoring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the

stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering,

to comfort feebleminded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in

any manner to the saving of souls from death.

This works of mercy is related to social holiness or social sanctification. In Wesley age there were so many social sanctification movements: labor movement for miner, industrial worker and farmer, anti-slavery movement and women liberation movement for lay preacher.

The works of mercy is also linked with economic holiness. For Wesley gaining all you can and saving all you can are focused on giving all you can with stewardship which all our properties are belong to God. Giving all you can mean distributing and sharing money to the poor and the isolated. The rich were surrounded by hindrance to holiness: atheism, idolatry, the desire of the eyes, the pride of life, pride, self-will, and every temper that is contrary to love of God and anger. In his sermon, "On Riches," Wesley explained like this:

Such are some of the hindrances to holiness which surround the rich

on every side! We may now observe, on the other side, what a

temptation riches are to all unholy tempers. And, first, how

great is the temptation to atheism, which naturally flows from riches;

even to an entire forgetfulness of God.....And how is the rich man

surrounded with all manner of temptations to continual dissipation!

Yes, how is the art of dissipation studied among rich and great!

Perfection means entire or final sanctification in this life. Wesley learned the concept of perfection from the Eastern Orthodox Church tradition like Gregory of Nyssa, John Crysostom and Macarius and the Western Church mystics: Jeremy Taylor, William Law and Thomas A Kempis.

For Wesley the doctrine of perfection has several meanings: participation in Divine nature (II Peter 1:4), entire holiness (I Thessalonica 5:23), entire love (Mt 5:48), entire happiness (I Thessalonica 5:16-18) and entire social holiness like jubilee and new creation in terms of cosmic ecological holiness.

Wesley made a very good explanation about perfection in his sermon "On Perfection":

What is then the perfection of which man is capable while

he dwells in a corruptible body? It is complying with

that kind command, 'My son, give me thy heart.'(Prov.

23: 26) It is 'the loving the Lord his God with all his heart,

and with all his soul, and with all his mind.'(Matt 22: 37)

This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all comprised

in one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God:

and as he that loves God loves his brothers also, it is

inseparably connected the second, 'Thou shalt love thy

neighbor as thyself.'(Matt 19: 19) Thou shalt love every

man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. 'On

these two commandments hang all the law and the

prophets:'(Matt 22: 40) these contain the whole of

Christian perfection. Another view of this is given us in those

words of the great Apostle, 'Let this mind be in you, which was

also in Christ Jesus.'(Phil. 2: 5) For although this immediately

and directly refers the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken

in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole

disposition of his mind, all his affection, all his tempers, both

toward God and man. Now it is certain that as there was

no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was

wanting. So that whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever

things are lovely, are all included in the mind that was

in Christ Jesus.