Everyday Saint:

When Ordinary People Meet an Extraordinary God

Title: Sanctified Through and Through

Date: September 6, 2026

Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13; 5:23-24

BIG IDEA

God Himself is committed to our transformation.

We can live with confidence that our growth in holiness is not dependent on our ability to achieve it, but on His faithfulness to accomplish it. As we respond to His grace, our lives are shaped by an ever-increasing and overflowing love—one that extends beyond comfort and reflects the heart of God to others. This love is not separate from holiness, but it is the very way it takes shape in us, as God steadily forms every part of who we are into the likeness of Christ. With our hope anchored in His promise that “He will surely do it,” we are invited to trust Him fully while actively living out a life marked by love, surrender, and expectancy.

Conversation Starter

- What stood out to you from last week’s sermon?
- What does it mean to “respond to God’s grace?”

COMMENTARY #1

(1 Thessalonians 3:11–13) Paul closes this chapter by shifting into a prayer that reveals both his pastoral desire and belief in the active work of God in his life. He wishes that God would direct his way back to the Thessalonian believers and cause their love to "increase and overflow." This was not a loveless church, but they still had room to grow in love, because love is an essential mark of the Christian faith. Jesus cited love as the identifying mark of the believer: "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*." (John 13:35).

This growth in love is directly tied to holiness. Paul prays that through this growth in love the Thessalonians' hearts would be "established blameless in holiness." Thus, love is not separate from holiness; it is the primary way holiness takes form in everyday life. Paul closes by pointing readers to the reason for all of this, Jesus is coming again and we want to be presented ready, faithful, and holy before Him when that day comes.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think it looks like for love to "increase and overflow" rather than remain steady or comfortable?

2. Why do you think Paul connects love so closely with holiness instead of treating them as separate ideas?

3. How does remembering that we will one day stand before God shape the way we love people now?

COMMENTARY #2

(1 Thessalonians 5:23–24) Paul closes his letter with a powerful benediction, placing the full weight of sanctification on God Himself. “May the God of peace sanctify you completely.” Completely here means exactly what you think! COMPLETELY. God’s transforming work touches every part of our being; our hearts, souls, bodies, thoughts, wounds, and struggles. One day, all of it will be washed away completely and we will stand before our Savior whole and holy as He always intended. It is tempting to get discouraged in the times when struggles or patterns seem inescapable; to think that we are too broken or will always be this way. But Paul grounds everything in God’s character: *“He who calls you is faithful*; *He will surely do it.”* This assurance reframes sanctification not as uncertain striving, but as a guaranteed work rooted in God’s faithfulness. Our response matters, but ultimate confidence rests in God’s grace and completion of the process in us. Again, holiness is not about trying harder, but trusting Him more.

He. Who. Promised. Is. Faithful.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you that God is the one who “sanctifies you completely”? How does that change your view of spiritual growth?

2. Where are you tempted to rely on your own effort instead of trusting God’s faithfulness to grow you?

3. How does the promise “He will surely do it” bring both comfort and responsibility to your life?

GOING DEEPER

These passages give us a beautifully balanced picture of sanctification by holding together two essential truths: our calling to grow in love and God's promise to complete His work in us. Paul's prayers reveal that spiritual growth is not first a task to accomplish, but promise to receive and participate in.

1. How does it make you feel knowing that God has promised to finish the work in us?

In the cultural context of Thessalonica—a busy, diverse Roman city shaped by commerce, social hierarchy, and competing loyalties—this kind of love would have stood out clearly. To overflow in love for "all people" (3:12) pushed beyond normal social boundaries, challenging divisions of class, ethnicity, and status. It reflects a distinctly Christian vision of community, where love is not selective but expansive, mirroring the character of God.

This city attracted many travelers because of its wealth, opportunity for work/jobs, and its bustling economy. Sounds a lot like Madison/Huntsville!

1. How can we, in our current context, live out this love that we are called to show?

Paul focuses on God as the One Who sanctifies "completely" (5:23) speaks into both ancient and modern tendencies to turn spirituality into self-effort. In the ancient world, people often pursued transformation through discipline, philosophy, or ritual. Today, that

same instinct shows up in performance-driven faith or pressure to “fix” ourselves. Paul counters this by rooting sanctification in God’s identity as the God of peace—the one who restores wholeness—and in His unwavering faithfulness.

1. What does it mean for our faith that God is the One Who sanctifies completely?

FAMILY CURRICULUM
Everyday Saint: Sanctified Through and Through
1 Thessalonians 3:11-13; 5:23-24

BIG IDEA

In this week's passages, we hear blessings. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. We also hear that *the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.* God will sanctify us, or purify us. We work to become more and more like Christ each day. We want to live into our calling of being children of God.

MEMORY VERSES

12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ~I Thessalonians. 3:12

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. ~ I Thessalonians 5:23-24

LESSON/ACTIVITY

This week we will have an English connection. We are working to become wholly holy! These are homophones. Remember that homophones are two words that are spelled differently, but sound the same.

- *Wholly* means entirely or fully. The root word is *whole* (used in a sentence: *She ate the whole pie by herself. The project was wholly successful.*)
- *Holy* means set apart or consecrated to God. (used in a sentence: *We love God and want to live a holy life.*)

Practice using the words *wholly* and *holy* in sentences. Bonus points if you can use them both in one sentence!

Discuss ways that you can live wholly holy lives!

SONGS

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" and *"The Blessing"*

PRAYER

O Lord you are wholly holy! We are in awe of your holiness. Because we love you, we want to live our whole lives for you. Help us to be wholly holy in our ways. We know that we cannot do this on our own and wholly depend on you! Amen.

CHALLENGE

Live a wholly holy life! Write a paragraph or poem about how you live a wholly holy life!