

**From Repentance to Perfect Love:
The Practical Structure of Chung Nam-soo's Theology of Sanctification in
the Korean Holiness Revival of the 1930s**

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Abstract

In contemporary Korean churches, believers affirm the gospel of Jesus Christ—confessing both the forgiveness of sins through his atonement and freedom from sin—yet this confession is not always sufficiently embodied in the ongoing practice of sanctification and love in everyday life. Furthermore, rather than sharing the love of Christ, believers are increasingly experiencing division amid political and ideological conflicts.

In this context, the Korean Holiness Revival of the 1930s, grounded in the Wesleyan holiness tradition, emphasized the message of sanctification. As Chung Nam-soo held tent revival meetings throughout the nation, he presented a practical model for the gospel, leading believers from repentance to regeneration and ultimately to entire sanctification.

This article presents four representative sermons by Chung Nam-soo and argues that his message of sanctification forms an integrated, dynamic, and practical structure that progresses from repentance through regeneration to entire sanctification. Furthermore, it demonstrates that this structure expands the practical understanding of sanctification and provides a theological framework that enables believers to embody the love of Christ concretely in their lives.

Introduction

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, sermons in public worship within the Korean church have increasingly shifted their focus toward

political and ideological issues, prompting criticism that the spiritual formation of believers and the pursuit of a holy life have weakened. This tendency has also intensified conflicts both within the church and in its relationship with broader society.¹

Admittedly, the present situation is not identical to that of early twentieth-century Korean society. Nevertheless, there is a notable similarity: social tensions and ideological conflicts have come to overshadow the essence of faith within the church.

Following the failure of the March 1st Independence Movement in 1919, Korean society under Japanese colonial rule underwent rapid ideological and social transformations. The so-called “cultural policy” of the Japanese colonial government permitted a certain degree of religious activity; however, the spread of communism and nationalism simultaneously generated theological tensions within the church concerning the relationship between faith and social change.²

Amid this ideological and spiritual confusion, Chung Nam-soo returned to Korea in 1926 after studying Wesleyan holiness theology at Asbury College. He began preaching the message of holiness through nationwide itinerant revival meetings, using large tents that could accommodate up to

¹ Seong-don Cho, “The Transition of the Korean Church Facing Crisis,” *Life and Word* 30, no. 2 (2021): 218, <https://doi.org/10.33135/srlt.2021.30.2.217>; In Cheol Kang, “Korean Protestantism and Conservative Civil Movement,” *Study of Humanities* 33 (2020): 3, <https://doi.org/10.31323/SH.2020.06.33.01>.

² Yong-wook Jeong, “Current Trends in Historical Studies of the March 1st Movement, and Where It Is Apparently Headed,” *History and Reality* 110 (2018), 269; Jong-jin Seo, “Imperial Japan’s ‘Extension of the Japanese Homeland’ Principle and Korea’s Government-General’s ‘Cultural Policy’ in the Aftermath of the March 1st Independence Movement,” *Journal of Korean Political and Diplomatic History* 41, no. 2 (2020): 7; Seungyop Shin, “Living with the Enemies: Japanese Imperialism, Protestant Christianity, and Marxist Socialism in Colonial Korea, 1919–1945,” *Religions* 13, no. 9 (2022): 824, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090824>.

6,000 people. During this period, Lee Myung-jik was establishing the institutional foundation of the Korean Holiness Church and invited Chung to join its leadership.³ From 1932 to 1934, Chung led a series of tent revival meetings, widely disseminating the message of holiness, and his preaching played a significant role in shaping the theological identity of the Korean Holiness Church.⁴

Despite Chung Nam-soo's historical significance within the Korean Holiness Revival Movement, insufficient scholarly attention has been given to how his sermons embodied holiness theology in a practical structure amid the spiritual and social crises of his time. Therefore, in this article, I will briefly discuss four of his representative sermons and argue that his theology of sanctification provides a dynamic, practical structure that integrates repentance, regeneration, and sanctification within the framework of Wesleyan orthodoxy. Furthermore, I suggest that this structure can help reestablish a practical understanding of sanctification in contemporary preaching and spiritual formation within the church.

“Repent”

This sermon was delivered by Chung Nam-soo on May 10, 1933, at the

³ Seo, Jae-cheol, *History of the Early Nazarene Church* (Pyeongtaek, 1969), 1, cited in Hyo-jin Choi, “A Study on the Life of Pastor Chung Nam-soo: Focusing on the Church of the Nazarene” (M.Div. thesis, Seoul Theological University, 1997), 39–49.

⁴ Lee, Myung jik, *The Works of Rev. Myung Cik Lee, D.D.*, vol. 1, *Editorials* (Bucheon, Korea: Institute for the Study of Modern Christianity and Seoul Theological University Press, 2011), 101–102.; Myung-Hee Lee, “A Study on the Fourfold Gospel as Reflected in the Sermons of Rev. Myung jik Lee” (M.Div. thesis, Seoul Theological University, 2014), 9–11.

Busan-po⁵ tent revival meeting.⁶ The message of repentance is a fundamental element of faith proclaimed and required in all churches. However, there were nominal Christians who, lacking sensitivity to sin, confined repentance to the initial stage of faith and subsequently replaced it with outward religious practices. Moreover, many believers failed to fully understand the meaning of repentance and salvation in Jesus Christ. In this context, Chung does not reduce repentance to mere moral reflection but redefines it as a comprehensive response of faith oriented toward a holy life within the salvific structure that moves from repentance to regeneration and sanctification.

Repentance as the Beginning of Sanctification

In this sermon, Chung views repentance as a “turning away from the direction of sin and turning toward God.” He does not limit this to a moral adjustment or “the introduction to the Christian faith,” but understands it as a fundamental change that encompasses the entirety of the believer’s life. Chung situates repentance within the broader structure of holiness theology that leads to regeneration and sanctification, interpreting it as an ongoing response of faith sustained by the Holy Spirit’s work.⁷

The Three Dimensions of Repentance

Chung makes his understanding of the fundamental change more concrete as he articulates repentance in three dimensions: contrition, separation, and earnestness. These dimensions demonstrate that repentance is not merely an internal emotion but a comprehensive transformation that encompasses

⁵ Busan-po is the historical name for present-day Busan, a major city in South Korea.

⁶ Robert Chung, *The Messenger of Flame: Evangelistic Sermons of Rev. Robert Chung*, vol. 1, ed. Keun Li, transcribed by K. W. Kim (Seoul: The Oriental Missionary Society Press of the Korea Holiness Church, 212).

⁷ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix A, “Repent,” 199–200, 211.

the whole of life.⁸

Contrition: The Inner Dimension of Repentance

Contrition refers to the believer's deep recognition of sin under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by an inner anguish and hatred for sin. This is not a fleeting emotional sorrow or momentary regret, but a profound spiritual grief arising from a deep awareness of sin, expressed as a broken heart before God.⁹

This understanding is consistent with the biblical witness. In Psalm 51, David acknowledges his sin and seeks God's forgiveness, declaring that "a broken and contrite heart ... you will not despise" (Ps 51:17). Likewise, "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matt 5:4) reveals that such contrition is a form of godly sorrow.¹⁰

Chung connects this contrition to concrete practice, urging believers to "come before God with tears and sorrow, unable even to lift up one's face, trusting only in His mercy." Thus, contrition functions as the inner dimension of repentance, leading believers toward God through a deep awareness of sin and spiritual anguish.¹¹

Separation from Sin: The Ethical Dimension

This inward turning from sin extends into the concrete ethical transformation of separation from sin. Chung emphasizes that true repentance necessarily involves a decisive break with sin. This refers to the inner transformation in which the believer comes to hate sin and turns away from it.¹²

⁸ *Ibid.*, 200, 201, 204, 209–211.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁰ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix A, "Repent," 201.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 201–202.

He criticizes those who continue in sin despite recognizing it, regarding it as foolish to persist in drunkenness while merely expressing sorrow over it. That is, he rebukes the attitude of lamenting one's sin without abandoning it. He further compares such behavior to "a dog that returns to eat what it has vomited" (2 Pet 2:22).¹³

For Chung, repentance is manifested in rejecting sin, longing for righteousness, and demonstrating a real separation from sin. We can only consider repentance genuine when sorrow accompanies transformation.¹⁴

Earnestness: The Practical Outworking

Repentance does not remain an internal state or condition. It involves earnestness toward God and demands fruits worthy of repentance. Chung insists that even after grieving over sin and turning away from it, believers must demonstrate tangible changes in their lives that correspond to repentance.¹⁵

He presents Zacchaeus as a representative biblical example. In Luke 19, after encountering Jesus, Zacchaeus declares, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody ... I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). This confession shows that his repentance extended beyond inner change into concrete acts of restitution. Jesus affirms this by declaring, "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9).¹⁶

Thus, genuine repentance is not limited to inner sorrow or separation from sin but is expressed through practical transformation and visible fruit in life. Chung repeatedly emphasizes phrases such as "you must make restitution and return," underscoring that repentance cannot remain at the

¹³ Ibid..

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁵ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix A, "Repent," 204.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

level of internal conviction but must be manifested through concrete actions and obedience.¹⁷

The Soteriological Consequences of Repentance

Chung also structures the results of repentance as forgiveness of sins, justification, and regeneration, helping believers understand the process they experience through repentance. For him, forgiveness is the result of God's grace, not merely a declaration but a salvific event grounded in divine mercy. Justification is understood as the imputation of righteousness based on Christ's atonement.¹⁸

Furthermore, repentance leads to regeneration through the Holy Spirit, placing the believer at the starting point of sanctification. Thus, repentance is not merely a theological concept but a comprehensive response of faith that includes inner transformation, concrete obedience, and active participation in God's saving work.

Wesleyan Continuity in Chung's Understanding of Repentance

Chung's understanding of repentance relates well to John Wesley's doctrine and practice. Wesley understood repentance as the beginning of faith, through which believers move toward new birth and holiness in the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ He described repentance as a process that begins with conviction of sin and leads, through faith, to a reorientation toward a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in God.²⁰ In this process, believers experience

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 210-212.

¹⁹ John Wesley, "The Repentance of Believers," in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1, *Sermons I: 1-33*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 335-36; John Wesley, "The Way to the Kingdom," in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1, *Sermons I: 1-33*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 225.

²⁰ Wesley, "The Way to the Kingdom," 225.

deep awareness of sin, sorrow, and a sincere desire to turn away from evil.²¹

Wesley also emphasized that repentance is not a one-time event, but an ongoing response required even after regeneration.²²

This Wesleyan understanding is similarly reflected in Chung's preaching. Chung does not confine repentance to the starting point of faith but elaborates it through the concrete elements of contrition, separation from sin, and earnest transformation of life. He situates repentance within the broader structure of salvation, leading to regeneration and sanctification, presenting it as a fundamental reorientation toward the righteousness of God that demands the transformation of the whole person.

Therefore, Chung's understanding of repentance demonstrates clear theological continuity with the Wesleyan tradition while also concretizing it within a more practical and sermonic structure.

“The Stairway of Grace”

This second sermon was delivered by Chung Nam-soo on June 18, 1933, at the Sin-cheon²³ tent revival meeting.²⁴ He decried the lack of clear evidence of moral transformation in people's daily pursuit of holiness. This included even church leaders, elders, and deacons who had attended church for many years, while believing in Christ's atonement and considering themselves justified.

In this context, Chung positions regeneration between repentance and

²¹ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” 229.

²² *Ibid.*, 225.

²³ Sin-cheon is a town in South Hwanghae Province in present-day North Korea.

²⁴ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix B, “The Stairway of Grace,” 41.

sanctification, thereby emphasizing that believers newly transformed must continue to move toward sanctification within the process of salvation. In doing so, he clearly reveals the theological tension that exists between these stages.

Regeneration as the Transitional Point toward Sanctification

Regeneration is not the completion of salvation but the beginning of the journey toward sanctification. For Chung, regeneration is the grace experienced after genuine repentance, through which, by God's mercy, the believer receives forgiveness of sins, justification, and new life. However, he does not regard regeneration as the completion of salvation. Rather, he emphasizes the ongoing necessity of the "renewal of the Holy Spirit," which leads believers to seek the grace of entire sanctification.²⁵

The Tension between Regeneration and Sanctification

In this sermon, Chung declares, "The renewal of the Holy Spirit is the grace that we must receive after we have been regenerated." He identifies this as either the baptism of the Holy Spirit or sanctification.²⁶

Thus, he makes it clear to his audience that regeneration is not the final stage of salvation, but that there still remains a greater stage—sanctification—through which God's grace continues to work.²⁷

Chung further explains practical regeneration by distinguishing between actual sins and original sin. While the grace of regeneration addresses the forgiveness of sins committed, sanctification is presented as the grace that cleanses the root of sin remaining in the believer.²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 34–35.

²⁶ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix B, "The Stairway of Grace," 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

As concrete examples of this tension between regeneration and sanctification, Chung points out that even those regarded as born-again believers—such as elders, revival preachers, and deacons—still harbor inner sins such as envy, anger, resentment, and jealousy. He therefore emphasizes that believers must receive the grace of the Holy Spirit so that even these deep inner sins may be cleansed.²⁹

Therefore, in this sermon, regeneration is not presented as the completion of salvation but as a transitional point that forms tension within the process leading from repentance through regeneration to entire sanctification. This understanding calls believers not to remain in the grace of forgiveness they have already received, but to continually seek the renewal of the Holy Spirit and move toward entire sanctification.

This tension between regeneration and sanctification demonstrates that, for Chung, salvation is not a state in which one continues to repeat the same sins after receiving forgiveness, but a dynamic process that moves toward sanctification.

Thus, regeneration is not the event that completely removes the root of sin, but the beginning of a journey in which believers must continually seek the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. In this respect, Chung's understanding of regeneration rejects spiritual complacency and urges believers to press forward toward entire sanctification.

Wesleyan Continuity in Chung's Understanding of Regeneration

Once again, Chung demonstrates affinity with Wesley's teaching. John Wesley distinguished between justification and regeneration, yet he understood regeneration as an event that occurs simultaneously with faith in Christ. He viewed it as the experience of being born again in the Holy Spirit and as the starting point of inner transformation in which the image

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

of God begins to be restored.³⁰

However, regarding the work of the Holy Spirit leading to sanctification, Wesley understood it as a continuous process that begins with justification and regeneration, and he did not equate the baptism of the Holy Spirit with entire sanctification.³¹

In this respect, Chung's understanding shows clear theological continuity with Wesley, emphasizing regeneration as the starting point of inner transformation that leads to sanctification. At the same time, however, Chung distinguishes the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a subsequent stage following regeneration, thereby forming a more explicit theological tension between regeneration and sanctification.

Nevertheless, both figures share a fundamental theological continuity in understanding regeneration as the point from which believers move toward sanctification.

“The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness”

This third sermon was delivered by Chung Nam-soo on June 27, 1933, at the Haeju³² tent revival meeting.³³ Among both believers and pastors, there existed a tendency to confess faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ while limiting its efficacy to the forgiveness of sins, without fully embracing—or even avoiding—the deeper dimension of inner transformation and the

³⁰ John Wesley, “The New Birth,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2, *Sermons II: 34–70*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 187–189.

³¹ John Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2, *Sermons II: 34–70*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 158–160, 167–168.

³² Haeju is a city in South Hwanghae Province, present-day North Korea.

³³ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, “The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness,” 182.

cleansing of original sin.

In this context, this sermon not only exhorts believers to seek the grace of entire sanctification but also clearly reveals the theological relationship between the atoning work of Jesus Christ and the journey of faith that leads to complete sanctification.

The Atoning Foundation of Sanctification

Chung understands that God sent Jesus Christ not merely to forgive sins, but also to provide the grace that cleanses the original sin rooted in the depths of the human heart.³⁴

Citing John 3:16, he distinguishes the work of Christ's atonement in two ways: first, "the grace that forgives our sins," and second, "the grace that cleanses the very root of sin." Through this distinction, he demonstrates that the grace of atonement extends beyond forgiveness to the transformative grace of sanctification, renewing the very foundation of human existence.³⁵

Entire Sanctification as the Cleansing of Original Sin

Furthermore, Chung explains that the way to receive the grace of holiness is through sanctification granted after regeneration—namely, the cleansing of original sin accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

Thus, the death of Jesus Christ is understood not merely as a legal act of forgiveness but as the means by which the complete salvation of the believer is accomplished through the grace of the Holy Spirit.³⁷

³⁴ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, "The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness," 167–168.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, "The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness," 168.

³⁷ Ibid.

Chung further emphasizes that, within the salvific structure that progresses from repentance to regeneration and sanctification, the grace of sanctification is given only to those who have experienced repentance and regeneration. At the same time, he clearly asserts that those who have not repented cannot receive the grace of holiness.³⁸

This understanding is further clarified in his theological conception of the relationship between atonement and sanctification. Chung understands sanctification in the context of entire sanctification and testifies to having experienced it. He defines complete salvation as “the cleansing of original sin that lies at the core of the heart.”³⁹

Moreover, citing 1 John 3:8—“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil”—he emphasizes that entire sanctification is the decisive purpose of Christ’s atoning work, through which the believer’s sin is cleansed.⁴⁰

The Role of the Holy Spirit and Human Response

This entire sanctification (i.e., the cleansing of original sin) is carried out by the grace of the Holy Spirit and calls for a human response of obedience. However, the purification of the heart is not the result of human effort but is accomplished by the grace of the Holy Spirit given to those who obey (Acts 5:32).⁴¹

At the same time, Chung acknowledges that even in the pursuit of entire sanctification, original sin remains within the human heart. Nevertheless, he urges believers both to seek the grace of entire sanctification and to trust that the inner reality of sin can be completely cleansed through the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 168–169.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, “The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness,” 178.

atonement of Jesus Christ.⁴²

The Fivefold Response to the Grace of Holiness

Chung presents five responses required of believers to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit: (1) earnest effort, (2) firm resolution, (3) obedience, (4) complete consecration, and (5) faith.⁴³

These are not merely external requirements but constitute a holistic response of the believer toward the grace of sanctification.

First, he emphasizes earnest effort, particularly persistent and fervent prayer, through which the purification of the heart is achieved.⁴⁴

Second, he calls for firm resolution, stressing continual dependence on God through the words of Matthew 7:7: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”⁴⁵

Third, he presents obedience as an essential condition for receiving the grace of holiness, grounding it in the obedience of Jesus Christ and his atoning work (Acts 5:32). Through Christ’s obedience unto death on the cross, the work of salvation was accomplished, resulting in both the forgiveness and cleansing of sin.⁴⁶

Fourth, he calls for complete consecration, urging believers to bring all aspects of their lives—including time, possessions, and abilities—before the altar and to surrender everything to address the problem of inner sin.⁴⁷

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 172–176.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 173–174.

⁴⁶ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, “The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness,” 175.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

Fifth, he emphasizes faith, affirming that the power of Christ's atonement can be experienced in reality through unwavering belief (Acts 15:9).⁴⁸

Thus, Chung's understanding of entire sanctification and atonement not only leads believers to long for complete grace but also transforms that longing from passive expectation into an active response of faith in which they confront and respond to the sin within.

Wesleyan Continuity in Chung's Understanding of Sanctification and Atonement

Again, we find parallels between Chung's preaching and Wesley's thought. The latter understood sanctification as beginning at the moment of justification and the new birth, and he described it as a process carried out through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Wesley maintained that through the atoning work of Christ, believers are reconciled to God and are gradually freed from the power of sin.⁴⁹

Similarly, Phoebe Palmer understood entire sanctification as grace grounded in the merit of Christ's atonement and emphasized a continual life of complete consecration of both body and soul to God.⁵⁰ In this respect, Wesley and Palmer, together with Chung Nam-soo, share a clear theological continuity in understanding entire sanctification as grace rooted in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

However, differences emerge in how they explained and experienced entire sanctification. Chung emphasizes that through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and obedience to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit can

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 178–180.

⁴⁹ Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," 157–158.

⁵⁰ Phoebe Palmer, *Entire Devotion to God*, rev. ed. (London: Alexander Heylin, 1857), 3–4.

cleanse the believer's heart instantaneously.⁵¹ By contrast, Wesley understood entire sanctification as a gradual process in which, following regeneration, believers are progressively freed from the power of sin through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.⁵² Palmer, on the other hand, emphasized the immediacy of entire sanctification, viewing it as realized through an act of faith grounded in Christ's atoning merit and expressed in total consecration.⁵³

Thus, while all three share a common understanding of sanctification as grounded in Christ's atonement, they differ in the manner and emphasis with which sanctification is experienced.

“Go on into the Perfection of Grace”

This sermon is included in volume 2 of Chung Nam-soo's sermons and was published together with volume 1 and other materials edited by his disciple T. Y. Song in 1933.⁵⁴

At that time, many believers confessed that they had experienced repentance and regeneration, yet remained trapped in a repetitive life of sin, unable to overcome inner sins such as pride and anger.

In this context, Chung did not present entire sanctification as merely an ideal state of spiritual maturity. Rather, he understood it as a real grace experienced within the ongoing spiritual and moral tension that persists even after repentance. He exhorts believers to move toward the growth of perfect faith and the grace of sanctification, through which they come to

⁵¹ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 1, Appendix C, “The Way to Receive the Grace of Holiness,” 179.

⁵² Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” 160.

⁵³ Palmer, *Entire Devotion to God*, 4–6.

⁵⁴ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 2, Appendix D, “Go on into the Perfection of Grace,” 4.

experience the joy of salvation, the love of God, and a life of love toward others.

Appealing to Hebrews 6:1–8, Chung insists that believers must not remain at the level of elementary teachings about Christ but must press on toward spiritual maturity. He rejects the notion that faith consists merely in repentance, sorrow, tears, or regret, and instead describes the life of sanctifying grace as one in which believers experience “complete freedom,” “complete joy,” and “complete love.” He strongly urges believers to advance into this experiential dimension of sanctification.⁵⁵

Entire Sanctification as the Perfection of Love

Chung understands sanctification as “growth in grace.” Just as a child must grow into maturity, he argues that remaining spiritually immature is a source of sorrow to God.⁵⁶ Therefore, believers must not remain at the level of basic teachings but should move toward a higher state of grace, pursuing a mature and perfect life. He rejects a form of faith that merely repeats sin and seeks forgiveness and instead presents sanctification as the process of growing into a mature life within grace.⁵⁷

Chung further emphasizes that such growth in sanctification requires “perfect faith.” This faith does not depend on the faith of others but trusts in God alone. It is not shaped by circumstances or human conditions but stands firmly upon an absolute trust in God.⁵⁸ This perfect faith is a power that comes from God—a power that resists sin and temptation. It is not merely an emotional resolution, but an active resistance to sin within the

⁵⁵ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 2, Appendix D, “Go on into the Perfection of Grace,” 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 30–31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

heart.⁵⁹

Chung argues that this understanding of entire sanctification is manifested in concrete, experiential results. He presents examples of believers who, despite persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ, respond not with resentment but with prayer and the joy of salvation. He also describes individuals who, even when unjustly treated and provoked, respond not with anger but patiently seek to mediate with the heart of Christ. These examples illustrate the lives of those who possess perfect faith.⁶⁰

Through these examples, Chung argues that those who live a mature life in the grace of sanctification do not remain at the moment of conversion. Rather, they overcome inner impulses such as anger and sin, experience the unchanging joy of salvation, and express their faith through prayer and love even toward those who show hostility and opposition.

Thus, entire sanctification is realized as believers live in complete freedom from the dominion of sin, maintain the joy of salvation, and embody perfect love toward others. This understanding clearly shows that sanctification is not merely an inner state, but a concrete practice of love expressed in everyday life.

Wesleyan Continuity in Chung's Understanding of Entire Sanctification

Wesley taught that following regeneration, believers are gradually freed from the dominion of sin through the continuous work of the Holy Spirit, ultimately being transformed into a state of entire sanctification. This transformation goes beyond mere moral improvement and leads to a life of total love and obedience toward God.⁶¹ He understood entire sanctification

⁵⁹ Chung, *The Messenger of Flame*, vol. 2, Appendix D, "Go on into the Perfection of Grace," 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 37–38.

⁶¹ Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," 160.

as a state of “perfect love,” brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer.⁶² In this state, believers overcome inner sinful tendencies and fleshly desires, becoming persons whose lives are governed by the love of God.⁶³

Chung’s understanding of entire sanctification also demonstrates deep continuity with this theological tradition. He emphasizes that believers must not remain at the moment of conversion but must overcome the problem of inner sin under the ongoing illumination of the Holy Spirit.

He further explains that, through faith in the atoning merit of Jesus Christ, believers not only maintain the joy of salvation but also grow into a mature life in which they practice patience and love even in the midst of hostile circumstances.

Therefore, Chung’s understanding of entire sanctification clearly exhibits theological continuity with the Wesleyan tradition of “perfect love,” while at the same time concretizing it in a more sermonistic and experiential form of life.

Conclusion

This article has examined four representative sermons by Chung Nam-soo within the context of the Korean Holiness Revival of the 1930s and has shown how his theology of sanctification unfolds as a dynamic, integrated structure of salvation. This structure reveals a progression from repentance through regeneration and sanctification, ultimately culminating in entire sanctification.

Such a framework does not limit salvation to a single moment of the forgiveness of sins but understands it as an ongoing process of grace in

⁶² Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” 160.

⁶³ Ibid.

which the inner life of the believer is continually transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit. In this process, repentance signifies a decisive turning toward God, regeneration marks the beginning of new life, and sanctification represents the progressive and experiential realization of that life in holiness.

Chung consistently emphasizes that believers must not remain at the stage of repentance or the assurance of forgiveness. Rather, they are called to advance toward the grace of sanctification, through which both the power of sin and its inner sin are cleansed. This process ultimately leads to entire sanctification, which he presents not as an abstract concept, but as a lived reality characterized by complete freedom, abiding joy, and perfect love toward both God and neighbor.

In this respect, Chung's theology of sanctification demonstrates clear continuity with the Wesleyan holiness tradition. His understanding of the structure of repentance, regeneration, and sanctification is deeply connected to Wesley's account of salvation, particularly in its emphasis on the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and the centrality of perfect love. At the same time, however, Chung's preaching further develops this tradition by presenting sanctification in a more concrete, practical, and experiential form, shaped by the context of revival preaching and the spiritual needs of early twentieth-century Korean Christianity.

Beyond this theological continuity, Chung's sermons make a distinctive contribution to the development of holiness theology within the Korean church. While rooted in the Wesleyan tradition, his articulation of sanctification reflects the concrete realities of the Korean church during a period of social, political, and spiritual upheaval. In this sense, his sermons function not merely as doctrinal expositions but as theological expressions that demonstrate how holiness is to be understood and experienced within the lived realities of his audience. This highlights the adaptability and vitality of Wesleyan theology as it is embodied within diverse cultural and historical contexts.

Moreover, Chung's emphasis on the experiential and practical

dimensions of sanctification offers an important challenge to tendencies within contemporary Christianity to reduce salvation to a purely doctrinal or cognitive understanding. By presenting sanctification as a living process that transforms both the inner disposition and outward conduct of believers, his theology bridges the gap between doctrine and life. It underscores that faith must not remain at the level of confession but must be embodied in a life of holiness and love.

This emphasis is especially significant in light of the challenges many churches face today. Faith communities are often marked by political and ideological conflicts, moral confusion, and a lack of spiritual depth. By insisting that believers must move beyond repentance and regeneration toward entire sanctification, Chung confronts such stagnation and presents a renewed vision of Christian life as a continual journey toward holiness. His preaching reminds the church that the goal of salvation is not merely the forgiveness of sins, but the transformation of the whole person into the likeness of Christ.

Furthermore, the dynamic structure of salvation articulated in Chung's sermons provides an important framework for contemporary theological reflection. By integrating the distinct yet closely related stages of repentance, regeneration, and sanctification, his theology affirms that each stage is essential while also emphasizing that none is sufficient in isolation. This integrative perspective offers a constructive framework for reconsidering the relationship between justification and sanctification in modern theological discourse.

In addition, Chung's understanding of entire sanctification as "perfect love" highlights the ethical and relational dimensions of holiness. His insistence that sanctification must be manifested in concrete acts of love toward others challenges any purely inward or individualistic conception of holiness. Instead, it situates sanctification within the broader context of community, reconciliation, and the love of God, thereby aligning theological reflection with the practical realities of Christian living.

Therefore, Chung's sermons should be understood not simply as

doctrinal explanations but as theological proclamations that call believers into a dynamic response to the grace of God. His message challenges a stagnant understanding of faith trapped in cycles of sin and repentance and instead urges believers to pursue a transformed life grounded in the love of God.

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