

What Paul Said About Holiness 3

by Aaron Hills

Aaron Hills explores Paul's teachings on holiness and the necessity of sanctification as a second work of grace for believers.

Scripture: Acts 20:32, Romans 6:6-12, Galatians 5:17, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Aaron Hills preaches about the apostle Paul's teachings on sanctification as a second work of grace, emphasizing the importance of seeking entire sanctification as the standard set by the Holy Ghost. Paul's writings in various books of the Bible consistently highlight the Pentecostal blessing of sanctification, urging believers to pursue a deeper level of holiness and consecration. The apostle's message revolves around the need for Christians to be sanctified by the Spirit, to yield themselves to God, and to be filled with the Spirit, ultimately leading to a life free from sin and fully dedicated to God's will.

Transcript

We have seen in the previous two chapters that the chief of the apostles wrote to the Thessalonians his first epistle, urging them in the most explicit terms to seek entire sanctification as a second work of grace. It was a church only recently converted from heathenism, yet entire sanctification was the standard the apostle set for them. But we hold that the apostle was inspired; it was therefore the standard set by the Holy Ghost.

Some may suppose that this was with Paul an exceptional way of writing to a church. It will probably surprise such readers to learn that St. Paul wrote or spoke in at least five books of scripture in which the Pentecostal blessing of sanctification is clearly taught.

In Acts 20:32, we find him addressing the elders of the Ephesian church. He says: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified."

In Acts 26:17, 18, he relates his commission from Jesus at the time of his conversion. It was this: "Delivering thee from . . . the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes . . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by in me." Here are the two taught pardon and sanctification.

Paul writes to the Christians at Rome, "called to be saints." In Romans 5:1, 2, he writes, "Be justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace we stand." Here again we have the two blessings of justification and sanctification, the latter being called the standing grace.

In 6:6 he writes: "Knowing this, that our old man. is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." This means the destruction the of the old man of carnality.

In Romans 6:11 he says: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Here again is the death of the inbred sin, which brings sanctification. We reckon by faith, and God makes it a fact.

In Romans 6:13 he adds: "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." This is the consecration that issues in sanctification, for he says, in 6:19: "So now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

In Romans 6:18 "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness," and in verse 22: "Being made free from sin, ye become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

In Romans 12:1, 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and an acceptable, and perfect will of God." These people were already Christians -- "brethren"; but they are exhorted to go forward to the Pentecostal blessing of sanctification, which the apostle calls "the perfect will of God." For in another place he says: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

In Romans 15:16 he tells us that we are "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." If the apostle did not teach a second blessing to these Roman Christians subsequent to regeneration, and urge it upon them as supremely important, then language could not do it.

The apostle writes to the Corinthian church in the same strain. In I Corinthians 1:2 he addresses his epistle, among others, "to them that are sanctified in Christ us."

In 1:10 (A.S.V.) he beseeches them to be "perfected together." In 5:7 he tells them "to purge out . . . the old leaven." In II Timothy 2:21 he assures us that if a man so purges himself, "he shall be . . . sanctified."

In I Corinthians 6:11 he says of some of them: "Ye are sanctified . . . by the Spirit of our God."

In II Corinthians 1:12 (A.S.V.) he glories in the fact that he has behaved "in holiness and sincerity." In the fifteenth verse he expresses an intention to visit the church that they "might have a second grace" (margin). Over and again he lets us know that that second grace is the Pentecostal experience.

In II Corinthians 1:22 he tells us that God seals us and gives us "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

In II Corinthians 7:1 he exhorts: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." How could there be given a plainer exhortation to sanctification? Lest any Christian should think this a severe and perhaps impossible requirement, he writes in 9:8: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye,

always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

We turn to his epistle to the Galatians, and we find this great theme still present in the apostle's mind. He tells us in 3:2 that we receive the Spirit (who sanctifies) by faith, and in the next verse he asks the pointed question: "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Manifestly Christian perfection is here held up as the goal of endeavor. And he taught that it came through the Spirit received by faith.

In the same chapter (3:14) he shows that Christ died that upon the Gentiles might come (1) the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus (justification), (2) that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (sanctification).

In the fifth chapter (5:17) he points out the inevitable conflict between the carnality of the heart and every attempt to serve God, in the striking words: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The next verse gives the remedy: "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." The uniformity tendency to sin is destroyed by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And so Paul urges this Pentecostal blessing upon us in the words: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

We turn to Ephesians, and we find the Pentecostal theme is predominant. The apostle scarcely gets his letter started before he tells us (1:4) that God chose us "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

In the thirteenth verse he tells the Ephesians: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Jesus called the Pentecost al outpouring of the Spirit "the promise of the Father."

In the same chapter (1:18, 19) he breaks out into a prayer, "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." We know what the hope of the calling is, for he tells us we are chosen to "be holy," and called unto sanctification.

In the third chapter (3:14-20) he breaks out into another prayer, that believers may be strengthened with the Spirit, and know the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of Christ, and "be filled with all the fullness of God."

In the next chapter (4:12) he tells us that evangelists, pastors, and teachers were given "for the perfecting of the saints" -- till we all attain unto a full-grown man, "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." In I Corinthians 3:1 he calls some Christians "babes," because they are "carnal." But here he tells us that means are provided for the perfecting of them until they are full-grown, that is, freed from carnality by sanctification.

In 4:24 he tells believers to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In 4:30 he tells them not to grieve the Spirit, whereby they are "sealed."

In 5:18 he tells them to "be filled with the Spirit," which rules out every form of sin.

In 5:25-27 he says: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle . . . but that it should be

holy and without blemish."

Yet with these two prayers and nine passages of scripture in this single epistle urging upon believers the Pentecostal experience of sanctification, multitudes have their eyes blinded to this great truth. Even many religious teachers cannot see that the apostle taught sanctification as a second work of grace.

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