

Chosen to Be Holy

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness in the Christian life and the need for the Holy Spirit to make it a reality.

Duration: 56:01

Scripture: Romans 7:24, Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 5:18, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Holy Living", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of holiness and the responsibility that believers have to strive for it. He highlights that this convention is of utmost importance, surpassing any other conventions happening in Dallas. The speaker also discusses the three possible outcomes for the world: the immediate return of Jesus Christ, the absolute destruction of civilization, or the continuation of the current state. The main focus of the sermon shifts to the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, with the speaker introducing the theme for the day and laying a foundation for further discussion. He references Ephesians 1:4 and emphasizes the need for continuous blessings and transformation in the believer's life. The speaker also addresses the issue of rationalizing sin and the importance of recognizing and overcoming personal weaknesses. He concludes by highlighting the spiritual warfare that the Church faces and the need for the power of the Holy Spirit to effectively reach and transform lives.

Transcript

The 1966 Southland Keswick Convention, Dallas, Texas, January the 20th. Message, Dr. Alan Redpath, Chosen to be Holy. Shall we just look to the Lord in prayer just for one moment? As we open our Bibles, so we open our hearts.

Dear Lord, and say to thee, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak just now some message to meet my need, which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Today in Keswick Convention is the day that we think especially about the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit indwelling the life of the believer.

We have thought together on Monday of that which grieves the Spirit of God, of the sin in our lives which makes it impossible for God to use. We thought on Tuesday of the way of deliverance and the way of cleansing. Then on Wednesday we considered yesterday the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

And surely the Lord dealt with many of us through these days. Now we turn our thoughts and hearts to this great subject, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And it is my task just to introduce the theme for the day upon which my brethren will build and to lay a foundation.

And for that purpose I want to put together in your thinking four verses. The first of them is Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 4. Ephesians 1 verse 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Chosen in Christ that we should be holy.

Our responsibility for holiness. The second verse is Romans chapter 7 and verse 24. Romans 7 verse 24.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Our resistance to holiness. Thirdly, 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 30. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 30.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Our reception of holiness. And finally, Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18.

Be not drunk with wine where it is excess, but be being filled with the Spirit. As the right translation of that verse reads. Be being filled with the Spirit.

Our realization of holiness. Now I want to suspend this first session reflecting upon these four texts. And I trust that the Lord will throw light into all our hearts.

First of all, let us consider our responsibility for holiness. Chosen in him that we should be holy. Now my dear friend, this convention is no side issue.

I don't know what else is going on in Dallas today. Possibly quite a number of conventions that consider themselves to have very important issues to deal with. But none of them are as important as this.

That's not because we are here. Listen. I don't know what you think about this world in which we live today.

In my humble judgment we face three shattering alternatives. And there are no others. First, the immediate return of Jesus Christ.

Second, to take his church to be with himself. And to set up his rule. Second, the absolute destruction of civilization as we know it.

That's the tremendous power that man has in his hands now. To shatter this civilization as we know it. And thirdly, such a mighty revival in the church of God, of Jesus Christ.

That in these last days before the Lord comes, there shall be a great ingathering. Which will vindicate the name of Christ and glorify God. I know which of the three my heart longs for.

Oh yes. Never a day passes but I think perhaps today he shall come. What a wonderful thing.

That we may wake up in the presence of God. We're having an awful job to get somebody established on the moon. When Jesus comes we'll bypass the whole lot.

It'll be a great day. Perhaps today. But will I shock you if I say that isn't the thing that I long for most? Somehow if he came today I should be so ashamed.

I should see so much of my ministry, so much of my service in all its ineffectiveness. And with all my heart I long that we may yet see before the King comes a mighty revival in the Christian church. You know the early church with a vital experience of the cross and of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ made effective in every believer by the Holy Ghost.

Just walked through every opposition triumphantly. They were irresistible. Life in the spirit.

Convinced men that at last sin and vice had met their match. And that a new and astonishing alternative principle of life had actually come into view. It was the joy of the early church, the spontaneity, the gaiety of heart which called out conviction from the world.

The supernatural goodness of spirit-filled men was irresistible. And those early Christians outfought the pagan of their day. They surpassed Grecian philosophy.

And they excelled the glory of the Roman Empire by the glory of the gospel. Theology, such as they had, was built on experience. It was doxology before dogma.

Today we have plenty of theology but not much experience. No wonder that all the powers in the world felt the grip of heaven that was made real in the church by the Holy Ghost. You can check this from the reading of the Acts of the Apostles.

But the first movement in answer to the down-coming of the Spirit of God was not the church going out to the world in mass evangelism. It was the world coming into the church in inquiry. When this sound was heard, they all came together.

And, my dear friend, the only thing which can turn the course of world history and shatter the colossus of communistic power and bring every false god upon its face, the only thing that can resist the tremendous powers of evil abroad in the world today is the Holy Spirit released through Spirit-filled man. A force of evil can only be overcome by a force of righteousness. The weapons of our warfare are not common, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

The church today is helpless without the Holy Spirit. I went with a friend of mine some time ago. In fact, it was so long ago now, it's almost ancient history, during the last war.

And we were visiting a mutual friend of ours who had a vicarage, I mean a parsonage, sorry, in the northwest of England. And it was one of these 16th century stone buildings. They are wonderful to look at, but awful to live in.

The draughts are colossal. And as we went inside this ancient building, we saw that it was glittering with electricity. Electric refrigerators and electric lights and electric cookers and electric washing machines, everything had been installed.

But to my amazement, the dinner was being cooked with a dirty, oily, kerosene stove. And the place was filled with smell and dirt. And I looked a little astonished.

And he said, what's the matter with you? You don't need to look like that. Don't you know there's a war on? And we've got everything here except the power. My dear friend, listen.

The forces of evil are crowding on full pressure today. And there's a spiritual warfare which will never cease until time runs out. And the church of Jesus Christ has got all the equipment, all the buildings, all the

plant, all the method, all the theory, and all the technique, but no power to move men to God.

And I say that to my own heart. We've never been so well equipped, but so lacking in endowment. Now, for this, each one of us is personally responsible.

And there is a great peril of attending convention without any resulting fresh step forward in faith and obedience. We love the atmosphere. We love the singing.

We love the speaking, at least some of it. But we fail to take a step further in the life of scriptural holiness. This is not a conference, it's a convention.

A conference is where we gather together to discuss a subject. A convention is a gathering of delegates to do business. And the great object, at least if I understand it right, is to make what is true in our positional standing before God at the moment of conversion true in our daily personal experience and personal life.

There is no value to the most thrilling meeting unless it results in a change of character. We talk of faith, we sing about faith, but we desperately need to take a step of faith as an urgent necessity to make what is theologically true at the moment of our new birth to become experimentally true in daily life. We are chosen in him that we should be holy.

We are brought from darkness to light and predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. Romans 8, 29. Be ye holy, for I am holy.

The Apostle Peter, 1 Peter 1, 15. That's the unchanging command of the Lord. Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Hebrews 12, 14. I want to speak very carefully, but I believe I have the whole authority of the word and of the spirit behind me. If your Christianity is not enough to get you victory over sin, indwelling sin, here and now, it isn't enough to get you into heaven.

Listen to C.H. Spurgeon. An unholy life is an evidence of an unchanged heart. An unchanged heart is an evidence of an unsaved soul.

We don't talk like that today. The only unalterable evidence of a new birth is holy living. And the real peril of the church is the indefiniteness in face of transcriptural injunction to utilize all that is provided for us in the Holy Spirit for every child of God.

Our churches are filled with people who would be equally shocked to see Christianity doubted as they would be to see it put in practice. Now that leads me to say there are two opposite positions taken by Christian people regarding this matter of holy living, both of which are equally dangerous and equally to be avoided. On the one hand, there are those who rejoice in our standing before God by grace and fail to appreciate their obligation in daily life to realize all that is true of them judicially in Christ.

Positionally in the Lord, in Christ, those people are right. Experimentally, they're tragically wrong. They never grew up.

They remain babes, carnal Christians. They have a formal acceptance, often only intellectual assent, to the doctrine of justification by faith, which is accompanied by a neglect to accept sanctification by faith. And those people are more afraid of holiness than they are of sin.

Afraid that in searching for more than they have at the very gateway of Christian experience, they may be led off the highway into some bypass of unscriptural fanaticism. I can only say, my dear friend, with all my heart this morning, that if God has something more for me in his word than I know, than I experience now, and I'm sure he has, I'm all for pressing for my claim. For I long to be as holy as a man saved by grace can be.

And in that seeking, longing, thirsting, hungry heart, I'm trusting Jesus every day of my life to keep me from fanaticism. He has promised to satisfy the longing soul and to fill the hungry with goodness, not madness. Here, then, is one position to be avoided at all costs.

It's usually taken by the hyper-dispensationalist. Now, I mustn't get sidetracked, else we'd be here all day. But the man who says, I have everything in Christ at the moment of my conversion, amen, brother, so am I. But I don't only want it in Christ, I want it in Edinburgh, where I've got to live in my daily life.

And I want to know it there. It isn't only position that I want, but it's experience. And people, I hope I'm not being unkind, who believe and take that viewpoint, I tell you that they would never know whether the Holy Spirit had left their churches or not.

Because nothing miraculous ever happens. They say, I believe in the Holy Spirit, but it is an article and a creed, not a life-transforming experience. Then there is the opposite extreme, which makes extravagant claims to holiness experience, which are completely contradicted by the life of the people who live them.

A man who parades his holiness, or boasts of his advancing maturity, is thereby contradicting the very truth he possesses, he professes to proclaim. Paul, after his conversion, said that I am the least of the apostles. Later on, he said, I'm less than the least of all the saints.

At the end of his life, he said, I'm the chief of sinners. That's progressive Christian maturity. Let the sound orthodox fundamentalist arise from his deadness before it's too late to claim his inheritance in Christ, and to live in the fullness of blessing, and to reveal the beauty of Jesus.

But let the believer in Pentecostal experience beware of grieving the spirit by making extravagant claims for his life which are not supported by his behavior. Let him beware of confusing an emotionally disturbing experience with no lasting result, with a dynamic, volitional transaction with God which changes the whole course of his life. If you want to judge the standard of a man's Christianity, you judge it, and this is very difficult for anybody but the man to do, you judge it by what the man is alone with God.

You are no better a Christian, and I am no better a Christian than that. We are chosen to be holy, and the prayer of my heart can be found expressed in the words of Charles Wesley, who knew this truth, and who said, oh, that in me the sacred fire might now begin to glow. Burn up the dross of base desire, and make the mountains flow.

O thou who at Pentecost didst fall, do thou my sins consume? Holy ghost on thee I call, spirit of burning. The second thing, our resistance to holiness. Romans 7, 24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? While the challenge of a holy life is impossible to escape, if we are honest, there is not one of us who has not been brought face to face with our helplessness to meet it.

We've often used in our own lives the language of Paul in Romans 7, 18, to will this present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. Like water, human nature cannot rise above its own level, and that always comes short of the glory of God. In ourselves, we are hopelessly beaten, though we may be

genuine Christians who love the Lord.

For it is tragically possible for us to be indwelt by the spirit whom we receive at conversion, and yet to be mastered by the flesh. The teaching of sinless perfection is utterly contrary to the whole principle of New Testament holiness. The implication behind it is that we attain to a state of grace where we are free from all sin.

But 1 John 1, 8 says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not enough. My friend, listen. New Testament holiness is not human life brought up to its highest level of development, but it is the divine life of the risen Lord brought down to the lowest level of our sinfulness.

That's where grace meets us. That's where mercy finds us. That's where he places us underneath some everlasting arms.

It isn't sinless perfection, but sinful corruption. That's the New Testament teaching. You remember what Isaiah 41, 40 and verse 31 says? They that wait upon the Lord shall, and here's one translation of it, exchange their strength for his.

There you have it. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, instead of the briar the myrtle tree. Instead of! Major Thomas must forgive me if I quote him, but he probably doesn't know this, but years and years ago, he made a statement which really began to introduce me to the new, in a new way, to the meaning of this that I'm seeking to tell you today.

I remember hearing him saying, God expects nothing from the flesh, your natural life, but failure. But God has given you the Holy Spirit that you need never fail. To sin is never impossible.

But praise the Lord, not to sin is always possible. Our resistance to holiness stems from the attempt to make the flesh good. God has only one thing for the flesh, the cross.

And at Calvary, Jesus showed us what he thought of our sinful nature. If I must understand what New Testament holiness is, then I must face my inability, my total inability in my own strength, and recognize that God does not punish me for that. And recognize that God does not punish me for that.

He doesn't hold me responsible for being a sinner by nature, I was born that way. But he holds me responsible for staying like it, because in Jesus, indwelling my life, he has provided the remedy. There's a wonderful hymn, I'm always quoting Charles Wesley, but this is a wonderful hymn.

Do you know this one? Listen. 'Twas most impossible of all, that here sin's reign in me should cease. Yet shall it be, I know it shall.

Jesus, I trust thy faithfulness. If nothing is too hard for thee, all things are possible to me. Though earth and hell the word gain say, the word of God shall never fail.

The Lord can break sin's iron sway, to certain though impossible. All things, the thing impossible shall be, all things are possible to me. Said one lady to another, who was a spirit-filled Christian, I'd give the world to have your experience.

Her reply was, that's exactly what it cost me. Not that we pay a price for any blessing of God, but pouring contempt on all our pride. Forsaking every trace of confidence in the flesh.

We take our place at Jesus' feet. In a broken-hearted repentance, not only for sin, but from sin. And there we recognize that the flesh profiteth nothing.

It is the spirit that quickeneth. Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. And to think that I've spent years in the ministry fighting against that.

I don't know how many ministers there are. Did you ever go round, used to go round your study, or perhaps you still do, poor Saul, your study every Saturday and look at all your books and say, Oh heavens, where is the next sermon coming from? Library! Unequal! All the latest commentaries of Campbell, Morgan, and all the rest of them. And you've gone round it all, and the thing's all dead.

Yes, my dear friend, I have been through all that. And it'll remain dead, until there comes a moment in your experience when you can, with a shout in your heart, with a song, with a joyful release, hear the Lord speak to you. He that believeth in me, out of his inner man shall flow.

Not a drop, not a trickle, not a stream, not a river, but rivers of living water. That turns the Christian ministry and the Christian life from drudgery into luxury. Hallelujah.

Now, thirdly, our reception of Holy Notes, 1 Corinthians 1.30. Where we fail to attain, attain, praise the Lord, we do obtain by faith. Got it? Where we fail to attain with all our struggling, we obtain by faith. Just as we receive the Lord by faith for our salvation, so we receive him by faith for our sanctification.

Because holiness is not an it, it is not an experience, it is not a blessing, it is a person. We are made partakers of his holiness, and holiness is nothing more and nothing less than Jesus. As I said to you the other night, the only good thing about any of us is Jesus Christ.

Now, here's a testing. I don't want to get sidetracked, I haven't time for that, and involved in controversy. But if you want to test the reality of a man's experience, and I hope you're not always going around as a kind of sermon taster, you know, but the New Testament never takes us away from the Lord Jesus.

It is not away from Christ and on to the Holy Spirit. It is he, the Spirit of God, who makes real Christ in our hearts. It is the work of the Spirit to magnify the Lord.

How do you magnify something? Well, as far as I know, you do it, You can do it either with a telescope or a magnifying glass. A telescope, you put your eye and it makes distant things come very near. A magnifying glass makes little things become very big.

Jesus is never little, but sometimes, let's face it, he's an awfully long way away. And it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring Jesus near, and flood my heart with the reality of his presence. So you see, it is not on to Pentecost, but back to Calvary.

Jesus said, at that day ye shall know, I am in my Father, and he in me, and I in you, John 14, 20. When the comforters come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, John 15, 26. And he is made unto us righteousness for a guilty past, sanctification for a triumphant present, and redemption for an uncertain future.

We must, and all this is still important, because we're all slow to learn, and we learn the hard way, we must abandon our struggle to be holy, and lay our inability to live a holy life where we laid our sin upon Jesus, and find in him our victory. Who am I? What release doth come? If we get to the sense of our

inability, there is no use going on trying anymore. And I take the inability to live the life, and I lay it at Jesus' feet, where perhaps many years ago I laid all my sin.

You see, a great saint is simply a great receiver. Men who take their holiness by faith, and go on taking it, or go on taking him. It is a crisis which is maintained every day in life by process.

That's why somebody says to me, how ridiculous, isn't it? Do you believe in the second blessing? I say to them, good gracious, my friend, of course I do. But you will allow me, won't you, to have a third? And a fourth? And a fifth? Any day without a blessing would be a miserable day. But it all begins with a moment in which the Spirit of God flashes into our mind that the opposite to everything that we are by nature is in Jesus.

And he is in us to reproduce just that. Are you a very impatient person? A man came up to me some time ago and said to me, past Red Cross, he said, I have an awful bad temper. That must be my cross, don't you think? I said, bless your heart, it's your wife's cross.

It's your sin. How amazingly clever we are at rationalizing. Are you impatient? I am, dreadfully, by nature.

Then his patience, the patience of a lovely Lord is right there to meet my impatience. Are you impure, tempted constantly by impurity of thought? Then turn off to the Lord, for his purity is there to match my impurity. Are you very bitter? Do you find this little thing inside your mouth that talks a lot? Do you find it very bitter in criticizing other people? Oh, but the Lord Jesus with all his grace is there to match my bitterness.

Have you a worldly heart, worldly spirit? Then here's the Spirit of his glory is there to match that. The opposite to everything that you are by nature is in Christ, and he is in you to reproduce his lovely life. In every moment of satanic temptation, and you'll never be free from that.

In fact, the Spirit-filled man is the most attacked man by the devil, because he's, well, he's the biggest menace to the devil. So if you're going in for this life this morning, you're in for a hot time, I tell you that, but praise the Lord, you're in for a triumphant time. In every moment of temptation, in utter weakness, I can look up to him and say, Now, Lord, I claim in this situation your grace, your purity, your love.

Tell me, what do you see? I mean this question very, very seriously. What do you see, what do you think about that is in your life that is contrary to the nature of Jesus? Utterly contrary. Are you willing to forsake it? Oh, but you say I can't.

Well, go to Jesus, lay it at the cross, and claim from him the opposite virtue that is in Christ to every vice that is in you. And praise the Lord for the victory. You see, and forgive the long words, but I can't put them any shorter, a Christian is really an eschatological phenomena.

Just think that one out. He is a projection of heaven into time. That's what the child of God is, meant to be.

Handelmoor, the bishop of Durham, wrote this lovely hymn. Years after his conversion, when he fought against this Keswick message, but he came to Keswick, saw the truth, largely through one of the founders of Keswick, who was called Evan Hopkins. And he wrote the hymn, My Savior, thou hast offered rest, O grant it then to me.

The rest is ceasing from myself to find my all in thee. In thy strong hand thou lay me down, so shall the work be done, for who can work so wondrously as the Almighty One? Now my last word in two minutes, and if I could I would speak in shorthand, but as I can't, it's very, very brief, and just simply will introduce the subject for the following speakers to take on. Ephesians 5 and 8, 18.

Be being filled with the Spirit. My need and his gratefulness meet, and I have all in Jesus. Egypt has the Nile, but it's the overflow of the Nile that blesses the land.

Egypt has the Nile all the year, but the Nile doesn't benefit Egypt all the year. In August, the snow melts in the mountains of Abyssinia and fills the streams with water. They fill the Blue Nile, and when the abundant waters of the Blue Nile reach the White Nile, fruitfulness results.

Oh, has the Blue Nile of God's power filled your life to capacity? I want to quote here a very favorite author, a Keswick speaker of a generation ago, who once said, and this I think is choice, there is no such thing as a once and for all fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is a continuous appropriation of a continuous supply from Jesus Christ himself. A moment by moment faith, and a moment by moment cleansing.

As I trust him, he fills me. The moment I begin to believe, that moment I begin to receive. As long as I keep on believing, praise the Lord, I keep on receiving.

That's lovely. Every step of faith and obedience enlarges my capacity for more and more of God. There's no finality until we get to glory.

And every moment of unbelief, of disobedience, shrinks it. If I disobey his word, though I can never lose the relationship which was established at my new birth, I can and do lose my fellowship. And though I continue in Christian work, God puts me on the shelf.

Do you know what that is? You know something of that experience? Stepping out to the path of obedience, stepping out to the path of faith. And at the moment, that moment, your capacity for his fullness shrinks up. And though the Holy Spirit remains in you, he is utterly ineffective.

God doesn't anoint the flesh with power. He gives you Jesus. And in him is all power.

Oh may the Lord give us grace during this day, all of us, to get out of the boat of self-life and into the boat of Christ-life and open all our being to him and say, thank you, Lord. I claim what is my right because you died and rose and ascended to heaven to receive of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

I claim my share of Pentecost right now. Let us pray. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Break me. Melt me. Mold me.

Fill me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh. We thank you, Lord, for the sheer lovely simplicity of thy word.

We thank thee for the ending of strife and struggle and tensions when we begin to rest in Jesus. And we thank thee for the joy, for the joy of believing into him and finding his life flowing into and through us so that the world takes knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Lord, hear our prayer.

And out from this convention may there be a company of people whose hearts God has touched. And may the impact be felt mightily in the state and in this country and to the outermost parts of the world. For

Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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