

The Bible View

by B.A. Cundiff

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of a second work of grace for true sanctification and holiness in the life of a believer.

Scripture: Leviticus 9:2, John 8:31, John 14:15, Acts 2:32, Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holiness"

Description

B.A. Cundiff preaches about the importance of sanctification as a second blessing or work of grace, emphasizing the need to destroy original sin or carnality through faith in God. He highlights how the carnal mind hinders unity among believers and blinds them from the true light, urging them to seek sanctification to be holy and please God. Cundiff encourages believers to aspire to be like God, emphasizing that holiness is the qualification to see God and enter heaven, and that being holy unites believers in Christ and enables them to do God's will on earth.

Transcript

We have now passed over the theories of men, and will take up the Bible view, which teaches that sanctification, or holiness, is obtained as a second blessing, or a second work of grace.

The facts brought out in the preceding chapters show that we all come into being with original sin in the soul; that (a) it is not destroyed in conversion; (b) growth cannot remove it; (c) death has no power over it; (d) purgatory has no real existence; (e) the resurrection cannot take it out: and we will now show that faith in God is the only remedy.

It is then asked, "But why do we need a second work of grace? We need it to destroy original sin, or carnality. The carnal mind is opposed to holiness, to God, to Christ and the Holy Spirit; and it prevents the children of God from being a unit. It blinds the eyes, so that they will not come to the true light. It makes them feel as St. Paul did when he was seeking sanctification, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." And if they hear a preacher say, yes, this warfare must be kept up till death, or the resurrection; original sin will rise up and say, yes, that is it, you can never overcome. The devil will tell you anything; he will use a minister of the gospel, or anybody else; just so as to keep you from seeking sanctification.

All the children of God should desire to be holy; to have everything taken out of them that is unholy, as holiness is the qualification to see God, or to enter heaven.

This should be the very aspiration of our being, that we may please God and be like him; and as he cannot look on sin with the least degree of allowance; as long as we live in any known sin, we cannot please him. He says, Ye shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy." Lev. ix. 2. When we are made holy we are one in Christ, and the Holy Ghost is our comforter to abide with us, and we are one with "all the holy brethren." The holy people do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. We pray for this when we say. "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Matt. vi. 9, 10.

The sinner can repeat this prayer; but he is not prepared, or willing, to do the will of God as it is done in heaven. The sinner is not commanded to be holy, but to repent. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts lii. 19. The penitent is not commanded to be holy, but "To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xvi. 31. The unconverted are exhorted to "be born again," not to be holy; see John iii. 7. Those who have repented, believed, and have been born again, are commanded to be holy. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. It must be remembered that Peter was not writing to sinners, but to the "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit." 1 Peter 1. 2.

Now as converted people are commanded to be holy, we conclude that they were not made holy in conversion; and, as the command is in the present tense, we conclude that we may be made holy now. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Are you ready to make the consecration to God, to take him at his word, and receive the second work of grace now? If not, why not? Do you know that you have been converted, and that you have peace with God now? Do you believe in entire sanctification? Have you received it? If you have, tell it to others to the praise of God. If you have not, will you seek it now? When you were converted (the first work of grace) your actual sins were blotted out; the second will destroy your original sin and make you free." "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32. Were those Jews in a justified state? They certainly were not condemned, for they believed on Jesus; and it is written, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." John iii. 18. They had received the word of Jesus, and he promises them a second blessing upon this condition, "If ye continue in my word." One may believe in Jesus, be his disciple, receive the word of God and have power with him at times, and yet not be free.

The apostles believed on Jesus; they received the word from him, and had power to cast out devils; yet they needed a second blessing. For this Jesus prayed. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth." John xvii. 15, 16, 17. The questions are often asked, "Did the apostles ever receive this second work of grace? If they did, when, and where was it? We have nothing to do at present with these questions. It is enough for us that Jesus knew that they needed a second blessing, and that he prayed to the Father to sanctify them. When we know the truth in all its fullness, we are sanctified, made free and have soul rest. Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 28, 29. There are two distinct blessings brought before us

in this scripture. Penitent sinners labor and are heavy laden with the weight of their actual sins. Jesus knowing this says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is conversion and is received by coming to Jesus; coming is believing, "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a reward of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 16. When the penitent sinner seeks the Lord and finds rest, or is converted then Jesus offers him a second blessing, upon these conditions, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This is a hard lesson for some to learn. Before we can receive the second work of grace we must become meek and lowly in heart. After we receive this great blessing we can then testify to the truth of the next verse. "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." O how easy it is to work for Jesus when he has given rest to our souls! The yoke is easy, and the burden light. When Jesus gives us soul rest then are we free indeed, as it is written, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John viii. 36. No man is free while he is living in sin, for "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," John viii. 34. But thanks be to God, Jesus "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1. 29. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; not in their sins, but from them; "For he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1. 21. We are saved from our actual sins by pardon; and from original sin by cleansing; as the beloved disciple said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1. 9.

The second blessing is no new doctrine. John the Baptist taught it when he said to his disciples, "I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Mark 1. 8. It would be very hard to believe that none of John's disciples were justified, or converted. He brought them under obligations to repent, and to believe on Christ, of whom he said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." St. Paul met with some of John's disciples at Ephesus, to whom he said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" These disciples had believed, but they had not received the Holy Ghost. We do not know just how far their faith went, but they were taught to believe on Christ. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Now if these disciples believed that Jesus was Christ, in that very moment they were born of God, for "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John v. 1. But they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They could not mean that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost, for John had taught his disciples that they should be baptized "with the Holy Ghost." They simply meant that they did not know that the Holy Ghost had been given, He had come upon many in his refining, sanctifying power, but they had not heard of it. They had repented, believed and had been baptized; and there they stopped, like a great many do now. Their teacher had taught them to expect a second work of grace, but they had not received it and when they met a sanctified preacher, he put the question directly to them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answered so indirectly that Paul knew they had not received the second blessing since they believed. He then asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They could answer this; they said, "Unto John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John verily baptized with the baptism (of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." You will bear in mind that these disciples have believed now if they believed "with a heart unto righteousness" that Jesus is the Christ, they were justified, converted or born of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John v. 1. That is the way St. John expressed it. after three years training with Jesus. But these brethren, although converted, had not received the Holy Ghost,

but "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Acts xix. 6.

These disciples spake with tongues, and prophesied when the Holy Ghost fell on them, as those did on the day of Pentecost. John the Baptist preached sound doctrine, when he preached the great doctrine of the second blessing. What inspiring words fell from his lips when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11.

The disciples of John were well instructed in the doctrine of the "second blessing:" and when some of them became followers of Jesus, he also taught them the same grand truths. After he had passed the cross and the tomb, he said to his disciples, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1. 5.

When our Lord said to his disciples, ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, he was not talking to sinners, but to those who were justified. He had said of them when he was praying to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John xvii. 16. He knew that his disciples were converted, and that they needed a second work of grace, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost to make them holy: for he couples the promise of the Father with this baptism. "And; being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water," etc., (4th verse). It has been asked, "Did the disciples ever receive the second blessing?" Yes, on the day of Pentecost they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, according to the "promise of the Father." "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear " Acts. ii. 32, 33.

If the disciples needed a second work of grace to make them holy, to prepare them to meet the temptations, to perform the duties of life, and to serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind; do we not need the same? Certainly we do, for we have the same world, flesh and devil to contend with that they had: and unless we have the same blessing we will make failures, just as they would have done without it. And if we have the same Holy Spirit dwelling in us that they had, we will triumph over the world, the flesh and the devil, just as they did; and we cannot without this divine help.

We have the same promise which the Jews had, if we love Jesus and keep his commandments. He says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 15, 16, 17. This was spoken more especially to the Jews but after Peter had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, at Pentecost; and had witnessed the same on the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, he said, "And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xv. 8, 9.

Faith brings the penitent sinner into a state where "God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus:" It brings the consecrating Christian into a state where God can sanctify him wholly, or purify his heart. This is set forth in the latter part of the commission which Jesus gave to St. Paul, to go to the Gentiles. "To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may

receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 18. These words of Jesus tell how we are sanctified. He says plainly they "are sanctified by faith that is in me." Could he be more explicit?

The great object of preaching is to get people saved from sin, or sanctified wholly. For this St. Paul prayed, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. Let's examine this prayer, and epistle, taking a retrospective view of the theories that we have passed over.

We will begin with the first theory, Sanctification is obtained in conversion; which is in direct opposition to this prayer. St. Paul knew that the Thessalonians had been converted, and that they had lived up to their profession.

1. The gospel was preached unto them. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only; but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (Chap. 1. 5.) There was no discount in the gospel, nor the spirit in which the Thessalonians received it.

2. The spirit in which it was received, for they "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." (Ver. 6.) The word had point, and pierced to the heart; it had edge, and cut down to the soul; it had weight, and went down like leaden weights into the soul. This produced "much affliction," and deep heart-rending repentance. They were then enabled to exercise faith in Jesus "then they received "joy in the Holy Ghost."

3. The effect which the word had upon their lives; they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." The sword of the Spirit cut them from their idols, and turned them to serve the living and true God.

4. They were "in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap. 1. 2.)

Surely those people were converted, for they were in Christ; and "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. St. Paul after telling them that he gave thanks to God for them' always, and makes mention of them in his prayers, says "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." (Chap. 1. 3.) Here was a high standard of religion held up by these people, but not the highest. The apostle says again, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." (Chap. iii. 9, 10.) What was lacking in their faith? They needed a higher degree of faith to enable them to make a full consecration to God, and to exercise the faith necessary to entire sanctification. The apostle was confident that if he could see them face to face, he could inspire them with this degree of faith, and that they would be wholly sanctified. He prays for this, and that proves that he knew that they had not obtained it in conversion.

We will next take up the second theory, sanctification by growth in grace. This theory is in direct opposition to the prayer of the apostle. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." The apostle does not pray that the Thessalonians may grow into sanctification, he prays God to sanctify them. If a man desires a clean heart he does not pray to God to help him to grow into it; but he goes to God and cries out, "Create in me a clean heart O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psal. lii. 10. St. Paul desired the

sanctification of the Thessalonians because it was the will of God; as he tells them. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thes. iv. 3. In perfect harmony with the will of God he prays, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This takes in the whole man, does not leave the body out, condemned to sin, while the soul is saved.

We next notice the 3d theory, Sanctification obtained in death. If this be true, how can we understand the above prayer? It makes the impression that we may not only be sanctified wholly throughout, spirit, soul and body; but that we may be preserved in this holy state "unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It has been said, "Well this is only a prayer, and how do we know that it has ever been answered?" That is not the question. The question is this, Did St. Paul know that the Thessalonians needed this second work of grace, and that they could obtain it before death, and be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ? If he did not, why did he pray for it? If he did, the doctrine is forever settled, we can be sanctified wholly, and preserved in that state through life, in death and forever. Let no one doubt the promises of God. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Make the consecration complete, and believe for entire sanctification and the work is done; "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thes. iv. 7, And as he is faithful we know that he will verify his promise.

We now notice the 4th, or Purgatory theory. Now if we could believe that there is such a place as purgatory, and that holiness could be obtained in it.; still how could we reconcile it with this prayer? What reason is there for the apostle to pray to God to sanctify them, and preserve them to the coming of Christ, if purgatory was to do it? The idea is too absurd to need refutation.

We next notice the 5th theory, Holiness obtained at the resurrection. If holiness cannot be obtained till the resurrection of the dead, it cannot be obtained before the coming of Christ, from the fact that the dead will not be raised till his second coming. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. Here St. Paul sets forth the fact that the dead will be raised at the coming of Christ, and that not before. Now if entire sanctification or holiness is obtained at the resurrection, it cannot be obtained before the second coming of Christ. How then could they be preserved blameless unto his coming? That which is blameless is without sin, that which is without sin is holy, that which is holy is sanctified. God does this work, and it is a thorough work. It takes in the whole man, spirit, soul and body.

This work may be wrought in us in the present time, and we may be preserved in this holy state till he comes again. We leave the theories, and turn to the Bible doctrine. Holiness obtained as a second blessing.

The members of the church at Thessalonica were converted, we dare not say they were not. They were "in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." They had a "work of faith: and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." They were "ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." Surely they were not only converted, but partially sanctified. St. Paul knew that they were converted, and that they had not fallen from grace, nor were they lukewarm professors, If he had thought that they were either sinners, lukewarm, or backslidden, he would not have said to them, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." This describes a high state of religion, for the justified; and St. Paul would not ask God to sanctify one below this state. Yet he prays for them, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Here is the Bible doctrine; partial sanctification in conversion; this is the first work of grace in the soul, and a great work it is. It means the forgiveness of sins; or the blotting out of all our actual sins, and the impartation of divine life to the soul that was "dead in trespasses and sins." With this divine life in the soul, the convert can present his body a living sacrifice wholly to God, and believe for entire sanctification; which is the second work of grace. This is the crowning work for this life; it is the destruction of original sin, or inbred corruption; and the filling with righteousness, or the fullness of God.

We can preach this as a Bible doctrine, with a present, personal experience. Praise the Lord for the privilege of preaching a full salvation!

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