

Advantages of Holiness

by Charles William Butler

The sermon emphasizes the transformative advantages of holiness in prayer, temptation, trials, and service in the Christian life.

Topics: "Christian Holiness", "Spiritual Victory"

Description

Charles William Butler preaches on the definite experience of true holiness as the highest state of grace attainable in this life. This experience, entered instantaneously, greatly impacts our prayer life by removing hindrances and deepening our fellowship with God. It enhances our ability to resist temptations and empowers us to have victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Additionally, holiness prepares us to face life's trials by aligning us with God's will and giving us the strength to endure. Ultimately, true holiness equips us for sustained Christian service, providing both the motive and power for impactful ministry.

Transcript

The definite experience of true holiness is the highest state of grace available to us in this life. It is a big state. We enter it instantaneously, as we cross the boundary of a state in passing from one state into another. When we are in the state, we are really in, but there is much territory within its boundaries to be explored. There is a great advantage however to one's crossing the boundary line and being in. Every phase of our total living in the Christian life is greatly advantaged by the crisis-experience of entering the state.

First, its effect on our prayer life. There is nothing more to be desired than free and easy access to God in prayer. The experience of holiness removes the inward hindrances to such access, and establishes a relationship and spiritual union, which greatly increases our fellowship with God, and which renders our approach to him both free and easy. Sometimes we need quick answers to our prayers. An illustration of this is very vivid in my memory. In one of my pastorates there was a very godly, holy, colored woman who worshipped with us. I used to go to her home to unite with her in prayer in meeting problems and in crisis-times in revival seasons. I was holding a revival series of meetings, doing the preaching myself. One evening I asked Sister E. to lead in prayer. She proceeded in freedom and power of the Spirit, and finally came to the point where she named me in prayer, asking God to "especially bless Brother Butler for the service." I shall never forget the quick answer to her prayer. The best way I can describe it is, if you had been standing near me with a fourteen quart bucket full of water, waiting for the word to dash it on me, it would not have been more real than the response of God to her prayer. The instant she mentioned my

name, the Lord gave me such a sensible blessing that the thrill of it was as real, even physically as a bucket of water dashed upon me. She lived in the state of holiness of heart and life.

The fellowship phase of the prayer life is greatly intensified and enriched. By the experience we are freed from opposing elements, and are brought into such agreement with God, that fellowship is deep and sweet.

Secondly, its effect on our power to meet temptation. You hear some preachers say you will have much stronger temptations after you are in the experience. While it is true that there are some temptations peculiar to the sanctified, for instance, the temptation to over-confidence, on the whole, the benefits of being truly sanctified, in meeting the old temptations are great. Just as it is easy to be healthy when you are well, so it is easy to have victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, when you are well spiritually.

I shall never forget my own experience as I read II Cor. 10:3-5, after I had the experience. It reads, "For though we walk in the flesh (live in our body) we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the PULLING DOWN of STRONGHOLDS; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

I had already experienced the victory described in this Scripture. It had been so easy to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and to cast down every high thing, that when I read this Scripture, my heart leaped within me with joy. I said, that is what has happened to me. It dawned upon me then that God had taken all sin out and come in to stay in the temple of my selfhood, and as Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me," so I could meet Satan and say, you have nothing here that belongs to you. Victory is so much easier when sin is out, and Christ dwells within. Yes, one may lose the grace of holiness, but one has the power not to.

It is a very serious thing to turn back when we have possessed this grace. Holiness makes us what we ought to be, and gives us power to do that which we ought to do. To turn to sin after knowing this power, is like a man with plenty of money failing to pay his bills. There is available to us in grace all we need to be and to do as we ought to. Glory to God! "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." We are united with the source of power.

Cyrus Nusbaum, when obtaining the experience wrote the song, "Let Him Have His Way With Thee." Ellen Williams Childs wrote a companion song, "Jesus Has His Way With Me."

"Walking with my Saviour, clinging only to the cross
Bathing in the blood that purifies from dross;
For his blessed knowledge counting all besides but loss -

Jesus has his way with me.

His power has made me what I ought to be!

His blood now sanctifies, and sets me free!

His love fills all my soul, and I can see,

'Tis best for him to have his way with me."

This makes the victory present and real. I am persuaded that where the experience is real, it works.

Thirdly, the great advantage of having holiness is, it prepares us to meet the hard trials and tests of life. The condition of obtaining the experience brings death to self-will, and to all but God's will. Often the final test of our complete consecration in preparation for obtaining the blessing is such, that it prepares us to meet future tests.

When God tests us in this experience, he brings us to the death point and centers us in his holy will. The test may be simple and seemingly small, or it may be some major interest or concern of life, but whatever it is, it brings us so to center in his will, that we are prepared to suffer, live, or die for him. Consecration puts the stake at martyrdom, then we are ready for anything this side of it. Paul said in speaking of trouble and pressure in Asia, until life was despaired of, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves" (II Cor. 1:8,9).

My own test was severe, but I have thanked God many times for it, as I have met the various circumstances of the years. I saw and became enhanced by the beauty and power of true holiness. I did not know all about the entrenchments of "The Old Man," in my personality, but God knew and he searched me out, and brought me truly to the "Day of Pentecost" for me. I see now how ambition to get on, and advance was strong in my nature. I wanted to climb to the best I was capable of in Appointments and win success in having something. I was reared in the limitations of poverty, against which I rebelled as a boy. God had called me into the ministry, I had united with the Conference, I was prospered in the work. When I earnestly sought holiness, God asked me if I would take holiness and demotion, instead of promotion. He asked if I would take holiness if it meant to go back to' the beginners on hard scrabble and serve there. I made my choice -- I said, "Lord, there is no place where there are souls for whom thou didst die too small for me to go to and do my best.

"If I have only a small place to serve and a small salary, I'll do the best I can for souls and for my family. I'll take holiness and hard scrabble if that is what it will cost." That was indeed a near death point for me, but God saw that I was not dead to ambition yet so added, "and die in the county house when you get through?" Again I had to choose. I said, "Lord, it will be just as short a trip to glory from a county house as from a beautiful home with velvet carpets and downy beds. I'll take holiness if it means the county house to die in." This, with some other tests brought me to where God saw I was ready to be sanctified, and he proved his faithfulness and gave me the blessing.

I have often testified to the fact that I got on the train in Lansing, Michigan, without the blessing and somewhere on the Grand Trunk train between Lansing and Perry, God sent a Lightning Express for Canaan, and my baggage was so streamlined that I caught the express and landed in the Canaan of Perfect Love and true holiness, so that I got off the train in Perry singing, "I'm living in Canaan now, I'm living in Canaan now, I'm doing well, I'm glad to tell, I'm living in Canaan now." The atmosphere was so glorious, I felt as though I had just begun to live. I had struck my true native clime. True holiness is indeed the level upon which God designed man to live.

How many times as I have faced the experience of life this test has proven a real preparation for it. My reputation was given to God. I have had many occasions to thank God for that. I have had some hard things to meet, have suffered some injustices, but with Paul I could say, "None of these things move me." Paul did not say, none of these things hurt me, but none of these things move me. He wrote the wonderful chapter on Perfect Love and declared that "Perfect love endureth all things." The advantage of being truly sanctified is thus proven in all the phases of our Christian living.

The fourth special advantage is on the service side of life. True holiness as an experience furnishes its possessor with the motive and power for sustained Christian activity. There is service power, as well as a purifying power in our personal Pentecost. "Ye shall receive power" Acts 1: 8, has a two-fold reality in experience. It puts the holy go in the soul. It prepares for service in all legitimate activities for winning souls and honoring God. "Sanctified and made meet for the Master's use." "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure" -- Tennyson.

Health is the normal condition of physical life. Holiness is spiritual health. It is therefore the normal condition for true Christian living and activity.

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