

# Perfect Love as a Definite Blessing

by Daniel Steele

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of grasping the higher revelation of God, specifically the trinal personality of God, in order to experience richer blessings and spiritual growth.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:4, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 3:19, Ephesians 4:30, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "Trinity Doctrine", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the importance of understanding and embracing the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - in our faith journey. He emphasizes the need to grasp Christ and the Holy Spirit in their distinct offices to experience spiritual power and deep religious growth. Steele highlights the significance of acknowledging the Sanctifier's role in purification, leading believers to perfect love that casts out fear, and the necessity of not neglecting or underestimating any of the Holy Spirit's offices to receive His blessings.

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## Transcript

It took four thousand years to unroll the scroll of the sacred Scriptures --"to import God into knowledge," in the phrase of Dr. Bushnell. The patriarchal and Jewish dispensations were occupied by the disclosure and ineradicable inculcation of the Divine unity upon one nation amid surrounding polytheism. To have taught the trinal personality of God, before the firm establishment of his oneness of substance, might have overtaken mankind in the period of their early theological pupilage.

The first words taught to every child in the Jewish nursery for more than three thousand years are these: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Faith in this truth, such as inspired obedience, was saving under the dispensations before Christianity. It is saving now to all who have no higher revelation. What need, then, have we of any clearer and more definite manifestation of the nature of God? Why should he reveal the unthinkable fact of his threefold personality, and require our faith to mount to heights so far above reason?

This is a question which the angels might well approach with bashful tread. It is certain that he has not taken me into his counsels. Here I walk by faith. Faith says that the higher revelation of God, and the new requirement of faith in the Trinity, proceed from the gracious purpose to bestow richer blessings upon the believer in a dispensation "rather glorious." Such is the nature of the human soul, and probably of all finite spirits, that faith creates and measures its capacity for spiritual good.

By this gateway alone does God enter. Hence it follows that he would make an advanced revelation of himself, requiring a higher upreaching of faith, when he should purpose to fill us with his fullness. It will not now be sufficient to believe in one God, as do the trembling demons. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, in his offices of prophet or teacher, priest and king, and the Holy Ghost, as our regenerator, spirit of adoption, and sanctifier, must be specifically grasped by our faith.

Hence we should look for little spirituality where these distinctive truths of the Gospel are little preached, and for much spiritual power and deep religious experience where they are distinctly taught and received with the least intermixture of error, and without disproportionate emphasis upon ritualism. Church history will sustain this assertion. There is always a spiritual decline whenever Christ and the Holy Spirit have a secondary place in preaching; and there is always a revival when the "whole counsel of God," the Father, Son, and Spirit, is faithfully presented in the pulpit.

Of many individual believers it may be truthfully said that their spiritual life is feeble and sickly because they fail to grasp Christ and the Comforter in all their distinct offices. Thousands are faintly moving, with languid steps, along the heavenward path, who might run with gladness, surmounting every obstacle and overthrowing every foe by their resistless momentum, if they would only persistently endeavour to "know the exceeding greatness of Christ's power to usward who believe."

Thousands of sincere souls are harassed and weakened by perpetual doubts, simply because they do not render due honor to the third person of the Trinity by trusting him to the work of his office, certifying their sonship by "the spirit of adoption." They do not stir themselves up to take hold of this blessed assurance, and to insist that the Divine seal be impressed upon them by the Holy Ghost. They live in constant disregard of the second pungent inference from Wesley's sermon on the Witness of the Spirit, "Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness." The natural consequence of this absence of "the spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father," is a perpetual oscillation between hope and fear, sorrowfully singing: --

"'Tis a point I long to know;

Oft it causeth anxious thought,

Do I love the Lord, or no;

Am I his, or am' I not?"

Instead of this they might be exultingly singing: --

"O love, thou bottomless abyss!

My sins are swallowed up in thee;

Covered is my unrighteousness,

Nor spot of guilt remains on me:

While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,

Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries."

I am convinced that this unsatisfactory and unmethodistic experience too prevalent in our Churches, is chargeable in part to the failure of our preachers to specialize this blessing, the common privilege of all believers. Hear Mr. Wesley:

Generally, wherever the Gospel is preached in a clear and scriptural manner, more than ninety-nine in a hundred do know the exact time when they are justified.

This is the testimony of a man more competent, from personal observation, to express a reliable opinion than any since the apostolic age, for he visited all his Societies annually, and met them in class, and put to each member searching test questions which went into the very core of his being. That was the style of class-leading in his day. But no such proportion of conversions, with the direct witness, now obtains at our altars. The failure is not in the Gospel, which is a changeless stream of power emanating from the living Christ, "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Where, then, is the failure? Let every preacher examine his sermons, and see whether he has made "the spirit of adoption" conspicuous in his ministry.

Another office of the Spirit is that of purification. He is the Sanctifier. Beginning this work in the new birth by implanting love to God, the purifying principle, he continues it until perfect love casteth out fear. That this consummation may take place long before death, has never been a disputed question with Methodists. That it was specialized by their great founder, with increasing emphasis, till his dying day, no man on the earth can candidly deny, after reading "Tyerman's Life and Times of John Wesley." That this magnifying of the office of the Sanctifier produced such Christian characters as Bramwell, Hester Ann Rogers, the seraphic Fletcher, and his saintly wife, and many others unknown to fame, but precious Jewels in the crown of Jesus, is as certain as the sequence of any effect after its cause.

These results were not the work of chance. There was a distinctive faith which grasped this prize. This faith came from preaching which honored the Sanctifier by dwelling emphatically upon his office, and not by the use of "glittering generalities" gliding smoothly over it like a slurred note in music. It must be borne in mind that the Holy Spirit is the most sensitive person of the Godhead. If blasphemy against him is unpardonable, the slighting of any of his offices must not only grieve him, but also deprive the soul of the blessings which it is his prerogative to bestow. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

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