

The Life of the Sanctified Man

by Dougan Clark

The life of the sanctified man is a life of faith, characterized by perfect love and a strong desire to please God.

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Matthew 6:24, John 14:15, 1 Corinthians 13:2, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 3:2, James 2:26, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holy Living"

Description

Dougan Clark preaches about the inner life of holiness, emphasizing the importance of faith and love in the sanctified man's journey. Perfect love involves perfect faith, with both being opposed to sin and leading to a desire to please God. The focus is on faith and love rather than seeking special signs or extraordinary manifestations. The sermon highlights that love in holiness is self-reactive and self-expanding, desiring to love more and increase its capacity, ultimately finding its infinite object in God.

Transcript

The next remark is that the life of the sanctified man is emphatically and peculiarly a life of faith. "Walk by faith and not by sight," says the great apostle. All Christians must have faith, but holy Christians possess it in a very high degree. And this is precisely the phrase by which some denominations of Christians, designate the experience of Perfect Love or Entire Sanctification. All three expressions are sanctioned by the Holy Scripture, and therefore may be rightly and properly used -- the only point necessary to be guarded, being that we do not employ the term "full assurance of faith" -- and at the same time exclude or deny the other names of the same experience which are equally Scriptural and equally true. And besides this the term assurance is often employed in our day to designate the experience of initial salvation, when the penitent sinner, becomes assured by the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God.

Perfect love involves and implies the idea of perfect faith. Perfect love is love to God without any rivalry, and right and pure love towards all men. Perfect faith is faith without any admixture of doubt and unbelief. Faith and love are twin sisters and always keep pace with each other. Faith takes an advanced step, and, lo, love is by its side. Little faith, little love -- much faith, much love -- perfect faith, perfect love. Believe Christ with a weak and trembling faith, and you will love him with a weak and trembling love. Believe Him with a firm and vigorous faith, and you will love Him with a firm and vigorous love. Believe Him with a faith that refuses to doubt, and you will love Him with a love that refuses to waver.

And both faith and love are irreconcilably opposed to sin. Just in proportion to the strength of your faith in Christ will be your desire to please Him, and your unwillingness to grieve or offend Him. And when your

faith becomes perfect, your determination will become fixed, that by His grace you will not voluntarily sin against Him. And on the other hand if you possess love for Him even in a small measure, in that same measure will be your wish to avoid sinning against Him, and if your love is perfect, nothing can induce you wilfully to transgress His Holy commands. And thus it is blessedly true that "faith worketh by love to the purifying of the heart." I believe there are people in the world today who would rather die than voluntarily to commit a known sin. Would there were many more.

The inner life of holiness being thus a life of faith, it does not much concern itself about special signs or visions or extraordinary manifestations, or sensational phenomena of any kind or character. No doubt the Lord may and sometimes does use dreams and trances and special revelations to the intellect or to the sensibilities, for the instruction and edification of His children. But we must not live in them, nor depend upon them, nor think that something is wrong when they are withheld from us. They are the exception and not the rule. It is not generally those who know most of the Hidden Life, who have these sensational experiences, and we are emphatically forbidden by the blessed Saviour to seek after a sign. If the Lord in His infinite wisdom, sends to us these extraordinary manifestations, let us receive them with thankfulness, and pray that we may learn the lessons they are intended to teach us; but when He does not send them and we are deprived of them as most Christians are all through this life, let us gratefully remember that we still have the Lord Himself, and still have the conscious or unconscious illumination of the Holy Spirit upon its inspired pages. For these let us thank God, and with these let us be satisfied.

The love that appertains to the inner life of holiness is like all other love, self-reactive and self-expanding. It is ever desiring to love more, and to increase its own capacity of loving. If this tendency to enlargement and expansion is to go on forever, it must have an infinite object on which to expend itself, otherwise it would necessarily terminate when it should have reached everything in the object which is capable of being loved. But God is an infinite Being, His excellence can never be exhausted, nor fully comprehended, and so the soul may go on loving Him with a love that is perfect all the time, and yet which increases and expands forever.

The inner life of holiness, I remark in the next place does not make the mistake of confounding love with joy. Many persons who seem and claim to be seeking for holiness are seeking for joy. Such not unfrequently express themselves, as desiring a religion that always makes them happy or joyful. These individuals no doubt love God sincerely, but the very fact that they are seeking for joy -- joy in the abstract, for its own sake -- is proof positive that there is still much self-love left in their hearts. It is blessedly true indeed that joy necessarily attends or accompanies holiness, but the thing to seek and find is not joy for its own sake, but holiness for its own sake.

Joy is an emotion, and emotions terminate in the individual who is the subject of them. If we have joy in the Lord it is because we love the Lord. And if we love Him with a pure love we shall love Him with an undying love, even if He should see fit for any reason, to take away our joy. The thing for a Christian to be anxious about therefore, is not his own measure of joy, but his faith and his love, and his obedience. The one thing God is pleased with is to have us everywhere and always, doing and suffering His sweet will.

Love is not simply an emotion but it has in it a strong element of desire. It does not settle nor terminate in the subject but goes forth with strong and burning desire to do good to the beloved object. And when it is directed toward God, the Supreme Object of Love -- it desires to please Him and to promote His glory. When on the other hand it is directed towards lost and fallen men it desires to save them at whatever sacrifice to itself may be required. Listen to Moses: "O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have

made them gods of gold; yet, now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

Listen to Paul: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Listen to Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw men unto Me." Beloved let us see to it, that our love is kept perfect, and thus, and thus only, our joy shall be full.

Whoever possesses the true inner life of holiness has his center in God. Every human being must have a center around which continually revolves his thoughts, his purposes, his motives, his words, his actions, his whole character. And this center is either God or self. Some doubtless make the attempt to revolve around two centers -- both God and themselves -- but this is only the old story of trying to serve two masters, which Jesus says is utterly impossible. Now it is a wonderful simplification of the Christian life, to have just one center of our whole existence, and that center God. Our thoughts then will be God's thoughts. Our hopes and aspirations will be directed towards Him. Our life will be hid with Christ in Him. Our expectations will be from Him. It will be the daily business of our lives to do always those things that please Him. Our love for all created persons and things will be subordinate to our love for Him. With such love and service as we are capable of we will honor Him on earth, and with a better love and a better service in the glory land.

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