

Continued

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon explores the complexities of justification and sanctification in the lives of believers, emphasizing the need for ongoing spiritual cleansing from carnality.

Scripture: John 16:27, John 17:3, Acts 15:8, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:25, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Justification", "Sanctification"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin discusses the presence of carnality in justified souls in the New Testament era, emphasizing that even the disciples before Pentecost lived under the Mosaic dispensation and were justified by meeting the requirements of their time. Jesus affirmed the disciples' faith and love, indicating their justification, yet their carnal traits like desire for greatness, spirit of retaliation, and unbelief persisted. Baldwin highlights the need for sanctification and heart purity, as seen in Jesus' prayer for the disciples and their cleansing on Pentecost, along with Paul's exhortation to seek entire sanctification.

Transcript

But the doctrines of Zinzendorf will not stand the test of Scripture. For proof that carnality remains in the justified soul in the dispensation under which we now live we must turn to the New Testament. In the very beginning we find an interesting inquiry and one which has caused a great amount of unnecessary trouble. It is asked, "Were the disciples justified before the day of Pentecost?" The indefiniteness and indecision in our answer would be done away if we would but remember the dispensation in which the disciples lived before the day of Pentecost. They were not post-Pentecostal Christians, when men passed from death unto life as we see them doing today, a transition which we as genuine Christians would quite easily understand, but they were living under the Mosaic dispensation and were justified by meeting the requirements of their age.

Jesus declared that the disciples had both faith and love, saying, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." -- Jno. 16:27.

In his upper room prayer, he said, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Farther on he continued the same thought, saying, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." (Jno. 17:8, 25) That they were justified is made clear by comparing the three passages above with the following statement of

Jesus, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Jno. 17:3. In the following passage Jesus states that they were saved, and prays for their sanctification, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (This is initial salvation). Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (This is holiness.) Jno. 17:16-17.

In addition to all this, when the disciples returned from their missionary tour and jubilantly reported their successes, Jesus told them not to rejoice because devils were subject to them, but rather to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. None but saved people have their names recorded there.

That the carnal nature still remained in their hearts is seen from the following facts.

They desired preferment. They wanted to be great in the kingdom which they supposed Christ was about to establish. They even went so far as to strive among themselves as to who should be the greatest.

They manifested a spirit of retaliation. They wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans, and when the rabble took Jesus, Peter drew his sword and cut off the servant's ear.

They were unbelieving. This is seen in the case of Thomas who would not believe unless he could see and handle Jesus. Jesus upbraided all of his disciples because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

All of these are carnal traits and are inconsistent with purity of heart.

That their hearts were still unclean is further seen in the fact that Jesus prayed for their sanctification, and also the fact that their hearts were cleansed on the day of Pentecost. In reporting the remarkable descent of the Spirit on the house of Cornelius, Peter said, "And God which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us (at Pentecost); and put no difference between us and them, purifying their (and our) hearts by faith." -- Acts 15:8-9.

The fact that carnality remains in the hearts of those who are saved, is learned, not only from the experiences of the disciples, but also from Bible doctrine elsewhere recorded.

Although the Corinthian Christians had trouble with some refractory people, yet the majority were far from being backslidden, for Paul wrote them thus, "Unto the church of God which is in Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus (sanctification begins at conversion), called to be saints ... God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." -- I Cor. 1:2-9. Immediately after these words of praise he lays bare the manifestations of carnality among them, saying, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (margin, schisms,) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." -- I Cor. 1:10-12. Farther on he adds, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men (according to men, margin)? For while one saith, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" I Cor. 3:1-4.

These passages show that a person can be in Christ and yet not be cleansed from the principle, that, if allowed to have its way, will cause envy and strife. The envy and strife of the above passages must not be

so interpreted as to refer to that wicked manifestation of these evils which is commonly allowed and excused in the lives of modern professors; but they do refer to those outcroppings of an evil heart which so often, even today, injure the cause of God; when men prefer certain ministers because of some qualities, which may be either good or bad, and, in spirit, "sit down" on every other man who does not run in the same groove. These feelings are not allowed to such an extent as to cause open war, or all grace would be forfeited, but they are seen in that secret, almost unconscious, harboring of preferences which is a grief to the Spirit, and, if allowed, become a snare to the soul.

Paul exhorts these same Corinthians who were already initially "sanctified in Christ Jesus" to seek entire sanctification or heart purity, using the following words, "Having therefore these promises (Read chapter 6), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." -- II Cor. 7:1.

To the Galatians Paul says, "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:16-17. Far proof that this passage refers to the condition of a regenerated heart read the following from Wesley's sermon "Sin in Believers." "Nothing can be more express. The apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate, there are two principles, 'contrary the one to the other.' "

Christ gave himself for the church, that he might "sanctify and cleanse it." Eph. 5:25-27. Notice that it is "the church" that is to be sanctified and cleansed.

To the Thessalonians, whose "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" he "remembered without ceasing." and to whom he declared, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God," -- I Thess. 1:3-4; to these people, he said, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." -- I Thess. 4:3, and again, "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." -- I Thess. 5:23-24. The apostle does not say that their entire sanctification had already been accomplished, but that the Lord "would do it" either now or at such a time as they should meet the proper conditions.

John says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (this is justification), and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." -- I Jno. 1:7. The "cleansing from all sin" is subsequent to "walking in the light;" this is conclusive proof that sin remains from which the simply justified soul must be cleansed. Again John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -- I Jno. 1:9. This again is cleansing subsequent to forgiveness, and establishes all the teachers of the second work of grace claim.

These passages, with others that might be adduced, show that there remains in the heart of the merely justified Christian a sinful principle, which is called "unrighteousness," "the flesh," and "filthiness;" from which he must be cleansed, and from which he will be cleansed if he walks in the light.

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