

The Call to Holiness.

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon emphasizes the divine call to holiness, urging believers to pursue a deeper spiritual life and fulfillment in Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18

Topics: "Holy Living", "Spiritual Purification"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin preaches on the call to holiness, emphasizing that God has not called us to uncleanness but to holiness. He highlights the infinite possibilities and worth of our souls, urging listeners to seek spiritual fulfillment and purification through God's perfect love. Baldwin encourages believers to awaken to their holy calling, reminding them that God offers greater things, including freedom from unholy tempers and the carnal mind, leading to full salvation and perfection in love.

Transcript

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness" -- 1 Thess. 4: 7.

"The human heart asks love; but now I know

That my heart hath from thee

All real, and full, and marvelous affection,

So near, so human! Yet divine perfection

Thrills gloriously the mighty glow!

Thy love is enough for me!

"There were strange soul depths, restless, vast and broad,

Unfathomed as the sea;

An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;

But now thy perfect love is perfect filling!

Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,

Thou, thou art enough for me."

Yes, there are "strange soul depths, restless, vast and broad." There is an "infinite craving for some infinite stilling" that never will be satiated until the famished soul quaffs living, healing waters from the fountain of eternal life, whose streams, sufficient for all the soul's needs, flow right into this world from the "fountain opened to the house of David."

There are possibilities in man that are awful to contemplate. We are so accustomed to seeing him, conversing with him, enjoying or revolting his company, that we forget the Infinite possibilities that are locked up in him. Yea, we are liable to forget the Infinite worth of our own souls. Men's lives are too material. Matter and its motions are about all the average person knows. Some, bolder, delve into material mysteries, and bring to light marvelous things; and these people are called famous. Still others philosophize concerning mind and its powers; but, notwithstanding all their wisdom, they are little appreciated outside of the halls of learning. There are very few, however, who trouble themselves to search into the mysteries of their spiritual existence. Thoughts of the Godhead are too deep for them to entertain; redemption, the new birth, the mysteries of godliness, "the hope of our calling," the way of holiness, are all out of the realm of their investigations. True, they desire to get to heaven when they die, but want to do so with as little trouble as possible. Meanwhile their immortal spirits are clamoring after God; their hungry souls demand refreshment, and their longing hearts pant within them for a draught from some cooling fountain; but all these inward demands are either unheeded or slaked from the shallow springs of earthly good.

Poor man, muck-raking in the mud and among the stubble of earth, when an immortal crown, more glorious than ever graced the head of Solomon, is suspended over him, which he can have for the asking! Spending his precious days and years in earthly pursuits, gaining pleasure, fame and wealth, when the pleasures of palaces, the fame of generals or conquerors, or the wealth of earth's mightiest magnates are not worthy to be compared with the glory that may (even here) be revealed in him!

Man, arouse thee. All nature is vocal with the call. It whispers in every passing breeze; it thunders from the rumbling skies; it echoes from the earth, and comes in beckoning form from sun, and moon and stars: The Bible repeats the call like the voice of God trumpeting on Sinai's cloud-capped mountain, or as heard speaking to Jesus when they that heard it said it thundered. The Spirit knocks at your heart's door and offers "a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." You are wasting immortal energies; you are trifling with costly gems; you are bartering away the pearl of great price. He calls you; will you come to the feast? "All things are now ready."

But you say that you are already saved from sin; that you have left the world behind you; that you have counted its gold as clay, and its gains as loss. Thank God for all you have, but greater things are in store for you. You may be made "perfect in love." God has called you to holiness.

"Ye who know your sins forgiven,

And are happy in the Lord,

Have you read the gracious promise

Which is left upon record?

I will sprinkle you with water,

I will cleanse you from all sin;
Sanctify and make you holy;
I will come and dwell within.
"Though you have much peace and comfort,
Greater things you yet may find;
Freedom from unholy tempers,
Freedom from the carnal mind.
To procure your full salvation,
Jesus suffered, groan'd and died;
On the cross the healing fountain
Gushed from his wounded side."

As these words are written the writer's soul almost bursts within him. It gets a glimpse of infinite things, urges him forward, and moves him with the holy Bramwell to cry, "Oh, how I long for all the church to know this great salvation!"

Oh, these burnings of love divine! Oh, this unquenchable flame, these strong desires after God and for the purification of the saints! May God dip this pen in blood, point it with fire, and wing it with love and let it bring from his great heart burning words that will urge the reader on to holiness!

"Rouse up, brother! rouse up, sister!
Seek, O seek, this holy state;
None but holy ones can enter,
Through the pure celestial gate.
Can you bear the thought of losing
All the joys that are above?
No, my brother; no, my sister,
God will perfect you in love."

In order to see the consummation of these things, let us go forward. Are you saying, "Amen, I will?" Then let us pray together, in the last stanza of the foregoing hymn, -

"May a mighty sound from heaven,
Suddenly come rushing down;

Cloven tongues, like as of fire,
May they sit on all around,
O may every soul be filled
With the Holy Ghost today;
He is coming! he is coming!
O prepare, prepare the way."

The following words from Fletcher will aid you, reader, in seeing the import of your holy calling, and perhaps help you in your decision to take the way.

Lift up your hands which hang down; our Aaron, our heavenly High Priest, is near to hold them up. The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail; our Samuel, our heavenly prophet, is ready 'to cut them and their king in pieces before the Lord. The promise is unto you.' You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, although you still seem afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centers -- Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door; 'Behold,' says he (and this he spake to Laodicean loiterers), 'I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in and sup with him,' upon the fruits of my grace in their Christian perfection; and he shall sup with me, upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.

Hear this encouraging gospel: 'Ask and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, It shall be opened.' 'If any of you [believers] lack wisdom' -- in-dwelling wisdom (Christ the wisdom and the power of God dwelling in his heart by faith), 'let him ask of God, who giveth to all men, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask [as a believer] in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed:' 'for let not that man think that he shall receive' the thing which he thus asketh. 'But whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. For all things [commanded and promised] are possible to him that believeth.' He who has commanded us to be 'perfect in love,' 'as our heavenly Father is perfect,' and he who has promised 'speedily to avenge his elect, who cry unto him night and day:' he will speedily avenge you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. * * * *

In the meantime be not afraid to give glory to God by 'believing in hope against hope.' Stagger not 'at the promise [of the Father and the Son] through unbelief:' but trust the power and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer, till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your heart. Wait at mercy's door, as the lame beggar did at the Beautiful gate of the temple. 'Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look unto us: and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them.' Do so, too: give heed to the Father in the Son, who says, 'Look unto me and be ye saved.' Expect to receive 'the one thing now needful' for you, -- a fullness of the sanctifying Spirit: and though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power, which, at Peter's word, gave the poor cripple a perfect soundness in the presence of all the wondering Jews, will give you, at Christ's word, a perfect soundness of heart in the presence of all your adversaries.

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