

Holiness as a Life Lived

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon emphasizes that holiness encompasses belief, experience, and a lifestyle characterized by grace and godliness in our relationships with ourselves, others, and God.

Scripture: Micah 6:8, Luke 1:73, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Christian Living", "Holiness"

Description

James Blaine Chapman preaches on the significance of holiness as a doctrine, an experience, and a way of life. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining the standard of holiness set by God, which requires both grace and personal effort. Chapman discusses the threefold nature of conduct: towards oneself, towards others, and towards God, highlighting the virtues of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness in each aspect. He concludes by illustrating how living in godly communion with God is attainable for believers, emphasizing the importance of quality and likeness to God rather than quantity and identity.

Transcript

Holiness is a doctrine to be believed, an experience to be received, and a life to be lived. As a doctrine, it is the central thesis of the Bible. As an experience, it is the heart of all the verities in the dealing of men with God in the things of the soul. As a life to be lived, it is from every point of view the best life possible.

There are two contrasting evils, toward one or the other of which we all tend to a greater or lesser extent. One is to lower the standard to the point where we can reach it without the grace God proposes to give us, and the other is to hold up a standard impossible even to the best of men. And, strangely enough, the practical results are about the same in both cases. The standard should remain where God puts it. At such a point we shall need all that grace can do for us to enable us to reach it, and yet by the grace of God we shall be able to reach it with joy and gladness. On the principle that the righteous are scarcely saved, and yet they are abundantly saved, when we fail by refusing the grace of God we fail miserably, and when we succeed by obtaining His grace we succeed gloriously. There is, indeed, a twilight zone between outbroken sin and the fullness of grace, where the appeal of the world is still strong and yet the call of God is more or less effective. But that zone should be crossed, not made a place of permanent dwelling.

Division of a subject sometimes helps us in grasping it, so let us think of conduct in three parts: in our relationship to ourselves, in our relationship to others of mankind, and in our relationship to God. Then we shall have a summary in Titus 2:11-12, where it is said the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness

and worldly lusts, and that we should live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts means to turn away from them, to forsake them, to refuse to indulge in them. Ungodliness is a word describing wicked conduct, and worldly lusts a term describing unholy thinking and desires. To deny these is to become outwardly and inwardly good in the negative sense. It involves harmlessness. It describes the passive virtues.

But holiness is more than negative goodness. It is positive goodness also. Taken apart, the statement is that we are to live soberly toward ourselves, righteously toward our neighbors, and godly toward our Heavenly Father.

Sobriety is just another word for temperance. Temperance, in turn, is defined as self-control. To live by this rule is to refuse tangents. To govern the temper and the will. To think soundly. To speak gently. To eat and sleep and work with neither sloth nor excess. To check the inner conscience sincerely. To face one's limitations faithfully. To speak the truth in word and in heart. To speak no ill of his neighbor. To neither minimize nor exaggerate. To be transparent before the bar of God and one's own moral judgment. To testify faithfully. And to pray unpretentiously.

To live righteously toward our neighbor is to be clean in our social relations. To be honest in our business relations. To be truthful in our communications. To be fair in our judgment of the deeds, words, and motives of others. The righteous man is a faithful friend, a good husband, son, and brother, an agreeable neighbor, a helper of the needy, a forgiver of enemies, an upright citizen, a supporter of civic well-being, a careful taxpayer, an observer of law and order, and a doer of good deeds.

To live godly is to live in the fear and love of God. To be obedient to all His known will. To worship God only, according to the first commandment; to worship Him spiritually according to the second commandment; to worship Him reverently, according to the third commandment; to worship Him statedly, according to the fourth commandment. It is to worship with the hand by tithing the income and making gifts according to the ability which God giveth. It is to worship with the mind by reading God's Word and meditating upon His power, wisdom, and love. It is to worship Him with the heart by pouring out the heart in prayer, praise, and giving of thanks. It is to live always in the attitude of willingness to give up what you seem to possess and to receive whatever He may choose to give. To live godly is to live in gracious communion, fellowship, and agreement with God.

If any are struck with the thought that we cannot live godly because we are but finite and God is infinite, then let him remember that it is quality and likeness and not quantity and identity that are required. We can be like God in the sense that a drop of ocean water is like the ocean.

A visitor to a clock and watch exhibition saw there a clock so large that the dial was fifty-two feet across and the minute hand was twenty-six feet in length. Then there were smaller clocks ranging on down to hall clocks, mantel clocks, and table alarm clocks. Then there were large, heavy watches, smaller gentlemen's watches, large-sized ladies' watches, wrist watches, and on down to one with a dial so tiny that one could not see the position of the hands except by use of a magnifying glass. But all the clocks and watches, great and small, were good timekeepers, and were kept regulated and set by experts, so that they were in perfect agreement. When the big clock up at the head of the line said, "Twelve o'clock," and the clocks and watches along the line said, "Twelve o'clock," the little, tiny one at the very foot spoke up in unison with the others and said, "Twelve o'clock." The little watch was not the big clock, but it was in perfect accord with it. And it is in something of that sense that we can be godly "in this present world." For

our present purpose it is superfluous to add those final words, for it is in this sense only that we can be godly even in heaven. And it is to the glory of His grace that God can so save and keep us that we can live truly godly right here, where Satan is loosed and temptation is rife and that we can live so all the days of our lives (Luke 1: 73-75).

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