

Holiness Instrumented

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of holiness in the life of a believer, grounded in God's law, the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Hebrews 13:12

Topics: "Heart Transformation", "Sanctification"

Description

James Blaine Chapman preaches on the importance of holiness as required by God's law, provided in the atonement through Jesus' blood, offered to all Christians on achievable terms, made effective by the Holy Spirit, and ultimately demanded at the Judgment. He emphasizes that holiness is not merely external rituals but a heart transformation that separates us from sin to be fit for God's presence. The sermon delves into the biblical foundation of holiness, the necessity of purity in heart and conduct, and the continuous pursuit of sanctification through God's grace and power.

Transcript

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17).

When we had been in India but a few days, we met on the road one day a little company of practically nude men, unkempt in appearance, bodies smeared with ashes, having a general bearing of aloofness. A missionary said these were "holy men" returning from a pilgrimage or perhaps on the way to some shrine. I remarked that the men did not appear to be good men, and I wondered if they were honest, truthful, and pure-minded. He said the likelihood was that the men were vile in thoughts, conversation, and action. He said they did not take with them any supplies or money, but depended on the alms of the people. I asked if they were a means of moral uplift to the population. He said he thought their example was detrimental and that, on the whole, they were a menace and a drawback. When I expressed surprise that "holy men" should be like that, the missionary said: "In the religion of the heathen there is no particular relation between holiness and righteousness. Holiness means devotion to religion, and religion is a thing quite apart from purity of mind and heart and proper conduct and elevating conversations. Only Christians identify these things."

It took centuries to make clear the meaning of purity in connection with the hearts and consciences of men. This idea was in the making all the time Israel was being taught sanitation for their camps, for their homes, and for their bodies. Even the law which required the segregation of lepers, being the only successful method of controlling leprosy that has yet been found, was religious in its import, and it helped

the Israelites to distinguish the clean from the unclean. The separation of animals, birds, and fishes into two classes, one class suitable for food and for sacrifice, and the other forbidden for both purposes, was just another lesson on moral discrimination between what is acceptable to God and what is not.

It is on the background of the long history of Israel with her multitudes of laws and traditions illustrating the difference between the clean and the unclean that we come to know that "Be ye holy; for I am holy" means that we are to be separated from sin and have all sin separated from us in order to be fit for the company of a holy God.

In his quaint manner, Bud Robinson said he was once extremely puzzled and nonplused by all the laws and ceremonies he found mentioned in the Bible, and he wondered if he would ever be able to understand and apply their meaning. But he was relieved, he said, when he found that the heart of all requirements was given in the Ten Commandments. He was still further encouraged when he came to where Jesus reduced the Ten Commandments to two, and said that all is covered just by loving God supremely and one's neighbor as he does himself. But all his fondest hopes for simplicity were fulfilled and more when he found Paul's statement, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Love is a heart factor and, while it does simplify, it also magnifies. One might come more nearly fulfilling all the 615 rules of thumb by which the Pharisees sought to direct their lives than he can love without the implanting of the divine principle.

Likewise one might more readily, in his own strength, do all the washing and sprinkling with blood and ashes provided in the Jewish economy than he can qualify for that blessedness which Jesus said is the heritage of "the pure in heart."

The Bible is God's message to man, and it is adapted to man's mind and heart. It contains about every form of literature known, and it brings its teachings in the simplest and most direct language to all. It begins with the proposition that man, though originally made in the image of God, is now fallen and sinful and separated from God by guilt for misdeeds knowingly done, and by moral and spiritual unfitness because of his inherent evil. It proceeds to unfold the means by which men may be individually restored to the favor and image of God. It concludes with the thesis that, in the restored relation and state, men can be happy in the fellowship of God both now and forever more. From the beginning, holiness is the objective, and toward this objective the whole of revelation moves determinedly.

Cato, it is said, used to begin, develop, and conclude his speeches before the Roman senate with the emphatic statement, "Carthage must be destroyed." And this is like the oft-repeated slogan of the Scriptures, not in form always, but in substance continually, "Sin must be destroyed."

But the Book does not stop with the negative putting. The positive theme is holiness. God is a holy God. Heaven is the home of holy beings. God wants men to share heaven with Him forever. He does not open the door of heaven to sin to make man's entrance possible, but He does direct man in the way in which he can get rid of sin and enter heaven without in any degree despoiling the glorious place of its holy character. Heaven is quarantined against sin, but God proposes to take all sin away from His redeemed.

Bishop Foster, in his book, *Christian Purity*, which is now admitted as being a "holiness classic," speaking of the grace and blessing of holiness which he had already proposed, says: "Is the high state of moral and spiritual excellence described in the preceding chapter attainable in this life? ... Many specious and beautiful theories have perished for want of proof. The most magnificent structure may be valueless

because of the insecurity of its foundation. Not all that is beautiful is true. And whence shall the proof be derived? 'To whom shall we go?' Not to creeds, or decretals, or ecclesiastical canons, or councils, nor even to the testimonies of those who profess to know by personal experience. There is but one foundation upon which any religious tenet can stand. To the Bible! -- what saith the Lord? All will admit the propriety of the appeal. We do not discard or disparage the opinions of the wise and good; but, however much we may esteem them, they are of no authority in matters of religious faith. We may thankfully employ them as helps, but dare not rest in them as infallible guides. We adhere to that sentiment of the illustrious Chillingworth -- a sentiment worthy to be written upon the sky and read by all generations -- 'The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion (authoritative creed) of Protestants.' Employing all lesser lights as aids, and rejoicing in them, we look away, and beyond them, for fuller illumination and sufficient instruction to Him who is the light of the world, and the teacher of His people. Let us, therefore, immediately address ourselves to the study of the holy oracles, and find what they teach upon the subject."

In approaching the Word of God, the most important of all qualifications for seeing its light is willingness to see it, and willingness to walk in that light when it shines. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." This is the touchstone that Jesus gave, and it is the most dependable ever yet proposed. Those who read for purposes of speculation cannot be expected to find the message their own souls need. But here, as elsewhere, the willing and the obedient shall eat the fruit of the land.

In continuing his approach to the Biblical instrumenting of holiness, Bishop Foster says: "In this treatise we shall employ both these methods for eliciting the divine teaching; and we hope to sustain our position, not by a single and isolated declaration only, or a single inference only, but by a great number of both direct and inferential proofs of the most unequivocal and irresistible authority; declarations so various, contained in commands, promises, prayers, exhortations, statements, and narratives; and inferences so multiplied, arising from so many sources, as to convince every candid reader that the doctrine we contend for is not limited to a bare and questionable place, a doubtful and uncertain existence in the sacred records, but is repletely and abundantly, as well as explicitly embodied as a cardinal feature throughout the whole system. It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, resounds in the songs, sparkles in the poetry, shines in the types, glows in the imagery, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from its alpha to its omega -- its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over and voicing all through revelation; singing and shouting in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The truth to elucidate which the system exists. If God has spoken at all it is to aid men to be holy. The wonder is, that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort."

After this Bishop Foster goes on to cite instances in which holiness is commanded, promised, prayed for, and possessed. He concludes the chapter with three observations: (1) God is holy, and all sin is infinitely offensive to Him. (2) If holiness is not attainable in this life, then it cannot be required; or if not attainable, and yet is required, then an impossibility is required. (3) If holiness is not attainable in this life, then it should not be sought or prayed for.

And now after this general putting of the subject, I desire to present the body of our present thesis in a few definite propositions:

I. Holiness Is Required by the Law of God. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so Be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16).

There may be some people who say we are not required to be holy, and we may seek excuses for ourselves, but we cannot get away from the fact that God requires holiness in His law. And the case does not have to stand upon a single quotation like the one we have given or upon many quotations. It is written right into the fundamental law. Take the Ten Commandments. No one will suppose that the commandments are negative in meaning just because many of them are negative in form. Take the first four which involve man's duty to God: no one can fulfill these commandments simply by having no God at all (although this would fulfill the negative meaning of the first commandment), or to refuse to bow in any worship, or to refrain from using God's name in any way, or to just refuse to work on any day of the week so as not to violate the Sabbath. No, underneath them all is the requirement that we shall love God with all our hearts and worship Him (1) only, (2) spiritually, (3) reverently, and (4) steadily. And such love as this is holiness. The statement in the old Methodist Discipline was, "No man can keep the commandments of God except the grace of God prevent him." The word prevent was used in what is now the obsolete sense, meaning to precede. And the thought was as true as the gospel itself, that no man can keep the commandments of God except the grace of God precede his effort and empower him to do so.

II. Holiness Is Provided in the Atonement. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

That view of the atonement of Jesus which would confine it to merit for pardon is certainly without basis in the Scriptures. Even the ancient prophets recognized the twofold nature of sin in connection with the atonement that they foresaw. Zechariah is an example; "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). The New Testament is replete with instances in which the merit of Jesus' blood is proposed to reach as far as sin has gone. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

III. Holiness Is Offered to All Christians on Terms That All Can Meet. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

They charge God with folly who say that holiness is required in the law, and provided in the atonement, but offered on terms that few if any can meet. It is true that the terms are exacting, so exacting in fact that only those who are fully sincere are able to know them and meet them. But they never exact any more than that particular person can do. A command from God is always a promise from God to give the help the willing soul needs to carry through. If a thing commanded is impossible to human strength, then the command to do it is an invitation to call on God for power to accomplish it.

We shall not here enter in detail into the conditions involved in securing God's priceless gift of a clean, holy heart. The prime condition is the deep desire to have the blessing. It is not enough weakly to wish for it. It must be desired with all the heart. But one who does thus desire it can be assured that no wall is thick enough bar him from the Saviour's fullness.

IV. Holiness Is Made Effective by the Holy Spirit. "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:16).

We obtain the new hearts when we are born of the Spirit. But along with this new heart or nature there yet remains the old nature, which requires to be purged away by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We are not

We are not sanctified wholly when we are regenerated.

All Christians are expected to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the things of God. But growth is the method of our enlargement, and not the method of our purifying. Growth looks to maturity, not directly to purity; and although growth both precedes and follows sanctification, it is not the means of sanctification.

God's people are rewarded for their good works by special dispensations of blessings here on earth, and they are promised further reward in heaven. But good works are not the means of either initial or of full salvation. We are saved to good works, but not by good works.

Knowing that people are not sanctified wholly when they are regenerated, and yet knowing they must be sanctified to enter heaven, Roman Catholic theologians invented the idea of a "purgatory" between death and heaven, and proposed that Christians must go to this purgatory for a longer or shorter time, that all sin might be purged out ere they are admitted to heaven. But this idea of purgatory is a pure invention to fill out an acknowledged gap in the process of salvation, and Protestants who reject it most not think that ends the matter. The fact still remains that Christians are not sanctified wholly when they are regenerated, and they must be holy to enter heaven. So while justly rejecting the idea of a purgatory between death and heaven, do not overlook the fact that this purging must take place somewhere between conversion and heaven, and don't neglect applying for it soon. Even a Roman Catholic can have no delight in the prospect of going to purgatory; and should one read our words, we come with the assurance that the way to beat purgatory -- and not to go there at all -- is to come now for the purging, sanctifying baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, and have taken out all that purgatory could take out -- have it done here and now.

V. Holiness Will Be Demanded at the Judgment. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

It would ill become us to enlarge upon what the Judge of all the earth will do and say in that day when you and I shall appear before Him. I never like to hear this scene dramatized, and do not myself aspire to a place on the judgment seat. In my best moments I cannot contemplate that solemn scene without reverent awe. And in connection with this thought I feel that we must all be true to ourselves, and not presume upon a mercy that the Bible does not propose for us. God has been merciful in giving us life and opportunity. He has called us by His Spirit. He has sent His Son to die for our sins and for our sanctification. He has offered us a cure for our fallen and sinful state on terms that we can meet. Now what shall our answer be if we come at last before Him with sin still clinging to our garments or adhering to our hearts?

In that day of all days when the world shall be judged, And the chaff from the wheat shall be throughly fanned; When the righteous shall shine as the stars in the sky, Let my portion be at the Saviour's right hand.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-blaine-chapman/holiness-instrumented/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net