

Sanctification -- How It Is -- Faith

by J.H. Collins

The sermon emphasizes that sanctification is an instantaneous work of faith that purifies the heart and is distinct from the ongoing growth in grace.

Scripture: 1 John 5:14

Topics: "Sanctification", "Faith Development"

Description

J.H. Collins preaches about the journey to perfect love and sanctification, emphasizing the need for faith in prayer and the assurance that God hears and answers according to His will. He discusses the distinction between growth in grace and instant sanctification, highlighting the instantaneous nature of receiving entire sanctification as witnessed in the experiences of believers. Collins encourages believers to trust in God's promises and have faith even when they do not immediately feel a change in their hearts, emphasizing the importance of believing first and then experiencing God's power.

Transcript

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24).

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14, 15).

A. Dear brother, since our last meeting I have been seeking the experience of perfect love, but as yet have not obtained my request. Will you, my brother, assist me in getting out of my difficulties? For I am sure it is the will of God, even my sanctification. Do we attain this state by a process of growth? You remember we are told to "grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth."

B. With all my heart, dear brother, I will help you; and now, to this end, let us ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit. We are certainly urged to grow in grace; but we cannot grow into sanctification. Growth in grace is one thing; to be sanctified is another. Entire sanctification may be obtained in this life; but perfect growth in grace will never be attained. We will grow in grace through eternity. Growth in grace is almost the opposite of sanctification. Sanctification purifies the heart; growth in grace enlarges it. Sanctification is subtraction; growth in grace is addition. Sanctification is the death of the "old man;" growth in grace is the development of the "new man." There may be growth in grace both before and after entire sanctification;

but we cannot grow the heart pure; we cannot grow the weeds out of the garden. The vegetables grow, but the weeds grow also. Sanctify the garden-that is, cleanse it of all weeds -- then the vegetables will grow faster than ever. We are to grow in not into grace. The man can swim in the water, but he cannot swim into the water. He gets into the water that he may swim; so we get into sanctification that we may grow in grace.

A. Are there any examples of those who have been by a process of growth gradually brought into entire sanctification?

B. We know of none. "Facts are stubborn things." It may be said that persons may gradually approach that state; but they receive it instantaneously -- as on the day of Pentecost the three thousand who were there converted. Many of them had received impressions before, and gradually saw the need of conversion. But when Peter preached, they stepped instantaneously into the light, and received salvation. A person may be many years receiving conviction for justification. They are led on step after step to see its necessity; but there comes a moment when they step over the line and are converted. As in justification, so in sanctification; there may be a gradual accumulation of light, the soul more and more discovering its inbred sin; but there comes a time when the soul yields to this light, and is instantaneously cleansed from all corruption.

A. What did Mr. Wesley say upon this subject?

B. In speaking of those who had obtained full cleansing, he says: "In the years 1759, 1760, 1761, and 1762 their numbers multiplied exceedingly, not only in London and Bristol, but in various parts of Ireland as well as England. Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself; and in London alone I found six hundred and fifty-two members of our Society who were exceedingly clear in their experience, and of whose testimony I could see no reason to doubt. I believe no year has passed since that time wherein God has not wrought the same work in many others; but sometimes in one part of England or Ireland, sometimes in another -- as 'the wind bloweth where it listeth' -- and every one of these (after the most careful inquiry I have not found one exception, either in Great Britain or Ireland) has declared that his deliverance from sin was instantaneous -- that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one-third, or one in twenty, declared it was gradually wrought in them, I should have believed this with regard to them, and thought that some were gradually sanctified and some instantaneously. But as I have not found, in so long a space of time, a single person speaking thus, as all who believe they are sanctified declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment, I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work." (See Sermon on Patience).

A. When I ask the Lord for a clean heart I do not feel any change in my experience. Why is this?

B. If we ask and receive not, it is because we ask amiss; we do not ask in faith. The scriptural direction is: "Let him ask 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 any thing of the Lord." (James 1:6, 7). The truth is, the Bible nowhere commands us to feel, but continually to "believe," "believe." "All things are possible to him that believeth." When God would have us come to him upon the straight line of faith, the devil tries to sidetrack us upon feeling.

Now, the way to do, is to trust God; not wait for any sign or feeling. If we come by faith, we cannot come by sight. If we trust God, he will take care of the consequences. By faith Noah built the ark before he saw the

congregating clouds or heard the reverberating thunders. By faith Abraham went out of his own country, "not knowing whither he went." He did not stop to question, "Now, Lord, if you will only show me the country where I am to be led, then I will consent to go;" but he went out, and God took care of his wandering steps.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, and the people raised a shout before they heard the crashing walls or saw the crumbling towers. In short, "faith is the evidence of things not seen," as well as things not felt. It is for us to believe first and to receive next. Many would reverse this order, and receive first and believe last. For any one to say, "I will not believe, because I do not feel that I am sanctified," is like a person saying, "I will not put my food in my mouth, because I do not taste it; I will not touch the keys of this organ, because I do not hear the music; I will not open this book, because I do not read it; I will not hold this flower near my nose, because I do not smell it; I will not come near the fire, because I do not feel its warmth."

O my brother, believe God first, and then you will feel his power! Abraham put his sacrifice upon the altar, and when the vultures came down he drove them away. He knew it was God's sacrifice, though as yet the fire had not come down. He waited patiently on the Lord. The trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold. A horror of great darkness fell upon him. Still he held on, and "when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." (Gen. 15:17). O my brother, we must have faith to claim and patience to inherit God's promises!

Put all on the altar. Claim God's word that the altar sanctifies the gift. It may be that God will withhold for a time the witness of the Spirit. Here is the trial of faith. Remain on the altar. As you have asked for entire sanctification, and believed that you received it, still claim it upon God's Word. Stand on his naked promise: "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:37). Glory to God, Jesus has said: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23).

A. Will you please mention some scriptures which teach that we are sanctified by faith?

B. I will quote only a few of the many that might be mentioned: "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible unto him that believeth." (Mark 9:23). "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24). "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:9). "Inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26:18). "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14, 15).

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