

The Holy of Holies

by John Hames

The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing the fullness of God's blessing through sanctification, which brings a fresh and fragrant life, and a fruitful and loving service.

Scripture: Numbers 17:8, Ezekiel 36:26, Hebrews 8:10, 2 Peter 1:4, Revelation 2:17

Topics: "New Covenant", "Holy Spirit"

Description

John Hames preaches about the significance of the holy of holies, drawing parallels between the ark of the covenant and a sanctified heart where God's laws are written, transforming duty into delight and love service. He emphasizes the new covenant where God gives a new heart and spirit, dwelling within us through the Holy Spirit to enable us to walk in His ways. Hames highlights the contrast between Sinai and Calvary, showcasing how love triumphs over fear and duty, making God's yoke easy and burden light through a love service. He delves into the symbolism of the golden pot of manna, representing Christ's inward life revealed by the Holy Ghost, and the importance of partaking in the hidden manna by overcoming and going behind the second veil.

Transcript

The holy of holies was fifteen feet square, and separated from the holy place by a thick curtain. There was only one article of furniture in this place. This was the ark of the covenant, which was a little chest about three feet high, overlaid within and without with pure gold. In this ark were three articles -- the table of the law, known as the Ten Commandments; the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, which budded, bloomed and bore fruit. The lid of the ark was the mercy-seat, and on each end were the cherubim; while between their hovering wings dwelt the Shekinah glory.

This ark, we know, is a type of a sanctified heart. In it was the law. God has been working for ages to get His laws in man's heart. In Heb. 8:10, we read: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." When God writes His laws in our hearts, they enter into our wills, our choices and our affections. Duty is transformed into a delight and into a spontaneous love service.

Concerning this new covenant, we read in Ezekiel 36:26, 27: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit also will I put within you.

"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Here is something more than writing His laws in our hearts. It is Christ Himself coming to

dwell there by the Holy Spirit, causing us to be Christ-like, holy, and heavenly minded. The best that man can do by his most strenuous efforts is but failure. It is God that worketh in us to will and to do.

"I will cause you to walk in my statutes." There is so much religion and service that is of self-effort that is a strain, a pull and a tug. This class live under the lash of conscience. "I will put my Spirit within you." Just as a watch-spring causes every wheel to move and the hand to keep time, so God proposes to work from the inside until the whole being will respond to Him in a spontaneous love service.

The difference between the first and the second covenant is the contrast between Sinai and Calvary. At Sinai, the law was given in thunderous tones, and Israel fled from God. At Calvary love was poured out, and love is stronger than law.

Those who serve God from the standpoint of fear and duty find "Zion's road a hard one to travel." This type of religion is irksome, burdensome and wearisome. But the heart that has God's law written in it finds that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, because a love service causes the chariot wheels of the soul to run smoothly and easily.

The second article in the ark of the covenant was the golden pot of manna. The manna of the wilderness, as we know, was a type of Christ. There are multitudes who feast on His outward life found in the Gospels, but the hidden manna in the golden vessel behind the second veil represents Christ's inward life, which only the Holy Ghost can reveal. The manna that fell in the wilderness, remaining only a day, is a type of the transitoriness of the blessing in the lower state of grace. The manna in the golden pot in the ark kept sweet for hundreds of years. It surely has its spiritual significance for us. Gold in the Bible is a type of holiness and of divinity. When the Holy Ghost puts in us the Divine nature, the manna in our hearts will keep sweet. There is nothing more odious or obnoxious than a holiness grown sour.

In Rev. 2:17 we read, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Now, the manna which fell on the ground in the wilderness was not hidden, but visible for everyone to see. This undoubtedly has reference to the manna in the ark behind the second veil. You will notice that it is promised to the overcomer -- to the believer who dares to go behind the second veil, entering into the death of Jesus, and dying, not only to the world, with all of its attractions, but to his own fleshly, carnal nature. Thousands of preachers are kept out of this rich blessing by refusing to place reputation, ministerial standing, big salaries and ecclesiastical power on the altar.

Friends, it is worth dying a hundred deaths to eat of God's hidden manna. The reproach connected with the blessing of holiness is nothing compared to the glory that accompanies it.

Just as the manna behind the veil kept fresh and sweet, there is a striking similitude in the freshness and sweetness about the second blessing. It is difficult to describe. One must experience it in order to understand it. It is beyond expression. To awaken in the morning with a honey-like sweetness in the soul diffuses blessing all through the trying hours of the day. After a certain writer received the blessing of Sanctification, he described it as "like a big lump of honey lodged in the heart, dripping its sweetness as the days went by."

Another said that he felt as if he were buried in a bed of roses with their fragrance filling his soul. You can generally tell those who have gone behind the second veil and have eaten of the hidden manna. There is a sweetness in the countenance, a tenderness in the eye, and an unmistakable expression of sympathy on the face when the deep things of God are being preached.

Since our great High Priest has rent the veil and opened the way in the holy of holies, let us press our way in until we are assured that we are feasting with Him on the hidden manna. The third article contained in the ark in the holy of holies was Aaron's rod, which budded, bloomed and bore fruit, all in one night.

In Num. 17:7, 8, we read, "And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness: and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." There are three features mentioned concerning Aaron's rod: buds, blossoms, almonds. These typify freshness, fragrance, fruit.

Just as the falling dew brings a freshness in nature, so there is a Divine freshness which belongs to the sanctified life. Numbers of believers are straight and orthodox in their life and teaching, but, oh, how lacking in freshness! Their sermons are dry and stale and unctious.

D. L. Moody said that after his wonderful blessing and fiery baptism, he preached the same sermons, gave the identical illustrations, told the same incidents, but all seemed new to the people, and not a single sermon did he preach after that which did not bear fruit, and souls were saved. When a believer arises to speak with the dew of freshness on him, the people give attention and lose not a word. He may not say anything that is new, but the people get blessed and hearts are gripped. This heavenly freshness is that peculiar unction, that strange something that cannot be explained. Just what the perfume is to the rose, this dew of freshness is to the soul.

The blossoms stand for fragrance. Natural dew produces a fragrance. There is an unseen power and holy atmosphere that goes out from a Spirit-filled life. Fletcher had it. You can detect it in his writings. It is like walking in a garden of spices to read his life. Fragrance comes best from crushed flowers. Oh, for a holiness that is so lamb-like when it is crushed by the cruel hand of an enemy that it can shower them all over with a holy fragrance. Dr. G. D. Watson very beautifully brings out this fact in his comment on the Song of Solomon 4:16:

"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' The north wind brings cold, and cuts the fragrance from the flowers, whereas the south wind brings warmth, causing the flowers and spices to blossom. Both winds are necessary to bring out all the functions of fragrance in shrub and flower. We need the softness of the Holy Spirit, like a south wind, to open our desires, to win us and cause us to unfold the secret parts of our souls in perfect abandonment to our Lord, and then we need the cold winds from the north to chasten our souls, to cut the fragrance out of our hearts. We need the baptism of tears, the touch of winter frost, the cold and unkind treatment of our acquaintances, or our relatives, or our Christian friends. We need the pressure of occasional severity or hard times. We need the harsh words, the slights, the neglect of our fellow-creatures. We need the buffeting of Satan to bruise the sweet spices of our affections in order that the delightful odors may exude from us, in order that we may be rendered mellow and gentle and submissive and long-suffering, and thus the fragrance of God's grace within us is brought out and scattered on the air. Oh, the sweetness of that perfume which goes forth from the soul of the pure saint when it is bruised and bitten by the cold north winds of adversity and sorrow. It is then that Jesus flies to such a soul to enjoy their lovely worship and their complainings of crucified love, and hence she says to the Bridegroom, 'Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits. As the south winds cause the graces to grow, so the severe north winds cause them to ripen, and Jesus cannot enjoy the fruits of His love in us until it is ripe and mellow.'"

The rod, we are told, bore fruit. There is no life so fruitful as the sanctified life. All inward hindrance has been removed, and the fruit and graces of the Spirit grow and flourish without being choked by the bitter weeds of carnality. In Second Peter, the first chapter, we read of the Christian's having escaped the corruption that is in the world, which means the corrupt, fallen nature, and being made partakers of the Divine nature. Then he bids him add all the graces of the Spirit. "It makes us that we shall neither be barren or unfruitful." Here is a sure guarantee that we shall be fruit-bearing Christians.

Just as Aaron's rod, a dry stick, budded, blossomed and bore fruit all in one night, a believer who goes behind the second veil and gets the experience of holiness will grow more in a short time than he did for years in his justified experience, fighting, as he did, the "old man" of inbred sin.

Finally, God Himself is behind the second veil. This is the crown of all blessings, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." In Exodus, the fortieth chapter, we read that when the tabernacle was complete, every article of furniture in its place, every curtain hung, that it was dedicated to the Lord, anointed with oil. Immediately the pillar of cloud and fire began to descend, and entered the holy of holies there between the wings of the cherubim and the blood-stained mercy seat, the glowing Shekinah took up His abode.

Friends, this is the climax of the atonement. There is nothing sweeter, higher, nor deeper than God enthroned in a human heart. This is the Christian perfection, sanctification, soul-rest - the fullness of the blessing, perfect love! It is Heaven on earth.

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