

# Holiness and Experience -- Second Work of Grace (Continued)

by Lewis T. Corlett

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness and the second work of grace, which is a definite experience of purification of heart from inbred sin, wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** John 17:21

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Lewis T. Corlett preaches on God's requirement for holiness in both heart and life, emphasizing the need for believers to be sanctified and unified with Him. Through the high-priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus prays for the disciples to be sanctified by the truth of God's Word and to be in unity with Him. The sermon delves into the necessity of a second work of grace, known as entire sanctification, where believers are made free from original sin and empowered by the Holy Spirit for life and service. Various biblical accounts, such as Pentecost, Peter at the house of Cornelius, the revival in Samaria, and Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians, are used to illustrate the importance of seeking sanctification as a distinct experience after regeneration.

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## Transcript

God's requirement is holiness both of heart and life. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). God's desire is for man's entire life to be in unity and harmony with Him. This is what He prayed for in the high-priestly prayer recorded in John 17. In verse 17, He definitely prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Then, in verse 21, He prays that the disciples might enter into a state of heart unity with their Redeemer. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). He did not utter these expressions merely in an arbitrary manner so that the Almighty God could require something of the finite mind. He knew the nature and character of the men whom He had called. He saw the instability of Peter, the doubting of Thomas, the self-seeking of James and John, and the hesitancy of the others in aligning themselves fully with Him. He created man and He knew better than man himself the results of the Fall. He knew that this sin principle, which every child of Adam's race inherited because of the Fall, contained in it the seed principle of every transgression against God. He knew that it was a corruption of the self-life and the bias in man's nature to make him want his own way regardless of consequences -- to become selfish rather than merciful and to become self-centered instead of God-centered. Thus, before Christ

went to the Cross, He unfolded His heart in this magnificent intercessory prayer, asking the Father to perform a work of righteousness in the hearts of these wavering disciples that would enable them to stand, "and having done all, to stand."

Also God understood man's disposition, faculties, and limitations. He wanted to encourage the believer to follow the inclinations of the new nature received in the first work of grace. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ gave the Beatitudes, one of which is, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). The child of God has a natural hunger for the things of the kingdom of God. The poet expressed it:

Oh, to be like Thee; oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!

Christ knew that, unless man followed the inclination of this desire, he would not succeed in Christian living; so He definitely stated through the writer to the Hebrews, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness [the sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). The early apostles joined in the great heart cry of the Master in desiring the welfare of the early Christians and the progress of the young Church. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, states this same thought in a beautiful prayer: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19). He expressed it as the fullness of God. He knew by personal experience that it was necessary and essential for man to have his whole motive life filled with God's love if he would carry out the divine admonition.

#### A Crisis Experience

The conflict in the Christian world has not been waged over man's need but rather over the method that God uses in meeting this need and the time when man receives deliverance from the sin principle. Some believe that it is removed gradually; others, that God, in the hour and article of death, purifies the soul. The Catholic church has advocated the doctrine of purgatory, which is a purification of the soul from the sin principle after death. The people known as holiness churches believe that this need of man's heart is met in a second definite experience of grace in the heart of the believer, which is termed entire sanctification. The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene gives a clear statement of the general viewpoint of this doctrine:

"We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

"It is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service."

There is much evidence that this experience is a second definite work of grace. John and Charles Wesley taught it, and it was the outstanding doctrine of the early Methodist church; but it did not receive its source here. The Bible definitely teaches that such an experience is possible.

#### The True Meaning Of Pentecost

Christ prayed for His disciples and commanded them that "they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). The disciples

obeyed this injunction and tarried in the Upper Room for ten days. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). The disciples tarried and received the promise of the Father and went forth to serve more efficiently than before.

#### Peter At The House Of Cornelius

The Book of Acts gives several incidents verifying the aspect of the second work of grace as related to Pentecost. The angel testified to Cornelius that God had heard his prayer, recognized the spirit behind his almsgiving, and now was desirous of giving explicit directions to aid him in receiving the answer to his prayers. He told him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who would come and explain God's will to him and his household. Peter came, in response to the urgent invitation, and preached to them. Following the message Cornelius and his family were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Peter, testifying to the church at Jerusalem, states definitely what happened and the relation to Pentecost. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). This clearly shows that both the disciples at Pentecost and the members of the household of Cornelius received a definite experience of purification of heart from inbred sin after their initial work of grace.

#### The Revival At Samaria

In chapter eight of the Book of Acts the story of the revival in Samaria is recorded. There were two different series of meetings, two different preachers, and two different types of work done. Philip went to the city of Samaria and "preached Christ unto them." Many were converted and turned from their evil ways to serve God. Much good was accomplished and "there was great joy in the city." A large number accepted Christian baptism and by so doing declared to the people that they had separated themselves to God. When the leaders at Jerusalem heard about this revival, they sent Peter and John to help get the people established. They preached unto the people of the further work of grace signified by Pentecost, and many were baptized with the Holy Ghost and gave testimony to that fact. This incident clearly outlines God's method in the plan of salvation of directing men in two distinct experiences of Christian grace.

#### Paul's Exhortation To The Thessalonians

Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica outlines specifically God's requirement of two works of grace for His disciples. In chapter one he describes the result of their having accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. He approves of their life and conduct so much that he states: "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." The news of their turning from idols, their labor of love, work of faith, and patience of hope had spread widely until it became easier for Paul to tell others of what God could do. Yet he writes, in chapter three, verse ten: "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." In verse thirteen, he specifically states the need when he says: "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." In chapter four, verse three, he challenges them by stating that it is God's will that they be sanctified. And in chapter five, verses twenty-three and twenty-four, he declares that God will do it. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." No greater proof can be presented of God's requirement that believers must be sanctified as a second work of divine grace.

## The Testimony Of The Saints

One of the outstanding evidences that sanctification is a second work of grace is that only those people who teach it thus ever testify to the fact that they enjoy the experience. Many others say that they believe in sanctification, and some preachers declare their belief publicly yet do not accept the doctrine that it is a second work of grace. Some advocate that Christians grow into this experience, but there is no record of anyone's testifying that the experience has been attained. Throughout the centuries thousands of people have borne positive testimony to the certain knowledge that God had sanctified their hearts, subsequent to their regeneration, by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. These all have witnessed to the fact that it was a second work of grace, wrought instantaneously in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

## Requisites For This Experience

### 1. A Clear Experience of Regeneration

Since entire sanctification is a definite second work of grace, only those who have been born again are eligible to seek the experience. In the first work of grace, the sinning problem has been cleared, a new nature has been imparted, and the Holy Spirit gave definite witness to the acceptance of the penitent as a son of God.

This gives new ambitions, new affections, and new anticipation. Out of these arises a strong desire to please God in all things and to obey Him implicitly. God gives grace to meet all the conditions and conflicts of life. The believer is rejoicing in the enjoyment of a fellowship with the Holy Spirit, who is abiding in the heart. This state is maintained as the believer continues to walk in the light, and the natural result of this hunger coupled with a victorious life is to desire the fullness of the blessing of God. Without this double sense of hunger and victory the believer is not in the proper place to ask God to sanctify him wholly.

### 2. Consciousness of a Heart Need

In order for man to come into possession of this glorious experience of entire sanctification, he must feel a sense of need of a further work of grace in his heart. He must be conscious of the fact that in his self-life there is a corruption "which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." He must recognize that the normal, natural hunger of the regenerated heart is to be "perfected in love," an experience which will remove the conflict and uneasiness from the motive nature of man's life. He must come into that place where he can see that his personality must be unified and aligned with some great objective if it is to reach its highest possibilities and be all that it is capable of being. He must sense the fact that the principle of sin is a dangerous foe in his inner life, which may at any time arouse into action the selfishness of his heart and cause him to rise up, demanding satisfaction to the claims of self as against the claims of God. He must realize his danger in this position and come consciously to the decision that something beyond his human strength must be done about it.

### 3. Realization of the Provision to Meet This Need

The second step toward this glorious experience of entire sanctification demands of the believer a consciousness that God has already planned a remedy for this need -- that Jesus Christ died on the Cross to sanctify as well as to regenerate. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own

blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). He must understand that not only did God give His Son to redeem a lost world, but "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Also he must see that no one enters fully into the provisions of the death of Jesus Christ until his heart is made holy, for this is the fundamental purpose of Christ's death upon the Cross. Also the child of God must sense that Christ prayed for him to be sanctified, planned for him to be sanctified, provided the way for him to be sanctified, and promised rich reward if he would go "on unto perfection."

#### 4. Complete Abandonment to God

When the mind of man becomes fully acquainted with these facts, then he realizes the necessity of a complete consecration of his redeemed powers to God. Paul wrote this to the Roman church: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2). In the sixth chapter he stated that believers should yield themselves as instruments of righteousness unto God. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:11-13).

Man's choices lie between two centers -- either God or ego. There are various approaches to each of these choices, but in the final analysis all choices are made either in harmony with the divine will or in satisfaction of the claims of the self. The only place of security for the self-life is to be "hid with Christ in God." As the believer brings himself into this place of complete abandonment to God, he places himself in the position where the Holy Spirit can perform the work of entire sanctification in his heart.

#### 5. Faith Is the Condition of Receiving the Experience

These four things, which have been described, are preliminary requisites for a second work of grace; yet faith is the only condition man must meet to receive the experience of entire sanctification. These others are really preparatory steps to faith. Some persons take considerable time in meeting these requisites and some struggle intensely while considering and meeting the requirements. Yet the struggle and hesitancy are not necessary, for the Bible clearly teaches that the believers are sanctified by faith. Paul in testifying before Agrippa, declared that God commissioned him to preach sanctification by faith when he said: "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:17-18). In discussing soul rest, which is a synonymous term for entire sanctification, in chapter four, verse three, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul stated emphatically: "For we which have believed do enter into rest." He also stated that some had not entered in on account of unbelief, or the lack of faith.

Sanctification, as a second work of grace, is conditional, like all of God's operations with man. The Scriptures state it thus: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Faith is the attitude

of expectancy and anticipation; so, when the believer is conscious that he has walked in all the light God has shined upon his pathway, he becomes conscious of an increasing fellowship with the Lord and he grasps the promise of God and accepts the provisions of the Blood and realizes that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth ... from all sin." Faith is trust, complete reliance upon God; so the believer is able to relax on the promise, have confidence in the wisdom and power of God, and enjoy the provisions of the promise of the Father for His believing child.

How Does A Person Know He Is Sanctified?

### 1. The Testimony of the Believer's Spirit

It is possible for the child of God to know when he has fulfilled the requirements necessary to put himself in the position where God can sanctify him. He has a certainty that all has been yielded to the Lord -- possibilities, potentialities, possessions, and the personality have been placed in consecration to the Lord for sacrifice or service as He sees best. The believer does not need anyone to tell him that this has been done. His mind, soul, and spirit will unite to assure him that he has made a complete abandonment to God. This certainty regarding the human aspect of consecration encourages the child of God to believe that God will surely perform the divine part of the covenant

### 2. The Testimony of the Scripture

The Bible not only speaks of the provision for heart purity, but a promise is also given that the work will be performed. A scripture referred to before will guarantee the believer that he is in the position he must occupy for God to do the work. John stated: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). This promise is God's property and, if the believer meets the condition and stands upon it, God is under obligation to purify the heart. Also the scripture in I Thess. 5:24, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," fortifies the seeking child of God as to the certainty of the performance of God's Spirit in the experience of entire sanctification.

### 3. The Witness of the Holy Spirit

This was discussed in the former chapter but is reiterated here for emphasis. This is the strongest of these three phases of the witness to man's own being and is definite, clear, and certain as the believer accepts, by faith, the provisions of God's grace for the purifying of the sin nature from his heart and motive life. The Holy Spirit does bear witness that He has sanctified the seeking soul. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before" (Heb. 10: 14-15).

### 4. Calmness and Unity of the Inner Life

The Promise of Pentecost is that the child of God will have power "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). This is not the promise of power to be sensational nor abnormal, but rather the assurance of power to keep the fruit of the Spirit manifested in the heart and life of the Christian. It means the removal by the Holy Spirit of the antagonistic nature to God and His will and the perfecting of the heart in divine love. This gives peace of soul, rest of heart, calmness of spirit, and poise of personality. There is a consciousness that the conflict has been removed from the motive life and that now the purposes of personality are unified in God.

Many other details of manifestation and assurance of the certainty of the possession of a second work of grace will be noticed as the believer walks with his God. There will be a deepening of devotion, an enlargement of heart in divine things, a quickening of the mind in spiritual values, and an increasing appreciation for the value of the momentary fellowship the child of God enjoys with the abiding Spirit. There will be a definite consciousness of the guidance of the Spirit into better blessings and forward to greater conquests. The conditional aspect will always be true. The sanctified believer must always walk in the light to maintain fellowship and to keep himself where the Blood continually keeps the heart clean and pure in the love of God. God will verify His promise and truly "the path of the just" will be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

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