

Let Us, to Perfect Love Restored, Thine Image Here Retrieve

by Phoebe Palmer

Phoebe Palmer emphasizes the importance of perfect love and holiness through faith and total surrender to God.

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:17, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Holy Living", "Sanctification"

Description

Phoebe Palmer preaches about the journey to perfect love and holiness, emphasizing the need to live a life of grace and obedience to God's command to 'Be ye holy.' She reflects on the surrender of all earthly possessions and the realization that everything belongs to God. Through deep self-reflection and humility, she acknowledges past unfaithfulness and the need for continual abasement before God. Palmer experiences a profound understanding of faith, recognizing that faith is taking God at His word and relying on His truth, regardless of emotions or feelings.

Transcript

"Let us, to perfect love restored,

Thine image here retrieve,

And in the presence of our Lord

The life of angels live.

"But is it possible that I

Should live and sin no more?

Lord, if on thee I dare rely,

The faith shall bring the power."

She now saw that holiness, instead of being an attainment beyond her reach, was a state of grace in which every one of the Lord's redeemed ones should live -- that the service was indeed a "reasonable service," inasmuch as the command; "Be ye holy," is founded upon the absolute right which God, as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, has upon the entire service of his creatures.

Instead of perceiving anything meritorious in what she had been enabled, through grace, to do, that is, in laying all upon the altar, she saw that she had but rendered back to God that which was already his own.

She looked upon family, influence, earthly possessions, &c., and chidingly, in view of former misappropriation, said to her heart, "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if received, why didst thou glory in them as of thine own begetting?" And though with Abraham in the sacrifice of his beloved Isaac, she was called seemingly to sacrifice what was of all earthly objects surpassingly dear, yet so truly did she now see that the "Giver of every good gift" but rightfully required his own in his own time, that she could only say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

And O, what cause for deep and perpetual abasement before God did she now perceive, in that she had so long kept back part of that price which, by the requirement of that blessed word, she now so clearly discerned infinite love had demanded! and when the inquiries were presented,

"Is God unreasonable in his requirements? Hath he given the command, 'Be ye holy,' and not given the ability, with the command, for the performance of it?" her inmost soul, penetrated with a sense of past unfaithfulness, acknowledged not only the reasonableness of the command, but also the unreasonableness of not having lived in obedience to such a plain Scriptural requirement.

With a depth of feeling not before experienced, she could now respond heartily to the sentiment,

"I loathe myself when Christ I see,

And into nothing fall,

Content if God exalted be,

And Christ be all in all."

Never before did she so deeply realize the truth of the words, "For we have received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in Him that raiseth the dead." With poverty of spirit her heart was constantly giving utterance to its emotions with the poet

"Thou all our works in us hast wrought,

Our good is all divine,

The praise of every virtuous thought

And righteous act is thine."

And when (as she still continued in a waiting attitude before the Lord) the Spirit appealed to her understanding thus, "Through what power have you been enabled thus to present yourself a living sacrifice to God?" her heart replied "Through the power of God. I could no more have brought myself, but through faith, in God, believing it to be his requirement, than I could have created a world!" Immediately the Spirit suggested, "If God has enabled you to bring it, will he not, now that you bring it and lay it on his altar, accept it at your hands?" She now, indeed, began to feel that all things were ready! and, in thrilling anticipation, began to say, "Thou wilt receive me! yes, thou wilt receive me!" And still she felt that something was wanting. "But when and how shall I know that thou dost receive me?" said the importunate language of her heart. The Spirit presented the declaration of the written word in reply, "Now is the

accepted time." Still her insatiable desires were unsatisfied; and yet she continued to wait with unutterable impatience of desire and longing expectation, looking upward for the coming of the Lord; while the Spirit continued to urge the Scriptural declarations, " 'Now is the accepted time,' I will receive you. Only believe! Trust all, now and forever, upon the faithfulness of the IMMUTABLE WORD, and you are now and for ever the saved of the Lord!" And now an increase of light in reference to the sacredness and immutability of the word of God burst upon her soul! An assurance that the Holy Scripture is, in verity, the Word Of The Lord, and as immutable in its nature as the throne of the Eternal, assumed the vividness and vitality of TRUTH, in a manner that she had never before realized.

These views were given in answer to an inquiry that rose in her mind, thus -- "Shall I venture upon these declarations without previously realizing a change sufficient to warrant such conclusions? Venture now, merely because they stand thus recorded in the written word! She here perceived that the declarations of Scripture were as truly the WORD OF THE LORD to her soul, as though they were proclaimed from the holy mount in the voice of thunder, or blazoned across the vault of heaven in characters of flame. She now saw into the simplicity of faith in a manner that astonished and humbled her soul; she was astonished she had not before perceived it, and humbled because she had been so slow of heart to believe God. The perceptions of faith and its effect that then took possession of her mind were these: Faith is taking God at his word relying unwaveringly upon his truth. The nature of the truth believed, whether joyous or otherwise, will necessarily produce corresponding feeling. Yet, faith and feeling are two distinct objects, though so nearly allied. Here she saw an error which, during the whole of her former pilgrimage in the heavenly way, had been detrimental to her progress. She now perceived that she had been much more solicitous about feeling than faith -- requiring feeling, the fruit of faith, previous to having exercised faith.

And now, on discerning the way more clearly, she was enabled by the help of the Spirit to resolve that she would take God at his word, whatever her emotions might be. Here she was permitted to linger for a moment, to count the cost of living a life of faith on the Son of God. The question was presented, "Suppose after you have ventured upon the bare declaration of God -resolved to believe that as you venture upon his word he doth receive you just because he hath

said, 'I will receive you,' -- and then should perceive no change, no extraordinary evidence, or emotion, to confirm your faith, would you still believe?" The answer from the WORD was, "The just shall live by faith."

She now came to the decision that if called to live peculiarly the life of faith, and denied all outward or inward manifestations to an extent before unheard of, with the exception of him who "journeyed" onward in obedience to the command of "God, not knowing whither he went," she would still, through the power of the ALMIGHTY, who has said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," journey onward through the pilgrimage of life -- walking by faith -- resolved that the shield of faith should never be relinquished, but retained even with the unyielding grasp of death, should the powers of darkness be permitted to assail her thus formidably. Never can the important step that followed be forgotten in time or in eternity.

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