

Holiness: How to Get It

by Samuel Logan Brengle

Holiness is a gift from God that comes through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and it is characterized by a deep sense of connection with God and a desire to please Him.

Scripture: Malachi 3:10, Matthew 5:6, Luke 17:13-14, John 14:13-14, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 2:9, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:10, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Holiness", "Faith and Surrender"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes that holiness is the state of being like Jesus in moral and spiritual nature, achieved through complete deliverance from sin and the perfection of spiritual graces. He explains that holiness is not attained through works or growth, but as a gift from God through faith and consecration. Brengle encourages believers to ask Jesus for holiness, trust in His promises, and act in faith, regardless of feelings. He illustrates this with the story of the ten lepers, highlighting that obedience and trust lead to cleansing and transformation. Ultimately, he calls for a full surrender to God, assuring that holiness is possible and available to all who seek it earnestly.

Transcript

Holiness is that state of our moral and spiritual nature, which makes us like Jesus in His moral and spiritual nature. It does not consist in perfection of intellect, though the experience will give much greater clearness to a man's intellect and simplify and energize his mental operations. Nor does it necessarily consist in perfection of conduct, though a holy man seeks with all his heart to make his outward conduct correspond to his inward light and love. But holiness does consist in complete deliverance from the sinful nature, and in the perfection of the spiritual graces of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness truth, meekness and self-control or temperance.

Righteousness is conformity to the divine law, but holiness is conformity to the divine nature. That there is such an experience is revealed to us in three ways:

1. By the Scriptures. The Bible tells us that God chastens us 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness' (Heb. xii.10) And He has 'given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust' (2 Pet. i. 4) in the Bible God makes us very precious promises of holiness. He gives us very solemn and imperative commands to be holy. He earnestly exhorts us and graciously encourages us to be holy, and teaches us to pray for holiness.

2. That there is such an experience is revealed to us by the testimony of holy men and women, who declare that God has brought them into this glorious experience.

3. It is revealed by the hunger and thirst of our own regenerate hearts: for if these desires to be like God, and to have His love and holiness so fill our hearts as to cast out every sinful thought and desire are begotten in us by the Spirit of God, then may they well be considered as proof that holiness is possible. For the Spirit of God will not beget desires in the hearts of His trusting children only to mock them.

Nearly all Christians expect to be made holy either before they die, or at the moment of death. And everybody agrees that we must be holy before we can enter Heaven.

Some other Christians maintain that we are sanctified at the moment of death by some mysterious operation of the Spirit of God; while others again insist that we grow into the experience. But we of The Salvation Army believe that it is the gift of God, and is the heritage of every soul that is born again, an inheritance into which we can enter at once by hearty consecration and childlike faith.

How then shall this holiness be obtained? Not by purgatorial fires, but by Holy Ghost fire. Not by works; that would make man his own savior and sanctifier. A great trick of the devil is to lead people to think they will get it by doing something, but a man might as well try to lift himself over the fence by his own bootstraps as to transform himself into the divine nature by works. He can get it no more by works than he can change the color of his eyes by works. He can no more rid himself of an inherited temper, or get lust out of his heart, or hatred, or pride, by getting baptized, by going to church, by joining the Army, by putting on the uniform, by reading the Bible, by doing any or every religious work, than he can get scrofula out of his blood by doing these things or add one cubit to his stature. 'Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph. ii. 9). However, a holy man is abundant in good works, and so is one who is truly seeking the blessing. But more of this further on.

Not by growth. Growth adds to us, but takes nothing from us, neither does it change the nature and disposition. Holiness consists in having something taken from us and in having our spiritual nature made over into the image of Jesus. In order to be holy we must have every unclean desire and temper and passion of the soul removed. We must 'put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,' (Eph. iv. 22), as really as a man puts off his old coat, 'and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness' (Eph. iv. 24), as really as a man puts on his new coat. This is the way God told Paul to tell us to do it. It would be nonsense to talk of growing out of an old coat into a new one. Put off the old coat, put on a new one! Put off the old Adam, put on the new Adam!

It is not by death. I used to think it was, because I was taught so. But I dreaded the thought of being killed by lightning, or shot by a stray bullet. I did not want to die suddenly; I wanted time to get ready. But, glory to God, I learned that it is not by death, and now I am ready to meet that old enemy. Hallelujah for ever!

Well, how can you get it? From Jesus, the very same Jesus that saved you and spoke peace to your troubled conscience, when you feared you were going to sink into hell. The very same Jesus that died for you. But how? By asking. By giving yourself freely and for ever to Him, to be not only your Savior, but also your Lord and Master; to do and suffer all His blessed, wise, tender will. By believing and receiving.

If you knew you had to die at sunset to-night, what would you do? You would give yourself to God. If you had any grudges against any of your neighbors, you would give them up, and if you had the opportunity you would ask them to forgive you for hating them, even though they had wronged you or some of your

friends. You would not stop to think how they would treat you. You would not care. You would feel it your business to get right, and you would leave them with God. If you had robbed any man, you would try to restore to him what was his. If you had any selfish plans, or ambitions, they would sink into mole hills before the mighty mountains of eternity, and you would give them up quickly. If you had been unfaithful in the discharge of any duty, you would confess it, mourn over it, and do all in the limited time left you to make the matter right. You would prepare the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight. Then, you would throw up your hands in helplessness, and ask God to forgive you for Jesus' sake, and not because there was any merit in yourself. And if you really trusted, you would receive forgiveness, and be at peace. You would feel Jesus to be your Savior, and you would rejoice in Him.

Now you would be a candidate for holiness. If the Holy Spirit should now reveal to you the hidden corruption of the human heart, and show you that it was out of this bad soil that grew the bad weeds of hatred and pride, selfish ambitions and envy, lies, adulteries, murders, drunkenness, thefts, and such like, you would cry to God to rid you not only of the weeds, but to entirely change the condition of your heart out of which such unholy things grew. And there would be only one way to get this done, and that would be to ask God to do it for Jesus' sake; trust Him to do it, and wait with full expectation till He did do it.

And He would do it. He would purge your heart of all unholy conditions by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, as surely as fire purges gold of dross. Glory to God! This is just what He wants to do. He wants all His children to be like His well-beloved Son, Jesus. It was for this that He sent Jesus into the world, and it is for this that He baptizes with the Holy Ghost and fire.

Some time ago a lady came to the Penitent-form for sanctification in one of my meetings. After I had questioned her and explained the subject as fully as I could to her and we had prayed, she claimed the blessing though she did not get any special witness that the work was done. But soon she came again to one of my meetings and testified, and her testimony threw light on the difficulty with many people.

She said that for several days after she left that first meeting she did not feel any different, but while about her housework a thought came to her mind. No doubt the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier Himself; suggested it to her, that her sanctification was a part of her Father's will for her and that He offered it to her on the simple conditions of full consecration and Childlike faith in Him. Then it dawned upon her that she had met these conditions and that now instead of waiting for any unusual feelings she must just act as though it were done.

She then added that when she began to count it done and to act as though it were done, then she began to realize that God was doing His part. She began to feel the mighty workings of the Spirit in her heart.

Now it is just at this point that many people fail. They wait for feeling, and hesitate and doubt and wonder and go with their heads down and repine, and maybe throw away their confidence. Instead they should recklessly but intelligently give themselves over to Jesus to be His for ever, to do His will unto death; they should step out on the promise with humility and adoring faith toward God, and with a shout of defiance to the devil and all their fears, count the work done.

One day ten lepers, poor, miserable men with the flesh rotting off their bones, met Jesus, 'And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them' (Luke xvii. 13-14) -- (bless Him!) -- how He loved them and yearned over them in their misery! But His yearnings over their sick bodies were feeble compared to His mighty yearnings over your diseased soul, my brother, my sister. 'And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests.' It was a law among the

Jews that when a leper was healed, he must go to the priest and get a certificate that he was a safe person to be at large among the people, much as a smallpox patient might have to do among us. But these poor fellows might have objected and said to Jesus: 'But look at us! We are not healed. Our leprosy is just the same. We are not different since you spoke to us. We shall be fools to go in this plight, and we shall not be received if we do go. Do not mock us. Heal us, make us feel different that we may know we are healed, then we will go.'

No, no, no, these poor wretches did not talk so; they did not stop to reason with their doubts and fears; they did not stop to examine their feelings, or to compare themselves with the healthy folks about them. Jesus had spoken the word and it was theirs to trust and obey; and so they hobbled off, I imagine, as fast as they could go, 'And it came to pass ' -- (something always comes to pass when people trust and obey) -- 'And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.' Bless God! That was cleansing through 'the obedience of faith,' and it is written for our encouragement and instruction.

Reader, do you want this experience? If you have it, rejoice and praise God for it. Don't merely keep on seeking it, else you will get into darkness, but go to thanking God for it and testifying of it to others. But if you have it not, give yourself up fully to God just now, ask for it, believe for it, and if it does not come at once, patiently and expectantly wait for it. Expect it, expect it, expect it! He gives His people 'an expected end.' Remind God of His promises. Don't give Him any rest till He comes and sanctifies you. Tell Him you have come to stay, and that you will not let Him go till He blesses you. Nestle down on His promises close to the loving heart of Jesus and stay there expecting till you know the work is done.

If the devil and an evil heart of unbelief say: 'It is for others, but not for you' -- you say: 'I am all the Lord's; get behind me, Satan,' and tell Jesus about it.

If the devil says: 'You don't feel any different,' -- you say: 'I am all the Lord's; get behind me, Satan,' and tell Jesus about this also. If the devil says: 'You can't keep it if you do get it,' -- you say: 'I am all the Lord's; get behind me, Satan,' and don't forget to tell this to Jesus.

Act out your faith, regardless of your feelings, and a heaven of love and joy and peace and patience will soon fill your poor heart, and you will get 'lost in wonder, love and praise' ; only don't bother yourself about your feelings. Your business is to wait on God for orders and inspiration, and then to trust and obey. It is His part of the business to shine upon you and cleanse you, and fill you with the Holy Ghost, and make your heart bubble over with joy.

Claim the promise; feed on the word of God; feast yourself on His love and faithfulness in Jesus; wait on Him in believing, expectant prayer and you will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and you will become strong to do a man's work for God and souls. You will rise above discouragements and difficulties, and you will chase a thousand of your enemies, and if you can find a fellow with a kindred spirit the two of you will put ten thousand to flight. Glory to God!

Go to believing just now and you will have peace. Continue to believe and your peace will flow like a river.

Hold on this way, resisting the devil steadfast in the faith, reminding Jesus of His promises and encouraging your own heart with them, and I declare it will not be long before your patient, expectant faith receives a great reward. God will say: 'It is enough; he has come to stay; We will bless him,' and, calling to mind His ancient promise, He will open the windows of Heaven and pour him out ' a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it' (Mal. iii. 10). Then down into your waiting, trusting, expecting heart

will come the Comforter, the blessed Holy Ghost, and up from the deepest center of your soul will spring the artesian well of living waters of holy love and praise. Then the meek and lowly Jesus will come and dwell in your clean heart, and you will love Him more than a mother loves her first-born babe, or than the bridegroom loves his bride. You will adore Him and worship Him and pour out your heart's treasures upon Him, and loathe yourself for all your sins that crowned Him with thorns and nailed Him to the Cross, and your unbelief and hardness of heart that kept Him from you so long.

Have the blessing now. Let God search you and show you all your heart. Don't be afraid. Heartily give yourself to Him and trust, expect, ask, wait, receive.

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