

The Beauty of Holiness

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness as the grand characteristic of the gospel of Christ, and the necessity of inward purity for a true relationship with God.

Scripture: Exodus 15:11, Psalm 96:9, Matthew 5:8, 2 Corinthians 10:3, Ephesians 2:8, Ephesians 6:10, Hebrews 11:1, James 2:26, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Christian Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on 'The Beauty of Holiness,' emphasizing the grand characteristic of the gospel of Christ as holiness and the importance of believers being a holy people. He highlights the difference between the world's morality and true holiness, which involves purity of heart and conformity to the divine image. Reade urges self-examination, prayer for divine illumination, and vigilance in the Christian warfare against indwelling sin and external foes, emphasizing the need for a living faith that works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

Transcript

2. THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

"Who else among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is glorious in holiness like you--so awesome in splendor, performing such wonders?" Exodus 15:11

"Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor. Let all the earth tremble before him." Psalm 96:9

If the external evidences of Christianity prove the truth of its being a divine revelation, how much more do the internal evidences attest its divine origin. From the period of the Fall to the Prophet Malachi, promises and prophecies were proclaimed, types and ordinances were instituted, to foretell and prefigure the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Lamb of God, who, in the fullness of time, should take away the sin of the world. Holiness is the grand characteristic of the gospel of Christ- and all who are interested in its blessings are a holy people; for the announcement to Joseph by the angel was, "You shall call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." "Be holy, for I am holy," is the command of God. "Be holy in all manner of conversation," is the apostolic injunction. Believers are described by Peter, as, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

There is a beauty in holiness which as far surpasses the rude features of the world's morality, as the dazzling brightness of the sun outshines the glowworm's light. The morality of the world consists in outward decency, and in rectitude of conduct towards our neighbor, while the heart is wholly estranged from God. Holiness has a special regard to God, and consists in purity of heart, and in a conformity to the divine image. This is what God demands. To this, a promise is annexed: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is what God works in believers by his Spirit; and without this, no man shall see the Lord. All religion is vain, if inward purity be lacking. No outward morality- no speculative knowledge of divine Truth- no formal observance of religious duties- can ever be accepted as a substitute for holiness by Him who has said: "My son, give me your heart."

Oh! my, soul, have you been born again? Has this divine change passed upon you? Are you renewed in righteousness and true holiness? Can you rejoice at the remembrance of God's holiness? Are you laboring daily, through the Spirit, for greater purity of heart, more heavenly-mindedness, chasteness of affection, and rectitude of intention? Is love to God, your principle of action? Is his glory, your end and aim?

Oh! blessed Jesus, I have no strength in myself to do these things. Put forth your saving, sanctifying power. Breathe, oh vivifying Spirit, breathe on the dry bones, and they shall live. Shine, oh Sun of Righteousness on my barren soul, that heavenly graces may blossom and bear fruit to your praise. Angels will then rejoice over another sinner that repents; and another jewel will be added to your crown.

Give me grace to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh, to loathe sin, as I should a garment in which is the plague of leprosy. Preserve me from the lustings of carnal nature, from inordinate desires, irregular propensities, and sinful thoughts, those seeds in the soul, from where spring so many poisonous weeds. Purify every imagination of the thoughts of my heart; give me, holy Savior, the victory over myself, that every thought may be brought into captivity to a willing obedience to you. Oh! may I daily worship You in the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth, that "with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I may laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you, and saying- Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory be to you, O Lord most High."

I am now living in an enemy's country. My heart, like a besieged city, has to contend with foes without, and traitors within. Watchfulness and prayer are the sentinels which guard the holy principle within; while circumspection watches the motions of the enemy without. If I sleep at my post, or relax in my vigilance, my soul would soon be overpowered by indwelling corruptions, and be vanquished by the powers of darkness. How earnest is the exhortation of Peter: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking those whom he may devour: resist him steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." How encouraging is his prayer, "But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen."

Self-examination, and prayer for divine illumination, are powerful auxiliaries in the Christian warfare. The Christian soldier must pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, that he may be endued with strength in the inner man. He must search into his heart, and learn to know himself, that he may not be surprised by the secret machinations of indwelling sin. Oh! how arduous is the life of the believer. The 'mere formalist' knows nothing of his conflicts or his comforts. "See, then," says Paul, "that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore, do not

be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Enable me, O Lord, to examine myself, whether I be in the faith; to prove my own self. Many deceive themselves by not scrutinizing their principles of action. Preserve me, your unworthy servant, from this fatal neglect; lest, judging from external performances, and disregarding the motives from where they proceed, I should be found, at last, to be only as reprobate silver in your sight.

Am I in the faith? True saving faith is a living, loving principle in the heart. As life manifests itself by action, so does a living faith- it works by love, it purifies the heart, it overcomes the world, it unites the soul to Christ, it apprehends his merits, and puts on his righteousness, it lives upon the promises, it realizes celestial glories, it raises the believer above the cares of life, the sorrows of the world, and all the gloomy horrors of the grave; it resists sin, it applies the death of Christ as a powerful corrosive to eat out the gangrene of corrupted nature, it raises the dead soul, by virtue of the Savior's resurrection, from the grave of spiritual death to newness of life, it enables the believer to walk with God, to worship him in the beauty of holiness, in the spirit of adoption, until he attain to the temple above, where his services and praises shall be perfected and eternal.

Have I this precious faith, this faith of God's elect, which is according to godliness? It is the gift of God; it is of the operation of the Spirit; Jesus is the author and finisher of it. Oh! blessed Trinity in unity, three persons in one Divine Essence, undivided, immutable, self-existent, and eternal; grant unto me this invaluable, indispensable blessing. Without it, I cannot please you. Without it, I cannot approach unto you with acceptance. If in Christ, I shall be precious in your sight, for his dear sake who lived and died for me. If out of Christ, I shall be viewed as a vessel of wrath, as fuel for the everlasting burning! Delay not, then, blessed Lord, delay not, to impart this precious gift of grace- a justifying faith working by love. Speak the word only, and the blessing will descend. Work in me all the good pleasure of your goodness, and the work of faith with power, that, going on from strength to strength, from conquering to conquer, I may rise superior to all my foes, glorify you here in the beauty of holiness, and shine forever as the sun in the kingdom of my Father.

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