

What Paul Said About Holiness 4

by Aaron Hills

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of sanctification, a process of becoming holy and righteous through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Philippians 1:9, Colossians 1:22, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 2 Timothy 2:21, Titus 2:12, Hebrews 12:14

Topics: "Sanctification", "Righteousness"

Description

Aaron Hills preaches on the Apostle Paul's emphasis on sanctification in his letters to various churches, highlighting the importance of believers pursuing a deeper experience of holiness and righteousness. Paul's prayers, commands, and use of specific words like 'sanctify,' 'righteousness,' 'perfect,' and 'holiness' underscore his strong encouragement for Christians to seek sanctification as a second blessing after justification. The Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews all contain passages where Paul urges believers to pursue sanctification and live blamelessly before God.

Transcript

The apostle writes to the Philippians, his best-loved church. He cannot get through the first chapter without a prayer for their sanctification in these words (verses 9-11): "And this I pray . . . that ye may be sincere and void of offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness." In the next chapter (2:14, 15) he says: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke [blemish, A.S.V.]."

In the next chapter (3:15) he assumes that he himself has evangelical perfection in these words: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

In Philippians 4:19 he gives a promise that includes sanctification in the wide sweep of its meaning: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." As Frances Ridley Havergal says, "What do we need so much as to have our hearts cleansed and kept sanctified, so that we shall not sin against God?"

Paul writes to the Colossians. Again in the first chapter he prays for their sanctification. He has already told them that they have "faith in Christ Jesus"; but he prays (1:9-12) that they "might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that

ye all pleasing who hath made to be . . . saints in light."

In Acts 26:18 he calls this an "inheritance among them which are sanctified." In Colossians 1:22 (A.S.V.) he tells them Jesus died "to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him." In 1:28 he declares that the object of all preaching is "that we may present every man perfect in Christ."

In the second chapter he speaks of spiritual circumcision not made with hands "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." This can mean nothing less, or else, than the putting off of the old man of depravity in sanctification by the Holy Spirit. In Colossians 3:5 he writes, "Mortify [make dead] therefore your members which are upon the earth," and "above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness" (3:14).

In 4:12 Paul quotes the prayer of Epaphras: "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Thus again in this epistle, the second blessing of sanctification is clearly urged upon justified Christians.

He writes to the Thessalonians. We have already discussed at length the teachings of the first epistle. We will only re-quote the remarkable verses here.

I Thessalonians 2:10: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

I Thessalonians 3:10, 13 "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith . . . to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness." In 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." In 4:7, "Go hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." In 4:8, "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

Chapter 5:19, "Quench not the Spirit." Chapter 5:23, 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless . . . Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

When those verses are thus put together, they make wonderful reading on the subject of the second blessing; for they were written to people who, Paul says, were already Christians.

In his second epistle to the same church he wrote (II Thess. 2:13, 14): "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto our gospel."

St. Paul writes to Timothy. He tells him (I Tim. 2:15) that people will be saved "if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Chapter 6:11-14, "But thou, O man of God, . . . follow after righteousness, godliness . . . keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable."

II Timothy 2:19, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

II Timothy 2:21, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Verse 22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness . . . with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." II Timothy 3:17, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work."

He wrote to young Titus (Titus 2:12): "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Two verses later he tells us why Jesus died (Titus 2:14, A.S.V.): "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession.

In the third chapter, he names the works of grace, justification and sanctification, in these words (3:5, 6): "He saved us, by the and RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST; which he shed on us abundantly." That is precisely what was promised by God, and accomplished at Pentecost, as Peter plainly testified.

We come now to the Epistle to the Hebrews. If this letter had been written on purpose to teach the doctrine of sanctification, how could it have been more explicit? It has fourteen passages on this subject. Here they are.

Hebrews 2:11: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."

Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost." This could not be said of Jesus if He did not save us from "the old man" of "indwelling sin."

Hebrews 9:13, 14: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience?"

Hebrews 10:10: "By which will we are sanctified."

Hebrews 10:14, 15: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."

Hebrews 10:29: "Who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing."

Hebrews 11:40; 12:1: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore . . . let us lay aside . . . the sin which doth so easily beset us."

Hebrews 12:10: "He [chastens] for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

Hebrews 12:11: "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Hebrews 13:12: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Hebrews 13:20-21: "Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will."

Conclusion

In the examination of the writings of the Apostle Paul we reach the following remarkable results.

1. There are more than seventy passages of scripture urging upon believers the Pentecostal experience of sanctification, showing beyond all question how important he esteemed it to be.
2. He prayed nine prayers that Christian believers might become sanctified.
3. Fourteen times he commanded believers to obtain this blessing.

4. In urging upon them this Pentecostal experience, he used the verb "sanctify," in its various tenses, sixteen times; the noun "sanctification," nine times; "righteousness," eight times; "perfect," seven times; "holiness," five times; "holy," four times; "perfection" and "perfectness," four times; "righteously," "cleanse," "without blemish," and "unblameable," twice each; the words "holily," "godliness," "without spot," "without reproach," "a pure heart," "complete," and "uttermost," once each. (See King James and Authorized versions.)

In the face of these facts, can any candid, teachable, and honest mind deny, or doubt for one moment, that the Apostle Paul urged upon Christian believers the second Pentecostal experience of sanctification?

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