

What This Pentecostal Blessing Is Which People Are Rejecting, and How It May Be Obtained

by Aaron Hills

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness and sanctification, and provides a call to action for believers to seek the Pentecostal blessing.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:6, Malachi 3:3, Acts 15:8, Romans 6:6, Romans 7:17, Romans 8:2, Hebrews 12:14-15, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holiness"

Description

Aaron Hills preaches on the importance of sanctification and holiness, emphasizing the need to surrender fully to God for a joyous and hopeful assurance of salvation. The sermon delves into the concept of the 'old man' as described in Romans, highlighting the various names given to this indwelling sin and the destructive influence it has on individuals. The preacher urges believers to understand the significance of being holy like God, as commanded in 1 Peter, and the necessity of seeking sanctification to experience true joy and victory in the Christian life.

Transcript

If we were to take a text or two to indicate the Divine endorsement of our teaching and give added weight to our words, out of very many that might be taken we select two:

Rom. 6:6: "Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin."

1 Peter 1:15-16: "Like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."

In these days of spiritual uncertainty and unrest, agnosticism, and soul famine, it is refreshing to meet a man who knows something. So many people only "guess" that "may be" they are saved; they have a "perhaps" or "hope-so" salvation. Paul says, "Knowing this." Let the reader pay strict attention to what the old saint knew, for it is the clue to a joyous, hopeful assurance of salvation.

1. He knew that the "old man was crucified."

2. He knew that by this crucifixion "the body of sin" was done away, "destroyed," "annihilated."

3. He knew that this brought him blessed deliverance from the tormenting bondage of indwelling sin.

I. Right here some one, to whom holiness literature is a novelty, says: "Please tell us what is meant by the 'OLD MAN,' 'the BODY OF SIN?'"

The Apostle Paul gives this "old man" a good many names besides these two in the text which are very suggestive. These names help us to locate him, and to understand who and what he is. In Rom. 7:17, he calls him "Sin that dwelleth in me," as if, at some time in his career and every man's [career] there was a strange inmate in the soul-house called "sin," a spirit of disobedience to God.

In Rom. 7:23, he calls him "the LAW of sin." If for this word "law" we substitute the words "the CONSTANT TENDENCY" to sin, we shall have the "old man's" photograph. He is the strange spirit of the devil, put into every child by race inheritance, a tendency to do wrong, and run after sin, and run away from God. The nursing babe sometimes shows it in its mother's lap. The little children very manifestly exhibit it in the nursery. Older children show it still more. Adults feel it so constantly, opposing every good resolution, besieging every holy purpose, mocking every Divine aspiration, that in spite of their covenant vows, and earnest prayers, and holy longings, they despair of pleasing God. This "old man" of indwelling sin destroys the religion of millions of hearts, and destroys the spiritual peace of millions more.

In Rom. 7:24, Paul calls him "this body of death." This image is probably a reference to that awful method of capital punishment sometimes used by the cruel Romans, which consisted in binding a corpse to a condemned criminal, eyes to eyes, face to face, mouth to mouth, bosom to bosom, limbs to limbs; the living man had to carry about the decaying corpse until its foul stench stifled him, and ended his life. It is an awful reference to the corrupting influence of the "old man," stifling, if it can, every holy desire of the soul, until faith dies and every longing for heaven expires.

In Rom. 8:2, the "old man" is called "the law of sin and death." Read for "law," the TENDENCY TO sin and death, and you just have it. It is a proclivity to evil that is not short-lived; it works on and on, like Asiatic leprosy, until it brings its victim down to everlasting death.

In Rom. 8:7, he is called the "CARNAL MIND" that "is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." In other words, he is an infernal traitor inside the citadel of the soul, an enemy to God that would be glad to surrender us to the devil. Indeed, he is the devil's own child, and his loyalty to his father can not be broken. He can not be bribed or won over to God; first, last, and always, he hates God's law, and hates God himself.

What an awful thing it is for a Christian to voluntarily retain in his heart such an enemy of Christ! Jesus is called our Bridegroom, and we are his bride. How would a young husband feel to come home and find that his bride was entertaining in the guest chamber an old flame of hers who was an avowed enemy of her husband? Can our Lord be any more pleased with our retention of the carnal mind?

In Heb. 12:15, this old man is called "a root of bitterness;" and this "root," planted by the devil in every heart, has an ugly vitality. It is sure to grow and produce a harvest of malignant fruit -- envy, jealousy, hatred, revenge. This is what makes it so hard for Christians to forgive injuries, and so easy to resent wrongs. It makes them sadly conscious of being unChristlike and strangers to the real spirit of love.

In Heb. 12:1, he is called "the sin that doth so easily beset us." The preacher who read it "the sin that doth so easily upset us," was not far astray. It always has snares laid for our feet. It is always making itself felt at the unexpected and unfortunate time. We are humbled by it when we least want to be. It finds the weak spot in everybody's character; and if at any time there is one gate to the soul unguarded, this sin is sure to find it out. O, this thing that we are talking about is a hot-tempered "old man," a touchy "old man," a proud "old man," a vain "old man," a worldly "old man," and as deceitful as the "father of lies" himself! What a detestable inmate to have continually about in the heart! He heeds no threats; he yields to no entreaties. He will stay though unwanted, and be industriously and continuously at his infernal business of trying to break the connection of the soul with God, and bring it down to hell.

In Heb. 3:12, this "old man" is called "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." This seems to be the hardest and most suggestive name of all. Think of it! A heart to doubt Jesus, to question his grace, to cast a suspicion upon his love, to disbelieve his promises of mercy and guidance! Such a spirit in a wife would break a loving husband's heart. Yet Christ, our patient Beloved, is compelled to bear it through the weary years, while we, His blood-bought ones, toy with this evil thing in our inmost souls. O the matchless patience of our Christ, waiting so long for us to permit the Holy Spirit to put out this vile proclivity to sin and Satan and hell!

There are several other names applied to this "old man" by God; but the list we have given is quite extended enough to describe him sufficiently for recognition. In common speech we call him "DEPRAVITY." He is best known among men by that name. Everybody means by it a sad appetency, a devilish propensity to sin, to break God's law, to rebel against His sovereignty -- a proclivity to do evil rather than good, a trend of nature away from the blessed God.

While this thing remains in the soul the tendencies to backsliding will always be multiplied; to fall will be comparatively easy. The Christian life will be robbed of much of its victory and joy. Its fruitfulness will be greatly lessened, and the Savior's delight in us will be greatly abridged, as those in whom His grace has not been permitted to do its perfect work.

The removal of this curse of Satan from the moral nature is called the "cleansing" of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8-9); the "circumcision of the heart" (Deut. 10:6, and Col. 2:9-11); the "purging away of dross" (Isa. 1:25); the "purging them as gold and silver" (Mal. 3:3); "the SANCTIFICATION without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

Holiness is the state of heart of one thus "sanctified," "purged," "cleansed." This is what God is talking about when he says: "Like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy, in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy: for I am holy."

A few years ago we had a war with Spain, and when one of our gunboats was on the way to the scene of action, a Catholic Spaniard, who had been working for years on the boat, was caught depositing a stick of dynamite in the coal to blow up the vessel. That fanatical Spaniard may represent the old man in the ship of your soul. Get him out if you do not want him to deposit a stick of dynamite within you ready to go off at any moment. Beloved, sanctification will take the Spaniard out of the Lord's ship, and put him over into the ranks of the enemy. We will still have foes to fight, but they will be on the outside. The ship and all within will be loyal to God. That is what all Christians need. God wants that traitor in the ship taken out forever. That is done by sanctification, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Then we will not be obliged to sing: "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it

for thy courts above."

May the day come when God's children shall all be free from proneness to wander, or to turn their backs on the blessed Lord!

II. Having seen what holiness is, let us now consider some manifest reasons why we ought to be holy and why God wishes us to be holy.

1. GOD IS HOLY. Our sun shines with surpassing brilliancy in the sky, so brilliant we can not look at it except with prepared glasses; but as glorious as our sun is, there are great spots on it many thousands of miles across. But our holy God is an undimmed Sun, shining in the sky of the universe, and there has never yet been, and never will be, one spot on His ineffable holiness. He is a holy God, and the angels and cherubim and seraphim look up into His face, crying, "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts!" That is the admiration of heaven. That is our God and Father. He wants His children to be like Him. You never saw a noble father or mother in your life that was not pleased to have their little child show the benevolent traits of its parents. If father is active and energetic, he likes to see that trait in his little son. If mother is sweet and affectionate, she likes to be told that little Mary has mamma's sweetness. She is pleased to have Anna show mamma's musical gift or talent for art. If father is a literary man, or an orator, he likes to see indications of these characteristics cropping out in his child.

So our Father in heaven is holy, and He wants His child to be like Him. There are just two great families of ours, and they both have the great, unfailing family resemblance. One is the family of sin; and they all have it stamped on their being. The other is the family of holiness; and they have the image of God stamped on their being. God is holy. "Be ye holy."

2. God commands us to be holy. O how men that are trained to obey commands will execute them! The sailor will obey his captain, and climb the masts and handle the sheets when the waves are rolling seemingly mountain high, and the great ship is the sport of the billows, and those masts swing back and forth till it would seem they would throw him into the deep. But he climbs because he was commanded to do so.

It is a matter of historical fact, and so said by foreign military critics, that General Grant was reckless and unsparing of the lives of his men. One time he lost twenty thousand soldiers in an awful battle, trying in vain to take an objective point, and ordering assault after assault, our men being driven back and mowed down to death, and there was an awful and useless loss of life. Colonel Peter A. Porter was commander of a regiment in that battle that went from Niagara Falls. General Grant gave a command to Colonel Porter, and Porter looked him in the face and said: "You have ordered me to a needless death." He turned straight around, led the charge, and was cut down.

Blessed be God! our King, the Captain of our salvation, never issues a needless command, nor orders to a needless death. He only asks us to die to self and the sin that damns us, that we may live to God and righteousness for evermore. He never gave a command that was not sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and in the doing of it there is great reward.

3. We ought to become holy, because sin and every proclivity to sin is so dangerous. I am amazed as I think of the awful power of Satan, how he has covered the world with sin and shame and woe; how nation after nation has gone down to wreck and ruin because of sin. The master-stroke of Satan was made when he planted a germ of evil at the fountain stream of human life to be communicated through all ages. That

was the germ of carnality. Sin is awful. Sin has cursed individuals, wrecked families, and made our great cities ungovernable. Sin has wrapped the world in a garment of misery and shame. Sin has visited heaven, and cast angels down from their high estate. Sin has filled the bosom of God with sorrow, and will roll a great Gulf Stream of woe through the universe of God forever. If this proclivity is in me, ready to act at any time, I pray God to take it out of my soul.

The cleansing Spirit can take that all out of you, and you will have the blessed "I know" salvation. If Jesus cannot do this, then the devil, who injected this moral poison into the veins of our race, is mightier than our Christ, He could inflict an evil which Jesus cannot cure. The very thought is almost an insult to our adorable God. This leads me to say:

4. We ought to be holy because holiness brings such blessedness. There is a world of joyless Christians living. There are multitudes of believers who go bowed down like bulrushes and hang their harps on the willows. If their souls sing at all, it is in some minor key, like Windham. The poor hungry heart wails out the sad refrain: "'Tis a thing I long to know, Oft it causes anxious thought: Do I love the Lord or no? Am I His, or am I not?"

Again in some unsatisfied hour it sobs its deep, pathetic want in the words: "Look how we grovel here below, Fond of these earthly toys; Our souls, how heavily they go To reach eternal joys!"

What a sorry commendation this is of the religion of Jesus! No exuberance of hope! no joy of assurance! Fullness of life in Christ will bring "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness." The birds of gladness will sing, and the flowers of peace will bloom, and the hallelujahs of praise to our sanctifying and satisfying God will roll through the arches of the soul, and rise as perpetual incense to our King.

5. Christ came for this purpose, and died for this end. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil; and the greatest work of the devil was getting that carnality planted in the bosom of every child of Adam's race. I see Christ leaving His home in heaven, leaving the adoration of cherubim and seraphim, and taking His lonely way down to suffer for this wicked world, which had no place for Him. I see Him scourged, and led out to be crucified. I hear the cruel mob cry, "Crucify Him!" I see Him dying on Calvary's tree, while God hides His face from Him, and my Savior cries out, "My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" And He is bearing all this -- what for? That He might cure us of sin, and make us sanctified and holy.

When I meditate upon all this in solemn thought, my heart cries out: "O Jesus, if Thou wert so anxious to have my heart cleansed and purified, it shall be cleansed. Thy soul shall be satisfied. I yield, I yield, by dying love compelled. I can hold out no more. I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord; I'll be what you want me to be."

We ought to want this blessing because God has set His heart upon it. The plan to restore man to holiness was planned by the Father; and He gave His Son that we might have it. For this Jesus poured out His Cleansing blood. For this the sanctifying Spirit was given that we might be holy. For this the plan of redemption was instituted to restore man to holiness. It is the will, the desire, the longing, the command of the Triune God, that every moral being in the universe should be holy. All the work of the atonement for man, and all the promptings of the Holy Spirit, move to this end. "Holiness! holiness needed, holiness required, holiness offered, holiness attainable, holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme." This is the glorious truth that is seen in Bible history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer:

"Be ye holy, for I am holy."

6. Until this blessing is welcomed we shall never attain our true usefulness and obtain the enduement of power. God could not safely bestow His great gift of power upon unclean, carnal souls. Most of the great popular preachers who receive a touch of power from God show how the carnal heart would abuse it and prostitute it to selfish ends. Few of them keep humble and true. Few keep their eye single to the glory of God. Few continue to remain great soul-winners. Few of them can be safely followed by the people. Few of them lead in the great but unpopular moral reforms of their day. Few of them walk close to God in the paths of righteousness. Power is a solemn, awful trust; God can not bestow His Spirit's power upon any but sanctified souls. III. How may the Pentecostal blessing be obtained?

I want to answer this solemn question so fully that all who read these lines with burdened and seeking, or even willing, hearts may surely find the way. There are so many people that do not know what ails them, believers in Christ who are still hungry and disappointed, restless and ill at ease. They want, they know not what; and their pastors, carrying about in their own souls the same craving, can not tell them.

I believe that all honest and sincere Christians who keep in close touch with God, and are willing to walk in the light, will, consciously or unconsciously, be led through certain steps to the blessing of heart-cleansing and sanctification.

1. The Holy Spirit will awaken in the teachable believer a sense of obligation to be holy, and drive home a great, deep conviction of want. It is not optional with the child of God to be sanctified or not. It is commanded nearly a score of times in the New Testament alone. We are exhorted to it in endlessly varying language, and encouraged by multiplied promises, and urged on by every conceivable motive drawn from earth and heaven and hell. We are taught that our usefulness and the salvation of souls and the glory of God depend upon it. Sooner or later the ever-present Spirit will show these things to the devoted and teachable heart and make it feel its need of a deeper and more radical work of grace, an enlargement of soul, and an enduement of power. Catharine Booth said, "O, what numbers of ministers, elders, deacons, leaders, Sabbath School teachers, and the like, have come to me confessing that they have been working with little results!"

Andrew Murray says: "You know that, before a sinner can be converted, he must be convicted of sin; just so the believer must be convicted and brought to the confession of his being in the carnal state. It might be termed a second conviction, of two things, -- the utter impotence of the flesh to do any good, and the mighty power of the flesh to work evil. This is the first condition of getting sanctified. Blessed are the poor in Spirit. Blessed are the Christian hearts to whom the Holy Spirit reveals their great want of a heart like unto Christ."

2. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Blessed are the believers who mourn over the fact that God's ideal of a Christian has not been more speedily realized in them; that they have not crowned King Jesus as the Lord of their being, and permitted Him to baptize them with the Holy Ghost; who mourn because they have had so little passion for souls, and won so few victories, and had so little concern for the lost. Such a mourning is a forerunner of the comfort of full salvation.

3. The Spirit-led believer will be brought to feel the importance of the Pentecostal experience. Like the disciples with their commission to represent Jesus and disciple the world, they will cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things? Lord, let me have more of Thy likeness and more of Thy power, or let me die right here; I cannot face the world as I am."

O the stupendous importance of being "filled with the Spirit," in order to be successful as a Christian parent, or teacher, or leader, or preacher -- anything that God wants us to be! There is no true and large success without it. How the disciples prayed for it in the upper chamber! How many others have bowed before God and sought it with all their hearts! Mrs. Booth says: "God never gave this gift to any human soul who had not come to the point that he would sell all he had to get it."

4. The leading Spirit will further show the seeking heart that this blessing is for each child of God. It is the "promise of the Father" to every one of His blood-bought children. "The promise is unto you and to your children, and unto them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Whoever of the sons of men has a call to be a Christian at all, has a call to be a sanctified Christian. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification; for God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification." (Eph. 4:3-7)

Before any one will ever successfully seek the blessing we are writing about, he will be led by the Holy Spirit to feel that, as a child of God, it is his blood-bought right to have it. He may be very ignorant of the philosophy or theology of the experience; as ignorant, for instance, as the poor Texan was. He was genuinely converted from a life of ignorance and sin, and began to read and pray over his New Testament. He had no teacher but the Holy Spirit. He found much in the book about sanctification, and that it was the will of God that we should be sanctified. He knelt above the sacred page and prayed: "O God, You say You want me to be sanctified. I do not know what it means, but You know, and I want it. Lord, sanctify me now." And heaven came down to greet his soul with a deluge of glory.

O, dear reader, this blessing is not merely for Saint Paul, and John Fletcher, and John Wesley, and a few other notable people, but, if you are a true child of God, it is for YOU.

A still further condition of receiving this blessing is to HUNGER AND THIRST FOR IT, until, like a hungry child, you will cry unto God for what you want. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." We must long for this blessing with a craving that will take no denial. You can pray for the baptism with the Holy Ghost till your tongues are tired, but so long as you fight sanctification as a possible experience of the children of God, He will not come to your souls.

Moody said: "Let it be the cry of your heart day and night. Young men, you will get this blessing when you seek it above all else. For months I had been hungering and thirsting for power in service. I had come to that state that, I think, I would have died if I had not got it." [After reading earlier in this book of how Moody later taught that all he received was power, and not purity, it rather nullifies the good impression one might receive from reading this here. -- DVM]

When men are thus filled with an agony of desire they will not need to be coaxed to come to the altar. When they get there, they will not be the pink of propriety, kneeling gracefully on one knee, and covering their face with a lace handkerchief, silent as a Sphinx: as if possessed of a dumb devil. When people are hungry enough for sanctification to get it, they will rush to the altar unceremoniously, and tumble down before God, and cry unto Him for the Spirit with a holy recklessness, with uplifted face, and loud voice, indifferent to the opinion of men or devils. That is the spirit that always gets the blessing.

6. Another condition that must be named is obedience. We read in Acts 5:32, "The Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that OBEY HIM." The Holy Ghost is not given to disobedient people. Sanctification does not come to conscious rebels. It is bestowed only on the obedient. But obedience is more than obedience in some things. It does not pick and choose what commands to obey, and what to disregard. Obedience is a whole-hearted, cheerful surrender of the will to obey God in EVERYTHING. How much it

means to have a hearty delight in the law of God, to love the statutes of the Lord, to feel that they "are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and that in keeping of them there is great reward!" We have too much obedience nowadays that obeys in everything but -- that easily besetting sin, worldliness, or pride, or avarice, or tobacco. People are willing to give up everything but; and behind that Satanic "but" there slips into the life the darling indulgence, the unhallowed love, the petted sin, which utterly vitiates the whole life.

This is not obedience at all. it is only playing at character and virtue. Men shrink from known duty, through fear of the opinion of others, or through dislike of some self-denial. They thus miss the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus, for the Spirit is grieved away.

Real obedience consents to obey God about everything, to listen to the slightest whisper of the Holy Spirit, to grant anything which God asks, to abstain from anything which His Word and a Spirit-illuminated conscience condemns.

People seeking the baptism with the Holy Ghost have frequent tests of obedience that are sometimes very striking. With Frances Willard it was the giving up of gold buttons; with Maggie Van Cott, the surrender of a gold ring given by a dead husband; with a man I know it was the discontinuance of the sale of tobacco; with another it was to give up his Masonic lodge; with a girl, the other day, it was to abandon a vain and fashionable dressing of her hair. In every one of these cases the heavenly anointing came when the will surrendered in absolute obedience to God.

7. The next condition is FULL CONSECRATION. Rom. 12:1, reads, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The body, being at present the home of the soul, stands for the whole being. The verb, "to present" is in the aorist tense, denoting an act done and finished. Whoever, then, would receive a baptism with the Holy Ghost for entire sanctification, and be made "holy, acceptable to God," must consecrate himself wholly to the Lord, body, soul, spirit; eyes to see for God, ears to hear for God, tongue to speak for God, hands to toil for God, feet to walk in paths of righteousness; the whole body to be the temple of the Holy Ghost; the intellect to think for God; the judgment to decide for God; the conscience to be an inward monitor, condemning everything God condemns, approving everything which He approves; the memory to record things just, and true, and pure, and holy, and of good report, and, as readily, burying in the "Lethe of forgetfulness" everything corrupting, and low, and vile, and Satanic; [*Lethe = 1. in Greek mythology a river in Hades producing forgetfulness of the past, 2. such forgetfulness -- Oxford Dict.] the sensibilities to thrill with such emotions and feelings as would become the bosom of an angel in heaven; the will to choose Christ, and place Him upon the throne of the heart, and crown Him Lord of our entire being, and say "amen" to His blessed will; the life to be lived alone for the glory of God; the possessions to be held in trust and administered upon, as by a steward, wholly for the kingdom and glory of God; the reputation to be given over to the Lord for Him to take care of and defend, everything that you are, or ever shall be, everything that you have, or ever shall have, to be the Lord's, WHOLLY His, ONLY His, for TIME and for ETERNITY, NOW and FOREVER.

"A consecrated spirit," as A. B. Simpson says, "is thus wholly given to God, to know Him, to choose, to resemble His character, to trust His word, to love Him supremely, to glorify Him only, to enjoy Him wholly, and to belong to Him utterly, unreservedly, and forever.

This is genuine consecration, and nothing short of it will bring the blessing we are talking about. Such a consecration as that will put yourself over into God's hands to be sanctified; will place you on the altar, which is Christ. What will He do with such a trust?

8. The soul that has consciously gone thus far has got on believing ground. There remains nothing left for it to do but to believe. Many try to believe prematurely, when their will is not fully surrendered, or their consecration is not complete, and they know it. In such a state of heart, the soul can not believe. Faith will not take hold. It may try, but it is only playing at believing; it is not on believing ground, where it can believe. But when the soul feels its need of sanctification, and mourns, and. hungers, and thirsts, and is fully surrendered to God for it, and to live it, and has put all on the altar, till it has the witness of itself and the Spirit of God that there is absolutely nothing held back, nothing unsundered, unconsecrated, then what? Why, just believe that as you have done your part, God now does His, now IS DOING IT. You may have to wait a little time as Abraham did beside the altar, scaring away the birds and jackals of unbelief, a minute, an hour, a day, or even a week, while you are holding fast in faith for sanctification; but, as sure as God lives and is true, He will honor a genuine obedience and consecration and faith with the witnessing fire, the sin-consuming, sanctifying energy of the Holy Ghost. It is the will of God that you should be sanctified. (1 Thess. 5:3) For this express purpose He shed His blood. (Heb. 13:12) When your will comes into harmony with God's will, and you earnestly cry unto God in faith for the very blessing He died to give you and has promised you (1 Thess. 5:23-24), HE "WILL DO IT." He could not remain a holy God, if He did not "do it."

Ordinarily the witness comes promptly. Frequently people wait a day or two; but it is an expectant, prayerful waiting. I have known one man in my meeting to thus wait seven days, when an unmistakable witness came. I heard one person say that he thus waited three weeks; but such cases are very rare. More frequently, by far, they get the witness at the same service in which the work was completed on the human side. GOD SANCTIFIES AS SOON AS, WITH ALL OUR HEARTS, WE LET HIM. In my book, "Holiness and Power," I devote ninety-six pages to careful instruction on how to receive this blessing. I know of no other book that gives such ample instruction, with the recorded experience of so many witnesses. I purposely made it so, because my heart was full of sympathy for the souls who were hungering, as I had done, for this great blessing which they knew not how to obtain. I refer the reader to that book for further and exhaustive discussion of this wondrous theme. To be filled with the Spirit means to be sanctified.

We close this Chapter with two quotations from that precious little book, "A Clean Heart," already noticed.

"Jesus who knew just what the heart of man is, said of it: 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things that defile a man.'" We are accustomed to hear much said today about the wickedness of our great cities. The wickedness of our great cities and little cities, and of the whole world, is in men's hearts, and all the expressions of it in thought and words are simply the workings out of what was inside all the time.

"The effort of all the laws and nearly all the religions of the world is to get men to behave better than their hearts want to behave. And the effort is a prodigious one -- to behave better than the heart inclines to do. All the crimes and sins of society are born in men's sinful hearts. If any religion is to be of benefit to man, it must have its chief sway in the heart. There never was a more successful wile of the devil than this -- to keep men's minds on the externals of religion to such an extent as to keep their attention from the heart. The result is that there is a cry that religion is declining. The decay of genuine, old-time revivals, the

decrease of membership in the Churches, the decline of family religion as witnessed by the increasing number of deserted family altars, the growing Sabbath desecration, the increasing hunger of the professed Church for the theater and dance, the small number who attend the means of grace in our Churches, are all indications that the heart is wrong. They are certain symptoms of the heart-disease which Higher Criticism, the preaching of evolution, the increasing number of organizations in the Church, do not check, but, like quack medicines, they only aggravate the disease and kill the patient. There must soon be a revival of heart-religion in the present Church organizations or God will take these candlesticks out of their places and give them to the keeping of some other whom he will raise up for the purpose.

"As long as the world stands, there is a place for heart religion, and God will always have it in the world. It is the only hope of the world. Let us each stand for heart religion, and let us remember that the greater part of religion is on the inside, and hence needs great attention.

"It seems as if Satan said to many Christians: 'Yes, I see that you feel your need of a clean heart, and it is right that you should have it; but get it in a reasonable way. Strive hard for it, or wait until you grow into it, or seek it by evolution.' With him it is just as well if you seek it in the wrong way as though you did not seek it at all. The Psalmist sought it by faith. This is the Bible method. It is not the popular method. The faith method of salvation has never been popular with the world, or the worldly part of the Church. The natural man has much to say about works and charities, but he ridicules your idea of being saved by faith. The religionist of the Church is as much opposed to the cleansing of the heart by the faith method.

"The late Dr. Curry used to say that the idea of religion that now obtains in the Church is to be converted by faith, and then go on and finish the work ourselves by our own doing instead of trusting God to complete it. Paul declared that he wished not to be found in his own righteousness of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

The reader will notice that the subject of this Chapter is HOW TO OBTAIN. Man seeks to attain a clean heart. This is the human method of doing it for ourselves by growth, evolution, etc. To OBTAIN is to receive it as a gift from God.

All salvation that we ever receive is by gift from God. There is not a passage in the Word of God that says it is by works or by growth that we have our hearts purified. All the passages that speak on the subject declare that it is by faith. When Paul stood before Agrippa he declared that Jesus gave him a commission to preach. In that commission it was declared that he was to so declare that gospel that men might receive an inheritance among them that are SANCTIFIED BY FAITH. If Jesus told Paul that men are sanctified by faith, it must be so. Who dares say it is by growth?

Peter declares in Acts 15:9," Purifying their hearts by faith." Why do men dare, in the face of these unmistakable teachings of Scripture, without a straight, direct passage to the contrary in all the Word of God, to set up human methods of saving men from sin (indwelling sin)?

Dear reader, the Word tells us four times that we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Once we are told that this heart cleansing comes at the time of the baptism with the Holy Spirit Will you, then, by faith receive this baptism for heart cleansing? Will you let the Holy Spirit crucify the Old Man and do away with him, that you may be holy? As the refiner's fire purifies the gold and silver, will you by faith receive the Spirit, and let the carnal dross of your being be purged away by the fire of the Holy Ghost?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aaron-hills/what-this-pentecostal-blessing-is-which-people-are-rejecting-and-how-it-may-be-o/>

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