

A Walk of Faith

by Dougan Clark

The walk of faith is characterized by a complete subjection to God's will, manifesting itself in a life of holiness, love, and sympathy.

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Philippians 2:3, Hebrews 11:1, James 4:3, 1 Peter 3:8

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Union With God"

Description

Dougan Clark preaches on the outer life of holiness, emphasizing the transition from desire to faith as a key aspect of a believer's journey. He highlights the importance of seeking God's will above personal desires, and the need for faith to rule within to exhibit tranquility and simplicity outwardly. The sermon also touches on the significance of seeking knowledge approved by God and the danger of pursuing knowledge without seeking His guidance. Furthermore, it discusses the union with God in love, particularly through genuine sympathy that stems from selflessness and rejoicing with others, regardless of their relationship or circumstances.

Transcript

As the outward walk of the holy man or woman is a walk of faith, it follows that it is characterized by the complete subjection -- amounting in one sense to the extinction of desire. The life of the unsaved is emphatically a life of desire. They are continually and restlessly running to and fro in search of some real or imaginary object which they suppose will gratify their ever active desires. They wrongly think that happiness consists in the gratification of their desires. But this is only true when the desires have God for their central object -- not while they are fixed upon anything short of God.

It is not only true of the unregenerate but of many Christians as well that they are full of desires, and that these desires often terminate in created objects, and not in the ever-living uncreated One. Their desires are strong while their faith is weak, -- sometimes apparently their faith is weak just in proportion to the strength of their desires. They desire temporal blessings for themselves or their families -- wealth, fame, position, influence, pleasure, and the many things that worldly minded people are evermore pursuing in the vain search for happiness.

Desire fixes itself upon the seen and sensible -- faith on the other hand attaches itself to the unseen and the spiritual. Desire clings to a variety of perishing objects, faith clings to the one eternal and imperishable object, even the Creator of all things. Now as the life of holiness advances in the heart of any believer, he

experiences a change from the reign of desire to the reign of faith. He changes his allegiance from the one ruler to the other. It is not that he ceases from desire, in the absolute sense of the expression, but all his variable and restless desires are merged into one overmastering and all-pervasive desire that God's will may be accomplished, and not his own, and then faith comes in its fulness to take possession of his entire being, and he rests in the joyous conviction that God's will is done, and in that will he himself finds a soul-satisfying answer to every desire and every prayer of his own. When faith rules within, and desire apart from God's desire has ceased, then the outer life will be sure to exhibit the results of the inward tranquility, by a quietness of manner, and a simplicity of spirit, which will be manifested to others, even if unnoticed by the subject of them himself.

The outer life of holiness seeks to be united to God and to His will as regards knowledge as well as faith. It does not seek to know everything, but only such things as God approves, and such things as He, by His providence, shows us that He is willing for us to know. The field of knowledge is so broad that no one can explore it all, or even any considerable fraction of it. We must make a selection of the things to be learned, and we need to ask God's direction and to obtain it in reference to what we shall know, not less certainly than in reference to what we shall do. Never, perhaps, in the history of the world has there been such a rushing rather than a running to and fro, and in such eager pursuit of knowledge as in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. The kindergarten, the common school, the academy, the college, the University, the technical and professional institutions are all full of active and studious learners. Science is extending its domain as never before, and art is keeping pace with it. But are we not in danger of forgetting that all knowledge that ever has been, or ever shall be, exists and has existed from all eternity in the omniscient God? Only a little of it can any of His finite creatures obtain, and that is only in fragments. Is it not presumptuous to push our speculations into all the regions of nature, and all the hidden mysteries of metaphysics and all the positive conclusions of logic and mathematics, and all the beautiful unity and diversity of philological questions of Biblical criticism and theological polemics without ever asking God what branches of knowledge He would have us pursue? If the young man decides upon what shall be the business of his lifetime, does he not seek especially and primarily to learn those particular sciences or branches of knowledge, which converge upon that business or profession? And has not God a plan for every man? And does not He know what is best and right for each one of us to acquire? The holy man or woman therefore is not a person who expects or affects to know everything, but who seeks above all to know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and the Holy Bible, which reveals the way of salvation -- and then whatsoever else in the broad field of knowledge, God may show him or her, by His providence, or in any other manner, that it is a duty or a privilege to learn. It is infinitely better to know God and be ignorant of everything else, than to know everything else that a finite being can know, and be ignorant of God.

And if the outer life of holiness implies a union with God in faith and in knowledge -- so that we shall believe, what He tells us to believe, and know what He permits us to know, and what He approves, and nothing else, it is equally true that it implies a union with God in love. An so far as the outer life is concerned this love will exhibit itself particularly and prominently in the form of sympathy. The very etymology of the word expresses oneness of feeling, or oneness of suffering, a feeling together. It is plain that all true sympathy is founded upon love. If it be the genuine article, it means unselfishness. It means rejoicing with those who do rejoice, and weeping with those who weep. It is the opposite of that feeling which is based upon inbred sin -- and which causes so many people, both the saved and the unsaved, to be envious at the prosperity of another, and particularly so if that other be a rival or an enemy -- and on the other hand to rejoice at the misfortunes, calamities, and afflictions of others -- particularly if they are not

our friends. All such feelings arise from the life of self which is still vigorous in the heart. But when by the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, the self-life is destroyed, then we love our enemies, then we love our friends not less but even more than ever before, then we sympathize with the sick, with the suffering, with the afflicted, with the sorrowing, then to the extent of our ability we will strive to mitigate the woes, and to augment the joys of those with whom we are associated in the providence of God without inquiring whether they love us or not, whether they are our friends or our enemies, or whether under like circumstances they would assist us, or the reverse.

The outer life of holiness exhibits a will in subjection, and united to the will of God. The sanctified believer does not lose his will. Without a will he would not be a man. But it is a will that harmonizes with the infinite will of his Heavenly Father, and finds its highest liberty in choosing His volitions in place of its own. The holy man or woman will manifest continually to others that his will or her will is trained to subjection. The law of habit here is of importance. In non-essential things -- in things that have no moral character and do not involve the question of right and duty -- it is well for the Christian believer to prefer others to himself -- to seek what will please others rather than himself; and to thus discipline his will. Keep the will well bridled in your intercourse with men and it will be easier to bring it and keep it in harmony with God. And the converse is equally true. The more you submit to God the more readily, in lawful things, you can submit to man.

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