

Holiness to the Lord -- the Evidences of Its Possession

by Edward Davies

The sermon explores the evidences of holiness, including the witness of the Holy Spirit, a blessed sense of devotion, and a heavenly consciousness of purity.

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, Psalm 51:10, Romans 8:16, Philipians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 John 3:21, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Edward Davies preaches about the evidences of attaining holiness and how to know if one has received the blessing of holiness. He emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit's testimony, the sacred devotion and fervor of spirit that come with being filled with God, the heavenly consciousness of purity, the fullness of perfect love that casts out fear, the humility that accompanies sanctification, the holy and heavenly happiness, the large effusion of the spirit of prayer, and the confidence in prayer that comes with being entirely sanctified.

Transcript

It is supposed, dear reader, that you have followed the order laid down in this book. And that you are now in the possession of this blessing which you have just received. You have just begun to live in the Canaan of Perfect Love.

"A land of corn, and wine, and oil,

Favored with God's peculiar smile,

With every blessing blest."

For your confirmation in this exalted state now, and in years to come, we will seek to find out, and fully and simply express, "the evidences of having attained this holiness;" or, to answer the question, "How may you know now, and at all times, that you enjoy the blessing of holiness?" This is a question that you will often want to answer, as you travel on to glory; and it may be well to have at hand a simple answer, that you may refer to at any time, -- to have a standard by which to test yourself at pleasure.

1. It will naturally be supposed, that as the Spirit of God witnesses to our regeneration, so He will to our entire sanctification, and so it is. I shall never forget the sweet and heavenly impression, or testimony, of

the Holy Spirit to my heart the night that I found the blessing; it was like "a Spirit-voice to the spirit-ear." I could not hear the sound with my bodily ear, but I could, nevertheless, hear in my soul the spirit testifying that "my prayers were answered, that the blessing of a clean heart was mine." Praise God! I feel it now. It is the office of the Spirit to testify our state to us, whatever that state is. And this Spirit is fully qualified for this work; "for he searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you, and is the truth, and is no lie. How fitting this is, that the same Spirit that does the work, should testify of the same to the Lord; in which it was wrought. "There is a Spirit-voice to the spirit-ear, and the communication is intelligible."

"I would not, Lord, my soul deceive,

Without the inward witness live-

That ante past of heaven."

Have you now the blessed witness? that heavenly anointing?

2. There is a blessed sense in which this blessing bears its own witness. When the soul is filled with God, there will be such a sacred devotion, -- a holy and hallowed simplicity, and godly sincerity; such a meekness and humility; such a fervor of spirit; such a blessed union of all our powers of soul and body with God, that we shall be fully assured the work is done, "The confusions of thought, and antagonisms of feeling, have all subsided into a heavenly harmony." There will be a sweet sinking into God, such a sense of security, while we abide under "the shadow of the Almighty." We have no fear of harm while we dwell in "the secret place of the Most High." He who rules the universe, rules our hearts. And we know his kingdom stands secure. He will keep that which we have committed to him. When all this change has taken place in our experience, we have the testimony of our own spirit that the blessing is ours. We know it, -- we feel it. It has become a glorious fact in our history that can not be denied. And our consecration has become a settled experience, or date. So that we reckon ourselves as dedicated wholly to God, from hour to hour, and the Holy Spirit continues the gracious work within. Still we must be on our guard, for we are not out of danger. "Moral freedom will still be an essential element in our nature; but should the tempter gain the mastery, and self rise up again, by the consent or negligence of the soul, then this entire consecration is forfeited, and its evidence would depart," and we must fly at once to the blood

"That makes the wounded whole."

3. As a matter of course, in this state there is a heavenly consciousness of purity, not merely that sin is gone, but that God's purity fills the soul. "As the soul bathes in the ocean of love; as it lies humbled at the foot of the cross; as it meekly kisses the rod with which it is afflicted; as it stands firm against the shock of temptation; as it recognizes the presence and in-dwelling power of the Holy Spirit, -- it feels that it lives in purity."

4. In this heavenly state of grace there is a blessed fullness of love, of perfect love that casts out all (slavish) fear. Love fills the heart, pervades the understanding, regulates the will, and rules and fills the whole soul. Love is the main spring of every action, beaming out of the eyes, and sweetly guarding the whole life, And this -love expands the heart, and fills it again and again, through all time, and through all eternity. Glory be to God!

5. Humility fills the soul of the entirely sanctified. Self is crucified, sets up no claims, seeks no honors but those that come from God, and are in harmony with him. This humility will show itself in everything; in the transaction of business; in its deportment in the family; in the class-meetings, and in the prayer-room. It will be seen in the very aspect of the countenance; it will be heard in the tones of the voice. A humility that lies low at the feet of Jesus, and

"Brings forth the royal diadem,

And crowns him Lord of all."

6. I need scarcely say, that a sanctified soul will have a holy and heavenly happiness. It has now formed a communication with the fountain of all happiness, its fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. This holy bliss may sometimes swell to an exultant shout, and sometimes it may sink even to heaviness, through manifold temptations, and, in either case, the soul is happy, and can not be otherwise while it maintains its consecration.

"How blest are they who still abide,

Close sheltered in Thy bleeding side!

Who thence their life and strength derive,

And by Thee move, and in Thee live."

A soul in this state can rejoice evermore, for, in the worst possible circumstances, there is always cause for gratitude. And in the midst of physical suffering and mental conflict, there may be a heavenly calm and a holy joy; yea, and in the midst, much grief and sorrow of heart. "Nay, the mind itself may be deeply distressed; may be exceeding sorrowful; may be perplexed and pressed down by heaviness and anguish even to agony, while the heart cleaves to God by perfect love, and the will is wholly resigned to him. Was it not so with the Son of God himself? Wesley tells of a woman, in his pastoral care, who was in the extremity of pain, rotting away by piecemeal, by the king's evil, full of sores from head to foot, with several of her bones appearing through her skin; yet so complete was her resignation, and so firm her faith in God and the realities of the eternal world, that she was constantly praising God, with tears of joy, for dealing so mercifully with her.

Yet you must remember that feeling is not the true index of a sanctified soul, for this may vary at different times. The cable that holds the Lord in this fullness is faith. Lady Maxwell says, "The Lord has taught me that it is by faith, and not by joy, that I must live."

7. Another evidence of a full salvation is large effusion of the spirit of prayer, by which the soul may pray without ceasing; so that a prayer may always lie uppermost in the soul, ready to be presented; so that while you always feel your dependence upon God, he always gives you the spirit of prayer, by which your wants may be always presented at the throne of grace. You may not only pray always, but you may pray with confidence; for if you do the will of God, you will have near access to him. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." These are some of the evidences of entire sanctification. Have you now this blessing? Are you wholly the Lord's? Have you the evidences?

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