

Empowering

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon emphasizes that the cleansing and empowering by the Holy Spirit occur together and are essential for a complete Christian experience.

Scripture: John 14:16, Acts 15:8, 1 Corinthians 12:13

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin emphasizes that the cleansing and empowering work of the Holy Spirit are simultaneous and occur at the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as seen in the experiences of the early disciples at Pentecost and Cornelius' household. He argues that there is no scriptural basis for separating cleansing and empowering in time, as the Holy Spirit who cleanses also empowers for service. Baldwin warns against the error of claiming complete cleansing at justification and later empowerment, stressing that growth in grace leads to a fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power already present in believers.

Transcript

There are persons who realize that their Zinzendorfan ideas are not satisfactory and to supply the deficiency they must add some further experience. They claim that the soul is wholly cleansed when it is justified and that after this there is no further cleansing but an infilling or empowering.

I submit for your consideration that the cleaning and the empowering are one and identical in time and that when we separate the two in time we bring in confusion. Again I submit that the cleansing as well as the empowering are accomplished by the one operation commonly called the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

The first time there is any trace of the actual reception of this baptism is on the day of Pentecost when the one hundred and twenty disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. -- Acts 2. That this filling is simultaneous with cleansing is proven by Peter who in reporting the experience of the Gentiles of Cornelius' house said, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us (at Pentecost); and put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8-9.

Further that the cleansing, the empowering and the baptizing with the Holy Ghost are simultaneous transactions is proven by reference to the first of Acts where the writer quotes the promise thus, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence * * But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. This last statement is rendered in the margin, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." This baptism with the Holy Ghost; power from on high, or power of the Holy

Ghost is interpreted by Peter as simultaneous with the act of cleansing.

Again I submit that there is no scripture that can unqualifiedly be made to draw a time distinction between cleansing and empowering. The empowering agent is the one who cleanses and where the cleansing is operative the cleansing agent must first be present. Not that God empowers in the Pentecostal sense an unclean vessel, but when the Holy Ghost cleanses a soul he does not depart to come some other day with an empowering for service, but while there he abides.

This whole contention might be summed up as follows: The baptism with the Holy Ghost effects two things one negative and the other positive; the negative is cleansing and the positive filling, empowering, unctionizing. If we separate the two transactions in respect to time we make room for all sorts of errors, and experiences innumerable will be piled up.

Now in the light of these facts and the Scriptures which have been quoted for any person to say that their hearts were entirely cleansed at the time they were justified and that after some months or years they were empowered for service is an error.

Greater measures of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart will no doubt produce greater effects, but this is only a sign of growth in grace and not of the reception of a new element called empowering or any other name. It is a fuller development of the power if we may so call it which is already in the life.

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