

Holiness Imparted

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon explores the impartation of holiness through the Holy Spirit, emphasizing its necessity for a true Christian experience.

Scripture: Malachi 3:3, Matthew 3:11, Acts 2:39, Acts 15:8, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 12:28, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

Description

James Blaine Chapman preaches on the importance of holiness as a heart experience necessary to see the Lord, emphasizing the dangers of failing to seek sanctification and allowing bitterness or impurity to defile us. He explores the dispensational blessing of sanctification through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, comparing Mount Sinai's law, Mount Calvary's redemption, and Mount Zion's impartation of holiness. Chapman highlights the Holy Spirit's role in purifying believers, drawing on biblical metaphors of refining gold and separating wheat from chaff to illustrate sanctification as a work of God's Spirit. He encourages believers to seek sanctification as a high privilege and a means to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Transcript

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire ... But ye are come unto mount Sion (Hebrews 12:14-22).

That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost (Romans 15:16).

After our diversion to consider "Holiness Instrumented" by the Bible, "Holiness Imputed" by the blood of Jesus, and "Holiness Conditioned" upon faith, we are returning today to our basic text in Hebrews 12. In our treatment of the general topic, we concluded that the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord is not the doctrine or the life of holiness, but the heart experience of holiness. In our "Holiness in Introspection" we considered the exhortation to get sanctified on the basis of the grave dangers that arise

from permitting inbred sin to continue in the heart. In "Holiness in Extroversion" we considered the urgency of the exhortation to get sanctified from the consideration of the danger that the world may break down our defenses and permeate and saturate us if we do not give heed to the call to seek and obtain a clean, holy heart. Today we return to the concluding thought in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, which is a justification of the urgent exhortation to get sanctified from the consideration of the fact that it is the dispensational blessing, and that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is especially designed to impart this blessed state and experience to us.

We have read the scriptures with some ellipsis today in order that the real connection may be the more readily seen. Reading interpretatively the elliptic reading is, "Give all diligence to getting sanctified, for ye have not come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion." Mount Sinai is the place where the law was given to Moses, and Mount Zion is the place where the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the infant Church on the Day of Pentecost.

There are three mountains that have special significance in connection with God's dealings with His people on this earth. The first is Mount Sinai, where the law was given, and which on this account stands symbolically for God's requirements of us. The second is Mount Calvary, where Jesus was crucified for our redemption, and which on that account is the symbol of God's provision for us. And the third is Mount Zion, where the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Church, and which therefore symbolizes God's impartation to us.

We have had occasion already to observe that the law requires holiness, and that the blood of Jesus provides holiness. We come now to observe that the Holy Spirit imparts holiness. The Scriptures do not teach that holiness is an attainment. They teach that it is an obtainment. We are not sanctified by a gradual process, but by the instantaneous outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal fullness. The approach may be and often is gradual, but there is a last moment when sin exists and the first moment when it is all gone, and these two moments join in an instant or segment of time too short for us to differentiate. And that moment when sin is for the first time all gone is identical with the moment when the Holy Ghost comes into the Christian heart as Sanctifier and abiding Comforter.

John the Baptist drew comparison between his own ministry and work and that of the ministry and work of Jesus Christ by pointing out that his was the baptism of repentance, while Jesus' was the baptism of holiness (Matthew 3:11-12). Water baptism is the symbol of regeneration, but the baptism with the Holy Ghost is an inwardly fiery baptism. John's language, "the Holy Ghost and fire," does not distinguish between the Spirit and fire, but emphasizes that the baptism with the Spirit is a fiery, purifying baptism. And as water is the element which stands for cleansing from guilt, so fire is the symbol of complete purifying. Water makes clean externally, but fire makes pure internally.

When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, in whom there was no sin, at the time of His baptism, He came with the symbol of a dove -- the representative of purity and gentleness. But when the Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem, there being in them sin to be purged, He sat upon their heads in double tongues of fire. It is by means of this fiery coming of the Spirit that our hearts are sanctified, and holiness is imparted to us, and becomes our real possession.

Describing the work of Christ in the ministry of His Spirit, Malachi (3:3) says, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." The metaphor here is that of ore-bearing rock, and its

submission to the process of separating the metal from the dross, with the result that the metal, gold or silver, may be pure.

There is the dross of the old nature in the justified Christian along with the gold of the new nature received in regeneration, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification to rid us of that dross.

Peter was one of those who partook of the benefits of the Pentecostal blessing on that day when it was first given to the people of God. Later he was called in question about the standing and privileges of the Gentiles in the gospel, and in making statement of this matter Peter reverted to the experience which he and the others received on the notable occasion when the Holy Spirit came upon them in fiery ministry, and this is what he said: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). The case could not be more plainly stated -- God gave the disciples in the Upper Room, and now the Gentile converts, the Holy Ghost on the condition of faith, and by the incoming of the Holy Ghost their hearts were purified or sanctified.

In that same connection in the third chapter of Matthew in which John the Baptist made comparison between his water baptism and Jesus' fiery Spirit baptism, John said of the work of Jesus in connection with the baptism with the Holy Ghost, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here the metaphor is wheat and chaff, but the agency of fire is retained. Now the great Harvester will separate the chaff from the wheat, will garner the wheat and burn the chaff. There is in every Christian something God wants, and also something He does not want. And by the operation of the Holy Spirit He proposes to separate the one of these from the other, and burn up the chaff and garner the wheat.

Sanctification has been defined as that act of God by which the affections of men are purified and alienated from sin and the world and exalted to a supreme love to God. Such a change as this can be effected only by the direct and personal ministry of the Holy Spirit. Only spirit can change spirit, and only the Holy Spirit can make the human spirit holy. Dr. Godbey suggests that the reason the Spirit is called holy is not because He is holy in any essential sense that the Father and the Son are not also holy, but because it is His special office work to make God's people holy, and so He is called the Holy Spirit, just as the Christ is called Jesus. Christ is called Jesus because Jesus means Saviour, and the Holy Spirit is called holy because He effectively cleanses the hearts of God's people and makes them holy.

Just as it is by the Spirit's coming that we are made holy, so it is by His abiding that we are kept holy. This is why we say that sanctified people are conditionally holy, rather than absolutely holy. God is absolutely holy because He is holy by essential nature. But we are holy relatively because our holiness is just God's holiness imparted to us. It is like the light in a room. The room would be dark, except for the lights that burn in it. If those lights were cut off, the place would immediately be dark. Just so, the Spirit's coming makes us holy, and His abiding keeps us holy. In giving us the Holy Spirit, God imparts holiness to our hearts.

We have considered the exhortation to get sanctified twice from the approach of warning; we now consider it from the approach of wooing. Now it is said: "Get the blessing because it is your high privilege to do so. Get the blessing because you have not stopped at Sinai, the mount of demand, but have come on to Calvary, the mount of provision, and on even to Zion, the mount of realization and impartation."

That is a poor commendation of the quantity of one's religion which would seek excuse for failing to press on into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel. No Christian should ever ask, "Is it positively required of me that I be holy?" No, his attitude should be, "Is it possible that I, even I, should have this unspeakable blessing?"

Once I was preaching in a camp meeting in a rural neighborhood. A minister of a church which had a circuit covering that country section came by and attended the meetings for a few days. One of his chief members had recently been sanctified, and he was anxious to know what his pastor's attitude was to be toward the meeting and toward the work of holiness. When the pastor did not volunteer an expression, after two or three days, the member inquired of him as to what he thought. The pastor answered: "Well, there is no denying that this preacher is preaching the truth, for he is preaching the Bible. But it will not do to preach holiness so strong as he preaches it, for that tends to discourage our weak members."

The layman was somewhat troubled about his preacher's words, and told me about them. Lest such a sentiment should grow, I took occasion as soon as convenient to say: "Men should never be discouraged by the news that there is provision for their deep needs. Suppose a man comes along at the close of the day, tired, dusty, and hungry, and you say to him, 'Friend, turn in here with us. Here is water with which to wash. Here is food in abundance. You are welcome to spend the night with us -- here are a room and a bed.' Will such an invitation tend to discourage the weary, hungry traveler?"

Not if I am any judge of the responses of men. Such an invitation will encourage the poor traveler. And what is more, he will not only be encouraged by the words, but if he applies himself he will be refreshed by the means proposed, and will go on his way strengthened and refreshed and happy." This is the news of full salvation. It is good news. But it is more than good news. It is strength imparted. It is disease and discontent extracted. It is health and purity bestowed.

Let no one suppose that those who were on Mount Zion that morning of the first Christian Pentecost are the only ones to whom this sanctifying fire is offered. On the very day in which these men and women received that blessing, one of them, the now Spirit-anointed Simon Peter, stood up and announced: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). We have all come to Mount Zion in the truly significant sense. This is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and the distinguishing fact of our age is that Jesus baptizes His people with the Holy Ghost. And the baptism with the Holy Ghost is for purity and for power -- for purity first, and for power as a consequence of purity and fullness.

It is not enough that we should have imputed holiness or positional holiness or any other kind of holiness except true, imparted holiness. In the concluding words of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the permanency of the experience of holiness is emphasized, and a final exhortation to get the blessing is based upon it. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

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