

The Holy Place (Psalm Xxiv. 3, 4)

by Seth Rees

The holy place is a place of honor, friendship, safety, power, and exhaustless resources, but it requires clean hands and a pure heart to enter.

Scripture: Esther 4:16, Psalm 24:3, Psalm 91:1, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Philippians 4:19, James 4:8

Topics: "Holy Living", "Spiritual Intimacy"

Description

Seth Rees preaches on the qualifications needed to enter the holy place of the Lord, emphasizing the importance of having clean hands and a pure heart. He describes the holy place as a position of honor, friendship, safety, power, and exhaustless resources, highlighting the privileges and blessings of being in the presence of the King of Heaven. Rees challenges the congregation to break with worldly influences, embrace intimacy with God, and experience the security and empowerment that come from being in favor with the King.

Transcript

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Psalms xxiv. 3, 4).

This twenty-fourth Psalm was doubtless composed for and used upon that eventful occasion when the ark of God was returned from the house of Obededom to its proper place on Mt. Zion. The ark had been in the hands of its enemies, but to them it was a great curse. In the house of Obededom, its friend, it was a great blessing. But the time had come when the ark ought to be restored to the place of public worship, and the worship of the living God resumed on Mt. Zion.

It was therefore a proper question for David to ask: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?" for, if the ark of God was to return and the worship of the living God was to be resumed, someone must go into the presence of the King; someone must be fit to stand in the presence of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings and act as priest and servant. So the inspired Psalmist cries out: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?"

What kind of a man is fit to go into the immediate presence of the King and stay? Who has the qualifications for this ministry? The inspired answer is, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." We want to notice briefly, first, the holy place, and then the conditions necessary to gain admittance into that place. The holy place was the place where God came and revealed His will and communed with His

people. It was the place where He was constantly present, and where He talked with those who ministered. The "holy place" of the old dispensation stands for "the state of holiness" under the new. A careful study of the Word of God teaches us clearly that just as the presence of God was known in the holy place, the immediate and constant presence of God is known today by those who are in the place of holiness, or who have entered into the experience of entire sanctification, where a clean heart is the normal condition and the Holy Ghost constantly abides. The first thing we want to notice about this place is that it is a place of honor. For one to get into the immediate presence of the King of Heaven is to get into a place of great honor. It is always considered an honor to get into the presence of an earthly king. Men go long distances to get to shake hands with the chief executive of their country. People feel highly honored to be permitted to stand for a moment in the presence of royalty, or even in the presence of the statesmen of our own country. I remember of standing for two hours waiting to shake hands with President McKinley. I felt like a fool for doing it, but there is something in us that respects and honors people in position. But, sir, the only true honor is in getting into the presence of the King of Heaven, and not only shaking hands with Him, but living in the immediate presence of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, the Chief Executive of the Universe, who made all things and by whose power all things are upheld.

We feel that we are highly honored to get into this holy place. There are those who so magnify the reproach that is connected with holiness that they do not consider it much of an honor to get to be with the King. In fact, if we were to judge from their conduct, they seem to be very much embarrassed when they are in the presence of those who are out and out for God and who are sanctified wholly. But some of us were over all this a long time since. We have come to know that to get into the presence of God is the highest honor that is ever paid to a human soul this side the gates of glory, and that to be cleansed from all unrighteousness and saved from all sin, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be permitted to live in the constant presence of the King of Kings, yea, to have royal blood and put on purple, and sit at the King's table, are privileges beyond calculation. Despised, decried and rejected as they are, the lay people are our folks, and we are inclined to exult over the fact that we have the honor of belonging to the band. Beloved, you need not feel ashamed of us. You need not feel ashamed that you are in this crowd. Of course, if you have fallen in with a set of frauds, people who do not practice what they preach; if you have made a mistake and are in bad company, it may be well enough to break company with them; but, sir, the holy few, who dare to go through and who think more of walking with the King of Heaven than they do of the honors of this earth; who care more for the smile of Heaven than they do for the compliments of earth, are the best company you can have in this world.

For those of us who have entered in, you need make no apology, you need make no excuse, you need never feel embarrassment, we are perfectly at home and satisfied. If you have any sympathy to bestow, please bestow it on the other fellow. We have gained admittance into the presence of the King, and we want no excuses. We have gained the highest honor that is bestowed. We have gained admission into the holy place. There are people who are ashamed of it, but they are the "non-possessors."

People who hang on the outskirts of a holiness meeting, and come to get a crumb because everything is withered and dried up where they came from, and are ashamed to have it known they "were down at the hall," have never struck what we are talking about tonight. When you get in the presence of the King you want everyone to know it, and you want it published in three worlds. You would be glad for all the galleries of Heaven to know it, and you would be willing to have it shouted through all the corridors of hell, and you see to it yourself that the earth knows it.

Again, the holy place is a place of friendship. In order to stand in the immediate presence of the king, you must be his friend. You must be on intimate terms with him. You might gain admittance into his presence possibly, through the influence of another, but you could not stay unless you had business there. You would have to relate your matter and be gone. If you could succeed in getting an interview with McKinley, you could not stay. Of course, if you are the President's friend, you might stay overnight. If you should chance to be his son, you could live with him; but it takes intimate terms to assure one the privilege of staying in the presence of great men, and it takes intimate relations to insure us the privilege of standing, as the text says, in the holy place. We must be on intimate terms with God. We must be even more than friends; we must be of kin to Him.

If we have royal blood in our veins, we can sit at the King's table, we can sit in the council chamber of kings. We can have the privileges of the palace, the privileges of the White House from cellar to garret, if we are sons. If we are merely guests, of course we must stay where a guest stays. If we are servants, we must stay in the kitchen or where servants belong, but if we are heirs, children, then we have the privileges of the whole house. You know a guest does not always feel free in a palatial home. I have stayed in homes where everything was so elegant that I felt as if I had swallowed a yardstick, and I wished I could get out; but there is a home in which I feel perfectly easy, my own home -- and when you come into this place you get into your own home.

But, beloved, do you know that to be a friend of God you must be an enemy of this world? Do you know that to be on intimate terms with the King you must break with other folks? Do you know that in order to have the undivided affection of your Bridegroom you must stop flirting with this world, you must give up casting glances at other friends, and give yourself entirely to the King of Heaven and earth? We can not be on intimate terms with God while we are trying to hold this world in one hand and God in the other.

So you have to break with this world, with worldly institutions, Christless lodges and secret fraternities. You can not live with the King and be hooked up with anybody else. I am positive of it. We have God's word for it, and it is settled forever in heaven that to be on intimate terms with Him we must deny ourselves and give up all that this world calls great and good, and take the lowly way with Jesus. We presume that is the reason that very many people fail to go in. We see those at the altar who weep for a time and seem tender under the conviction of the Spirit, but "bring up " against some obstacle, dry their tears and retire without the blessing. They come to something they must break with if they go with the King, and they choose to hug the things of this world and turn from the King of Heaven.

Beloved, I choose to break with the things of this world and cleave to things that are eternal. I choose to let go of everything here and choose things that will live forever more. I deliberately loosen my hold upon dignitaries and upon honors of the world and church, and welcome any reproach that may come to me by taking the narrow way, for I am determined to go through to the skies with the despised and lowly Nazarene. Just as Moses loosened his grasp on popularity and royalty in order that he might take hold upon the skies, so I loosen my hold upon the things I was hugging down here that I might open my arms to heaven and all that heaven means.

Again, the holy place is a place of safety. When you are in favor with the king, you have the protection of the king's bodyguard. When you are on intimate terms with the king you are as safe as he is. As long as you have his favor and his smile, every man and every gun that guards him guards you, and you are perfectly safe.

There are those who tell us that holiness is dangerous, and that to get sanctified wholly is very risky business. There are preachers with tall hats and white ties and lots of buttons on their coats, who tell us that "If you get so high up you may fall, and then the fall would be awful," but they fail to comprehend the philosophy of this thing. They do not understand that holiness is not getting up high at all. It is getting down on your face, and when a man is down and stays down, how can he fall? The most he can do is to roll over. The fact is that when people get sanctified wholly, they come into an experience of such security and safety and divine protection as they never had before. The safest men and women that walk this earth are those who are free from sin, who have had the last keg of gun powder removed from the basements of their souls. Every one knows it is dangerous to keep gun powder in your cellar. It might stay there a whole year and do no harm, but some day it might explode and your house would go into a million pieces. The best thing for you to do is to get the powder out of your cellar. If you would be well insured you must remove all such things. It is when we get sanctified wholly that we get delivered from that explosive element that gives us so much trouble. A man is never quite trusty -- I never fully trust a man until his soul has been cleaned out and delivered from all the devil's dynamite and filled with the Holy Ghost.

You sometimes feel when you pay your taxes that they are a little high; you can hardly see the necessity of paying out so much money to keep up the running affairs of the government; but if you were traveling abroad you would appreciate the strength of this government. If you were on foreign soil you would have the protection of this country. Wherever the stars and stripes float you are perfectly safe so long as you behave yourself, simply because you are a citizen of this country. When you get your citizenship in Heaven every man on sea or land and every battleship that our Christ can command and all the artillery of the skies are at your back, and if hell was to turn out in full force against you, God would empty Heaven, if necessary, to take care of you, for you are a subject of the King of Heaven!

This is a place of safety. If you desire to be safe make friends with the King. Some years ago an English sailor of American birth was hastily tried by Spanish authorities and condemned to death. The American consul said that the hasty trial was not sufficient, and, conferring with the English consul, they agreed that the man ought to have a new hearing. The Spanish authorities refused to grant the new trial, and the man was brought out to be shot. Just as the twelve men were put in line ready to shoot, the American consul stepped up and threw over him "the Stars and Stripes" and the English consul came forward and wrapped "the Union Jack" around him and said, "Fire if you dare." The guns fell from their shoulders and the man had a new trial. Nothing but strips of silk, but behind them were two of the strongest nations of the earth.

When you are wrapped in the bloodstained banner of Christ, you are safe, for there are some things at which the devil himself does not fire. He has fought at the cross, at the wide open tomb. He was a conquered foe in the garden, on the cross and at the open grave, and all you have got to do is to refer him to the resurrection morning and he hides his head in everlasting shame. If we are under the blood stained banner of Jesus all the galleries of Heaven pledged to take care of us, and all the artillery of the skies will help us; we are perfectly safe as long as God is safe. This sounds to some folks like heresy, but it is not. It is the power of divine grace; we sit sheltered in the cleft of that rock which was opened for us, and while we abide in this cleft, there is no devil that can damage us, for we have the support and immediate protection of our King.

Again, beloved, the holy place is a place of power. When you are in favor with the king you are in a place of influence. When Queen Esther stood in favor with the king she accomplished something. It looked like a perilous undertaking to go into the court room, but she said, "If I perish, I perish," and she appeared before the king, and when he saw her and she found favor in his eyes, he extended to her the golden scepter.

That was the scepter that ruled the kingdom; and when she drew nigh and touched the end of that scepter, she touched the power of the throne, and her people were free. Why? Because she was in favor with the king and was in a place of power.

When Joseph had influence with the king of Egypt, he stood at the elbow of a man who ruled the world, and his word was authority throughout the whole empire. Why? Because he was in a place of power. It was not what Joseph was; just a short time before he was in a pit, later he was in a jail. It was not what he was, but where he was, and it does not make any difference what we are or where we come from, whether we come from the slums or from Fifth Ave., if we get saved and sanctified wholly, we are in a place of power, where we can press a button and turn on the powers of the skies and accomplish tremendous things.

When we stand before the King we can pray fire enough out of the skies to put our friends under conviction. You might preach at them and scold them and nag them for ten years because they do not go to church, and they would not be saved, but when you get into a place of power you can turn on power enough in five minutes to put them under conviction.

Again, the holy place is a place of exhaustless resources. When you are in favor with the King you can have all you want as long as you want it. It will not give out, for He is able to make all grace abound that "always having all sufficiency in all things" we may abound in every good work. Now, we have accepted this theoretically; we have been singing, "I am a child of a King," but we have made the mistake of living as if our Father was a beggar! It is one thing to sing, "I am a child of a King," and it is another thing to talk and act and live as though you possessed all things! When we get into the holy place we possess all things. We are not elevators, we are not storehouses, we are not reservoirs, but we are pipes and channels through which God pours the rivers of salvation to water the famished millions of earth. We just open the faucets and God pours His blessings through us. All my life we have had to study economy. We never knew what it was to have overmuch of this world's goods, and so to us who have had to count our nickels and see how far a dime will go, it is a great luxury to find something there is enough of. Oh, you will not misunderstand me. We feel elated, because we have reached a place where things never give out; we never strike the bottom of the flour barrel; we never have bills to meet that we can not pay, for we have a rich Father who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. There is no lack to the man or woman who walks humbly with God.

I have sympathy for that little girl, who was brought up in an attic and had never seen much of anything; when she was taken to the seaside and asked what she thought of the ocean, she said she was "glad to see something there was enough of!" I am thankful I have tapped a reservoir so great that we can give people all they will take and have some left; all that we servants can use or give away! You may be a pauper if you wish, but I do not propose to be one. I propose to be a millionaire, and have all the servants and footmen and coaches and everything of that kind that I want.

You can go afoot, but I propose to ride in a chariot. The Bible teaches me that Philistines can be converted into chariots, and as long as I have as many enemies as I have now I will never have to go afoot or "ride a wheel"! You and I never have to be poor! Never have to tell in class meetings how weak we are! We do not have to tell what a hard time we have had and how many crosses and losses and ups and downs we have had. All we have to do is talk about the King, tell what He has done; and we will have enough to do. Hallelujah!

Now let us look for a few minutes at the conditions upon which we gain admittance into this holy place. It is a place of honor, a place of friendship, a place of safety, a place of power and a place of exhaustless resources, but you can not enter unless you have a ticket! As sure as they have twelve gates to heaven and twelve angels to guard them, this holy place is protected by a flaming sword and cherubim, and you can not enter unless you have met the conditions mentioned here.

The first condition mentioned is "clean hands." If our hands are not clean of the blood of all men, if they are not free from bribery, if they are not free from other people's property, we can not go in. There are lots of people who steal who do not take money. They just take a corner off a man's reputation and refuse to bring it back. "Clean hands" means a strictly clean, upright, downright, Christlike nature, on the inside and outside; an everyday walk before God and before men that is above suspicion and without reproach. It was that kind of a walk and that kind of a life that the seven deacons of the early Church had. They were of honest report; were full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; they had "clean hands." Their outward life was right.

If your outward life is not all right, you can make it right. You may say there are some wrongs that can never be undone, you may say that you can never make your hands clean, but I say you can. When you have made everything right that you can make right, you have done as much as you can do, and God never requires any more of a man than he can do. When a man does all he can to make his outward life right, he has "clean hands." And another condition to which I want to call your attention is that we must have pure hearts Now, the Holy Ghost would never suggest that this was a condition of admittance into the holy place if it was not possible for us to have pure hearts. God does not mock us by offering us something unto which we can not attain; and when He offers us a clean heart and makes us hungry for it, He not only makes it possible for us to have it, but puts it in easy reach at the very threshold of our souls.

Any one here tonight can have clean hands and a pure heart and enter into the holy place. Those who enter, enter under these conditions, and those who are not in will never get in until they meet these conditions until they have washed their hands and had their hearts purified through the blood of Jesus Christ. How many of us are in the holy place tonight? Preached at Cincinnati, O., Nov. 29, 1898

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