

Articles and Sermons :: God Uses Clean Vessels by T.K. Hershey

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## God Uses Clean Vessels

by T.K. Hershey

Tobias Kreider Hershey was born here in Lancaster County in 1879. At eight years of age he felt the desire to become a missionary. He was converted at age 17 and the next year was appointed superintendent of a nearby mission Sunday School. In 1917 he and his family, together left for mission work in Argentina under the Mennonite Church. T. K. served in central Argentina as a pastor, bishop, evangelist, superintendent of the Argentine Mission. He also worked as financial agent, and printer. The Hersheys retired from the Argentine mission service in April 1948. In 1949 they served one year as church workers in Puerto Rico. After returning to the United States, T. K. and Mae Elizabeth were active in missions, evangelism, discipling, church planting, and Bible teaching in the United States and Canada.

The Bible has much to say with respect to the qualifications and character of spiritual leaders. God can use in an effective way a clean man. He has three outstanding tools with which to accomplish His work among men; namely, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and a redeemed life. The latter is the instrument, because it is through the redeemed life that the Holy Spirit functions. We can at once see the need of that life being clean and holy, consecrated to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In a revival, the evangelist must be a fellow worker with God. Someone has said, "Any ordinary housewife would not use a dirty pan for milk, nor cook a choice bit of food in an unclean pot." "A farmer," says another, "would find it most difficult to do good plowing with a rusty plow." To do good work, no one would work with unclean tools. Everyone desires clean tools to work with; so does God. He uses tools in proportion to the cleansing. "Those things which proceed out of the mouth...defile the man, for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matt.15-18,19). Read also Mark 7:20-23.

Many evangelists work hard in evangelistic campaigns and often conclude that there were no visible results because of this, or that, or the other reason that he may have manufactured. It is not God's fault that men are not used by Him in a greater way. The fault, more or less, lies with themselves. Perhaps they have not measured up to God's requirements with respect to cleansing. They are not permitting Him to cleanse them and to keep them clean. Remember what Jesus said in John 15:2, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." God wants to cleanse, but many evangelists continue to battle with the sins in other people's lives, and are not successful because they themselves are not clean, and will not allow God to cleanse them so that they may bring forth more fruit. Those who allow God to "purge them" testify how mighty the power of God is and rejoice at the additional fruit of their labor.

## Temples for the Holy Spirit

"Know ye not that your body is temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (I Cor. 6:19,20). When Jesus was in Jerusalem, He saw that the Temple of God was being defiled. What did He do? He cleansed it. How much more important that our body be clean, for it is the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

I fear there are evangelists who live on the low level of the people whom they are attempting to lead to Christ and who commit as gross and outstanding sins and are as unclean in their temple, thought life, and often action, as the lost in the world are. Such have forgotten the admonition in II Peter 1:9 (R.V.): "For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins." Yea, many Christians forget this also, and are as "the he sow that was washed, returneth to her wallowing in the mire." The result is that the evangelist is powerless and his mouth is sealed.

Uncleanness in the life of God's fellow workers—God's tools—seals their mouth and hinders their usefulness. How can an evangelist tell a slave to sin, how to get victory over that particular sin if he himself is a slave to the same sin? It is impossible to preach with power that Jesus is able to save and to keep from sin, if the preacher continues in sin himself. Let us all remember that Christ so loved the church that He gave Himself for it. Why? "That he might sanctify it, hav

ing cleansed it by the washing of water with the word” (RV). We find in God’s Word what pleases and what displeases Him. When we see ourselves as Isaiah saw himself, a man of unclean lips, and at the same time we see the holiness of God, it is then we, too, will cry out, “Woe is me!” It is then that we will see the people around us just like we were. Isaiah said, “I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” Why did Isaiah complain about the lips being unclean? Because there lay the besetting sin. I can hardly imagine that he used profane language, or that he soiled his lips with filthy stories, but evidently he was not using them to the glory of God. There are people who profess God with their lips but do not honor Him with their life. God wants both. Especially must an evangelist be an example of having cleansed, purified lips. When the live coal from off the altar touched the lips of the prophet, he was a changed man and God used him in a mighty way. Brother Evangelist, has the Holy Spirit purified your lips and life? He wants to use you mightily as a spiritual adviser, but cannot unless you submit to His cleansing power. Clean lips come from a clean heart. To have a clean temple in which the Holy Spirit desires to dwell is to drive out the filth and dirt that has been stored there for a long time.

One thing is certain: The Holy Spirit will not dwell in a dirty, filthy temple. “Wherefore brethren, having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh.” Each one of us has our part in this temple cleansing. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Do your part and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

I repeat that God uses clean tools. Every evangelist who was used mightily in revival work was a clean man. Study the lives of great church leaders that you may know of and you will find that they were individuals who were living holy, godly, pure, clean lives.

Bishops, ministers, deacons, evangelists, missionaries, Sunday-school superintendents, Sunday-school teachers and laity in general, do you want to see a real revival in your church? This is possible only as we represent not a filthy, dirty, rusty, impure, corrupt, polluted temple, but a purified, honest, cleansed dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. If there has not been the desired results in your series of meetings, make a self-examination of your own life. Do it now. Look at your own self for the cause.

The fault does not lie with God. It is nine times out of ten because sin reigns in the body of God’s fellow workers. May God help us to be clean tools for Him and for the church.