

How To Obtain The Blessing Of Sanctification

~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:

"The Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple" (Malachi 3:1).

"Ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16).

A growing number of Christians are inquiring about the experience of sanctification. Multitudes wish to get rid of the carnal mind that is enmity against God. Many are weary of moral defeats and would like to enter upon a life of victory. What large numbers long for a relief from internal conflicts and sigh for cleansing of heart and soul, for purity and power!

Well, their hunger and thirst may be gratified. There are some scriptural conditions to be complied with, and then the longed-for goal will be reached.

I. -- The first condition is a conviction of want. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," those who are conscious of a soul-need of something more. Nothing short of this deep sense of need 'will lead one to earnestly seek the blessing, and pay the price for it. Hannah Whitall Smith, after eight years of Christian experience, said: "My heart was ill at ease. . . . I resolved, I prayed, I wrestled, I strove, I lashed myself up to attain to more faithfulness. But all in vain! I said, If this is all the Christian life has to offer, it is a bitterly disappointing thing."

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote of herself: "There is an undercurrent of perplexity and unhappiness about my spiritual state. Why am I thus restless? Why do I not have all God wants me to have? Ah, why not? Every effort of mine breaks like a wave upon a rock. We reason, reflect, resolve and pray, weep, strive, love, love to despair, and all in vain.

Andrew Murray wrote: "The believer must be convicted and brought to the confession of being in a carnal state. What may be termed a second conviction of the utter impotence of the flesh to good, and its mighty power to do evil? It is the seventh of Romans over again." Blessed are those who have such a conviction! It is a sign that God is moving on their hearts for sanctification.

II. -- The second condition is repentance for having kept the sanctifying Savior out of His full possession of your nature so long, and for the resulting failures of life. A Christian lady once said to me, as she was going out of church, "How can God ever forgive my past?" "Blessed are they that mourn" for wrong words spoken, questionable deeds done, duties neglected, opportunities wasted, usefulness impaired, cleansing deferred, holiness hindered, and perhaps souls lost because we did not have clean hearts filled with the Holy Ghost.

III. -- A third condition is to feel its importance. The one hundred and twenty in the upper chamber have been commissioned to represent Jesus and disciple the world! How would they feel about it? Peter would remember his fickleness and blasphemy, and lying and cowardice. Thomas would remember his doubting, and James and John their unholy ambition, and Martha her fretting. Mrs. Catherine Booth said: "God never gave this gift to any soul who had not come to the point where he would sell all he had to get it." Torrey said: "No man ever got this blessing who thought he could get along without it."

IV. -- Another condition is, Believe that the promise is for you. Not merely for Paul and John, and Wesley and Finney, but for you.

Daniel Steele writes: "I took the promise, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.' I wrote my name in the promise, making it read, 'I say unto you -- Daniel Steele.'"

Dr. A. J. Gordon wrote: "The filling of the Spirit belongs to us as a covenant privilege," because we are the children of God.

Dr. Lowrey wrote: "It is a prime necessity to bring yourself to the conviction that sanctification is for you. The Scripture affords ample ground for such a blessed faith.

1. Jesus prayed for it. John 17:17.

2. Jesus died for it. Eph. 5:25,26, and Heb. 13:12.

3. God wills it. I Thess. 4:3.

4. God promises it. I Thess. 5:24

5. God commands it. I Peter 1:15.

What more ground of confidence can any soul demand, that you may seek this blessing with the expectation of receiving it?"

V. -- A fifth condition is to hunger and thirst for it. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." One must desire it intensely with a real craving of soul. A lazy, indifferent, feeble desire never obtained this blessing. I once said to an audience: "You may pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit until your tongues are tired, but as long as you fight holiness, He will not come." On the way out of the church a lady said: "I see my mistake; I have long prayed for the Holy Spirit, but all the time I have been opposing holiness. I now see that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness." She consented to be sanctified, and at once the Spirit came.

David B. Updegraff, the saintly Quaker, writes as follows:-- "I hated pride, ambition, evil tempers and vain thoughts, but I had them for all that. There came into my heart a great hunger and thirst to be filled with the fullness of God."

Anna M. Hammer, a great temperance worker, writes: "Finally a great hunger of soul came on me. I knew that nothing but 'the anointing that abideth' would satisfy my soul. I was in deep conviction for three days in an agony of tears, as one said to me, 'dying hard.' But all this time the hunger and aching increased, until I could no longer resist the pleadings of the Spirit."

Hannah Whitall Smith says: "I began to long after holiness. . . . My whole heart panted after entire conformity to the will of God."

Rev. J. O. Peck, D. D., writes: "A deep heart hunger began to be realized for a clean heart. I was not backslidden, and my ministry was never more fruitful, but the hunger of my soul grew more imperious. I went to a holiness campmeeting and confessed how I was hungering."

It will be noticed in what similar language all these people depict the deep longing of their souls for a holy heart. The forerunner of sanctification is usually a desire for it so intense that it can be fitly likened to "hunger and thirst," as Jesus said.

VI. -- The sixth condition is obedience. God says: "He gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). An illustration is furnished by the Bible itself of this condition. Jesus told the five hundred believers to tarry in Jerusalem till they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, the blessing promised of the Father which they should soon receive. Only one hundred and twenty obeyed; yes, and only one hundred and twenty got the blessing. Jesus had promised (Luke 11:13), "the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," and commanded to tarry and pray for the blessing till it came. They obeyed, and prayed in that upper chamber, and the blessing came.

Obedience means obeying in everything. Mr. Torrey tells of a woman who prayed and struggled for this blessing until . people thought she would go crazy in the intensity of her desire. Every time she prayed some little gew-gaw in her hair was the sticking-point with her. She prayed and prayed, and that would come up every time. At last, one day, when in prayer, she put her hand to her head and tore it from her hair and threw it across the room. Immediately the Spirit came, because she had settled a principle that she would obey God.

Mrs. Maggie Van Cott, of U.S.A., had led seventy-five thousand souls to Christ. When she was converted she laid aside all her jewelry, of which she had been vain, but one ring. As often as she prayed for sanctification the Spirit said, "Put away your ring." At last, one day, when dealing with seekers at the altar, she saw that her ring was attracting the attention of a seeker, and she took it off. Immediately the Spirit came. She had settled it that she would obey the slightest whisper of God.

VII. -- The seventh condition is full consecration. God's Word is, "Present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Consecration is the actual present Surrender to God of our whole being and all we possess. It is the turning over of ourselves to the Lord to be owned and used by Him, just as a master owns a slave. The ground of it is Christ's ownership. He created us. He preserves us. He bought us with His blood. He has a triple right to us, and in consecration we recognize the right.

How To Obtain The Blessing Of Sanctification

Consecration is not an act of feeling; it is an act of will. It can be performed without feeling. It is a simple recognition of God's claim upon you for the service of all your God-given powers.

Rev. B. K. Pierce, D. D., writes: "On my knees I wrote out an . entire surrender of myself, body, soul and substance, and all pertaining to me, and I solemnly signed my name to it."

Rev. Isaiah Reid presents this as a proper form of consecration for this blessing: "O Lord, in view of this thing Thou hast besought of me to do, I hereby now do really consecrate myself unreservedly to Thee for all time and all eternity. My time, my talents, my hands, feet, lips, will, my all, my property, my reputation, my friends and family, my entire being, a living sacrifice to be and to do all Thy righteous will; -- for the cleansing of my nature from indwelling sin, I seek the sanctification of my soul.