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Articles

PENTECOSTAL SANCTIFICATION

By

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*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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PENTECOSTAL SANCTIFICATION

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1. God's Will

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." -- I. Thess. iv. 3.

It would not only be wise, but our duty to find out the will of God concerning us at the beginning of a new year. One thing is certain, that God could not "fill" anything in regard to us that did not make for our happiness and best interest. All of us have found out that to go counter to the divine will means trouble, and to fall into line with God's desire and command is blessing. Happy the man who finds out the will of God, and blessed the man who does it. We are not left in doubt here. The words are unmistakable, that God wills our sanctification. May we all say Amen to that will, and never rest until it is perfectly fulfilled in us.

2. Christ's Prayer.

"Sanctify them." -- John xvii. 17.

This was Christ's prayer to His Father for His disciples. He had another prayer for sinners--it was: "Father, forgive them." But here is a petition for His followers and servants, and there is no mention of forgiveness. It was not only a prayer for the disciples but for all His followers who were to come after them. Listen, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also which shall believe on me through their word." This comes down to our times and touches us. Sanctify means to "make pure," to "set apart." If we are made pure we will certainly be set apart. Christ prays this for us. Shall we gladden Him in Heaven by allowing the prayer to be answered?

3. Unblemished

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. -- Eph. v. 25-27.

The Revised Version brings out the second work of grace very clearly here. It says Christ gave Himself for the church that "He might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the washing of water by the Word." The object of the second work is that the church might be a "glorious church," without

"spot or wrinkle" or "blemish"; in a word, "holy." The world could never stand before such a church. So if we want to see men saved, let us pray first for such a church.

4. The Great Object of the Atonement.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." --Heb. xiii. 12.

So Jesus died that He might sanctify the people. This was why His blood was shed without the gate. How few Christians have dreamed of this. They thought Christ died for our regeneration, but this verse shows it was also for our sanctification. It stands to reason that He died that we might obtain the greatest blessing. How strange it is that with this provision, some of God's children are satisfied with a lesser blessing. How sad it is that some of God's people have not yet felt the full benefit of what was done on the cross for them.

5. An Exhortation.

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. -- Heb. xiii. 13.

If we want the crowning grace of our holy religion we have some things to do for its obtainment. There must be a "going forth" instead of growth to get this blessing. And it is a going forth "unto Him." Jesus has the unspeakable grace for us. He is made unto us sanctification. It is a going "without the camp." Great is the loneliness and isolation of the life seeking the blessing of sanctification. It is to be found without the camp in a social and ecclesiastical sense known well to the seeker. It is found while "bearing His reproach." It was Christ's unbending holiness that caused Him such antagonism, reproach and persecution. Nevertheless let us go to Him.

6. Christ the Altar.

"Ye...blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? -- Matt. xxiii. 19.

The altar in the olden days stood for Christ, even as the priest and lamb typified the Saviour. It was the Lord's kindergarten way of teaching His people in the days of their spiritual childhood. Christ is our altar; the Bible says so: "We have an altar--let us go unto Him." If the Jewish altar sanctified, so will the Christian altar make holy. If a stone-altar had such power, what should we not expect of a man-altar and that man Jesus Christ? He is our altar; let us go to Him, and presenting ourselves a living sacrifice suddenly realize the acceptance of this life gift, feel the fire, and overflow with all the fulness of God.

7. A Second Work.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. -- John xv. 2.

In this chapter Christ recognizes four different kinds of branches in the vine: the no-fruit branch, the some-fruit branch, the more-fruit branch, and one that bore much fruit. The first is taken away, the second purged that it might become the third, while the fourth is just the kind that every keeper and owner of a vineyard would be glad to have abound. Four classes of Christians is the teaching of this parable. The no-fruit member who is finally taken from visible and actual fellowship with the Saviour, and is destroyed. The some-fruit Christian who seeks and obtains the divine work; of "cleansing" or "purging," and becomes more active, diligent, faithful and truthful than ever before. And this same man with Christ's words abiding in him, and he abiding in Christ, becomes simply loaded down with the fruits, graces and gifts of the Spirit. So we are confronted in the spiritual life with the words none--some--more--much: which one will you range yourself under?

8. Conditional.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. -- I. John i. 7.

Here is one of the strongest verses in the Bible teaching a second work of grace. The person spoken of is "in the light," and "walking" in it. He is also in the full enjoyment of Christian fellowship, the verse stating that there is "fellowship one with another." There can be no such agreement between light and darkness; the Bible says so, and life proves it. Now to this man while walking in the light, and in Christian fellowship with his brethren, suddenly the blood of Christ is applied cleansing him from "all sin." All sin is not out of the regenerated heart. A new heart is not a pure heart. Inbred sin is left in the converted man, but, thank God, the blood of Jesus Christ can remove it all. What an experience of blessedness to be cleansed from all sin. This great blessing is for all who will come into the light, and walk in it to the point where the work is done.

9. Purifying.

"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." -- Mal. iii. 3.

The work of sanctification is clearly brought out here. Christ is the one who does it, according to Malachi. It is wrought not upon sinners, but upon the servants of the Lord, the sons of Levi. It is not a pardoning, but a "purifying." It is not forgiveness, but a spiritual "purging." The work is done with fire. The fire is put not on base metal, but on "gold and silver" the people of God. The result is "offerings to the made in righteousness." The next verse says they will be "pleasant." All this takes place in the fire-baptized soul.

10. Blessed.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." -- Matt. v. 8.

New and pure are not synonymous. We get a new heart in regeneration and a pure heart in sanctification. One other verse in the Bible is strikingly similar to this: "Follow peace with all men

and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Such verses mean something: they are not put in accidentally. Both say there is some kind of vision to be had of God that will be granted only to those who possess holiness or are pure in heart. What "seeing God" means may be understood differently by Christians; yet it means something, and we can not afford to cheat our souls out of some exalted privilege, intimate nearness, or face-to-face view of God on earth or in heaven, because of some prejudice or opposition to the words and works of our Saviour.

11. Commanded.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." -- Jas. iv. 8.

Here is a double injunction or command: sinners are told to cleanse their hands; the double-minded are exhorted to purify their hearts. The last command is for purification. There is but one being in the universe who can purify the heart, and that is God. The double-minded man is the man who has the carnal and spiritual mind warring together in him. The carnal mind can not be pardoned or regenerated, but can be destroyed by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. The result will then be a pure heart. Then, whether sinners or double-minded Christians, let us draw nigh to God. The promise is that if we do so He will draw nigh to us. This promise He fulfills.

12. Promised.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." --Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

There is a blessing promised God's people of perfect cleansing. Nearly every prophet spoke of it and the epistles in the New Testament addressed to the churches are full of it. Ezekiel says here, that it is a cleansing from "all filthiness," all "filthiness of the flesh," such as questionable habits give, and all "filthiness of the spirit," like fear of man, love of praise, spiritual vanity and pride and other manifestations of inbred sin, purged away. It is also a deliverance from "all idols." An idol is anything that arrogates a supremacy and position in the heart and life that belongs only to God. Some professors have them. Thank God, there is a blessing that cleanses us from all uncleanness and delivers us from every idol; the heart is clean and Christ is supreme.

13. A Divine Habitation.

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." -- Eph. ii. 22.

In another epistle: Paul calls each Christian a temple of God. but here he makes the great body of believers a habitation of God. It is a wonderful argument for tolerance and agreement. It is not more necessary that different parts of a house be unified than that Christians be firmly joined together, And just as one part of a building should not despise another part, so with God's people who are different parts of His habitation. There is a difference in doors, windows, halls and staircases, while all are necessary, so there is a dissimilarity in religious people but God needs them all. May we all have the wisdom as well as grace to allow other Christians to differ from us in certain

respects of language, manner and work. So long as God uses them, we might be satisfied. It would be a pity for a house to be all doors; and it would be unfortunate were everybody exactly like ourselves.

14. Experienced.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." --Gen. v. 24.

How can two walk together unless they be agreed? The agreement here was very delightful, for the walk lasted three hundred and sixty years. It also went so far that it resulted very happily. Enoch walked so far one day with God that he never came back. Doubtless he was so absorbed in the divine communion that he could not consent to break it off for a moment. Perhaps he obtained such a glimpse of Heaven, that he fairly sickened of earth. Anyhow he did not want to return home from his last walk with God; and so the Bible says, "God took him." May these same words be said of us when we are dead--"God took him."

15. Preserved.

"I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." -- Isaiah xxvii. 3.

God calls His people in this place "a vineyard of red wine." The promise is remarkable for its perfect provision and preservation. It is a divine keeping. "I the Lord" will do it. It is a constant care. "I the Lord do keep it." There is a continual refreshing of the soul. "I will water it every moment." Some Christians know what this means. As a lady once said, "My heart is like a pebble in the brook." Here the figure is that the dew and rain or moisture shall be always on the leaf. Then there is protection from day and night dangers. They are different and both are perilous. God promises deliverance in both seasons. The Spirit will apply these words where needed.

16. Spiritual Hunger.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" -- Matt v. 6.

According to the words of Christ it is blessed even to yearn after full salvation. The filling is to come but it is blessed to want it. Hungry and thirsty people are not critical and fault-finding at the table. It is the person with capricious appetite that is so difficult to please. The hungry man sits down without a word and helps himself until he is satisfied. Spiritually hungry people do not lose time in quibbling over words, theories or distinctions. They are not captious about methods and men. They are hungry and want all that God has for them. How easy it is to lead such people into the sanctifying grace of God.

17. Filled.

"For they shall be filled." -- Matt. v. 6.

There is a filling blessing. There is a command for it in the Scripture. Sinners are commanded to repent, but believers are directed to be filled with the Spirit. We obtain a measure of the Spirit at our regeneration, but we get filled at sanctification. It was for this filling the disciples tarried ten days in the Upper Room. When it came upon them the Bible says "they were filled with the Holy Ghost." If the believer of today will tarry as did the disciples for this special blessing he will obtain what they did. Jesus has spoken the words that we "SHALL be filled."

18. One.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." --- Heb. ii. 11.

It is sanctification that brings perfect unity with Christ. It makes us "all of one." The very same thought appears in the seventeenth chapter of John where Christ prays for this very unity. The passage above also teaches us that Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren when we are sanctified. Some people are ashamed of us who claim the experience and do not conceal the fact, but thank God, Christ is not. So we breathe again, and hope and work on.

19. Able.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." -- Jude 24.

Not only can Christ lift us up when we fall, but His power is still more wonderful -- He can keep us from falling. How a person can say we must sin after such a verse as this is a mystery. How any one can refuse to seek sanctification on the ground that they fear they can not keep the blessing, in the face of this Scripture passage, is another mystery. Could anything be plainer? "He is able to keep you from falling." This is the Gospel. Here is Good News indeed. Let us cease disputing and go to seeking full salvation.

20. Witnessed.

"He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. -- Heb. x. 14, 15.

Some tell us that there is no divine inward testimony to the fact of sanctification. But Paul in the verse above informed us that there is. Whom shall we believe, men uninspired, or a man inspired and who was caught up to the third heaven. Let no seeker cease his importunities and waiting on God until he obtains the witness of the Spirit to his sanctification. With the witness comes perfect assurance of faith, unruffled tranquillity of mind, abiding light and joy in the heart, steadfastness of life, and great boldness and power in the Gospel.

21. Through the Blood.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." -- Heb. x. 19.

According to the Bible and experience there is a holy and holiest. A veil separates the two. It is possible to be in the first and not in the second. But the veil has been "rent," not torn down, and all believers can now, if they will, enter "into the holiest." From peace and love we can immediately pass into perfect peace and love. From alternate victory and defeat in the Christian, we can enter upon constant triumph and no defeat. This better experience and holier life we can obtain through the blood of Jesus. It is not by works, but by faith. And as Jesus has bought this blessed grace for us, let us come at once and with "boldness," and possess it.

22. Shall Know.

"The heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." --Ezek. xxxvi. 23.

The trouble today with the heathen world is that it is not confronted by a fire-baptized and holy Church. The type of piety we possess is not sufficient to knock down the walls of Pagan darkness. God says when He is sanctified in us, the heathen will then know the Lord. If we will "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts," that is, have proper conceptions of Him, lift Him up where He should be in our hearts and lives, He will then sanctify us. Then it is, that filled and fired with the Spirit of Holiness the Church will sweep on to victory and the nations go down before our shining faces, burning tongues and heaven-empowered lives.

23. Sealed.

"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." -- Eph. i. 13.

Here again appears the second work of grace. The verse says that AFTER we have believed, and the word of truth has become the Gospel of our salvation, something else is done to us by divine power. The apostle calls it a "sealing," and says it is a divine work, wrought by the Holy Spirit. This figure is full of suggestion. A letter is first written, then sealed, directed and delivered. So we first became epistles of Christ, next He sealed us. A sealed letter is a secret to the world, and is only known to two. Christ and the sanctified soul have a secret unknown to the world outside. Third, we are directed "To the New Jerusalem." Fourth, we will in good time get there. Fifth, we will be opened and read to the delight of multitudes.

24. No Sunset.

"Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." --Isa. lx. 20.

Here is a prophecy of the great Coming blessing that is to glorify the church. But as the whole is made up of parts, it is an individual experience as well as a general state of good. The verse above tells the experience of the sanctified soul. There is everlasting light in the soul. The Lord is that light. We do not walk now with eyes upon the suns of earth. God is our sun. He has risen upon us with healing in His wings. There is no sunset within. There may be dark days on the outside, but there is

a sweet daytime inside. And the "days of mourning," the old-time fretting, repining, groaning, are all ended.

25. Fullness of Joy.

"These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." -- I. John i. 4.

What "things" was it that John was talking about? Let the reader read the seventh verse of this chapter and see one "thing," above stated, that should thrill every Christian heart. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light," and have "fellowship one with another," right there in such a life the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from "all sin." If ALL, sin is gone, inbred as well as personal, the heart is pure. This of course should make us glad, and if we obtain the blessing, "our joy will be full."

26. Overflowing.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." -- Psalm xxiii 5.

This is a true description of the sanctified man. The anointing of the head with oil and the overrunning cup are unmistakable. Such a condition of soul known occasionally to the regenerated is a perpetual experience with the sanctified. We can not look in their bright faces and hear the glad exultant ring of their voices without a constant vision of the anointed head and overflowing cup. A crowning description of the tranquillity and triumph of the life is the spectacle of the man EATING in the presence of his enemies. Nothing they can say or do spoils his appetite. Then there is the enjoyment of the one over against the impotent wrath of the others. And, blessed thought, God prepares the table!

27. Defended.

"Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." -- Psalm xxxii. 7.

There are two thoughts in this verse. One is that our spiritual gladness will be a means under God of saving us from our enemies. We read in Chronicles that the Lord sent out His people to meet their enemies with the strange weapons of musical instruments and praising the beauty of holiness. The victory they obtained was overwhelming. Truly our gladness in God is a power. The Bible says, "The joy of the Lord is our strength." The other thought of the passage is that God will deliver us from our dangers and troubles, and we as a result will be compassed about with songs of deliverance. Saved from Pharaoh and the Red Sea, the rescued with timbrel Song and dance praise God on the seashore. Faith, confidence and joy is seen in the first thought; and joy, praise and gratitude in the second.

28. Double.

"And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." II. Kings ii. 9.

Here was a prayer in the dark, for a man can not give his spirit to another; but it was a prayer for all that, and the man making it was moving upward toward the light. Elisha evidently saw that Elijah had something he did not possess. He wanted it. The prophet of Carmel told him he could have it if he saw him when he was taken up. This was a good answer. It is the upward look that gets this blessing, not the lateral glance of human discussion. It came upon Elisha. In the midst of wind and fire, the mantle of Elijah fell upon him. With it he divided Jordan. And as he passed over, the sons of the prophets looking upon the man cried out, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha." Something new had taken place. He crossed Jordan a religious man; he recrossed having something in addition. Moreover, everybody saw it. Hallelujah for the second work.

29. Free Indeed.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." --John viii. 36.

It is one thing to be pardoned and another thing to be free in the Christian life. If we are to go by what we see about us the two do not go together. Lazarus had life when Jesus raised him from the dead, but he was tied up with grave clothes. The second divine command was "loose him." Regeneration brings life, but what converted man has not felt the bonds and restrictions of man-fear, self-consciousness and other things of kindred nature? Sanctification makes us free. But some regenerated people say, "I am free now." Then to them we read the verse the second time and sanctification makes us "free indeed." Here is complete deliverance and perfect liberty. Who would not be glad to possess such a blessing? Let them be still more glad to know that Jesus came to do this very work, and give us this very blessing.

30. Fixed Forever.

"He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." -- Rev. xxii. 11.

So there are moral grades among the redeemed in heaven. Just as there are ranks among the angels, so there are differences among the saved in heaven based on character, faith and life work. God recognizes here a distinction between righteousness and holiness. And He speaks of it as being in heaven. And He declares it shall be perpetual. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; that is, forever. And he that is holy, let him be holy still, even forever. Thank God for a perpetuated and never-ending holiness. There will be no moral lapse or change in heaven. We will be holy forever. Let us seek for the best experiences while on earth, and the highest grades and rewards in heaven. "Let no man take thy crown" is the Word of the Lord.

31. Abundant Life.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." -- John x. 10.

Christ has two gifts of grace for the souls of men, life and abundant life. The first is for the sinner dead in trespasses and sins; and the second is for the child of God panting for the fulness of God. Repentance and faith will secure the first; and consecration and faith with importunate prayer will

obtain the second. We get "life" by falling down at the foot of the cross of a crucified Lord; we receive "abundant life" by tarrying in the Upper Room with one mind and one accord in prayer until the fire comes upon us from the ascended Redeemer. One blessing takes place on Mt. Calvary, the other on Mt. Zion. "Life" brings us into the kingdom of God, and "abundant life" purifies the heart and clothes us with invincible power for the conquest of the world. Lord, grant to all thy children this mighty, over-flowing, all-conquering life.