

Sermon

God's Provision for Holiness



Part 2/4

Beauty of Holiness
By Derek Prince

The theme of our study today is the beauty of holiness. This is the second study in a series of four studies on this theme. The previous study emphasized the holiness of God and the fact that God demands holiness in His people. We also pointed out yesterday that when God demands something from His people, He always makes provision by which His people can satisfy His demand.

It is logical, therefore, that this afternoon we study God's provision for holiness. In the printed outlines which are made available, this is on the second panel of the outline, and the heading is 'God's Provision for Holiness.' We said already that holiness is an aspect of God's nature, a unique aspect without parallel anywhere in creation. And we will begin this present study by noting that God has made provision for us to be partakers of His total nature. This is the basis of the study this afternoon, and it's of great importance that we lay hold upon this fact.

I'd like you to turn with me for an opening Scripture to 2 Peter 1:2–4. Now I'm going to read the *King James Version*, which is very good, but the English is somewhat elaborate. And I'm going to try to simplify it and also make it a little more up to date in due course as I expound it. It's a very interesting thing, I don't want to dwell on, but Peter was a fisherman. Paul was essentially a student and a theologian. But when it comes to language in their writings, the language of Peter is much more elaborate and complicated than the language of Paul. My personal opinion is that, of the early church preachers whom we know, the outstanding preacher was not Paul at all, but Peter. Paul was not a preacher. He said in one place that his enemies criticized him, that his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible. But when you read the writings of Peter, you realize he must have been something of an orator. And we find this in this passage which we're going to read now, commencing at verse 2 and reading through verse 4:

> "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, . . . (KJV)"

Let's pause there for a moment and notice that the Christian life is not a static condition in which you get into salvation and sit there, but it is a life of multiplying. It's a life of growth and increase. And if there is no growth and no increase in

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your spiritual experience, I question whether you're in salvation at all. There isn't anything that God creates that just remains static, unmoved and unchanging. And the believer in Christ is the summit of God's creation and if ever there should be an unfolding growth, increase and progress, it should be in the life of the Christian believer. And this is what's indicated here, Peter says, 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you'—continually increasing.

And he says, 'Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.' Everything is contained in knowing God and Jesus Christ. Jesus said elsewhere that to know the true God is eternal life. And we pointed out yesterday in relation to holiness, that a person can have no conception of holiness until he begins to know God. So everything that we're speaking about is wrapped up in knowing God and Jesus Christ in a direct and personal way.

Now let's read the next two verses, 3 and 4. I'll read them in the *King James Version* and then we will expound them.

> ". . . according as his [God's] divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (KJV)"

Now there are a series of statements made in these verses which are of tremendous importance. I would say that there are four successive statements, two in verse 3 and two in verse 4. The first statement, at the beginning of verse 3, is that God's divine power **hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness**. Notice, above all, the tense. It's not *will give*, but *has given*. God has already given us all that we'll ever need for this life and for the next. For time and for eternity, God has already made complete and total provision.

The second half of verse 3 says, '**Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue**.' That being Jesus Christ. But where the *King James* says *knowledge*, the Greek says 'acknowledging,' so that our moving on in the things of God comes in proportion as we acknowledge Jesus Christ. You see, the church is not united by discussing doctrine. In fact, experience in history confirms that the more we discuss doctrine, the more divided we become. The church is united in acknowledging Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 4:13 Paul says, 'Till we all come into the unity of the faith,' and the *King James* says 'the knowledge of the Son of God.' But the Greek word again is 'acknowledging.' In other words, we move into the unity of the faith in proportion as we acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, every aspect of Christian doctrine is an aspect of Jesus Christ and His ministry. You come into salvation through acknowledging Jesus the Savior. You come into healing through acknowledging Jesus the Healer. You come into the baptism in the Holy Spirit through acknowledging Jesus the Baptizer. You come into deliverance through acknowledging Jesus the Deliverer. So progress in the Christian life and unity among believers is achieved not by isolating doctrines and disputing about them, but by acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ. The more completely we acknowledge Him, the more we are united in Him and the more we develop in our own spiritual experience. So that the second half of verse 3 says it all comes through the acknowledging of Jesus Christ.

So in verse 4 the actual means are stated by which we enter into what God has provided. Verse 4, the first part, '**whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises**.' The provision of God is in His promises. This is tremendously important. The total provision of God for all believers is in the promises of God. There's a little slogan that I've developed and I'd like you to say it with me. I'll say it once and then you repeat it because you'll remember it that way. 'The provision is in the promises.' Say that with me. 'The provision is in the promises.' Say it again. 'The provision is in the promises.' Say it once more and you'll remember it. 'The provision is in the promises.'

Now we go on to the latter part of verse 4 and we find the results in our experience of appropriating the promises of God. And you can classify it as a single result or a double result. It doesn't matter. But the first thing that Peter says is through appropriating the promises, '**ye might be partakers of the divine nature**.' You actually begin to partake of the nature of God Himself.

And then he says at the close, 'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' In proportion as we partake of God's nature, in that proportion we escape the corruption of the old Adamic nature—because corruption and the divine nature are mutually incompatible. Where corruption prevails there is nothing of the divine nature. Where the divine nature prevails then there can be nothing of corruption. So in proportion as we partake of the

divine nature, we escape the corruption which is ours by inheritance from Adam.

Now I've set this out in the form of a simple outline which I would like to use just to make it a little clearer to you if I can. Let's look here at the outline for a moment. I'll just try to set it forth in a way that your eye can easily apprehend the truth. The Scriptures are 2 Peter 1:3–4. There are two statements in verse 3, two statements in verse 4. The first statement in verse 3 is that full provision has already been made by God's power. It's essential to grasp that. If you as a believer pray for God to provide something which has not apparently been provided, you're praying on a false basis. Because God says He has already provided all that you'll need. And that's one reason why God sometimes doesn't answer prayers of that kind because they're prayed on a false presupposition. They suggest that there's some provision that God hasn't made. God says He's made all provision. So sometimes God has to refuse an answer to a prayer like that because it's based on a false understanding.

The second statement in verse 3 is that the provision comes through the progressive acknowledging of Christ. In proportion as we acknowledge Christ, we enter into God's provision. Then at the beginning of verse 4, the first part, the next statement is that the provision is in the promises of God. We've already said that together.

And the second part of verse 4, as a result of appropriating God's promises in His Word, two things follow in our personal experience. We partake of God's nature and at the same time, automatically insofar as we partake of God's nature, we escape the world's corruption. Let me say that for you again. If you remember little else, if you can grasp this, it can change your Christian experience. These four facts. First of all, full provision has already been made.

> "Secondly, the provision comes through the progressive acknowledging of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the provision is contained in the promises of God's Word."

And fourthly, as we appropriate the promises and acknowledge Christ, we are made partakers of the divine nature—of God's own nature—and as we partake of God's own nature, automatically we escape the world's corruption.

Now I want to illustrate this, for a moment, from the Old Covenant. Turn with me if you will, to the book of Joshua 1:1–3. This is just an illustration, but a very clear one.

Under the Old Covenant, God led His people into a promised land. Under the New Covenant, God leads His people into a land of promises. Just to set the outline up for you there, the reference, Joshua 1:2–3.

In the Old Covenant, the leader was called Joshua. The inheritance promised to God's people was the Promised Land. Second Peter 1:3-4, under the New Covenant, the leader is called Jesus. Now *Jesus* and *Joshua* are the same word in Hebrew, just different ways of presenting it. Under the New Covenant, the inheritance of God's people is not a promised land, but a land of promises. That's the difference.

Under the Old Covenant, under Joshua, Israel entered into a Promised Land. Under the New Covenant, under Jesus, we enter into a land of promises. All the principles that applied under the Old Covenant apply equally under the New. There are two books in the Old Covenant that deal specifically with entering into the inheritance of God's people. The first of these is the book of Deuteronomy which lays the basic principles for entering into, and remaining in, your inheritance. Then the book of Joshua describes the actual experience of the children of Israel as they applied these principles and entered into their inheritance. And if you read Deuteronomy and Joshua with that understanding, you'll find that they have tremendous light to cast upon your experience as a Christian entering into and remaining in your inheritance in Christ.

> "Now let's just look at these opening verses of the book of Joshua. Joshua 1:1-3:
> Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people . . . (KJV)"

Let's pause there for a moment. Sometimes there has to be a death before new life can come forth. Sometimes one order has to terminate before a new order can develop. Moses was God's appointed leader to bring Israel out of Egypt. But God had told Moses very clearly that he could never bring God's people into their inheritance in the new land. So Moses had to die before God's people could move in.

Now I believe that there's a parallel situation in the church today. I trust I'll offend nobody by saying this, and I hope

you'll understand it the right way. But I believe there has been a death in Christianity, and the thing that has died is the institutional church. Now I'm not saying the Baptist Church has died, or the Pentecostal Church, or the Episcopal Church, or the Catholic Church. I'm saying the institutional church is dead. And I think we probably mourned over it long enough. Israel was allowed thirty days to mourn over Moses. God is a psychologist, He knows that things shock people and it takes them awhile to adjust. So He gave Israel thirty days. Then He said to Joshua, 'Now it's time to stop mourning and start acting. Moses is dead, that isn't the end of the world; in fact it's the end of one phase and the beginning of a new phase.' And as I see it, the institutional church is like Moses; it cannot take God's people through into their inheritance that God has appointed for us in this generation. We have to have new leadership, a new pattern, a new way of going forward. And I believe God is leading us into this today.

So now let's look at the principles that were unfolded as Joshua was commissioned to lead God's people into their inheritance. We'll read verse 2 through again and then verse 3:

> "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. (KJV)"

What I want to point out to you here is two different tenses of the word 'give' that are used by the Lord. In verse 2, the Lord says, 'The land which I do *give* to them'—present tense. He was giving it while He was speaking. But by verse 3, it's become the past tense. 'Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I *given* unto you.' From that moment onwards, the entire land was legally theirs. But they still had to appropriate it. And they had to appropriate it by putting the sole of their foot on every area of the land. And as they placed the sole of their foot upon that area, it became theirs experientially.

You see, there's this tremendous difference between legal possession and experiential possession. You've probably heard of the typical Fundamentalist who says, 'Brother, I don't need any experience beyond salvation, I don't need any second blessing, I don't need the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I got it all when I was saved.' And the answer is, Yes, you did—legally. But not experientially. Israel got it all legally from Joshua 1:3 onwards. Legally it was theirs forever. But not experientially.

Now you'll forgive me if I make this parallel, but I say if Joshua and the children of Israel had been Fundamentalists, they would have lined up on the east bank of Jordan with their arms folded and said, 'We've got it all!' Had they been Pentecostals, they would have crossed the River Jordan, lined up on the west bank and said, 'We've got it all!' And whichever side they're lined up, the Canaanites would still have been laughing at them. Because the Canaanites knew who had it in experience. So there's a difference between legal inheritance and experiential possession.

This is true in the Christian life. In our experience, the inheritance is the land of promises. They're all yours in Christ. Already. But, you've got to put the sole of your foot upon them to possess them experientially. And every step that the children of Israel took into their inheritance under the Old Covenant was contested by enemies. And every step you take into your inheritance in Christ under the New Covenant will be contested by enemies. The enemies under the Old Covenant were '-ites'— Perrizites, Hittites, Hivites, Jebusites, Canaanites, Amorites, and a lot of other '-ites.' And the '-ites' that will contest your progress under the New Covenant are the forces of Satan; evil spirits, demons. You've got to set your face like a flint and move in saying, 'The Lord has given me this land and I'm putting my feet here, Satan, and you move off!' But Satan only moves when he confronts faith plus determination. Without that, he'll continue to hold onto your inheritance. Though it may be legally yours, you will not enjoy it in experience. So there's the great basic principles.

Now we're going to apply these principles to the truths of holiness. We have already seen, but we'll just refresh our memories for a moment, from Hebrews 12:10, that we are to be partakers of God's holiness. It says that God chastens us 'for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness.' Peter says 'partakers of the divine nature.' The writer of Hebrews says 'partaker of one particular aspect of the divine nature; God's holiness.' But the principle is the same. And all the principles that I am now unfolding in relation to holiness actually apply in many other different areas of the Christian life almost without change.

Let us now consider God's provision for holiness and you'll find it stated there in your outline. I've put it under seven headings, but we'll have them up here in front of your eyes so that you may get a clearer view of them. I find, in studying the New Testament, that there are seven things

involved, provided by God and needed by us to partake of our inheritance of holiness in God.

> "The first is Jesus Christ."

The second, the cross, understood as the place of sacrifice, not something that you hang around your neck. Though I'm not criticizing hanging them around the neck, but I mean that's not what we're talking about.

> "The third is the Holy Spirit.
> The fourth is the blood of Jesus.
> The fifth is the Word of God.
> The sixth is our faith.
> The seventh is our works, that is, the actions whereby we express our faith."

As I said already, these provisions go far beyond appropriating holiness. Almost exactly the same would apply, for instance, for healing. But we are dealing in this study with holiness. Let's now work through these seven aspects of God's provision, in order, without dwelling too long on any of them.

First of all, Christ. Turn if you wish, well, we've already seen in 2 Peter, we don't need to turn back there. Chapter 1:3, that it is through the acknowledging of Jesus Christ that we enter into the total provision. Now in respect of holiness, or sanctification, this is stated in 1 Corinthians 1:2:

> ". . . unto the church of God [Paul says] which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, . . . (KJV)"

So our sanctification is in Christ Jesus. Outside of Christ Jesus there is no provision for sanctification. It all begins with Christ. And then yet more clearly at the end of that chapter, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul says:

> "God the Father has made Jesus four things to every believer: wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption. It is all in Christ. Apart from Christ, God has nothing of blessing to offer us."

Another Scripture that lines up with that is John 1:17:

> "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (KJV) And if you want another Scripture, Romans 8:32: It's 'all things' with Christ, nothing without Christ. See? The entire inheritance is in Christ. Secondly, the second provision for holiness is in the cross. Hebrews 10:14, one tremendous verse:
> For by one offering [but it's probably more clear to say *sacrifice*] he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (KJV)"

The offering, or the sacrifice, is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Now the tenses in Greek are of extreme importance. The tense is the form of the verb that shows the time of the action. The *King James Version* does not make a clear distinction, but there is one in the Greek. They're quite different tenses that are used. 'For by one offering he hath perfected' — a perfect tense denoting something that is finished, complete, cannot be touched, cannot be added to, cannot be changed. But the second part of the verse says this: 'for ever them that are being sanctified.' The process of being sanctified is a continuing, progressive process. Many people have misunderstood the relationship between the perfect sacrifice and the continuing appropriation of the sacrifice. I think some false ideas about instant holiness have sprung from this verse. I don't, myself, believe in instant holiness anymore than I believe in instant coffee. If you want real coffee you go through the percolator. And if you want any real experience with God, there's a percolator process. You bypass the percolator, the results are disappointing.

Here is a picture that I believe represents this visually so that you can see it. Here we have the cross, which is a kind of vertical intervention of God in human history and in every individual human life. The cross is vertical; it comes down from God and bisects human life. It's one perfect sacrifice, never can be changed. On the other hand, human life is represented by the horizontal dotted line which is continually unfolding. And after the cross is come into our life, there's a progressive appropriation of what is made available through the cross. What Jesus has done on the cross is perfect and forever. But our appropriation of it is not instantaneous and complete. It is progressive. We are progressively being sanctified. And people who believe it ought to be instantaneous and don't receive it that way, tend to come under condemnation and think that something has gone wrong and God isn't doing what He promised to

do. It has to be explained to them that God's part is complete. Our appropriation is progressive. It's very important to see that; it gets rid of a lot of misunderstanding and condemnation in Christian experience.

All right. The next factor in God's provision is the Holy Spirit. Maybe we'll turn back to the previous sheet so that you have these in front of your eyes. We're going to deal now with the part of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. It's in your outline as well. The first Scripture that we need to look to there is 1 Corinthians 6:11:

Paul says, and if you want to read what 'such' is, you've got to read the two previous verses. It's not very pleasant reading: fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners. They weren't all from the most high-class social background. 'Such,' Paul says, 'were some of you. But . . .' I thank God for that *but*, don't you? It's a cutoff of the past and the beginning of something new.

> ". . . but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (KJV)"

The administrator of Christ's grace is the Holy Spirit. The basis of provision is the cross. The one who administers the cross' benefits in our life is the Holy Spirit. And one of the benefits that He administers is sanctification. Now we'll turn to another verse that we'll continually be referring to. Second Thessalonians 2:13. If you can find some way of turning this page down, you're going to go back there several times.

> "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (KJV)"

Leave out the first part of the verse and we get this tremendous statement, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' If you take the time order, I believe it's this way: God chooses in eternity, from the beginning. Then in time, the Holy Spirit begins to sanctify, to set us apart, to draw us, to the place of revelation of God. We'll come to this more fully in the third study. The Holy Spirit's sanctifying work brings us to believe the truth of God's Word. And in believing the truth, we enter into salvation. We are brought into salvation. It's important to see no matter how people may feel about it, this is what the Bible says. That the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit begins before we come to salvation. And if the Holy Spirit didn't begin, we'd never come to salvation.

Now you turn to 1 Peter 1 and we find basically the same outline given there. First Peter 1:2, speaking to believers in Christ, Peter says this:

> ". . . elect [modern English, chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: . . . (KJV)"

Now Peter puts in one other thing: in eternity. He not merely speaks about God's choice, but he speaks about God's foreknowledge, which actually logically precedes God's choice. So in eternity we have this: God foreknows and on the basis of His foreknowledge, He chooses (all this is in eternity). In time, the Holy Spirit begins His sanctifying work in our lives, and brings us to the place of obedience to God's Word and the gospel. And when we obey the Word, then the blood of Jesus Christ is sprinkled upon us in salvation, cleansing and separation.

Notice, please, one basic fact. The blood is only sprinkled upon the obedient. The disobedient do not have access to the blood of Jesus. This principle goes on all through the Christian life. First John 1:7 says, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light [continually walk], we [continually] have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ [continually] keeps us clean.' It's conditional. Being kept clean by the blood is conditional upon walking in the light. And walking in the light is walking in obedience to the light of God's Word, which is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet. Remember that please. The access to the blood of Jesus is conditional upon this obedience. And as soon as you become disobedient, you forfeit the right of access to the blood until you repent. So there we have the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit.

The next factor in our sanctification is the blood of Jesus. And we go on simply at the same Scripture that we have already been looking at, 1 Peter 1:2. The Holy Spirit, by His sanctifying work, brings us to obedience, and through obedience the Holy Spirit ministers to us the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus separates us out of our old sinful past and background. We come to the bloodline at the

cross; crossing the bloodline we pass out of Satan's kingdom and into God's kingdom in Christ. That is the point of transition. Let us look at two other Scriptures that speak about the sanctifying power of the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 10:29:

> "Of how much sorer punishment [of a transgressor under the law of Moses], suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (KJV)"

That Scripture tells us, first of all, that it is through the blood of the covenant that the believer is sanctified. To me it also makes it clear that it's possible to lose your sanctification. By a deliberate rejection of Jesus Christ and His shed blood you forfeit the sanctification which was available through the blood. You'll remember that under the Old Covenant, in the ceremony of the Passover lamb, the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the lintels and on the two side posts of the door. But it was not sprinkled on the threshold. It was sacred and no one was permitted to walk upon the blood. Here the suggestion is that somebody turns and deliberately tramples under foot Jesus Christ and the blood and does 'despite to the Spirit of grace,' deliberately slights and rejects the Holy Spirit, and such a person has passed beyond any possibility of recall to repentance.

Now this is not the theme of my message but this is what this verse happens to say. So we need to be very, very careful in our attitude towards the blood and toward the Holy Spirit. If you ever do despite to the blood of Jesus, you insult the Holy Spirit. And conversely, if you despite the Holy Spirit, you forfeit the right of access to the blood. The blood and the Spirit go very, very close together.

And then in Hebrews 13:12, one other Scripture about the sanctifying operation of the blood of Jesus:

> "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate [on the cross]. (KJV)"

So one purpose for Jesus' death on the cross was to provide the blood which He shed there by which God's people might be sanctified, might be set apart to God and to their inheritance in Christ. Now the next factor in this process is the Word of God. The Word follows the blood. John 17:17 is a beautiful Scripture about the sanctifying power of God's Word. John 17 contains the great high priestly prayer of Christ on behalf of His disciples and His people. Speaking about them, Jesus says in John 17:15:

> "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one, I do believe is the correct translation. That is the devil.] They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (KJV)"

The true believer is in the world but not of the world. Mere physical separation from the world in a convent or a monastery would not resolve this problem. It is a spiritual problem and cannot be solved by a physical situation. So Jesus says the solution is in verse 17:

I prefer to say, 'thy word is the truth.' I don't know whether you've heard this little saying, but some things are true, but they're not *the* truth. You may have a toothache and be in pain. That's truth, but it's not *the* truth. The truth is, 'With His stripes we are healed.' See?

Now certain things are true but will change. But what's in God's Word is the truth and never changes. And it's the truth of God's Word that sanctifies the believer in Jesus Christ. This is stated also in the passage that I told you we'd be looking at frequently, 2 Thessalonians 2:13. We'll turn back there quickly but not dwell on it. You remember it says:

> "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (KJV)"

The Holy Spirit brings you to believe the truth of God's Word. And that is a further phase of your sanctification. However, I think the greatest single Scripture on the sanctifying part of the Word is contained in Ephesians 5:26–27. This introduces a parallel between the relationship between husband and wife and between Christ and the church as His bride. Ephesians 5:25 and following:

> "Husbands, love your wives, even as 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. (KJV)"

Now here we have the interrelationship between the blood and the Word. Verse 25, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it as the substitutionary sacrifice upon the cross, shedding His blood to redeem the church. But He redeemed the church with this purpose: that He might thereafter sanctify the redeemed church with the washing of water by the Word. So the next verse says that He gave Himself for it in this redemptive sacrifice on the cross, shedding His blood (that was the redemption price), that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. Jesus redeemed the church by His blood that He might thereafter sanctify and cleanse it with the water of His Word. And it's most important for Charismatic people, and God's people generally, to understand that redemption through the blood is God's gateway into cleansing and sanctification by the water of the Word. The process of making us holy is not completed through redemption by the blood; it must be completed through the continual sanctifying and cleansing operation of the Word in the life of every believer. Then the conclusion of the two operations is stated in verse 27:

> "That he [Christ] might present it [the church] to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (KJV)"

The holiness of the church is achieved first, through redemption by the blood, second, through continual cleansing and washing by the water of the Word. And it is my firm conviction that no believer will qualify to be a member of the bride, to be in this glorious church that is to be presented to Jesus Christ, unless that believer regularly submits to the discipline, the cleansing and the sanctifying of the Word of God. Mere experience of having entered into redemption through the cross will not constitute adequate preparation for that great and glorious day when we are to be presented as a chaste and spotless bride to Jesus Christ. The water of the Word has an essential part to play in making us ready for that great presentation. And I find that many believers who believe that they are redeemed by the blood are very slack and careless about the sanctifying process of the Word in their lives.

Now this is beautifully illustrated in the Old Testament by one of the items of furniture and that is the laver. We'll turn to Exodus 30:18-21. Now I have to assume you understand that everything in the tabernacle in one way or another is a picture of Jesus Christ, the Christian life and God's provision for us. This is why so much space in the Old Testament is devoted to the tabernacle. I think there are something like forty chapters dealing with the tabernacle. Its whole furniture and relationships and details are listed and specified twice over in the Old Testament. It's not of unimportance, it's extremely important. It's one of the greatest means of teaching about Christ and the Christian life. And here we see this part here in Exodus 30:17-21:

> "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass [a laver is a vessel for holding water for cleansing priestly purposes], and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations. (KJV)"

There's a double provision for the priest. It's the altar of sacrifice and it's the laver of clean water. And only through the double provision can the priests achieve that holiness which is necessary for spiritual life. This is a kind of diagram which is not intended to be accurate, but just to give you the relationship.

Now anybody approaching the tabernacle approached it through the gateway of the court. The first thing that confronted them that they could not bypass, which stood clear in their way, was the brazen altar of sacrifice where the blood of the animals sacrificed was sprinkled. This

indicates that no one can approach God except on the basis of Christ's death on the cross. There is no approach of a sinner to God without a propitiatory sacrifice. And the only sacrifice acceptable to God is the sinner's substitute, Jesus, who shed His blood and forfeited His life on the cross. So the first great truth inside the tabernacle is this altar that speaks of the blood, which reconciles the sinner to God and sets the sinner apart; moves him out of Satan's kingdom and into God's territory. But before the priest could go from the altar to the tabernacle, he had to go every time by way of the laver of brass. And if you read the description clearly, he never was permitted to pass in either direction without stopping to wash both his hands and his feet in the laver.

Now the laver is the Word, the water of the Word, which cleanses and transforms us. As we meditate in and obey the Word of God we are changed progressively in character, in attitudes, in outlook, in our daily conduct and behavior. And only by way of the laver could the priest have access to the tabernacle. So that whenever he came to the altar, he went from the altar to the laver, then from the laver to the tabernacle. When he left the tabernacle to go out again, he went from the tabernacle to the laver and from the laver to the altar. The laver was an essential, indispensable part of God's provision for the priest. And if the priest failed to wash in the laver, God said he would die. I don't think there's any way of more emphasizing the absolute vital importance of Christians not merely trusting in Jesus' blood for redemption, but submitting to the continual cleansing and sanctifying of the Word of God for their progressive cleansing and sanctification.

And then there's one other interesting thing about the laver, which is mentioned in Exodus 38:8. Normally speaking, we are told very little about where the materials to make the items of furniture came from. But this particular item, the laver, we're told, and I'm sure God had a purpose in having it recorded.

> "And he [that is, Bezaleel, the man who made all the furniture] made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (KJV)"

You realize that in those days they didn't have glass mirrors, but their mirrors were made of brass very highly polished. So in order to make this laver, the women had to sacrifice their mirrors. And I think the thought is not that a woman should not make herself attractive in her outward appearance, but the thought is let's transfer the emphasis from what we look like in the natural mirror to what we look like in the spiritual mirror of God's Word. Let's lay the emphasis on the inward beauty of holiness rather than mere outward, physical beauty, which the Bible says is vain and is sure to pass away. So there's a thought that God is giving you a hint. It's time you put more emphasis on what you look like inwardly and less concern on what you look like outwardly. I think I've stated it here in your outlines as: Replace concern for outward physical appearance by concern for inward spiritual experience.

Let's turn also in concluding this part of the study, not the whole study but this part, to 1 John 5:6. Speaking about Jesus, it says this:

> "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. [verse 8:] There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (KJV)"

So Jesus came not by water only, as the teacher of the Word, but by water and by blood. By blood as the substitutionary sacrifice shedding His redemptive blood on the cross. There's the double aspect of God's provision. The blood shed on the cross, the sanctifying water of the Word. Jesus came by water and by blood and it is the Spirit that bears witness to the blood and to the Word.

I didn't have any way, I dislike trying to represent the Holy Spirit visually, but if I could have done, I would have drawn the glory of God resting over this area here. Because as the believer comes first to the blood, and then to the Word, the Spirit of God in the believer's heart bears witness to the blood and bears witness to the Word.

And then it says there are three witnesses on earth that bear testimony to Jesus Christ: the blood, the water, and the Spirit. And these three agree in one, Jesus Christ. So there is a tremendous and glorious truth that there are three witnesses to Jesus that should be present in the lives of every believer. The witness of the blood, the witness of the water of the Word, the Holy Spirit who bears witness to the blood and to the Word, and the three are like. The blood, the Word and the Spirit all speak about one person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let's look in closing at the part that we have to play in appropriating the sanctifying means that God has put at our disposal. The means we have seen already, but we'll go back there for a moment. We have dealt with Christ, the cross, the Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus, the Word of God. Now we come to our faith and our works.

Now, all that God has provided through Christ must be appropriated by the believer through personal faith. Faith is the funnel in our lives through which God's grace and blessing can be poured in. Unless we have the funnel and have it turned in the right direction, we can't receive all this provision that God has made. The provision is there, but we receive it by our faith. Let's look at two Scriptures which emphasize this. Again, we're going back to one you should be able to find by now, that's 2 Thessalonians 2:13. We're only going to read the latter half of the verse:

> ". . . God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation [that's the end of God's choice, salvation] through [two processes] sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (KJV)"

Belief, it's the same word as *faith*. So there is a time when our faith has to appropriate the truth of God's Word in order to enter into the provision of holiness which God has made. Then there's another very, very beautiful verse which I cannot read today without getting stirred up. I think God is speaking to me personally from this verse. And that's Acts 26:18. This is the call of Jesus to the apostle Paul to go as His apostle to the Gentiles. And this is what Jesus told Paul through the gospel he was to do for the Gentiles. Every time I read these words something comes over me.

> "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me [Christ]. (KJV)"

Let no one ever tell you that Satan doesn't have power. That's a silly thing to say. The Bible says that Satan has power. But through the gospel, our eyes can be open, we can be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God. And that when we so turn, we receive, first of all, forgiveness of sins. That's basic. That's the first requirement that your sins be forgiven. Then you're in a position to deal with Almighty God without a sin barrier. And secondly, an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ. The inheritance is for those who are sanctified through their faith in Christ.

There's another Scripture that I'll give you that is not in your outline, Colossians 1:12. It's such a good Scripture and we make no extra charge for this one so you may just as well have it!

> "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [but the Greek says *capable*] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (KJV)"

Notice the inheritance is for the saints, the holy ones, the ones who have been made holy by their faith in Jesus Christ. That they might receive inheritance, Jesus says, among those who are sanctified, set apart to God, by faith in Jesus.

Finally, our faith must express itself in positive action. James 2:26 says 'faith without works is dead.' A faith that does not express itself in action is dead faith. This is stated specifically with regard to sanctification. Let us look quickly at two verses, 2 Corinthians 7:1:

> "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (KJV)"

I pointed out already to you that the provision is in the promises. We started from that point in our study today. Now Paul says in the light of the provision made available through the promises, having therefore these promises, it's up to us to do it. We have to apply the promises. We have to put our foot upon the inheritance. We have to take it for ourselves. This God will not do for us. So Paul says let us cleanse ourselves. God isn't going to do that. God's made it possible for you to do it. Let us cleanse ourselves, and I pointed out yesterday there's two kinds of filthiness. From all filthiness of flesh and spirit. Filthiness of the flesh: the carnal sins like drunkenness, immorality, swearing and so on. But the filthiness of the spirit is worse: the occult, involvement with Satan's supernatural, trespassing in the forbidden territory, the Ouija board, fortune telling, horoscopes, astrology, séances, false prophecies, Eastern cults, philosophies. All these things are the filthiness of the

spirit and the Bible says that if we are to be holy we've got to cleanse ourselves from both the one and from the other.

Finally let me give you one other good Scripture that applies in every area of the Christian life in Philippians 2:12-13:

> "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (KJV)"

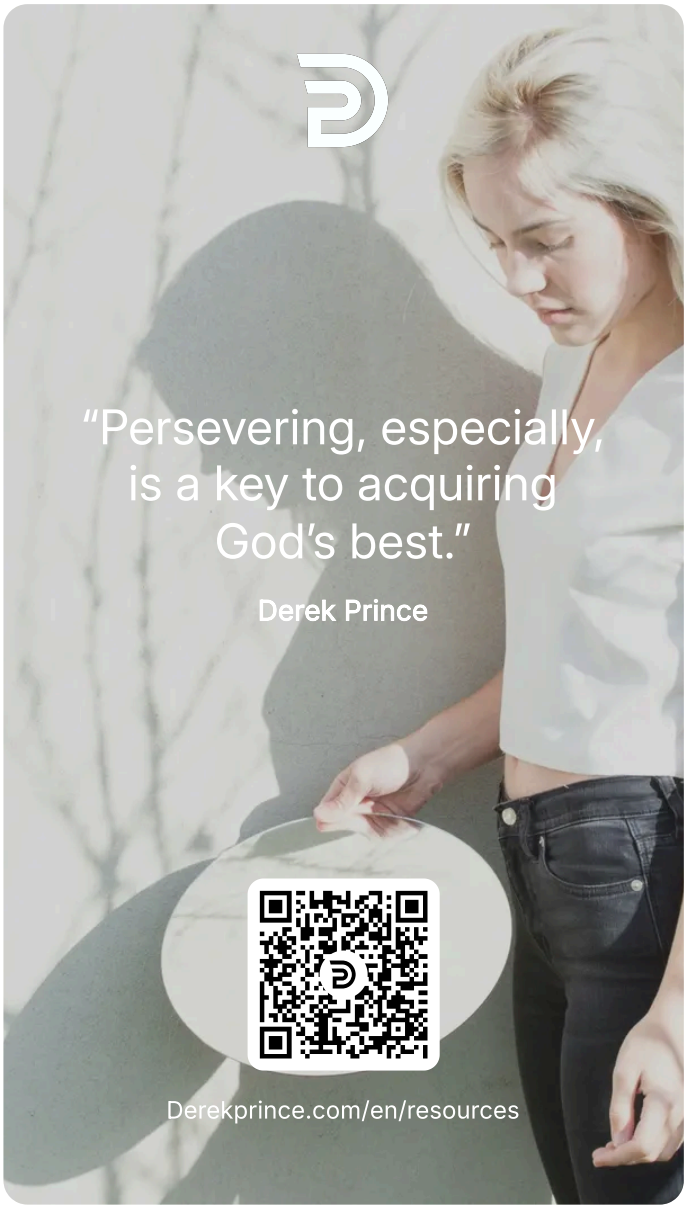
God works in you, then you have to work it out. But if you don't work out what God works in, then God has to stop working in you. This applies to every provision of God throughout the entire range of Christian experience.

Let's close with just a word of prayer. Our Father, we praise Thee and thank Thee that Thou hast been with us in this study. We thank Thee for the fullness and completeness of Thy provision as we look at it in Thy Word. And we pray, Lord, that none of us will be slothful or careless or negligent in availing ourselves of this provision. I pray for each one that hears this study and for myself that we shall be faithful and diligent to appropriate the holiness which You've made available to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Sermon

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