

Chapter 29. Holiness – the Chief Aim of Bible Study

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." – John 17:17

In His great intercessory prayer, our Lord said He had given the words which the Father gave Him, to His disciples, and that they had received and believed them. It was this that made them His disciples. It was the keeping of these words that would really enable them to live the life and do the work of true disciples. ***Receiving the words of God from Christ, and keeping them, is the mark and power of true discipleship.***

Jesus asked the Father to ***keep*** the disciples when they stayed behind in the world after He had ascended to heaven. Our Lord prayed that the Father would ***sanctify them in the truth***, as truth dwells and works through His Word. Christ said of Himself, *"I am the truth."* (John 14:6). He was the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). His teaching was not like that of the law which came by Moses, giving knowledge, a promise of good things to come which was only an image or a shadow. *"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life,"* (John 6:63), giving the very substance and power and Divine possession of what they speak of. Christ had spoken of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, Who would lead into all the truth that there was in Himself, not as a matter of knowledge or doctrine, but into its actual experience and enjoyment. And then He prays that in this living truth, as it dwells in the Word, and is revealed in Him by the Spirit, that the Father would sanctify them. He says, *"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth."* (John 17:19). He asks the Father, in His power and love, to take charge of His disciples, that His object – to sanctify them in the truth, through His Word which is truth – may be realised, and that they, like Himself, may be sanctified in truth. Let us study the wonderful lessons given here in regard to God's Word.

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." ***The great object of God's Word is to make us holy.*** No diligence or success in Bible study will really profit us unless it makes us humbler, holier disciples of Jesus. In all our use of Holy Scripture, this must definitely be our main aim. The reason there is often so much Bible reading with so little real results of a Christ-like character, is that *"salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,"* is not actually sought. People imagine that if they

study the Word and accept its truths, this will in some way, of itself, benefit them. But experience teaches that it does not. *The fruit of holy character, of a consecrated life, of power to bless others, does not come, for the simple and most natural reason, that we only get what we seek. Christ gave us God's Word to make us holy. It is only when we make this our definite aim in all Bible study, that the truth, not the doctrinal truth, but its Divine quickening power, imparting the very life of God, that it contains as a seed, can open and impart itself to us.*

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." **It is only God Himself who alone can make us holy by His Word.** The Bible, separated from God and His direct operation, cannot avail. The Bible is an instrument: God Himself must use it. God alone is the Holy One. He alone can make holy. The unspeakable value of God's Word is that it is God's means of holiness. The terrible mistake of many is that they forget that God alone can use it or make it effective. It is not enough that I have access to the dispensary of a physician. I need him to prescribe medicine for me. Without him, my use of his medicines might be fatal. It was similar to the scribes. They boasted in God's law; they delighted in their study of Scripture and yet they remained unrighteous. The Word did not sanctify them, because they did not seek for righteousness or sanctification in the Word, and they did not yield to God to do it for them.

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." **Holiness through the Word must be sought and waited upon from God in prayer.** Our Lord not only taught His disciples that they must be holy; He not only sanctified Himself for them, that they might be sanctified in truth, but He brought His words and His work to the Father with the **prayer that He would sanctify them.** We need to know God's Word and meditate on it. We need to set our heart upon being holy, as our first and main object in studying the Word. But all of this is not enough. Everything depends upon our following Christ in asking the Father to sanctify us through the Word. **It is God, the Holy Father, Who makes us holy,** by the Spirit of Holiness who dwells in us. He works in us the very mind and disposition of Christ who is our sanctification. *"There is none holy but the Lord."* (1Sam.2:2). All holiness is His and what He bestows by His holy Presence. The tabernacle and the temple were not holy by virtue of cleansing, or separation or consecration. They became holy by the incoming and indwelling God. Him taking possession of them made them holy. God sanctifying us through His Word is nothing else than Him bringing Christ and the Holy Spirit into us. And the

Father cannot do this unless we wait silently on Him in deep dependence and full surrender of ourselves to Him. It is in prayer offered in the Name of Jesus, the fellowship with Him, and the faith of the Great Intercessor when we pray, "*Sanctify me through Your truth, Your Word is truth,*" that the Father's sanctifying power is released, and God's Word truly makes us holy.

How sacred is the Morning Watch! The hour specially devoted to yield up your soul to God's holiness, to be sanctified through the Word. Let us always remember, the one aim of God's Word is to make us holy. Let it be our continual prayer, "Father, sanctify me in Your truth."

Prayer: Father, sanctify me in Your truth. Your Word is truth. I wait in total surrender and dependence on You. I desire to obey your Word in everything in my life. Amen.