

## The Importance of Union and Fellowship with Christ The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification – Direction 5

*Direction 5:* We cannot attain to the practice of true holiness by any of our endeavors while we continue in our natural state and are not partakers of a new state by union and fellowship with Christ through faith.

*Thesis:* You cannot be truly holy through any of your endeavors as long as you remain in your natural state; you must be partaker of a new state through union with Christ and fellowship with Christ by faith.

### **I. The False View: Personal Reformation**

- A. Many try to reform their lives according to the law without inward change.
  - 1. This is what we are urged to do by conscience (Rom. 2:14-15).
  - 2. This is how Israel did it, of which Paul is an example (Phil. 3:6).
- B. Some are so near the kingdom they are convinced of the goodness of the law (Mark 12:33-34) and the importance of holiness.
  - 1. Some struggle and labor with great earnestness and are relentless in abstaining from sin and performing the law.
  - 2. Some think salvation will come through holiness and are terrified of damnation.
  - 3. These fall into despair when they fail to reach holiness.
- C. These false opinions give false encouragement.
  - 1. Some think they are free to choose sin or not.
  - 2. Some think they must do their part and Christ will do the rest.
  - 3. Some produce examples of people who, apart from Christ, had good religious words and works.

### **II. Affirmations and Answers**

- A. If the one is true, the others will of necessity be false.
- B. Support for this truth and answers to the false claims:
  - 1. We must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom (John 3:3, 5) and we are created to good works (Eph. 2:10) and we become new creatures through faith in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).
  - 2. Those in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:8) and the flesh is our natural state (John 3:6).
  - 3. The old man must be put off before we can be freed from the practice of sin (Rom. 6:6-7; Rom. 13:12-14).
  - 4. We naturally have several properties that present us from the practice of true holiness and enslave us to sin.
    - a. The guilt of sin and its curse brings God's wrath.
    - b. An evil conscience that blinds and hardens us.
    - c. An evil inclination to sin (Rom. 7:20, 23; 8:7) that enslaves us.
    - d. Subjection to the power of the devil who blinds us (2 Cor. 4:4).

- e. Death in sin (Eph. 2:1) according to God's judgment (Gen. 2:17) in which we can stir up strength (Rom. 5:6) or help toward true holiness (Rom. 7:18).
- 5. We have no good thing in us (Rom. 7:18) for God to help. He expects, not to help us in our sin, but to deliver us from it.
- 6. This does not in any way excuse the natural man from his sinfulness since sin is still one's own choice.
- 7. This does not mean it is useless to preach the gospel to the natural man or to call them to repentance and faith. We must call them to this rather than to holiness.
- 8. The religious attainments of the heathen should move us to abandon this truth.

Conclusion: Man is not as wicked as he could be at any time. Though man's sin is enough to condemn each one to eternal punishment, and the world is vile and wicked, each man is not at any given time as vile and wicked as he could be. We must praise God that it is no worse.