

## **Be Ye Therefore Perfect**

Texts:

Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

John 17:23a: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..."

II Corinthians 13:9, "For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection."

II Corinthians 13:11: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

Hebrews 13:20, 21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

James 1:4: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

I Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In our multiple texts I want to cover this subject thoroughly by bathing the truth in the one reliable truth, the Word of God. Our opening text is Matthew 5:48. Jesus has just presented us with the Beatitudes, informed us we are to be the light of the world, to be at peace with our adversaries. Then Christ commanded moral impeccability and to turn the other cheek when assaulted. After commanding the perfect life, He says to us, "Be ye therefore perfect..." Our Lord has just commanded a human impossibility. But remember, behind every command of God He places omnipotence, in other words, He will supply all the power we need to be obedient to what He so desires in us (Philippians 2:13).

In the history of the church, perhaps no one became a proponent of Christian perfectionism more than John Wesley. Realizing the controversial figure he had become on this issue, he began one of his sermons on Christian perfection with these words: "'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect' (Philippians 3:12). There is scarce any expression in Holy Writ which has given more offence than this. The word perfect is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them. And whosoever preaches perfection (as the phrase is,) that is, asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen man or a publican. And hence some

have advised, wholly to lay aside the use of those expressions, because they have given so great offence. But are they not found in the oracles of God? If so, by what authority can any Messenger of God lay them aside, even though all men should be offended? We have not so learned Christ; neither may we thus give place to the devil. Whatsoever God hath spoken that will we speak....” Although I cannot come to some of the conclusions at which he arrived, I will say Amen to what he said about our need to address this most important topic.

Here are words from the original languages from which we translate the word “perfect”:

Greek: “Teleios” which means complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); of full age, man, perfect. This is where we get our word “telescope” from, in other words, unfolding (extending out) one stage at a time to function at full-strength capacity. I would be remiss not to say Christ is the One we observe through the telescope of sanctification to bring Him in focus and full view as our goal of perfection.

Greek: “Katartizo”, means to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust: — fit, frame, mend, prepare, restore.

Hebrew: “Tam or “Tamiym” meaning to complete; usually (morally) pious; specifically, undefiled, upright, entire, integrity, truth: — without blemish, full, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright(-ly), whole.

## I. THE RECIPIENTS OF PERFCTION

A. They are people admired by God.

Job 1:8; Job 2:3; II Timothy 3:17

B. They are people who are products of grace.

Galatians 3:3; Hebrews 7:19

C. They are people who are happily married.

I John 4:17,18; Colossians 3:18, 19, 14

The word “bond” comes to us from the Greek word “sundesmos” which means a joint tie, i.e. ligament, (figuratively) a uniting principle, control.

## II. THE ROAD TO PERFECTION

A. We have a roadmap.

Psalm 19:7; James 1:25

B. We have the best possible route.

Psalm 18:30

C. We discover our road is paved in gold.

II Chronicles 4:19-22; Song of Solomon 3:9, 10; Job 23:10; I Peter 5:10; Hebrews 2:10

### III. THE RESULTS OF PERFECTION

A. We are able to know God's perfect will.

Romans 12:1, 2; Colossians 4:12

B. We are able to serve fully.

I Chronicles 12:38; I Chronicles 28:9; II Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 101:6

C. We are able to live and die in perfect peace.

Isaiah 26:3; Psalm 37:37; Proverbs 4:18; Hebrews 12:23

Psalm 17:15: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Conclusion:

In returning our thoughts to John Wesley, I leave you with two exceptional quotes to illustrate his intense desire for God's people to be holy and the results thereof:

"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth."

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

I close with this biblical admonition. Hebrews 6:1a: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection...."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.