

The Old Paths

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“Now Ye Are Clean”

Jarrod Jacobs

Jesus said, “*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*” (Jn. 15:3). In the context of John 15, Jesus compares His Father to a “husbandman” (vinedresser, Jn. 15:1), and compares Himself to the “true vine” from which the branches feed and grow. In a study of John 15:1-10, we learn that if we are “in Him,” we will be clean, purged, and bear fruit. If we are not, then we will wither, and be cast “into the fire” to be “burned.” Jesus taught that to bear much fruit brings glory to God (Jn. 15:8), and we show that we love Christ by doing (practicing) His will (v. 10-14). John 15:15 states that Jesus calls those who are in Him “friends.” Yet, because of our relationship with Christ, the world will hate us (Jn. 15:18-20).

In this article, we wish to study John 15, and especially verse 3 as we learn from Christ’s words and try to make applications to our daily lives.

How Is One Made Clean?

“*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*” (Jn. 15:3). Darby’s translation reads: “Ye are already clean by reason of the word I have spoken to you.” The NKJ and NAS versions concur with this translation also. How did this one become clean? “Through the word,” the divine will of God (Jn. 15:3)!

Some 1000 years before Christ, David asked, “*Wherewithal (how, JJ) shall a young man cleanse his way?*” The answer: “*By taking*

heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps. 119:9). Men stand before God as filthy sinners (Isa. 1:18), but it is God’s word that will bring about the cleansing. Peter said, “*Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...*” (I Pet. 1:22). It is God’s word that tells us that baptism for the remission of sins will cleanse us (I Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16). Therefore, when we take heed to the gospel, God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16), we can become spiritually clean!

Being Clean Results In A New Relationship.

Notice the phrases Christ uses in John 15 that describe a relationship: “*In me*” (6x); “*in you*” (2x); “*abide in me*” (3x); “*abide in the vine*”; “*without me*”; “*abide in you*”; and “*continue*.” These things cannot be said of one who is not in the vine, i.e., not a Christian, nor cleansed from sin. Therefore, when we discuss being clean, or cleansed, we are discussing a new relationship one has in Christ!

Paul showed the Ephesians this truth (Eph. 2:11-13). “*In Christ*” we have blessings never before realized (Eph. 1:3). The world does not enjoy these blessings because they are not “*in Christ*”! God causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall on the just and unjust (Matt. 5:45). However, the spiritual blessings belong to a “*peculiar people, zealous of good works*” (Tit. 2:14).

Old-time preachers used to teach that faith changes the heart; repentance changes the lifestyle; confession changes the allegiance; and baptism changes the relationship. This is the truth! Once clean, we have a relationship we could not have enjoyed

previously.

Now That We Are Clean, We Must Stay Clean.

How can we stay clean? Let the Bible answer! This cleansing from sin is enjoyed as we abide in Christ, bearing fruit for Him. This is why we need to show concern for those who have fallen away (Gal. 6:1). Away (or apart) from Christ, there is no cleansing, there is no life, there is nothing (Jn. 15:5-6). One away from the Lord will wither and die spiritually. Why? “*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in me*” (Jn. 15:4). If we understand this concept of “*vines*” and “*branches*” in the physical world, should we not feel a great urgency toward those spiritual branches, our brethren, who need to return to God?

The prescription for staying clean is seen in my relationship with God. If one wishes to stay clean, he must:

1) ***Stay in Christ and bear fruit*** (Jn. 15:2, 8). Bearing “*fruit*” includes bearing the “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Gal. 5:22-23) as well as bringing new converts to the Lord. I must not forget that!

2) ***Continue in Christ’s love*** (Jn. 15:9). How does one do this? “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love...*” (Jn. 15:10).

3) ***Be Christ’s friend*** (Jn. 15:13-15).

4) ***Love one another*** (Jn. 15:12). This is a command from Christ that we love one another (Jn. 15:17).

5) ***Endure afflictions*** (Jn. 15:18-20; II Tim. 2:13; I Pet. 4:16).

Conclusion

Based on John 15, are you “*in Christ*” or not, dear reader? Have you left the “*true vine*”? Are you yet to be “*grafted in*” (Rom. 11:17, 19)? Are you clean? Don’t delay from doing what you know is right. Tomorrow may be too late (II Cor. 6:2)!

Preach "First Principles"

Benjamin Franklin (1812-1878)

There is no telling the evils that have arisen in some old congregations, from preachers assuming that folks knew all about what are usually called first principles, and not preaching them. In this way, they never get folks to understand the principles of the gospel at all. They preach to their half-sleeping audiences, not *hearers*, some little, exhortatory sermon, of twenty-five or thirty minutes, and not a syllable is recollected in two days. The people are thankful that the sermon was short, and the preacher thankful the "service" is over. In this way the gospel has literally been shut out of some churches, and year after year passes without anything like a clear development of the gospel, and neither the church nor the regular hearers understand the gospel, or know the difference between the gospel and something else. This also gives rise to textuary preaching and preaching a sermon "to develop a single thought." We heard of one preacher who delivered a sermon on the text, "And there shall be no night there." The wording was soft as a summer breeze and as harmless as a butterfly. Now, we must say that we abominate this as mere trash. We want good, sound, solid, manly preaching, containing principles and practical instruction, that will make the group *think*, and *feel*, and *that to some purpose*. Let us advocate the cause, maintain and defend it, with zeal, earnestness, and power. Unfold the great principles of the faith, spread them out, and let the world see them, and see at the same time that we intend they shall prevail. The principles are self-evidently right, and

there is no reason why any man should be ashamed of them, or afraid to advocate them. They can be carried through the world, and we have the men and ability, and, the Lord helping us, we shall spread them throughout the land.

(From: Book of Gems, p. 474)

Editor's Note:

Brother Benjamin Franklin, a distant relative of the well-known statesman and patriot of the same name, did much good for the cause of Christ in the 1800's. Without his tireless work, preaching and writing, in Indiana and other mid-western states, many souls, no doubt, would have died in their sins having never heard the gospel of Christ. I am honored to be able to include his writings from time-to-time in *The Old Paths*.

Please look below and read carefully another article from his pen. I chose to reprint this article because it relates to a question we received about I Corinthians 12:13 on last week's radio program. Interestingly, he arrives at the same conclusion I did! (We must be reading the same book!)

"One Baptism"

From: Book of Gems, p. 190

We take it as Wesley did, that "by one Spirit" is by the *direction* of one Spirit,

we are all immersed into one body. It is clear that the baptism alluded to is the initiatory rite, for there is no other baptism *into one body*. The immersion in the Spirit is not *into one body*, or *into* anything. At the house of Cornelius they were immersed into Christ after they had been immersed in the Holy Spirit. The immersion in the Spirit was to convince Peter and his Jewish brethren that God intended to receive the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Hence, when Peter, in his rehearsal of the matter to his Jewish brethren, when he came to this exclaims, "What was I that I should withstand God?"

The "one baptism" of Paul is the initiatory rite — the baptism of the Commission, connected with the faith and repentance for the remission of sins, and will remain as long as there is one to believe, repent, or seek remission of sins. The faith, repentance, confession, immersion and remission of sins stand connected in the gospel of the grace of God, and we see not how any man can be so perverted as to try to evade any one of these items.

David Said: The blessed man will not associate with evil people, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2).

Something to Think About... Is the Bible your delight, or something that is keeping you from doing what you like???

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs

Phone: (270) 683-5386

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