

BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT

INTRODUCTION:

1. Matt. 5:48: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”
 - A. This is the goal, the aspiration, the target, the ideal, the upward thrust, to rise to heights undreamed, to become more and more like the Master.

I. THE ROAD TO PERFECTION REQUIRES THAT WE TAKE OFF ALL OUR OLD CLOTHES.

- A. The Old Clothes of Yesterday Must Be Discarded:
 1. Col. 3:1-10: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you also once walked when you lived in them. But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”
 - a. Col. 2:12-13: The apostle Paul had just written:

“Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

“Bring Christ your broken life, so marred by sin. He will create anew, make whole again.”

2. Romans 6:1-6: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
- a. Those baptized for remission of sins:
- (1) Had all past sins removed.
 - (2) We are not to continue to live as in the past.
 - (3) Were to take off the old man - old clothes.
 - (4) To put on the new clothes and conform to the image of Him who saved him.
3. Rom. 6:19: “I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”
4. Eph. 4:22-24: “That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.”
5. Rom. 13:13-14: “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”
- “Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in cease-less praise.”

6. I Cor. 6:9-11: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

7. I Cor. 6:18-20: “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

8. II Cor. 7:1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

9. Gal. 5:19-21: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

10. Eph. 2:1-3: “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”
 - a. A radical change is called for in our lives.

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Im-man-uel’s veins;
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.”

11. Eph. 4:29-31: Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that

it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

12. Eph. 5:3-5: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

"I take, O cross, thy shadow
For my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine
Than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by,
To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame,
My glory all the cross."

13. Eph. 5:15-16: "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

"Redeemed - how I love to pro-claim it,
Re-deemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed thro' His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am."

14. I Thess. 4:3-7: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness."

"More holiness give me,
More strivings within,
More patience in suffering
More sorrow for sin,
More faith in my Saviour,
More sense of His care,

More Joy in His service,
More purpose in prayer.”

15. Titus 3:2-7: “To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”
16. Heb. 3:12-14: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.”

“Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you
Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus:
He will carry you through.”

- a. Conclusion: A change is to take place after baptism.

The old clothes of our past life are to be discarded by the wayside.

We are to turn our backs on the worldly living.

We have been redeemed.

We are the family of God.

We must so speak and act.

The goal is heaven where we already have an inheritance.

II. CONVERSION: A PROGRESSIVE CHANGE INTO GOD'S LIKENESS.

A. At Baptism, We Are Raised to Walk a Different Kind of Life.

B. The Process is Twofold:

1. Putting off the old man of sin - the old clothes we once wore.
2. Putting on new clothes - a new personality - becoming the kind of person where our friends and relatives and neighbors can see the spirit of Christ in us.

C. The Scriptures Teach That God Expects Us To Be Perfect.

1. Rom. 12:9-13: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."
2. Gal. 5:24: "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."
3. Gal. 6:9-10: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

"Each day I'll do a golden deed
By helping those who are in need.
My life on earth is but a span,
And so I'll do the best I can."

4. Eph. 4:23-24: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness."

5. Eph. 4:32; 5:1-2: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you. Therefore, be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

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6. Phil. 1:27: “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

“I need thee every hour, stay Thou near by,
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.”

7. Phil. 2:15-16: “That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”
8. Col. 1:21-22: “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight --”

“Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.”

9. Col. 2:6-7: “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

10. Col. 3:13-15: “Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

“Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Cal-v-ry my sin and disgrace;
Such love con-strains me to an-swer His call,
Follow His leading and give Him my all.”

11. Titus 2:1-6: “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things

-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded."

12. Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."
13. I Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is Holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"
14. I Peter 2:1-5: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
15. I Peter 2:9-10: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

"O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer fuller be."

16. I Peter 4:1-5: "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer shall live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in

the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

“When I survey the won-drous cross
On which the Prince of glo-ry died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of na-ture mine,
That were a pres-ent far too small;
Love so a-maz-ing so di-vine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus said, “Be perfect as My Father in heaven is perfect.”
 - A.

We should not want to settle for less than that as a goal in our lives. This is the standard to be reached.

2. This Involves:
 - A. Putting off our old clothes.
 - B. Putting on new clothes.
3. The Road to Perfection is Progressive - It is Lifelong.
 - A. It involves intellectual honesty.
 - B. Asking God for forgiveness when we slip, fall, sin.
 - C. Asking for courage to continue to be faithful.
 - D. Having a burning desire to get to heaven and taking someone else along also.

“Walking a-long at eve and viewing the skies a-far
Bidding the darkness come to wel-come each silver star;
I have a great de-light in the wonderful scenes a-bove,
God in His power and might is showing His truth and
love.”

“O for a home with God,
A place in His court to rest,
Sure in a safe abode,
With Jesus and the blest;
Rest for a weary soul,
Once redeemed by the Saviour’s love,
Where I’ll be pure and whole
And live with my God a-bove.”