## Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? (Quality: Good)

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Date: 01 January 1900 Preacher: McNee, John

[0:00] We find our text this morning in Psalm 15 verse 1, the first verse of the 15th Psalm.

! And we have this question placed before us.! Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

The book of Psalms from which our text is taken has always held a prominent place in the experiences of God's people. The psalmist expresses all the anxieties and the distresses of his heart in the book of Psalms. He realizes in his life that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. So recognizing this truth, he sets forth in the book of Psalms all the experiences of his life. He tells us of his joys and his sorrows. He reveals to us the innermost depths of his experience. One time his heart is filled with a knowledge and an experience of the goodness of God. How good God was to him in his life as he surveyed the bodious experiences of his heart. He cries out. All that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, for his wonderful works to the children of God. His heart is filled with an experience of the goodness of God towards him. But listen to the other side of his character when he cries out.

When he cries out. With deep remorse in his soul. He had sinned against his God. And one of the most solemn experiences of a true believer in Christ is when he has disobeyed the Holy Scriptures.

When he has transgressed the law of God. When he has passed reproach on the sacred words of Holy Scripture. Remember his cry in the 51st Psalm.

[3:05] Against thee, the only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. He was a sinner.

And he sought to be ever directed by the works of Holy Scripture. It is eyed in the depths of his heart. From the evidences of his regenerate nature.

To seek to walk in close proximity to the Word of God. So here before us again is anxious.

Again is anxious that his heart may truly testify to the grace of God in his soul.

And he cries out the words of our text. He cries it out in a word of a divine testimony to the work of God in his soul.

[4:11] And he also sees these words and he says Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle who shall dwell in thy holy hill.

The question that we need each one of us to ask ourselves Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle who shall dwell in thy holy hill.

In other words he's asking himself this question. How can I describe he's saying a citizen of Zion.

how can I describe those who come close to God in prayer and divine worship. He's asking this question.

Who is a fit recipient of the grace of God? Who is going to heaven? Because this is a description of that person who's traveling towards the celestial city and is living in hope of eternal life.

[5:37] Lord he asks the question of God because he will understand that no person can ask or receive this question in his experience.

This is the Lord God Almighty that alone can answer this question. So he says in the second verse three things that he does.

Here is a man who walks and seeks to walk in conformity with the will of God. So he tells us there are three conspicuous things in this person's experience in the soul that's traveling towards the celestial world for a true worshiper of God upon the earth desires in all things to seek God's face in prayer.

So he replies to the question in these words and notice the godly man in the second verse does three things.

he says he walks uprightly he worketh righteousness and he speaks the truth in his heart.

[7:05] Three things. Now that is the positive side to a Christian man's experience. This is what he does through divine grace and divine power.

He does these three things in his life. And if we do not do these three things as the result of the inward spiritual nature which God gives his people through regeneration there's no real true evidences of divine life in our soul.

Then not only does he give three definite evidences of regeneration he gives us three negative aspects of life that the believer does not do.

But not only is there a positive side to a Christian's experience but there's a negative side also. something in his life which he abstains from doing.

Three positive things three negative things and they are truly the sum and substance of a true spiritual Christian experience.

[8:36] And as we look into the light of divine truth through this verse of our own disposition that the work of grace has commenced in our hearts.

This is truly a solemn question. Now many questions are asked in the scriptures questions which relate certainly to our spiritual experience questions that relate to our eternal destiny.

You will remember the first question that was asked in the Holy Scripture. Adam had sinned in the Garden of Eden. We have a picture as it were of God looking for Adam.

God asked this question. He says, Adam, where art thou? God already knew where he was.

This question is given that Adam may understand where he stood in the light of divine words.

[9:55] Adam, where art thou? Apply the question to your own experience. Where do you stand with relation to the Holy Word of God?

Where do you stand in your spiritual experience? Are you growing in grace and knowledge? Or as it were, have you got a static experience in the things of God?

So much so that the Word of God has no effect in your life, in your heart, experience? Truly a question that we need all to ask in the light of that knowledge.

All things are needed and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. You and I, at the present time, are exercised with regards to our soul's destiny in the light of Holy Scripture.

Adam, for art thou, you could well ask the question. To ask your own heart, where do I stand in relation to the Word of God, in relation to my exercises of soul before an eternal and omniscient God.

You remember that two years ago I preached in this chapel on the words the blind man in the ninth of John. The neighbors had come to him and asked him that question, how are thine eyes opened?

They asked the question because there was a miracle of divine power exhibited before them. And they couldn't understand that a man that was born blind could now see.

He was a marvel of divine grace, a testimony to divine power in his heart, in his eyes. There was the evidence of divine power.

So we could ask ourselves again that question, how were thine eyes opened? Am I a believer in Christ Christ because my father and mother were believers?

Do I follow the strict Baptist rule of faith because my father and mother were recipients of divine grace?

[13:00] You know, religion doesn't run in a family. faith. The faith of your parents can never, never make up for your unbelief.

How were thine eyes opened? How were you a recipient of divine grace? How did you come to a knowledge of divine truth? And so many people are living in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Another question we might ask, how did he become religious? To love the scriptures? To heed divine truth?

How were thine eyes opened? So we come to the exercises of the psalmist before us in the words of our text.

And I would like us to notice first the three positive things in this man's experience. First it says, he walks uprightly.

[14:08] Now this is absolutely essential to a true experience of grace. He walks uprightly. It doesn't tell us how much he talked in his conversation.

For walking is more important than talking. Many people talk the religion. But how few really walk before God in the light of the living.

He walks uprightly. And this is what the characteristic of this man because he ordered his life, the whole of his life, by the testimony of the holy scriptures.

There is the light which shines forth with divine power to the soul that's made regenerate by the power of the Holy Ghost. He walks uprightly because faced before him are the holy scriptures of God.

And he seeks with all the ardent desire of his spiritual nature to walk uprightly. Remember the first song.

[15:23] Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor siteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

I wonder if that's true in our experience, that the holy word of God is the desire of our hearts that we seek with all the ardent desires of our nature to meditate upon the word of God.

But only by a true knowledge of the holy scriptures, only by the sense that the word of God dwells deeply in our hearts can we walk uprightly.

Not only is it the testimony of the new testament, but it's the testimony of the old testament, and how the godly men of old walk before God, and what glorious experiences they had of the movements of the holy spirit in their hearts.

[16:46] Because by sovereign mercy, they walked uprightly. Listen to the testimonies in the old testaments.

Enoch walked with God. What a wonderful expression. What an experience of a man moved upon by the spirit of God.

He had communion communion with his God. He walked with God. The two cannot walk together unless they be agreed.

But Enoch must only walk with God. But God so manifested his grace towards him, such was the perfect harmony of this man, Enoch.

that he walked with God and he was not. But God took him. God took him, body and soul, into the glories of the celestial world.

[17:54] He walked with God. But that man, when he walked with God, you read the 11th chapter of Hebrews and we find these wonderful words.

He had this testimony in his heart that he pleased God. What a glorious experience for a sinner brought upon by the Spirit of God.

God spake to him. He had communion with God. He had true fellowship with his God and deep down in his soul, there was that wonderful experience.

that he pleased God. How wonderful that is. He pleased God. Deep down in the spiritual recesses of his quicken nature, there was placed in his soul that testimony, that assurance, that he walked with God.

God. But he was not the only man that walked with God. Many of the Old Testament saints had this glorious experience, that he walked with God.

[19:15] So listen to the biblical testimony of Noah, the man who built the ark. We have this testimony concerning Noah.

And read what the Holy Scriptures say of this man. it says, these are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation.

That's what the Scriptures say. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

God. Now we must not understand that the word perfect means that he was sinless. That is absolutely impossible. Absolutely impossible for a child of Adam to be perfect.

But if you read the marginal rendering, you see these words. Noah was a just man, and upright in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

[20:29] Believer, there is an experience in which we walk in obedience, and through sovereign mercy, in communion with God.

And it's all the frailties of human nature, within all the activities of our carnival, fallen, sinful dispositions, that can be that testimony through the atoning work of Christ, that we can walk with God.

He tried by sovereign mercy, by infinite grace, to obey the Holy Scriptures.

But that's the foundation of all spiritual blessedness in this world. And Noah found this experience by being obedient to God's words.

However great the difficulties were in building the arms, however great the opposition was from worldly ungodly men, in spite of all the difficulties which he encountered, it is said this word of him in the last verse of chapter 6.

[21:56] Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he. What's a blessed truth.

It is possible by the grace of God amidst all the sinful dispositions of our nature to have that experience to walk with God.

So we have a similar testimony. In the opening words of the book of Job, we have these words. Here is another man who walked with God.

It says the very first verse of the book of Job. There was a man in the land of us whose name was Job. That man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and assured evil.

Great was the testimony of this man concerning the nature and character of God towards him. Though we had many obstacles to encounter, as we well know, as we have read continually the book of Job, the description is this is still true, that that man was perfect, he was upright, in all the characteristics of his life towards his fellow men, and all his desires towards his eternal God.

[ 23:27 ] He was perfect and upright, one that feared God and assured evil. The Lord delights in anything, not only to see that grace is grace in the heart, that the soul is realizing that he's been born again by the Spirit of God and been brought into great communion with his God.

The scriptures declare, the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.

The Lord sets forth the character and the disposition of Job in these words, even to Satan. And he says, hast thou considered my servant Job?

There's none like him in all the earth, one that feared God and estueth evil. Now Job knew he was a sinful man.

Though the scriptures testify he was perfect and upright. The word perfect here means mature. Here is a man that's mature in the things of God, that no longer was he a babe in Christ.

[ 24:56 ] So many people profess salvation, but the marks of regeneration is this, that the soul grows in grace and knowledge, that the soul cries out continually to have a deeper manifestation of God's sovereign mercy in his soul.

Lord taketh pleasure. Can you understand infinite mercy, infinite compassion towards a sinner? And Job realized that though these things which were written, he was mature and upright in the things of God.

He realized how sinful he was, testifies continually throughout the book of Job. I have sinned on one occasion, he says, O thou preserver of men.

He realized he was a sinner in the sight of God. But still by grace he had that fellowship, that great fellowship with God through the precious blood of Christ.

For he declared, I know that my Redeemer liveth. He was truly afraid of God in the sense that he was a child of God quickened by the Spirit.

but there was that awareness that in spite of the sinful dispositions of his heart, the Lord spoke to him and guided him and controlled him in all the vicissitudes of life.

Because he realized this, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. for the regenerate man above all things is fearing God in everything he does as he surveys the majesty, infinity, and greatness of a sovereign, eternal God.

He's afraid. But notice, the Scriptures speak of two kinds of fear. There's a servile fear, and there's a filial fear.

the servile fear is the fear of a servant, afraid to do this, that, and the other. He's compelled, as it were, to work.

He's under the Lord of God. Servile fear, the fear of a servant. But that filial fear which Joel possessed was this.

[27:36] It was the fear of a son connected with the fatherhood of God. He was a child of God. And the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, was a filial fear.

Fear of a vital living relationship. Fear of a son of offending his father. He was mature in the things of God.

No longer was he a child. in his dispositions towards God. He'd come to that maturity of doctrine, that maturity of experience, that he grew in grace and knowledge.

I wonder where we stand with regards to our life before God. Am I still a babe in Christ? Still being fed with the milk of the word?

when the scriptures urged us to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, to grow in grace and knowledge, not to be a babe all the time, even if we are regenerate.

[ 28:58 ] Because notice how the scriptures set this forth, and the exaltations are given continually in one word or another concerning the necessity of growing in grace and knowledge.

So Peter tells us, after setting forth the glory of eternal life, and the exceeding great and precious promises given to us by the word of God, by which we are partakers of the divine nature, he says.

So having set forth the glories of an eternal world, and the work of regeneration in our hearts, he says this, beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge experience, and to experience patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

And then he says, if these things be in you, and abound, they make you. You see the effect of divine power, of the authority of God's word, if these things be in you and abound, they make you.

They make you. They shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. How many today are barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

[30:34] He says, that he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, he says, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and your salvation is fixed by an eternal decree before the foundation of the world.

But brethren, in the experiences that you possess, you are urged by the Spirit of God to give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Because if the Spirit of God dwells in you, as it must do if you are regenerate, then that nature, that new nature which you possess, will make you to abound in holiness, righteousness, and truth.

He that is born of God, says the Apostle John in his first epistle, he that is born of God, loveth righteousness. Yea, he goes this far and he says, he that is born of God, cannot commit sin.

He's got a new nature. That new nature cannot sin, the wonders of a true spiritual experience.

[32:00] So when you sin and disobey the word of God, it's the old nature, fighting the new nature. When I would do good, evil is present with us, rightly discern the word of truth.

He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness in his heart and he fest as he is born of God.

So our text says something else. It says, he walks uprightly. Then he says, he worketh righteousness.

The only man that can do it is the regenerate man. He works righteousness. It is gloriously true that we are saved by sovereign grace and infinite mercy.

By grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

[ 33:12 ] No man can work for his salvation. It's a sovereign gift from an eternal God. God. Nevertheless, the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God within him causes him to work righteousness.

For this is what he loves. This is what the new nature desires above everything else, to work righteousness. The scriptures declare that we are saved by sovereign mercy through the eternal love of God in Christ.

He's always working, this new nature, always. The work of the Spirit is so powerful within him that that spiritual thing which he loves, it decides to make operative in his own heart.

And he works righteousness within him because the Spirit of God within him causes him to work out that righteousness which is imparted to him by sovereign mercy.

Remember the experience of Abraham. I was saved by faith and now the Apostle Paul uses his experience to set for the nature of true righteousness.

[34:38] Righteousness which the believer exercises in his soul as reference to the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And so does he work that righteousness that he realizes the blessedness of that man to whom God imputed righteousness without works.

He's saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ but that which is imputed to him he desires by grace to manifest in his life the impartation of divine truth.

he seeks to walk in conformity with the holy scriptures and in this ungodly wicked world the manifestation of true righteousness in his soul is brought into evidence by his conformity to the holy will and word of God.

Truly this righteousness is exhibited not the imputed righteousness of Christ but that righteousness which is wrought in his heart and by which he seeks to walk in accordance with the will of God.

[35:52] So not only does he set forth the righteousness of a true believer in Christ so let his light so shine before men that they seeing his good works shall glorify God in him he works righteousness but then not only does he work righteousness but there's something else our text says when he says he speak out the truth in his heart.

There's one thing that should ever dominate our experience and that is the truth of holy scripture. He seeks to walk many people have many additions to a Christian's experience but when everything is said and done the true nature of godliness is this that he seeks to obey by divine grace and mercy seeks to obey the divine will of almighty God in his heart.

It speaks of the truth in his heart and each of us know each of us know individually though other people may think different each person that is regenerate knows whether he is sincere a godly person whether he is under the influence and power of the holy ghost.

This man by sovereign mercy sets forth the integrity of his spiritual nature by the actions which he does.

He speaks the truth in his heart. And that is the reason why we read the 26th psalm. Because you notice in the 26th psalm the psalmist is setting forth the integrity of his spiritual nature before God.

[ 37:51 ] Testifying by the actions of his life. That he sought to speak the truth in his heart and make it evident in his life and conversation.

So you notice in the 26th psalm what the psalmist is endeavouring to do. And he's calling upon his God to examine him. And he says these words, Judge me O Lord for I have walked in mine integrity.

Now how many of us can say this? Because the psalmist was conscious of no hypocrisy, no inconsistency in his life as he walked or sought to walk in conformity with the will of God.

Judge me O Lord for I have walked in mine integrity. I have trusted also in the Lord therefore I shall not slide.

Examine me O Lord and prove me. Try my reins and my heart. It is asking God to examine him by the providences of life that so he may be so wrought upon that he may know, that he may understand, that he may experience the integrity of his own heart.

[39:14] And thou often throughout the psalms that the psalmist said for the sincerity and the consistency of his experience before God.

So when he calls upon God to examine him by the light of his word, he says, Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes and I have walked in thy truth.

Ever before him was the mercy of God to his soul. That just as God had brought upon him an infinite love and compassion and quickened his heart in the things of God, he desired to show before men and even before God himself the integrity, the sincerity of his heart.

Because God's love was foundation of his experience. God's mercy was displayed towards him and then he tells us the effect of this experience before God.

Because grace had made a change in his life and grace had so wrought upon him that he had sought to avoid the counsels of ungodly men.

[40:34] So he says these words, I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated, he says, the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked.

Grace always makes a change in a man's life and disposition, so much so that the things which he loved before, he loves no more, even though sometimes the old man seeks to out supremacy, is called upon to mortify his members which are upon the staff, to flee from the very appearance of evil.

So this man avoided the counsels of ungodly men, he had nothing to do with the world, nothing to do with the ungodly, because he desired to have a good conscience before God, and he says, I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compassed thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Then he expresses his love to the house of God, that he desired to be instructed in the true knowledge of God, when he says, Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.

He said, anything he desired was to meet with those that feared God's holy name. He had fellowship with God, and with those that loved, and had communion with God himself.

[ 42:16 ] So here was the confession of his integrity before God. So there were the three things that he desired to do by sovereign mercy.

He walked up rightly, he worked at righteousness, and he speaketh the truth in his heart. There are many people in this world who make a confession of faith, yet it never changes their lines.

They still walk in the same way as the Lord, of whom I have told you often. Then he goes on and reveals their true character.

Many walk, inconsistent, in contradiction to the holy word of God. But this godly man, he walked up rightly, he worketh righteousness, he speaketh the truth in his heart, that's the positive aspect of a true believer in Christ.

But notice the other three things. Here we have the other side to a Christian's experience. There are certain things you are prohibited from doing, certain things that you must not do, and they are not the words of men, they are the words of God.

[43:53] And yet, when we examine the holy scriptures, sad to say, it reveals our inconsistencies, it reveals our failures.

Now notice, the first thing he says is this, he that backbitch not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.

He mustn't do these things. Now the first thing we must notice is this, that we are called upon as Christians, as believers in Christ, to separate ourselves from the world, the world, the outside influences from Christian faith.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

They're the words of the Holy Ghost. They're the words to a believer's heart. Now far short we fall of it these days, when so much time is given to leisure and pleasure and sport and other things.

[45:15] The command is this, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Many times I've examined my experience by that word.

If any man, whatever is stationed in life, whatever is character, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. We live in an ungodly world. We live in a world in which the work of Satan is diabolical and active.

Yet the believer is called to divine separation. Have no fellowship, have no fellowship, says the scripture, with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Be separate, it. But here, in the words before us, there's something else, something that's like a cancer in the church.

[46:27] Whenever there's a cancer that works in such a drastic way, it's this, the control of our tongues in this life.

Here is a sin that's so prevalent in our midst. Many times we ourselves are guilty of it unawares.

He says, he backbites it not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor. the scriptures are very solemn with regards to our speech and conversation in this world.

Let your speech be as become of the gospel of Christ. May we measure it up by that standard, that my speech should be without jesting and laughter and so on.

the scriptures declare, for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof.

[47:42] In the day of judgment, that loose expression which I uttered to a friend, that suggestion which I made to my believer, my brother in Christ, and yet it's an idle word.

It's a word that should never be uttered. And remember those solemn words, because they are testimony or that I could impress this upon my own heart and yours.

It's every idle word that men shall speak. They shall give account thereof. In the day of judgment. Because Paul in the epistle to Timothy says these words, there are many going about to say this, who are tattlers, who are busybodies, who are saying things that they should not say.

And the question arises in our Christian experience, to avoid the very appearance of evil with regards to our speech and our conversation and our language.

For we must realize that we cannot control our tongues by ourselves. No man. He hasn't got the power, he hasn't got the ability of himself to control his tongue.

[49:06] But notice what the epistle to James declares to us in the third chapter when he says these words, even so the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things.

Behold, he says, how great a matter, a little fire kindler. What destruction a little fire has caused.

And so the tongue, the tongue when it's spoken incorrectly, has wrought churches and chapels into two. there's been a great destruction in the church.

Because we cannot control our tongues. So we say, the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body.

Set it on fire, the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. What a power the tongue has, little member, but it boasts of great things.

[50:19] So he goes on, he says, the inconsistency of the tongue. And he says, these words concerning the tongue. Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom.

If you desire by grace to display the nature of true godliness, of true honesty with the word of God, then be careful of your conversation, be careful of your language, speak more the language of Zion than the work of your natural nature.

So he sets it forth, and he says, that if a man possesses true wisdom, and that by sovereign mercy can control his tongue, he says, that the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

And the fruit of righteousness is sold in peace of them that make peace. Here is the negative side of a Christian's experience.

He backbites it not with his tongue, there's no malice in his nature, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.

[51:54] Here, then, are the marks of true godliness in the life of a true believer in Christ, that by sovereign mercy, he seeks to abide in the tabernacle of God and dwell in his holy hill.

Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. So, he replies to the question in the remainder of the words of the chapter and sets forth what a godly man does in his life.

He's still asking the question. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

One of the most blessed experiences, as the believer comes to the tabernacle of God or to the house of God, he comes with a conscience void of offense towards God and man, and by sovereign mercy, seeks to conform his life to the testimony of what is laid down in this 15th chapter.

And by grace, it is surprising what grace has done, as we've sought to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, to lift up our voice for understanding, and the cry of our hearts is, open thou our eyes, that we might behold wondrous things out of thy words.

[53:30] So I trust the Lord will give us grace to meditate upon this first verse of the 15th chapter. Thus we confer, or compare, the natural ungodly nature of our unregenerate man when he questions the existence of God in the previous verse which we read.

For it says, the fool hath said in his heart there is no God. When the believer comes in the description of the 15th chapter, in the 15th Psalm, he realized that the Lord God Almighty is the very center of his experience, and he desires above all things to worship him in the beauty of holiness.

