

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

### CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS

James 4:8 "Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts . . ."

"The proverb 'cleanliness is next to godliness' expresses the idea that those who are pure and wholesome are close to God. When the proverb was put forward, in the 17th century, cleanliness (or clenlynesse or cleanlines as it was spelled then) referred to both moral purity and to personal hygiene." (Some attribute this proverb to John Wesley)

James, in verse 8 continues to discuss the tension that exists for the Christian between living in the sinful world, undergoing temptations from it and the Devil himself; and, living their life in accord with God's will and to His glory. James says in verse 8 you need the cleansing of your hands and your heart purified.

Ephesians 5:26-27 says this has happened in your life through your baptism, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

You having been washed, cleansed, purified is discussed in Titus 3:4-7, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The writer to the Hebrews parallels James who wrote in James 4:8, "draw near to God" with these words in Hebrews 10:22-24, ". . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Through your baptism, the Holy Spirit created faith in your heart in your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to draw you to your heavenly Father to receive His forgiveness of your sins by the purifying cleansing of your sins through Jesus' shed blood. "Though your sins are as scarlet He makes them whiter than snow." (Isaiah 1:18)

Prayer: Holy Spirit, draw me to my heavenly Father through the redeeming work of Jesus, my Lord and Savior. In His holy name. Amen.

There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day;  
And there have I, as vile as he, Washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply  
Redeeming love has been my theme And shall be till I die.

When this poor lispng, stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave,  
Then in a nobler, sweeter song I'll sing Thy power to save.  
(TLH 157)