

**From the Altar to Glory: The Brazen Laver: Washed for the Work
A Spirit-Filled Journey Through the Temple Sanctuary**

Dr. John Carmichael

[Exo 30:17-21 NASB95] 17 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. 19 "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; 20 when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire [sacrifice] to the LORD. 21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."

- In the tabernacle, before the priest could move into the Holy Place, before he could handle the bread, tend the lampstand, or offer incense, he had to stop at the laver.
- He had already been to the altar. Blood had already been shed. Sacrifice had already been made. The issue of atonement had already been addressed. But God did not only require sacrifice. He required washing.
- That tells us something very important: forgiveness brings us near, but cleansing prepares us to serve.
- The altar dealt with guilt. The laver dealt with daily defilement. The altar speaks of justification. The laver speaks of sanctification. The altar says, "You are forgiven."
- The laver says, "Now let Me wash what you picked up along the way."
- And this is where many believers struggle. They know they are forgiven, but they still carry shame. They know Jesus saved them, but they are still wrestling with old habits, hidden compromises, private battles, and unrenewed thinking.
- But the message of the laver is not, "You are too dirty for God." The message of the laver is, "You are too called to stay dirty."
- God has work for you. God has oil for you. God has purpose for you. God has ministry for you. God has authority for you. God has fresh assignment for you.
- But before the priest stepped into sacred service, he had to be washed.
- And today, God is not condemning His people. He is cleansing His people. He is not pushing us away. He is preparing us to come closer.

How does God cleanse His people so they can serve Him with clean hands, a surrendered heart, and Spirit-empowered confidence?

To understand the laver, we need to see that God's cleansing is not rejection, punishment, or religious bondage. It is an act of love. It is the Father preparing His sons and daughters for holy service, greater intimacy, and fresh anointing.

I. The Laver Shows Us That Forgiveness People Still Need Daily Washing

- a. **[Exo 30:17-21 NASB95] 17 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. 19 "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; 20 when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire [sacrifice] to the LORD. 21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."**

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- b. The priests were commanded to wash their hands and feet at the laver before entering the tent of meeting or approaching the altar to minister.
- c. The priests had already encountered blood at the altar, but they still had to wash at the laver. This is important. The laver was not for strangers. It was not placed outside the gate for outsiders. It was in the courtyard for priests.
- d. This is one of the most liberating truths in the Christian life: cleansing does not mean you were never saved; cleansing means you are still being sanctified.
- e. Some people think, "If I still need washing, maybe I am not really forgiven." No. The priest was already accepted through sacrifice, but his hands and feet still needed washing because he was walking through a dusty world.
- f. That is still true for us.
- g. You can be genuinely saved and still need your mind renewed. You can be sincerely called and still need your motives purified. You can be powerfully gifted and still need your heart surrendered. You can love Jesus and still need daily cleansing from attitudes, reactions, temptations, and wounds.
- h. The laver reminds us that sanctification is not God saying, "I am ashamed of you." Sanctification is God saying, "I am committed to finishing what I started in you."
- i. **[1Jo 1:8-9 NASB95] 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- j. Notice the promise is twofold: He forgives and He cleanses. Forgiveness removes the guilt. Cleansing removes the residue. Forgiveness deals with your standing. Cleansing deals with your walk. Forgiveness restores relationship. Cleansing restores readiness.
- k. We do not approach the laver as condemned sinners trying to earn acceptance. We approach the laver as blood-bought believers who believe God's Word about who we are. We are not trying to become righteous by our own works. In Christ, we have been made righteous. Now the Holy Spirit teaches us how to walk out what Jesus has already worked in.
- l. Every day, let the Lord wash your hands and feet. Before you serve, before you lead, before you speak, before you post, before you counsel, before you minister, before you make a major decision, pray: "Lord, wash my hands. Wash my motives. Wash my words. Wash my reactions. Wash my thoughts. I am Yours today."
- m. This is not religious fear. This is daily surrender. Declaration: "I am forgiven by the blood, and I am being cleansed by the Word and the Spirit. I do not live under condemnation. I live under consecration."

II. The Laver Shows Us That God Wants Clean Hands and a Pure Heart

- a. **[Psa 24:3-4 NASB95] 3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.**
- b. Psalm 24 asks a powerful question: Who can ascend? Who can stand? Who can come near?
- c. The answer is not merely talented hands. It is clean hands. Not merely a gifted heart. A pure heart.
- d. This matters deeply in our generation because we live in a time when visibility is often valued more than purity. People want influence, but God wants integrity. People want a platform, but God wants consecration. People want power, but God wants purity.
- e. Holiness is not supposed to produce shame. Holiness is supposed to produce freedom.

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- f. Biblical holiness is not God crushing your joy. It is God removing what contaminates your joy. Holiness is not less life. Holiness is higher life. Holiness is not bondage. Holiness is freedom from bondage. Holiness is not dead religion. Holiness is Spirit-empowered wholeness.
- g. The laver teaches us that God cares about what touches the work and what carries the walk. The priests washed their hands and their feet. Hands represent what we do. Feet represent where we go.
- h. God wants to cleanse our actions and our direction. He wants clean hands: what I touch, what I handle, what I do, what I practice. He wants clean feet: where I walk, what paths I take, what environments I entertain, what direction my life is moving.
- i. **[2Ti 2:20-21 NASB95] 20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these [things,] he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.**
- j. That is encouraging. God is not just calling us away from something. He is preparing us for something. He is preparing us for every good work.
- k. I am not fighting for victory over sin from a place of defeat. I am standing in the victory Jesus already won. I am not trying to become a vessel of honor through striving. I am yielding to the Holy Spirit, who makes me useful to the Master.
- l. Application: Ask the Holy Spirit to put His finger on anything that is touching your hands or directing your feet.
- m. Questions to ask in prayer: “Lord, is there anything I am doing that is dulling my sensitivity to You?” “Is there anywhere I am going emotionally, mentally, relationally, or spiritually that is pulling me away from Your presence?” “Is there anything I have normalized that You are asking me to surrender?”
- n. This is not about paranoia. This is about partnership with the Holy Spirit.
- o. Declaration: “My hands are clean. My heart is surrendered. My feet are directed by the Lord. I am a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful to the Master.”

III. The Laver Points Us to the Washing of the Word

- a. **[Eph 5:25-27 NASB95] 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.**
- b. The laver was filled with water, and Paul tells us that Jesus cleanses His church by the washing of water with the Word.
- c. This is why the Word of God is not optional for believers. The Word does not merely inform us. The Word washes us.
- d. The Word washes our thinking. The Word washes our identity. The Word washes our imagination. The Word washes our expectations. The Word washes our desires. The Word washes our confession.
- e. Many believers are trying to live clean while feeding on contaminated voices.
- f. You cannot constantly consume fear and walk in faith. You cannot constantly consume lust and walk in purity. You cannot constantly consume offense and walk in love. You cannot constantly consume doubt and walk in confidence. You cannot constantly consume the world’s narrative and walk in kingdom authority.

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- g. The laver tells us that priests must be washed before they minister. Today, one of the primary ways God washes us is through His Word.
- h. **[Jhn 15:3 NASB95] 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**
- i. Jesus said His Word has cleansing power.
- j. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. The more the Word washes me, the more faith rises in me. I cannot speak victory if I am meditating on defeat. I cannot walk in purity if I am rehearsing shame. I must let the Word of God become the dominant voice in my inner life.
- k. Application: Create a daily "laver moment" with the Word. Before the day gets loud, let the Word wash you. Read a passage. Speak it aloud. Personalize it. Declare it. Pray it.
- l. Do not just read the Word to gather information. Stand at the laver and let the Word wash you.
- m. Declaration: "The Word of God is washing my mind, cleansing my heart, strengthening my faith, and preparing me for the work of the Lord."

IV. The Laver Points Us to the Renewing Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. **[Tit 3:5 NASB95] 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,**
- b. The laver does not only point to the cleansing of the Word. It also points to the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. This is where the Pentecostal message becomes very important.
- c. Holiness is not human willpower dressed in religious language. Holiness is not personality modification. Holiness is not behavior management. Holiness is the Holy Spirit transforming us from the inside out.
- d. The Spirit does not merely empower us to shout, dance, prophesy, speak in tongues, or lay hands on the sick. The Spirit also empowers us to live clean.
- e. He gives us power for witness, but He also gives us power for purity. He gives boldness, but He also gives self-control. He gives gifts, but He also produces fruit. He gives utterance, but He also forms character. He gives anointing, but He also leads us into holiness.
- f. This is why Pentecostal holiness must never become cold legalism. We are not preaching rules without relationship. We are preaching Spirit-empowered transformation.
- g. **[Gal 5:16 NASB95] 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**
- h. That is a promise. The Spirit gives us a new way to walk. The Christian life is not merely "try harder." The Christian life is "yield deeper."
- i. The answer is not, "I will fix myself." The answer is, "Holy Spirit, fill me, lead me, strengthen me, and renew me."
- j. I am not powerless against temptation. The Greater One lives in me. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in me. I have resurrection power working in my inner man. I can walk in victory because the Holy Spirit empowers my obedience.
- k. When you face temptation, do not only resist with willpower. Respond with surrender.
- l. Declaration: "The Holy Spirit is renewing me. I am not bound to old cycles. I walk by the Spirit, and I live in victory."

V. The Laver Shows Us That Jesus Cleanses Us for Intimacy and Assignment

- a. **[Jhn 13:5-10 NASB95] 5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 So**

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He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." 8 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, [then wash] not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." 10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all [of you.]"

- b. This is one of the most beautiful New Testament pictures of the laver. Jesus, the Lord and Master, gets down and washes feet.
- c. This shows us the heart of God. Jesus does not cleanse us harshly. He cleanses us lovingly. He does not humiliate us. He humbles Himself to restore us.
- d. Peter did not understand it at first. He said, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"
- e. That is still hard for some believers to receive.
- f. Jesus is not afraid of the place that needs washing. He does not cleanse you to embarrass you. He cleanses you to bring you into deeper fellowship.
- g. He told Peter, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." This was not rejection. It was invitation.
- h. Jesus was saying, "Peter, let Me serve you. Let Me cleanse you. Let Me deal with what you cannot fix on your own."
- i. Then Jesus said something very important: "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet."
- j. That is the laver.
- k. In Christ, you are already His. You are already redeemed. You are already accepted. You are already loved. But as you walk through this world, your feet pick up dust.
- l. Daily surrender allows Jesus to wash the dust away.
- m. **[Heb 10:22 NASB95] 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**
- n. Notice the tone: full assurance of faith. Cleansing does not make us draw back in fear. Cleansing allows us to draw near with confidence.
- o. I do not run from God when I need cleansing. I run to God because He is my cleanser. Shame says, "Hide." Faith says, "Draw near." Condemnation says, "You are disqualified." Grace says, "Let Jesus wash you and keep walking."
- p. Application: Do not let shame keep you away from the laver.
- q. When the Holy Spirit convicts you, respond quickly. Do not argue. Do not hide. Do not make excuses. Do not rehearse condemnation. Just surrender.
- r. Declaration: "I draw near with full assurance of faith. Jesus is not ashamed to cleanse me. I am washed, restored, and ready for the work."

VI. The Laver Prepares Clean Vessels for Fresh Oil

- a. **[2Ti 2:21 NASB95] 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these [things,] he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.**
- b. God is raising up clean vessels for fresh oil.
- c. Not perfect vessels in the sense of never needing growth. Clean vessels. Surrendered vessels. Available vessels. Consecrated vessels. Vessels that say, "Lord, I belong to You."
- d. In the tabernacle, the laver came before the priest entered the Holy Place. That means washing preceded deeper ministry.

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- e. After the laver came the Holy Place: the table of bread, the lampstand, the altar of incense. Provision, illumination, intercession.
 - f. But the priest could not bypass the laver. Likewise, the church cannot bypass consecration and expect sustained glory.
 - g. We need gifts, but we also need grounding. We need power, but we also need purity. We need anointing, but we also need alignment. We need fire, but we also need clean vessels to carry it.
 - h. This message is deeply relevant for modern Pentecostals. We have often celebrated the gifts of the Spirit, and we should. We believe in prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles, deliverance, and the manifest presence of God.
 - i. But the same Spirit who gives gifts also produces fruit. The Spirit of power is also the Spirit of holiness.
 - j. [1Th 5:23 NASB95] 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - k. God wants the whole person: spirit, soul, and body. Not just your Sunday voice. Not just your public ministry. Not just your visible gift. Not just your church activity.
 - l. He wants your spirit, soul, and body surrendered to Him.
 - m. I am not a dirty vessel trying to convince God to use me. I am a blood-bought vessel being cleansed, filled, and prepared by the Holy Spirit. I expect fresh oil because I am yielding fresh surrender.
 - n. Application: Make a fresh consecration of your whole life: Your eyes. Your ears. Your mouth. Your hands. Your relationships. Your schedule. Your finances. Your private life. Your ministry. Your calling. Your future.
 - o. Declaration: "I am a clean vessel for fresh oil. I am sanctified, useful to the Master, and prepared for every good work."
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- **The same God who forgives us at the altar cleanses us at the laver so we can serve Him with clean hands and a surrendered heart.**
 - We begin at the altar because everything starts with the blood. There is no access without sacrifice. There is no forgiveness without blood. There is no approach to God without the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - But after the altar comes the laver. And the laver tells us that the God who forgives also cleanses.