

Holiness

We live in a filthy world, breaking apart at the seams. The early church had such a standard of holiness, those not born again, “dared not join them” (Acts 5 : 13). The call of holiness in today’s church has been suppressed by the blessing, quick-fix gospel. Read Oswald Chambers, Watchman Nee, Norman Grubb, A.W. Tozer, Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis and you will begin to desire to be holy. You will see that 1 Peter 1 : 15 -16 and Matthew 5 : 48 are not impossibilities, but glorious Him possibilities.

Explanation of Holiness

The holiness of God is the essence of ethics, and permeates all His other attributes. This essential prosperity of God demands that sin be dealt with. Our sin saturated minds cannot grasp the pure crystal stream of God’s holiness : it is foreign to human nature at even it’s best and most exalted. Confronted with the Holy One man can only tremble, and be silent as Isaiah’s awesome, prostrating vision. Holiness means ‘to be well’ and ‘to be whole’ in the Anglo-Saxon language and we need to start here in attempting a definition. That happy state is reserved for those who know God’s righteousness DEMANDED the Cross and His love PROVIDED the Cross. Righteousness, God’s self-preserving attribute was the sentinel or guard. Love, God’s self imparting attribute was the guide. Holiness = Righteousness + Love + Glory. We are to obtain glory said Paul to the Thessalonian church. God’s holiness begins by impartation through the blood of the Lamb to the humble and honest heart. The seed of sanctification begins at the new birth as we are separated from the guilt of sin. The Cross of Calvary then must do a work to deliver us from the power of indwelling sin. When Jesus returns we are transported from the presence of sin. Holiness will be the great theme of the millennium age! (See Zechariah 14 and Isaiah 35). So we need to desire holiness now more than life itself, to be prepared for the ages to come.

Essentially, holiness is the character of Jesus as revealed in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We begin to partake of this divine nature after the new birth. He is looking for the fruit of holiness and will return for a Bride without spot or wrinkle.

1. Holiness is commanded. (*Leviticus 19 : 2*)

Peter amplifies the O.T. injunction by saying “in all manner of living” – be holy (1 Peter 1 : 15). Paul links holiness with glory in **2 Corinthians 3 : 18** (RV version) :

*“But we all with unveiled face,
reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,
are TRANSFORMED into the same image
from GLORY to GLORY even as from
the Lord the Spirit.”*

Paul also warns the Corinthian church of God’s judgement if holiness is not pursued. 1 Corinthians 3 : 16 – 17 needs to be memorised because the word hidden in our hearts will sanctify our memory. We are the new covenant

sanctuary of God in our spirits. When David placed the Levites around the ark of the covenant to worship for 36 years there was an open heaven. His tabernacle had no division between holy place and holy of holies. God does not want a wall between your soul and your spirit. The soul should be a pure vehicle for God's life to come through your spirit and influence your world. We are God's temple and any attempt to defile or destroy it inevitably leads to the wrath of God unless we repent.

2. **Holiness commends Jesus in the World**

We are the salt of the earth and light in the world. We must mirror Jesus Christ and power only comes through a clean vessel. It's our life that speaks to others, not so much our words. People are moved by radiations more than exhortations. I knew a holy Bible teacher who through a smile and a simple handshake could impart a holy anointing that blessed your soul. John 17 : 15 says we are in the world, implicated in it's trade, discussion, politics, education, work and so on, but we are insulated from the spirit of the age behind the world system. When we sin we ever feel our need in this life of the daily cleansing of 1 John 1 : 7 – 9.

3. **Holiness is communicated through the Son of God**

Luke 1 : 35 describes the holiness of the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ. His holiness comes to us through redemption and Pentecost. Galatians 4 : 6 wonderfully exclaims :

*“And because you are sons, God sent forth
the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,
crying, ‘Abba, Father’.”*

The degree of our salvation is the degree we see Jesus. We progress through discipleship and obedience from forgiven sinners to free sons!

FORGIVEN	SINNERS
FOLLOWING	SERVANTS
FELLOWSHIPPING	SAINTS
FREED	SONS

Experiencing sonship is evidence of maturity. You can be prominent in your church, but a lightweight. Are you significant because you want holiness more than anything else? The degree of real success in leadership is not because we follow the right strategy or have the right church structure, but **HOLINESS!** Is Jesus having His way with us? Are you living as a freed son?

THE EXPERIENCE OF HOLINESS

Reading : ISAIAH 6 : 1 – 8

A real vision humbles you. The counterfeit vision exalts you and leaves you with a smug feeling of pride. Ezekiel and Daniel were debilitated by the honour of beholding the glory of God. Isaiah received the awesome prostrating vision which brought the impact of conviction, **“woe is me, I am undone!”** Undone equals dumb in the Hebrew. He was frozen in the mouth. When revival is impending, the saints speak a lot less and tend to whisper. Once a word is spoken it can never be retrieved – our words are in the ether. The concentration of sin was on Isaiah’s tongue. His wrong speech was cleansed by the fire of the living coal. The holy experience of glory elevated Isaiah from seventeen years as a local pastor to becoming an international prophet. Isaiah 6 was his Acts 2 experience – a sanctification by fire which brought him to hear divine intercourse. God trusts the holy man or woman with His inheritance. Obadiah 17 reveals the divine order :- deliverance, holiness and inheritance. In past generations, deliverance did not need to be emphasised because society still had moral foundations. Since 1950, deliverance has become an essential precursor to real holiness. The experience of having demons cast out from our lives quickens the hunger for holiness. Many believers think the new birth alone makes them holy and delivered, but experience and a close look at God’s work tells another story. The difference between justification, and sanctification can be seen in this summary chart :

JUSTIFICATION

1. COMPLETED
2. IMPUTED (put to my account)
3. DONE FOR US
4. GOOD WORKS EXCLUDED
5. OBJECTIVE – in Him (position in Christ)
6. BY DECLARATION OF THE FATHER
7. FORGIVENESS – GUILT OF SIN REMOVED

SANCTIFICATION

- CONTINUAL
- IMPARTED
- DONE IN US
- GOOD WORKS ESSENTIAL
- SUBJECTIVE - condition through Christ
- BY OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT
- FREEDOM – grip of sin broken

The experience of holiness is IMPARTED so the powerful grip of sin is broken. This must not be confused with sinless perfectionism, but a state of abiding, where we need not sin, becomes our privilege. My life is only what the Holy Spirit makes it.

Isaiah had to see the ascended Lord surrounded by the burning, incandescent ones who cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Leaders of throne worship, the seraphim, were also guardians of His holiness by fire. He saw a bright heaven in the year King Uzziah died. There may be calamity on earth, but there is always consolation in heaven when the eyes of our heart are flooded with light. In the year, when my husband committed adultery; in the year we went bankrupt; in the year the floods took away your house; in the year I lost my job – heaven's holy resources are still available for you! God orders catastrophe that we may receive a deeper revelation of Himself, of ourself, and a lost world! He will bring us to the place again and again where we know that human life cannot live the Christian life, so that we may experience holiness.

ENTRANCE TO HOLINESS

Reading : ROMANS 6 : 1 – 8 : 17

This logical sequence contains the keys to entering in. The holiness principle is found in Romans 6 : 14.

***"For sin shall not have dominion over you (Romans 6),
for you are not under law (Romans 7) but under grace." (Romans 8)***

The link between sin and law is found in 1 Corinthians 15 : 56, "***the strength of sin is the law.***" The law showed our guilt before the new birth in Romans 3. The law shows our helplessness and hopelessness after the new birth in Romans 7. The great truths of Romans 6 and 7 must be "obeyed from the heart". The word "form of doctrine" in 6 : 17 means the imprint of doctrine. The word for "form" is the same as the imprint of the nails on His hands! If God is going to brand "HOLINESS" into our spirits, the Roman letter, vital to our understanding must be meditated upon again and again.

Let every distress, trial, temptation, defeat and disappointment drive you to the place of allowing the light from the Cross to show you how God sees it all. He will use these things to break from us the self - delusion that thinks we can live the Christian life by our own ability. The law in Romans 7 helps us to come to the end of ourselves. Moses in Midian knew it, and so did Jacob with Laban, which is perhaps the clearest picture of the breaking of a believer. We are meant to feel our INABILITY, and the blessed schizophrenia of Romans 7 : 14 – 18. The new man is trying to do good, but messing up and missing out on the resurrection life of the Spirit....this is the carnal man. In Romans 6 we have the picture of the natural man or Satan in us, as the spirit of disobedience doing evil. Remember Jesus to the unregenerate disciples in Luke 11 : 13.....

***"If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts
to your children...."***

In Romans 8 we see the spiritual man, the new man succeeding in the power of the law of the Spirit of life.

Just before that wonderful release we reach the great despair of Romans 7 : 24 **“O, wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”** The temporary uprising of the dominion of sin was allowed by God to stop from our self-reliant self that keeps acting in independence of God. The law in Romans 7 accelerates the sinfulness of sin and it’s antagonism to God within the new creation believer. Most of God's children do not go through Romans 6 and 7 because some form of covetousness (7 : 7) still reigns. “What’s in it for me?” questions Peter in Matthew 19 : 27. So it is today. To the believer dead to sin, and dead to the law, the law can no longer say “You shall” or “You shall not”. We have passed into a new sphere, in Christ Jesus, where we contain, as a vessel, the precious treasure of the life that God lives. The condition is to choose to be slaves of righteousness by departing from every known sin. This becomes an easy yoke for those who have seen their funeral nailed to the tree with their crucified Lord! (See Romans 6 : 6). This co-crucifixion with Christ is the basis of victory over self and demons. Preaching must revive this truth, so clearly seen in Galatians 2 : 20 (a).

**“I (the old self) *have been crucified with Christ,*
nevertheless I (the new self) live, yet not I, (self - assertive self)
but Christ lives in me (the liberated personality of the new creation.)”**

We placard our horizon with “Not I but Christ” and enter the holy life of the Spirit. Legalistic holiness centres on TRY HARDER in :

GIVING	READING BIBLE
PRAYING	SERVING
SUBMITTING	TITHING
WITNESSING	GOING TO MEETINGS
etc, etc.	

The Cross in my life for God stops all that nonsense and causes me to know the leading of the Lord in all matters. The big secret of Jesus was that the Father LIVED IN HIM. (See John 14 : 10). Now CHRIST LIVES IN ME. I don’t have to come apart at the seams. Only Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit can do the Sermon on the Mount. As we die daily to self, He in us can live righteously through our thoughts, emotions, actions and even motives. This holiness is the Christian’s vital desire.

EXORTATION TO HOLINESS

Reading : 2 CORINTHIANS 6 : 11 - 7 : 1

Holiness teaching is never external law threatening you with “you shall” and “you shall not”, but internally received truth that convicts and comforts. Truth must hurt before it heals, and it hurts by being applied to the heart. The Corinthian heart was restricted (v.12) by the kind of city they had grown up in. We are conditioned by the preconceptions of our past, culturally, environmentally. Corinth was a tourist and

trade city with much sexual licence. Aphrodite, the goddess of erotic sex, desired her male and female prostitutes to make love in front of her massive naked statue. This would excite her to have sex with other gods and confer blessing upon the copulators. Paul, who lived in great strictness even before his conversion, was called to Corinth! As an apostle! Not a calling he would naturally have chosen. So he speaks often to the church about holiness. Verses 14 to 16 emphasise the difference between the redeemed community and the seething world of the heathen.

An idol is anything we draw strength from apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Corinth was full of idols, and demonic power. That's why Paul forbade meat to be sacrificed to idols, because the average Corinthian gave meat to Aphrodite, Apollos and Zeus in order to receive the demonic 'blessings'! Paul was drawing a line between :

BELIEVERS	UNBELIEVERS
LIGHT	DARKNESS
CHRIST	BELIAL
TEMPLE OF GOD	IDOLS
CUP OF THE LORD	CUP OF DEMONS
	(1 Corinthians 10 : 21)

Young believers at Corinth were under a great temptation to be lured back to the world value of promiscuity and idolatry. The way of escape in 1 Corinthians 10 : 13 is the way of the Cross. To die daily, to deny self, to reckon oneself to be dead to sin so that the power of Cross - death could be a present, living reality in them.

The Father welcomes saints who desire the separation of holiness. Are you desperate for real change? Is the Word of God governing your life, your attitudes and motives? Are you washed in the blood of Jesus to the extent you are ANOINTED to see your home town and the streets you live in AS JESUS SEES? Do we have meaningful fellowship with other believers? Is prayer an adventure? How do we value one human soul? Is that unsaved soul more precious than owning all the world? (See Matthew 16 : 26).

WASH yourself with HOLY BLOOD! Are you sick of yourself? Sick of the world's values? Tired and sick of a Christianity that has no heart for holiness?

We need FIRE for our lips, the CROSS of CHRIST for our self - life and the BLOOD of the LAMB to cleanse us from the defilement of the world. It's the only way we keep our eyes on Jesus. Do you remember your first time out in a car? You must keep your eye on the road. If you look at people walking or shop windows you will veer over to what you are looking at. If our gaze is on the things of the earth we will become worldly, and deny the precious birthright of being born again. So, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean. In our culture that is TV - and then receive the promise :

***“ I WILL RECEIVE YOU
I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU
AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS.”***

Holiness is the highway to practical sonship. Without holiness we shall not see the Lord. Plead with God for holiness like the saints of old –

“ Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be by your grace.” Then our Christian lives will spontaneously reflect the image (the inner branding) of the Lord Himself, and people will be drawn to God as Jesus is lifted up through you and me, from WITHIN YOU AND ME. (See Romans 8 : 9, Colossians 1 : 27). NOW we can LIVE A LIFE WORTH CHRIST DYING FOR!

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