

The Ingredients: Holiness - 1 Peter 3:16-18 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

A few years back one of the popular youth group songs proclaimed, “Holiness is what I long for, holiness is what I need, holiness is what You most want from me. So take my heart and form it, take my mind and transform it, take my will conform it, to Yours, to Yours, Oh Lord.” It was a good song, maybe one we should sing again, yet, I often wondered if the kids were actually grasping the lyrics they were singing out. For many of us, the mention of the idea of holiness brings to mind women in long dresses and hair up in a bun, ditching our rock and roll music, and judgmental Christians. You can see why singing a song like this might be a little bit difficult. It’s also difficult to preach on this topic without sounding like one of those crazy moralistic preachers.

Add to this our effort to make sure the Gospel is at the center with our focus being on Jesus and the truth that we are forgiven, that our acceptance before God is never based on our performance. Talking about holiness sure sounds like a message that proclaims that God loves the good people. Yet, you cannot read any part of the Bible without interacting with the idea of holiness and God’s call to His people that He has chosen them and separated them to be a holy people. Holiness is an necessary ingredient for any person or people who desire to authentically follow Jesus as disciples. In fact, holiness is much like the chocolate cookies in our cookie recipes, they are the ingredient that both defines the nature of the cookie and the key ingredient that gives the cookie its flavor. The truth is that we can mix the other ingredients into our discipleship, but if an understanding and pursuit of holiness is not part of our faith the result is something other than discipleship. Yet, we also need to be careful here, because what we call holiness is so much more than a set of ethics and morals.

In both the Old and New Testament the original language words translated as “holy” have as their basic meaning to be separate, different, other. In the Old Testament the root word comes from the word for knife, or cut, and comes with the connotation of something that is cut away, and therefore separated from the other part. Yet, the word holy is not first applied to people, but is first and most often a defining characteristic of God Himself. God is holy. And He is not just holy, but several times in the Scriptures we are told that God is “holy, holy, holy.” (See Isaiah 6). We are never told that God is “love, love, love,” or “just, just, just.” But the Bible does declare that right now in the heavens there are angels crying out in worship that God is, “Holy, holy, holy.” This is so important, because the first thing we must understand to make sense of God, ourselves, and the world around us is that God is separate, He is different, He is other. God is God, we are not. There is separation, distinctiveness between God and us, and furthermore between God and everything He has made. God is not in any way mixed in to Creation, rather He is sovereign over all that He has made. But we are also told that God is holy in a distinctly ethical way, He is perfect in all His attributes. God is perfect in His love, His justice, His righteousness, His faithfulness, His glory. God is holy! This is both the best and worst possible news for sinful people. We need His holiness because this is the basis of His being able to save and worthy of our trust. Yet, the glory of His holiness would consume us if we were to actually see His face. The holiness of God should leave us in awe, trembling as we are both drawn to Him and in danger of being consumed by Him. Yet, the holiness of God is put on full display in the beautiful sinless perfection of Jesus, the only true and perfectly holy person. And it is in the holiness of Jesus that we too can be transformed.

It is this holy God who then chooses people, sets them apart for Himself, and calls them to live as a holy people. To be holy is to be separated, different, other. Different from our old selves and different from the world around us. So we could see an example of this,

in the Old Testament God would take ordinary objects and have them set apart, or made holy, for His worship in the Temple. An ordinary candlestick became holy when it was consecrated for God. This is us. A disciple is an ordinary sinful human who heard the call of the Gospel and in His grace God saved them through the blood of Jesus. God cleansed us from our sin and set us apart for His purpose. If you are a follower of Jesus, in one sense, you are already holy. And the promise is that one day you will be fully holy, that God will remove the taint of our sin. Yet, the call in this life is to pursue Jesus in a way that we are day by day becoming more like Him. Our ethics, sexuality, politics, values, humility, justice, love for neighbor (I could go on) are being shaped by the holiness of Jesus who has made us holy, is making us holy, and will one day completely make us holy. Holiness matters, it is the flavor of discipleship. This is a flavor that when people in our culture taste it in us will both repel and draw them to Jesus. Holiness is what I need, it needs to be what I long for, and it is what God desires to see in my. And as the song says, the path to holiness is through repentance and submitting my heart, my mind, my will, all of me to Christ. He has set me apart for His purpose, I am a holy vessel given over for His use and glory.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 98	Psalm 99	Psalm 100	Psalm 101	Psalm 102	Psalm 103	Psalm 104

Reading from this past week: 1 Peter 3:16-18
 Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday:

Family Worship

Song - *Christ Our Hope in Life and Death*

<https://youtu.be/Oibli1rz7mw?si=7P29lj-w9mCtelE>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Church is Opposed
 Story: Peter performed miracles
 Big Picture Question: What is the church?
 Answer: The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.
 Scripture: Acts 9

New City Catechism

Question15: Since no one can keep the Law, what is its purpose?
 Answer: That we may know the holy nature of God, and the sinful nature of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior.
 Verse: Romans 3:20

Scripture

1 Peter 3:16-18

- Define the word “holy”. What does this word mean? What does it mean when the Bible says God is holy? What does it mean for us to be holy?
- Why is holiness a hard thing for us to talk about in our culture?
- What is the difference between Gospel holiness and religious holiness?
- How do we pursue and strive for holiness in life?

Prayer

*Pray that we would grow in our holiness as God’s people.
 *Pray for Travis Dierker and our ministry for teenagers.