

Holiness Movement - Time to be Holy

by Lieut. Colonel Richard Munn

1 Peter 1:10-16

The passage in I Peter 1 - "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." - is authoritative scripture on the holiness of God. It is a statement declared early in the Old Testament and reiterated in the New Testament.



The way Peter uses it follows a description of the all the prophets pointing to Christ as the fulfilment of this holiness, and he then points that line to us - the readers. These prophets 'were not serving themselves but you...even angels long to look into these things.

The holiness of God is the central attribute of His nature. It is the attribute around which, and from which, and through which all other attributes radiate.

"Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard." (AW Tozer)

The recognition of God's holiness by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stood in startling contrast with surrounding religions and deities. The moral purity, ethical virtue, integrity, and honour of Yahweh stood Him apart from the multiple petty, sensual, aggressive, immoral, unreliable deities that the pagan religions revelled in.

The early lesson was simple: "The Lord your God is one God." Immediately there were communicated central lessons in the concept of holiness: complete unity, purity and the idea of separation from evil.





Holiness describes the majesty of God, and the purity and moral perfection of his nature. We serve and worship a holy God. 'Holy, holy, holy,' was the vision of young Isaiah in the temple and 'Holy, holy, holy' is the worship of the elders around the throne.

God is utterly separate from everything else, He is perfectly united in essence and action and He is completely pure. Holiness is the absolute absence of any evil in Him.

And that is very good news for you and me, because, it means that the actions of God to us are always perfect and just.

It is good news because the principle that we become more and more like the object of our devotion and worship means that as we worship holy God, we have the propensity to become holy ourselves - whole, clean, absent from evil, people of integrity and honour and ethically strong.

Holiness expressed in a person connects us with the very heart of God. It is an indispensable prerequisite for every believer. Peter is so emphatic about this he makes a major change in the language and becomes imperative. He suddenly up's the ante.

We see that in our scripture reading: "Be holy, because I am holy."

The Salvation Army says it this way: "We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified (made holy)..."

Isn't this breathtaking and dynamic stuff!? It's breathtaking because it includes you and me! It's dynamic because the potential is unlimited. The horizon is expansive. The energy is explosive.



The Holy Spirit - the agent of holiness - is also called the 'comforter.' We need to understand it in a vigorous way. Literally, it means 'with strength.' So we are promised that the 'strengtheners' will be with us.



The Peter text captures the vigour. "Prepare your minds for action." I love the King James: "Gird up the loins of your mind." The figure is that of man gathering the folds of his long garment and tucking it into the folds of his belt so he can move freely and quickly. We would say today, 'roll up your shirt sleeves, get yourself together, let's go!'

Talk about the holiness movement, this is holiness movement all right. Great for an Army. I love it because it shatters any notion of holiness being a passive, reclining, inert, lifeless, placid state.

Peter then urges us to be 'self-controlled' - literally 'avoid excessive use of wine,' in other words, 'don't become intoxicated.' It has an exact application to drunkenness, and also broader application to other toxins that can poison our mind, spirit and body. Holiness is a commitment to living a clean life, free from impurity, whether chemical or mental or spiritual.

Then Peter finishes by urging us to set our hope on this grace as revealed in Christ.

The grace of holiness is here connected with the idea of a call.

The call of God. It is the same call mentioned in another great holiness verse, 'May God himself...sanctify you through and through... spirit, soul and body... the one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.' (1 Thess. 5:23,24)

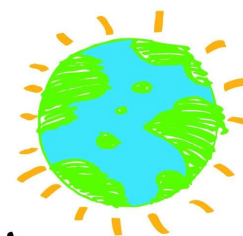
God calls us to holiness:

- We are separate from him.
- God wants to be connected with us.
- He is urgent about it.
- He is passionate about this call for holiness

At the time of salvation much of the emphasis is on the past. Repentance because of the past. Forgiveness from the past. Gladness that the past is over with.

What holiness does - the grace of holiness, the grace of sanctification - is to not only spare us from being locked into one moment in time, but it propels us into the future. Holiness keeps our faith dynamic. Holiness means that we can't be stranded back at one point in time remembering how glorious that moment was or those days were, but instead, it projects us into ever growing, vital relationship with God and with people.

Clean up



the world

PAST →
FORWARD →

The grace of holiness is received in exactly the same way we receive the grace of salvation. We recognize the need, we pray, we consecrate and we receive by grace through faith.

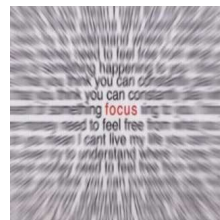
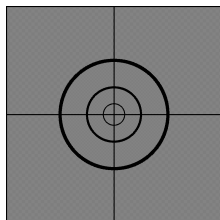


Holiness is an extension of the glorious grace of salvation. Salvation is always dominant, but it is now enhanced, intensified, magnified, reinforced by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Holiness is a continuing, deepening work of saving grace, subsequent to salvation that transforms the life of the believer from an uncertain, vacillating experience into an assured strong faith. One that rises above the annoying persistent temptations to sin.

WHAT IT IS:

- It is perfect harmony with the nature of God.
- It is the single eye. The perfect focus.
- The undiluted heart.
- It is separateness from sin.
- It now becomes harder to sin, than not to.



We are now more inclined to God and the things of God than things that are opposed to God. We now want to spend time with God, serve God, grow more like God. We become increasingly stronger in our faith, increasingly godly, increasingly wanting to serve him.

There are many names:

- Entire Sanctification
- Perfect love
- Full salvation
- Infilling of the Holy Spirit
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Second blessing
- Blessing of a clean heart

Our Christian experience is not meant to be up and down, hot and cold, off and on.

The strength and vigour of the Holy Spirit will bring steady growth and stability to your pilgrimage. You will be characterized as one who is strong in Christ. Godly in temperament. You will reside in the naturalness of the Holy Spirit.

Your essential personality will be the same. No fear of becoming some kind of religious neurotic - the 'you' will remain, but now be beautifully enveloped in the ambience of God the Holy Spirit. You will be naturally attractive. A godly man or a godly woman is an attractive person. They are people reconnected with God.



You will be marked by a fresh vital experience with God. Not a jaded church person. You will love people. You will love God. You will love worship. You will love to serve. You will continue to grow.

So roll up your sleeves, don't pollute yourself any more, move forward with your hope in Christ and be holy, just as God is holy.

It's time!

