



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#174)
The call to holiness.

1

HOLINESS: Being set apart
⇒ separated in some way from other things.
(Different contexts will result in somewhat different focuses.)

Holiness can be related to:

- A moral issue – such as good vs. evil.
- A difference in nature – such as God vs. humans.
- Something that is special vs. common or every-day.
(This last category is not our focus here; but we can learn principles from such passages.)

★ Unless we pursue holiness, we will never really understand holiness. ★

2

GOD IS HOLY...

- ✓ He is the uncreated God, separate from all creation – yet connected to it (through Jesus, who is both God and human).
- ✓ He is totally separated from all sin and evil.

... AND HE REQUIRES US TO BE HOLY.

- ✓ We were created in the "image of God," separate from the rest of creation (because God created us in his image) – though connected (to it because of our physical bodies).
- ✓ We are to be totally separated from all sin and evil.

Through Jesus Christ, we – who were born as sinners – can become holy, with all that is a part of it:

- ✓ a devoted loyalty to the only uncreated God;
- ✓ a special covenantal relationship with him;
- ✓ the goal of becoming like him in moral purity.

3

Everything about God is holy (1).

- ✓ **The Father** is holy. John 17:11; Revelation 4:8; 6:10.
- ✓ **The Son** (Jesus) is holy. John 6:69; John 10:36 (sanctified/set apart); Acts 3:14. Even the *demons* admit it! Mark 1:24 Luke 4:34.
- ✓ **The Holy Spirit** is holy. After all, he is the HOLY Spirit!
- ✓ **His name** is holy.
(His "name" represents him and all he is.)

... the Lord ... God my Savior ... the Mighty One ... — **holy** is his name.
Luke 1:46b, 47b, 49 (NIV)

★ Every time we say the "Lord's Prayer," we admit it... *But do we mean it?*

Many translations say, "Hallowed be Your name." This means...

Our Father in heaven, [may] your name be honored as **holy**.
Matthew 6:9b (CSB)

4

Everything about God is holy (2).

- ✓ **His Word** is holy. Romans 1:2; also 2 Timothy 3:15 ("sacred," a similar concept).
- ✓ **His law and commandments** are holy. Romans 7:12.

★ The apostates are the ones who know about God's holy commandments... and then don't obey them.

For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the **holy** commandment that had been delivered to them.
2 Peter 2:21 (NET)

What is our attitude toward God, his name and his Word?
... as evidenced by our actions and words?

5

All humans have an obligation to be holy.

- ✓ Since we were created *in God's image*, we are to be like God in holiness (though on the level of a created being). This obligation is NOT just for saved people!

... for it is written: "Be **holy**, because I am **holy**."
1 Peter 1:16 (NIV)

Yet only the **SAVED** can fulfil this obligation.

- ✓ All humans have pursued the way of sin; but God has offered to restore to holiness those who are willing to submit to *Jesus Christ*.
- ✓ This offer is made available by means of his *Word* – the message of the Bible, the Good News. As Jesus prayed...

Make them **holy** by the true word: your word is the true word.
John 17:17 (BBE)

★ In this Word, we find everything necessary for life and godliness. ★

6

IF WE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW JESUS, WE WILL DISCOVER THAT GOD HAS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN OUR BECOMING HOLY.*

(We will look at human responsibility later. We do have obligations.)

In Scripture, God reveals what he has done in these matters. He tells us these things in order to *encourage* us who choose to pursue holiness.

- ✓ **It gives us hope.** The more we understand our sinfulness, the more we realize how *hopeless* our condition would be, if God *weren't* involved.
- ✓ **It guarantees the outcome.** In Scripture, we discover that God not only *makes holiness possible*, but also *guarantees the success* of those who are willing to follow Jesus.
- ✓ **It does not cancel human responsibility.** Scripture is filled with reminders that a *genuine* salvation (= one that God is involved in) is an *ongoing* salvation (= one in which we are willing to continue).

* (The *only* reason we know about these things is because the Bible tells us.)

7

Scripture tells us that, for we who are following Jesus, God is actively involved in our becoming holy.

- ✓ God chose us to be holy.

For [God] chose us *in [Christ]* before the foundation of the world to be **holy** and blameless in His presence.

Ephesians 1:4 (BSB)

- ✓ NOT because of any merit in us... but simply because he chose to.

For God saved us and called us to live a **holy** life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:9 (NLT)

- ✓ And he made it possible through Jesus' sacrifice for us.

For God's will was for us to be made **holy** by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

Hebrews 10:10 (NLT)

8

In his Word, God reveals to us our obligation to be holy.

(Scripture is the only way a sinner can *accurately* know his obligation.)

- ✓ Holiness is our *obligation*.

But just as he who called you is **holy**, so be **holy** in all you do ...

1 Peter 1:15 (NIV)

- ✓ Holiness is *God's will* for our lives – his desire and our moral duty.

For it is God's will that you should be **holy** ...

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (BSB)

- ✓ If we have chosen to follow Jesus, holiness is our *calling*.

God has called us to live **holy** lives, not impure lives.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (NLT)

9

God reveals how serious this matter of holiness is.

- ✓ Without it, we *cannot* "see the Lord." (Those without holiness will be cast out of his presence forever.)

... without **holiness** no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14b (NIV)

- ✓ We will need to be *disciplined*, in order attain holiness.

... God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his **holiness**.

Heb 12:10b (NLT)

This is not the same as punishment. It may include punishment, if necessary; but it also includes training, correction, testing, and more – whatever is necessary to grow us into people that share in his holiness.

- ✓ It also requires Jesus to *die* in our place. →

10

Scripture tells us that Jesus made our holiness possible.

The book of Hebrews tells us a lot about *how* he accomplished this. It also shows us the parallels between what Jesus did, and the Old Covenant temple practices (which were intended to *picture* what he would do).

- ✓ He made *himself* holy (as a *sacrifice*), in order to make us holy.

And I give myself as a **holy** sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

John 17:19 (NLT)

The word "sacrifice" is implied. He was preparing for his death.

- ✓ It's fully accomplished – paid in full – once for all time. There will *never* be a need for *another* sacrifice!

For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made **holy**.

Heb 12:14 (NLT)

★ What he did is 100% sufficient to accomplish its purpose. ★

11

More than that, Jesus is our holiness!

- ✓ If we are "in Christ," he *is* our holiness.

... Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, **holiness**, and redemption.

1 Corinthians 1:30b (BSB)

In ourselves, we have *no* holiness. When we become followers of Jesus, it's *Jesus'* holiness that we receive.

In Christ, God *already* sees us as holy. Yet from the "human responsibility" perspective, we need to *pursue becoming* holy.* It needs to become the controlling factor in our lives. Then the *world* will see what *God* already sees!

* (God has already given his people the desire and the power do this – Ephesians 6:10, Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 10:16; etc.)

12

The Holy Spirit is also involved, enabling us to live holy lives.

- ✓ The Spirit brings what Jesus did into our lives! He works to accomplish God's plans.

God planned long ago ... to make you his **holy** people, which is the Spirit's work.
1 Peter 1:2a (ERV)
- ✓ He uses our trust in the truth of Scripture.

You are saved by the Spirit making you **holy** and by your faith in the truth.
2 Thessalonians 2:13b (ERV)
- ✓ He applies to us what Jesus accomplished for us.

But you were washed clean, you were made **holy**, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
1 Corinthians 6:11b (ESV)

13

WHAT MUST WE DO?

We have a wonderful future to look forward to!

We have an inheritance! That's the final outcome of accepting and living by the Good News – as Paul says twice in the book of Acts:

... the **inheritance** that is shared by all of God's **holy** people.
Acts 20:32b (GW)

'... a **share** among God's people who are made **holy** by believing in me [= Jesus].'
Acts 26:18 (GW)

✎ God will enable us to receive the inheritance that is reserved for *holy* people!

BUT WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FUTURE ALSO HAS A DIRECT CONNECTION TO WHAT WE DO NOW.

14

We need to reinforce in our minds the need to be holy.

1. We must oppose the ways of the world.

- ✓ The world is constantly telling us that we don't need to be holy! (It is doing so every time it tempts us to sin.) *We must oppose this!*

You used to walk in these [sinful] ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: [here is a description of **sinful** conduct]. ...
 Therefore, as God's chosen people, **holy** and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with [here is a description of **righteous** conduct].
Colossians 3:7-8a, 12a (NIV)

If we have this changed focus, we have a *glorious* future to look forward to. (See verses 2-4.)

15

2. We must oppose the ways of the flesh.

- ✓ Our own "**flesh**" (sinful nature) wants us to use our bodies for sin. But we have a *different* obligation: use them for righteousness.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, **holy** and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
Romans 12:1 (NIV)

Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to escalating wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to **holiness**.
Romans 6:19b (BSB)

If we have this changed focus, we have *eternal life* to look forward to. (See verse 22.)

16

Some of the blessings of holiness begin now; but they are linked to our obligations.

★ **BLESSING: God's promises belong to us!** ★
 ★ **OBLIGATION: We must pursue moral purity.** ★

- ✓ Our experience of holiness may be imperfect; but we must pursue perfection! How should we do it? Here is the way!

Therefore, since we have these **promises**, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting **holiness** out of reverence for God.
2 Corinthians 7:1 (NIV)

This "reverence" is often translated as "fear." It shows us that certain types of fear are both *good* and *godly*. (Others aren't.)

MORE DETAILS ABOUT THESE PROMISES AND OUR OBLIGATION.

17

- ✓ Here are the PROMISES:

This passage describes it as a *promise*. Hebrews (next page) describes it as a *reality*.

"I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." ...
 And,
 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."
2 Corinthians 6:16, 18 (NIV)
- ✓ Here is our OBLIGATION:

This verse tells us what we must turn our focus *from*. Hebrews (next page) tells us who we must turn our focus to.

Therefore,
 "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."
2 Corinthians 6:17 (NIV)

18

★ **BLESSING: We become part of God's family!** ★
OBLIGATION: We must keep our focus on Jesus!

- ✓ What Jesus did makes it possible. *And it brings us into his family!*

Jesus, the one who makes people **holy**, and those who are made **holy** are from the same **family**. So he is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.
 Hebrews 2:11 (ERV)
- ✓ He has called us to be holy and to be his brothers and sisters. Our obligation is to focus on Jesus and on what he has accomplished... *and to respond properly!*

Therefore, **holy** brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, ... We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.
 Hebrews 3:1a, 14 (NIV)

(Genuine faith is ongoing. Don't turn away from God, like Israel did.)

★ **BLESSING: Restored relationship with God!** ★
OBLIGATION: We must continue in our faith.

- ✓ Because of what God did through Christ, we are no longer his enemies! At the same time, we can no longer consider sin to be an option we can choose.

YOUR ORIGINAL CONDITION:
ALIENATED.

WHAT CHRIST DOES:
RECONCILIATION.

YOUR OBLIGATION:
CONTINUE IN THE FAITH; DON'T ABANDON IT.

Once you were alienated from God and were hostile in your minds, engaging in evil deeds. But now He has **reconciled** you by Christ's physical body through death to present you **holy**, unblemished, and blameless in His presence—

if indeed you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope of the gospel you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Colossians 1:21-23 (BSB)

NOW is the time to prepare for the future judgment.

- ✓ **There is a coming judgment of fire**, followed by a *new* heaven and a *new* earth. *This fact should influence how we live!*

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live **holy** and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
 2 Peter 3:11-12a (NIV)
- ✓ **The time is coming when change will be no longer possible.** This verse, near the end of the book of Revelation, appears to be a warning that, from that time on, *we will stay the way we are...*

"Let the one who does wrong **continue** to do wrong; let the vile person **continue** to be vile; let the one who does right **continue** to do right; and let the **holy** person **continue** to be **holy**."
 Revelation 22:11 (NIV)

OUR MISSION:
WE MUST PURSUE HOLINESS NOW!

SIN never was an option; only sinners pretend it is.
 When we pursue HOLINESS, we are just doing what we were originally created to do.

If we are willing to pursue holiness, God will make sure we attain holiness!

May the God who gives peace make you **holy** in every way. May he keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—blameless when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.
 1 Thes. 5:23-24 (GW)

Credits

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