

Lesson # 6 -- The Promise Regarding the Believer's Holiness.

Introduction

- A. The Biblical teaching on the believer's holiness is one of the most encouraging in the Scripture. If there is any area where all of us know our weakness it is here. However, the provision God has made makes it possible for each of us to live in freedom from sin and in holiness of daily life.
- B. Too often we interpret the message of sanctification as simply learning how to change our behavior. The provision God has made for us does more than that -- it brings about a change of our character. The word "transformation" is how it is described.
- C. It is vitally important to realize that there is a twofold way in which the believer is spoken of as holy. There is a legal standing shared by all believers. We are holy (sacred) people because we belong to God. The second reference has to do with how we are to live -- our manner of life. In this area the word refers to the product of divine grace -- the holiness of daily life which is the result of His transforming work and our growth.

I. The Biblical Theme.

- A. Our holiness is related to our creation and re-creation in the image of God.

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:24*

Comment: The instruction in this verse, regarding holiness, has to do with the equipment we received in our original creation and in the new birth. Paul described it by the words "righteousness" and "true holiness." He reminds us that Adam had the ability to live a holy life and because of spiritual rebirth -- we too can live that way.

- B. Our holiness is related to our identification in the work of the Lord Jesus.

*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:4*

Comment: Jesus Christ lived and died as our Representative. As we considered in the last lesson -- we died and were raised from the dead in Him. The value, cleansing, and power of His great work has been imputed to us. This transaction is more than legal -- we are people who participated in the Crucifixion and Resurrection. We cannot live as though this did not happen!

C. Our holiness is related to the reception of the divine call.

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* I Peter 2:9

*For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*  
I Thess. 4:7

Comment: The divine call is not only an indication of the kind of life God wants us to live -- but also an implied promise of enablement. When the Lord calls us He gives us the provision we need. In spite of how we feel about ourselves, and how we live, we are a part of a "holy nation" (sacred people) simply because of our relationship with God.

D. Our holiness is related to our Biblical identity.

*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints (holy ones) . . .*  
I Corinthians 1:2

Comment: The words "sanctified" and "saints" both come from the Greek word which means holy. These descriptions remind us that we every believer is holy in the sense of being a sacred person. As the Old Testament tabernacle became a sacred tent, when dedicated to God, so the believer is holy because we belong to Him.

II. The Biblical Explanation.

A. Salvation and the believer's holiness of life.

1. It is helpful to realize the spiritual distinction between our salvation and the holiness of daily life.
2. While these are related as flower to seed their basic characteristics are different. A great deal of confusion will be introduced in our lives if we do not understand this.
3. In summary the distinctions are as follows:

<b>Salvation</b>	<b>Sanctification</b>
1. Gift	1. Claimed
2. No degrees	2. Degrees
3. Permanent	3. Transitory
4. Depends only on the Savior	4. Depends on the Savior and our obedience

B. The divine provision and the believer's holiness of life.

1. The provision in the work of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life . . . Knowing this, that our old man (all we were before the new birth) is (was) crucified with him, that the body of sin (how sin is manifested in us) might be destroyed (rendered inoperative), that henceforth we should not serve sin. Romans 6:4,6

Comment: As we have seen earlier in this lesson every believer is identified in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Crucifixion we were set free from the bondage and defilement of sin. In the Resurrection we were given an enablement to live above sin. This provision is not an external gift added to us by divine grace -- but the very kind (character) of a person we are as believers.

2. The provision in the Word of God.

Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. John 17:17

Comment: The Word of God is not a group of dead symbols on the pages of our Bible. It is living, powerful, and the method chosen by God to transform us. When we choose to practice the Bible, God the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to obey and in the process brings about a sanctifying work in our character.

3. The provision in the Holy Spirit.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify me . . . . John 16:13,14

Comment: The Holy Spirit has come to apply the work of the Lord Jesus in our life through the Word of God. This is why it is so essential that we understand the meaning of redemption, the basic message of the Bible, and make realistic choices to obey God. This will open the door to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who will lead us ever deeper into a life of sanctification.

III. The Biblical Application.

- A. We must learn to obey God in temptations -- in spite of pressure and our desires.

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. I Peter 1:14

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I Corinthians 10:13

Comment: God can only deliver from sin and enable us to live in freedom as we choose to obey Him. He cannot bless us in our sin and neglect. As powerful as the pressures of life and our desires may be -- the promise of God is that of a divine enablement.

- B. We must learn to recognize the patterns of sin and the patterns of holiness.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation (life) the old man . . . and put on the new man . . . . Ephesians 4:22,24

Comment: It is very rare for sin to manifest itself as an isolated factor in our life. Almost always we can see some kind of a pattern which acts like a form of conditioning. When we break down the old then a new pattern can be established by divine help. All of us have some areas of life in which we now respond by way of holiness -- instead of sinfully.

- C. We must learn to make the above choices as decisions of faith in which we express our trust in God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God . . . . Romans 6:11-13

Comment: The four exhortations in these verses touch the heart of our walk with God. Each of these are decisions of faith which opens the door to the cleansing power of God.

1. We must reckon (count on it) that we died in the death of Jesus Christ and were raised in His Resurrection. This is a choice to act on the redeeming work of our Savior and live in harmony with His work. It is an explicit trust that the Holy Spirit will change my attitude, character, values, priorities, and enable me to live in the will of God.

2. To "let not sin reign" is a constant refusal to give way to sin. It is a resounding spiritual "NO." If we neglect to do this our growth will be greatly limited and we will have many areas where sin will reign over us.
3. Not yielding our members to sin has to do with understanding how sin manifests itself in our various functions. James reminds us how easy it is for us to manifest sin through the use of our tongue. Because of the provision God has made for us we can "take charge" of our members.
4. We trust God for His intervention and help when we yield our members to Him. When we recognize our sin we can claim the truth that we died to that sin in the work of Christ, say "NO" to it, take charge of the area in question, and deliberately trust God for His help. When we do this -- we will not be disappointed. Obeying these four exhortations may appear complicated at first -- but it can soon become an automatic response.

Conclusion: Holiness of life is not an option -- but a commandment.

*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (daily life). I Peter 1:15*

Comment: God is not only holy in the negative sense of being free from sin, but in particular in being the infinite perfection of everything good -- truth, faithfulness, love, devotion, righteousness, justice, and purity. Too often we equate our holiness in negative terms only. God expects us to be like Him -- characterized by goodness, mercy, love, faithfulness, purity, and honesty.