

The Command to Holy Living
Preached morning service of November 13

Isaiah 40:25 and 1 Peter 1:14-15

I want to return to a passage previously expounded on. It is Isaiah 40:25.

*“To whom then will you liken Me
That I would be his equal?” says the Holy One.*

God knew what He was doing when He gave this to Isaiah to write down. The verse in a sense asks the question, “Who is Holy like Me? Who will equal Me in My holiness?”

Three weeks ago, we talked about the Holiness of God. I feel that I did not do it justice. In that sermon, I gave two aspects of God’s Holiness as found and defined in scripture.

God is Holy in His otherness.

Holy means separate, unique, other. God is holy in these ways. He is separate than any other. He is other than any other. He exceeds the limits of our mind, and goes far beyond our understanding. Even though we grow in understanding God, we never plunge to the depths of who God is.

Holy is a quality that is emphasized more in comparison to the other attributes of God. In Isaiah 6, the seraphim cried to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory!” No other attribute of God is repeated three times. The other attributes of God are to be understood in light of His holiness.

God is Holy in His purity.

God is Holy in His otherness. He is also holy in His purity. The radiant purity of His holiness is that which could not be looked upon by sinful man, nor created angelic beings. Moses longed to look on the face of God. God said, “No man can look at me and live.” Moses was privileged to see the backside of God, and yet his face glowed in radiance such that a veil had to be put over his face.

Here is the question I want to ask. How are we as creatures of humanity to respond to the holiness of God? What is our responsibility? That is a question we tried to answer three weeks ago. Yet, I sensed that more time and attention needed to be given to answering these question.

I direct your attention to a couple of passages that answer that question.

First is a verse found in Matthew 6. This passage is known as the Lord’s Prayer. It is actually the disciple’s prayer which Jesus taught us as disciples to pray.

Matthew 6:9 says:

*“Pray, then, in this way:
‘Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.’”*

This is not a request. It is a command. It is written in a mode of a command. "Let your name be Holy." Hallowed is an old English word simply means to make holy, sanctify.

His name is to be treated and respected above all others. It is to be honored, revered. Glorify, and obey Him as singularly perfect.

Scripture says in 1 Peter 3:15, "*Sanctify Christ as Lord of your hearts.*" "Sanctify" in this verse is the same word Jesus uses in Matthew 6:9. He is to be central to our being. When He is central to our being, then He will be central in all that we think, do, and say.

Is Christ sanctified in your life? Do you hallowed His name in your life? It is more about what you do than just what you say you do.

The second passage is where I want to hang out for the rest of our time together.

1 Peter 1:13-17

This is a series of three commands. Verse 13 has the first command. Set your hope completely or unreservedly on the grace to come that will be revealed at the coming of Jesus Christ. The third command is found in verse 17. Conduct yourselves in fear.

It is the second command that I want to focus on. "Be holy." Let's look at verses 14-16 again.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Pay attention again to verse 15. "Like the Holy One who called you," or in accordance with the Holy One, or as determined by the Holy One who called you; "You become holy in all your conduct."

That is a tough commandment. It is a commandment that is repeated in verse 16. In the same manner and in the same level of holiness that is God, you and I are to become holy. As He is separate, unique, otherness, we are to be separate, unique, otherness in comparison to the world. In the same way that He is pure and blameless, we are to be pure and blameless.

If your translation is like mine, the phrase, "You shall be holy, for I am Holy" is in all caps. This is an indication that this is a direct quote from the Old Testament. The phrase is found three times in the book of Leviticus: 11:44-45, 19:2; 20:7.

11:44-45

44 For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45 For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy."

There is a difference between those who were in Old Testament days and us who live in the New Testament days. The difference is Jesus Christ. In OT days, everything was external. They had to keep the law in order to be holy. They were empowered by the flesh to remain holy. In NT days, everything is spiritual. For Jesus is our sacrifice. Faith in Him brings Holy Spirit who writes the Law upon our hearts, enabling us through the power of the Spirit to remain holy.

Become Holy. It is not what you do, but it is who you are.

In this passage there are five things mentioned that enables us to live holy lives before a holy God in the same manner in which He is holy.

I want to give you four things that are in this passage that tells us how we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to become holy. Write these down as I give them to you. They are important. This is not Gary Reeves. This is Holy Bible that gives us these four things.

We are called to holiness.

"As the Holy One who called you..." As a person is summoned to jury duty or to testify in court, so we are summoned to holiness.

How many of us have received in the mail a special invitation from the county clerk of court to participate in jury. That is a privilege. As we consider that invitation, we can think about it, and if it doesn't fit our schedule, we can decline by not showing on the date identified on the invitation, right? Wrong! It is a summons. We are called to jury duty. If we don't show up, someone will show up to see you. God's call to holiness is the same. It is a summons. Our response is expected. To respond by saying, "No," will mean that we have serious consequences to face.

As God calls us to holiness, we find that God not only calls us to holiness, but empowers us to it through the Holy Spirit in us. Like a fresh battery powers up a flashlight to shine, so the freshness of Holy Spirit empowers us to shine in holiness.

"Faithful is He who called you, and He shall bring it to pass."

We are reborn to holiness.

"As obedient children..." You who are called and have responded to Christ is faith are Born again. That is we become children of God. As we are children of God, we are children born with the nature in us to obey our heavenly Father. We are enabled to do so through power of HS in us. I see common factors in children who obey adults, whether they are parents, teachers, or others. They obey out of respect. They obey out of love. They obey out of trust. Most time, their obedience comes without questioning or without objection. Do you love God? Do you respect Him? As He gives the example of holiness, so obey Him as obedient children. You are born with His nature in you.

We are given a new nature to holiness.

"Do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance..."

Ignorance equals not knowing. You simply did not know. Your mindset was different. We are given a new mindset, that which seeks and desires that which God wants for us. That which is your mindset is that which is your wants and desires. *"Do not be conformed to the former lusts."* Conform is the same conform in Romans 12:2. Do not be conformed to this world. It is the outward form.

A farmer was walking the fence line of his watermelon field. The fence line ran parallel to the highway. Someone had thrown out a gallon mason jar. It didn't break, but landed in the farmer's watermelon field. Instead of picking the jar up, the farmer decided to do an experiment. He put a small, green watermelon in the jar. A few weeks passed. It was picking time. The watermelons

were huge as its nature intended for them to be. The one put in the jar remained the size of the jar. Inside it was still a watermelon, but its size was limited because it conformed to the the jar.

You are given a new nature. There is a spirit nature in you that is God in you. You have in you that which you can become outwardly, in behavior. You can live life of holiness that is in same manner of God as we are conformed to the new nature that is put in us.

We are given power of living daily to holiness.

You become holy in all conduct. This is referring to public life. It is what others see about you, 24/7/365. Let me ask you, though. What about when others don't see you? What about the times that the only one who sees you, hears you is God Himself? Does He see a mirror of His holiness? Isn't that integrity, who you are when others are not looking?

Holy is He! As He is Holy, so are we to be holy in all our conduct. He is the standard. How are you measuring up?

In and of ourselves we are unable to match God in His holiness. Our sin prevents us. As we are given vision to our Holy God, it exposes our sinfulness and our humanity. God has provided a way of being forgiven of sin—Jesus died for our sins. He has provided a way for us to have eternal life—Jesus was raised from the dead. Asking God to forgive us and surrendering our lives to His Lordship, we become new in our spirit. Is that something you need to do now?

Christians, God is the measure of holiness. How is your living? Do you need to ask forgiveness of sin and reaffirm His Lordship of your life? Why not do that now?