



Teaching Notes

Holiness!!

By

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Teaching Notes are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

These teaching notes are from a series of studies from 1 Peter.

[These notes are from more than 45 years ago.]

I. Suffering

Let's read 1 Peter 1:1-16 together:

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold

that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the

former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

1 Peter 1 deals with suffering in light of future inheritance. Peter deals with the hopes, the trials, and the joys of Christians. He reminds the readers of the sure salvation of the Messiah and then exhorts them to holiness. Look with me at verses 13-16.

A. The “wherefore” of verse 13 is equivalent to, “in view of the fact that even though you are undergoing many kinds of trials, yet because of your heavenly inheritance awaits you,” **gird up the loins of your minds**. Wuest’s expanded translation reads, “Wherefore, having put out of the way, once for all, everything that would impede the free action of your mind.”

B. We are exhorted to “be sober.” It means to be calm and collected in spirit. It speaks of the proper exercise of the mind — to be self-controlled — to see things without the distortion caused by worry, fear, and related attitudes.

C. Peter exhorts the believer to “hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” The word “end,” *teleios*, is an adverb which qualifies the verb “hope” and describes it. It is a “hope” that is to be “*teleios*” — complete, perfect, wanting nothing, being in its character an assured expectation.

D. The words “as obedient children” are literally “as children of obedience.” The motive principal of the child of God should be obedience.

E. The believer is exhorted not to “fashion” himself to former lusts. The word “fashion” refers to the act of assuming an outward appearance expressing something not representative of his true nature.

IN OTHER WORDS ... the believer and child of Christ is to be on the outside what he or she professes to be on the inside. So many believers today claim the name of Christ, but act like a child of the devil. I've seen so many Christians who are practical atheists. By this I mean that they live and act like God doesn't really exist. It's not all in the mouth, friend, it's what you live that really counts. If you preach faith, but don't live faith, then you are fashioning yourself after former lusts. If you preach holiness, but live impurity of lifestyle, then you are fashioning yourself after former lusts. Wouldn't it be wonderful if God's true children in America would just live like God's children ought? We would have a genuine revival in America if Christians just lived what Jesus commanded. If we would live holy lives, all of the world would take notice that God is alive and real in His people. Probably the major reason that millions do not flood the church to be saved is because God's people have fallen into the deadly "hypocritical syndrome." One of the first things to be done is clean up the house of God. We need once again to fall in love with the precious Lord Jesus. We need once again to fall in love with the Word of God. We need once

again to perform the first works!! We need to put aside all the worldliness and creeping carnality that has found its way into the church and perform as never before the WILL OF GOD! And what is this will of God?

F. Look with me at verse 15. The word “as” refers to domination. Dominated by God’s holiness, we are to be holy in our behavior and living. God’s will for us is to be holy! We have been called to be a holy people!!

G. Peter quotes from Leviticus 11:44 — a direct commandment from God to the nation Israel and now restated for the holy nation, Christ’s children — “Be ye holy!”

II. What is holiness?

A. Holiness is **likeness** to God. Let me say that again. Holiness is likeness to God – likeness to His moral character!!! Leviticus 19:1-2 says, “And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” All of the Old Testament is summed up in this one verse – Leviticus 19:2 .. “Ye shall be holy.” God’s purpose for His children has not changed. Ephesians 1:4 says, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

B. If holiness is “God-likeness,” then just what is it to be like God? The Scripture teaches us that God is Spirit, Light, and Love.

1. God is essentially Spiritual, so the first mark of holiness is a corresponding spirituality – in outlook, attitude, desire, and sense of values. Genuine holiness is spiritual-mindedness.
2. What light is to the natural world, God is to the spiritual world. Only in light can we see; yet light cannot be seen – it is transparent. Light is also manifesting. It reveals the things which are, making them visible to natural sight. The analogy – God is light, means that holiness, a moral likeness to God, is:
 - such purity of mind as exposes in sharp distinguishment the beauty of goodness and the ugliness of evil.
 - a sheer transparency – of motive, purpose, and desire. “Holiness is transparent purity and sincerity of the mind.”
3. God is love.
 - His love is not passive, inward emotion, but an active outreaching benevolence.

- His love is not a self-contained, complacency, but a self-emptying *otherism*.
- His love is not a contemplative sublimity of feeling, but a redeeming compassion toward the unworthy and unlovely, the defiled and deformed; a love which gives and gives and gives again!
 - God so loved the world that He gave ...
 - God proved His love us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died ...
 - Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed ...
 - Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.
 - Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son.

Let's summarize:

Christian holiness is, 1) spiritual-mindedness of outlook, appraisal, desire, and choice; 2) transparent purity of aim and motive; 3) self-forgetting outreach to bless others.

To know what true holiness is, we must somehow be able to see it. We need not only to have it described, but have it revealed. JESUS CHRIST IS THAT REVELATION!! Jesus was intensely spiritual, perfectly natural, and thoroughly practical. He was pure holiness manifest in flesh.

I think now that we can expand our definition a bit more by saying that **holiness is likeness in heart and life to Christ.**

- In the Old Testament, holiness is *demanded*.
- In Christ it is *provided*.
- By the Holy Spirit it is *imparted*.
- Holiness inwrought in us **from** God, **through** Christ, **by** the Holy Spirit.

Inwrought holiness is a progressive renewal, correction, purification, refinement, and renovation of all the qualities, tempers, urges, propensities, and functionings of the mind, the emotions, and the will. Holiness is restoration – it is a renewing of our body and soul. Holiness is not *abrogation*, but *completion*.

III. What are the means and the extent of holiness?

In other words, How can I be holy and How holy can I be?

A. To be saved we needed certain things done **for** us and certain things done **in** us. Jesus Christ has effected all that needed doing **for** us; the Holy Spirit affects that that needs doing **in** us.

1. Christ's work **for** us covers all the *judicial* aspects of our salvation. The Holy Spirit's work **in** us covers all the *experiential* aspects of our salvation.
2. Through the atoning work of Christ we have justification and positional reconciliation. Through the interior work of the Holy Spirit we have regeneration and moral and spiritual sanctification.
3. Christ's work **for** us concerns our Godward relation. The Holy Spirit's work **in** us concerns our inward renewal.

4. Christ's work **for** us has distinctively to do with our standing or position. The Holy Spirit's work **in** us has distinctively to do with our state or condition.
5. Through Christ's work **for** us we have righteousness imputed (legal aspect). Through the Holy Spirit's work **in** us we have holiness imparted (vital aspect).

Is holiness the filling of the Spirit? Not necessarily. It is the renewing of the Spirit.

Is holiness spiritual growth and maturity? Not necessarily. It is spiritual and moral health.

Spiritual and moral health abounding! Holiness is not what you *know*, but what you are.

Example

Take for example a man who has wasted his money and his health on riotous living. He's living in a back-alley gutter, full of disease and dying of malnutrition. Then, an unknown benefactor has him picked up and taken to a lovely house on a hillside overlooking a great field. The man is fed the best of foods, given plenty of rest and exercise, and takes a good amount of natural vitamins. In a few weeks he's healthy and strong again and looking like his old self. This goes on for more than a year, until one day the man again returns to his old lifestyle of drinking, carousing, and gambling. He doesn't eat, he doesn't get enough sleep, and he doesn't get any physical exercise. Because his body is healthy he is able to take this lifestyle for awhile, but soon finds himself back in the back-alley gutter again dying of malnutrition and liver disease.

This is one analogy of what happens to us spiritually. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were sick with the disease of guilt wracking our body and mind. God found us in the back-alley gutter of life and picked us up to a new home overlooking a bright meadow of peace. We begin to eat plenty of spiritual food. We rest in the Spirit. We get plenty of exercise in the things of the Spirit. Our minds are renewed and our spirits given new and vibrant life. We become strong and healthy in spirit. We are holy and without blame. Then, we go back to our old way of living and thinking. We do the things that once almost ruined our souls. Because of our spiritual health it doesn't show on us for awhile. However, within a short time we are again living in the valley of despair and gutter of sin. We're still God's children, headed for Heaven, but what has happened? We're spiritually unhealthy. Positionally we are righteous, but we are not living holy lives. This is many times called backsliding, but I prefer to call it loss of spiritual health. Sin has again poisoned us and dealt a blow to our relationship with the Savior.

Holiness is the life of the Holy Spirit transfused and interpenetrating every part of our moral and spiritual being, transforming diseased impulses and responses, impure desire and inclination; unholy thought, motive, purpose, temper, and imagination, into fulness of moral health. Hatred becomes love, anger becomes kindness, impure desire becomes holy aspiration, selfishness becomes Christlike others, jealousy becomes sincere affection, perverted motive and purpose change into earnest ambition to fulfill only the will of God, evil temper and carnal imagination give place to equanimity and spiritual-mindedness, pride becomes humility, egocentricity becomes Christocentricity. The whole inner life becomes pure, gracious, and healthful.

IV. What must one seek to be truly holy?

1. That our hearts may be truly filled by the Holy Spirit.
2. That the infilling Holy Spirit will renew our whole moral being from **sinward** desire and inclination.
3. That the Holy Spirit will bear unmistakable witness in our deepest consciousness to His sanctifying work within us.

How holy can I be?

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

1. The first epistle of Paul to the church of Thessalonica was written to encourage and establish this young church in the basic truths of the Gospel, to inspire it to progress in the power of holy living, and to instruct it in the matter of the coming of the Lord for His own, and the relation of that event to the events of the day of the Lord.
2. In chapter 3, Paul prays that God would establish their hearts unblameable in holiness.
3. In chapter 4, Paul presents God's call to holiness. Look at verses 1-7

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification

and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

a. Notice some key phrases —

- “this is the will of God, even your sanctification”
- “every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.”
- “God hath .. called us .. unto holiness”

b. What is sanctification

1. The word “sanctify” means *to set apart*. The noun, sanctification, in 1 Thessalonians 4 is “the course of life befitting those who are so separated.” It speaks here of the separation of the believer from evil things and ways. Sanctification is God’s will for us and His purpose in calling us by the Gospel.
2. The Agent in sanctification is the Holy Spirit. In this work, He has a two-fold ministry — one to the lost, and another to the saved.
 - a) The first is called positional sanctification. Turn to 1 Peter 1:2 – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

- The first step in the salvation of a sinner is his or her election by God the Father.
- The second step in salvation is the sanctification or “setting apart” of the sinner by the Holy Spirit. This “setting apart” work of the Spirit is “unto obedience.”
- The third step is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This is a spiritual application of Christ’s shed blood in respect of the sinner’s committal of sins, which on that ground receives forgiveness.

Another way of putting this would be to say that God the Father elects the sinner to salvation — God the Spirit brings him or her to the act of faith — and God the Son cleanses the sinner from sin.

- In the Spirit's ministry with the saint, we have what is known as "practical or experiential" sanctification.
 - On the human side this is a progressive and continuous yieldedness and obedience to God.
 - On God's side it is an entire possession and use of the yielded vessel; an unobstructed infilling of the believer; a penetrative renewing of the moral nature which decisively breaks the tyranny of inherent depravity, and lifts the mind into an experience of dominant holiness in all its spontaneous impulses, desires, motives, and inclinations.

Again, let me restate the question before us: How holy can I be? Let's read 1 Thessalonians 5:23 again – “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The word “wholly” is literally “whole or complete.”

Paul's desire is that the sanctification of the believer may extend to every part of his or her being. The word is similar to *holokleros*, which means “complete, entire, sound in every part.” Then, Paul goes on to say that his prayer is that God will preserve our whole spirit and soul and body without blame until Christ comes again. I believe that a Christian can be set apart to God. I don't mean “sinless perfection” or complete eradication of sin. I mean the fullest present **abiding** in Christ, accompanied by the fullest spiritual **abounding** in Christ, and resulting in truest **character-likeness** to Christ.

One theologian has said that “entire sanctification is perfect love filling the heart and overflowing through the life.”

Another teacher has said —

- “regeneration is newness of life”
- “sanctification is fulness of life”
- “conversion does away with the legal guilt of sin”
- “entire sanctification deals with the inward bent to sin”

He went on to express that “sanctification could not be achieved, but must be received” ... “sanctification is not a state we attain by self-effort; it is an inwrought renovation which we obtain through Christ by the Holy Spirit.”

Let me reiterate that the supreme purpose of the Holy Spirit's deeper work in our lives is to **transfigure our character**. What do I mean by that? Turn to Matthew 17:2 – “And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” The word “transfigured” is *metamorphoo*, which means “to change into another form.” For a brief time, Jesus Christ became on the outside what He was on the inside.

Now turn to Romans 12:2 – “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The word “transformed” is also the Greek word *metamorphoo*, the same word used for Christ's transfiguration. Paul is telling us to be outwardly what we have become inwardly!

My prayer is that we would be a people “holy and without blame” .. a people wholly set apart for Christ .. a people entirely committed to His glory .. a people in the likeness of God!

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29

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