

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO



Over the past few weeks I have been finding myself getting angry and upset when reading the scriptures. I know that seems very, very wrong - and it is. However, the anger that rises up is not really concerning the scriptures themselves. The scriptures are true and sure. My problem is not with the scriptures. My difficulty is that when I read the scriptures and see the clarity and truthfulness of what they say in their context and in the totality of all scripture, it makes me angry that so many false doctrines, misleading and half-truth teachings are being perpetrated by many within the Body of Christ these days. I am “hearing” an “unbalanced” message being brought forth in the Body of Christ.

Some are teaching an inordinate, lopsided doctrine on one aspect of the “full Gospel” message forgetting all the other precepts and just zeroing in on one and making it **THE** message of the hour. Another one is teaching on another inordinate, lopsided doctrine of another aspect of the “full Gospel” message, again, forgetting all the other precepts and just zeroing in on one and making it **THE** message of the hour. And it goes on and on. In and of themselves, each precept is correct, so it makes it difficult to dispute what is being brought forth. However, this “simplifying” of the message of the Kingdom of God is inordinate and dangerous. It is no longer becoming a “Full Gospel Message” but rather it is becoming a “pick and choose,” “feel good” and “easy Christian lifestyle” message.

I guess what really pushed me over the top was when I heard about people, in explaining the correctness of what they were being taught and then living by, were saying that all of Jesus’ teachings **before** His cross and resurrection were directed to those living at that time **prior** to His death and resurrection. They were saying that the words that Jesus spoke (yes, those **red letter** words in your Bible) **before** his cross and resurrection have no bearing on believers today. It is only His words and the words of the writers of the Epistles we read **after** His resurrection that are important and valid for believers today.

All I could say to this was, Wow!!!” I was dumbfounded. Yet this is being “preached and proclaimed” by well known preachers and teachers that have somehow, some way reached the position of authority in the Body of Christ. We see them on Christian television. We see them at Christian conferences. We see them at Christian youth events and concerts. We see them in the pulpits of today’s churches. They make living the Christian lifestyle and being a Christian so easy that, “Hey, anybody can do it. Everybody is saved because of what Jesus did on the cross. You do not need be concerned about what you do and/ or don’t do.” It sounds a lot like the old 1960’s mantra that “if it feels good, do it.” By the way, that mantra started a movement of rebellion, licentiousness, and outright sinfulness that we still are experiencing and reaping in today’s world and culture. That kind of thinking is the devil’s breeding ground for the perversion of the principles and values found within the scriptures. It is happening within the Body of Christ today.

I believe that this new wave of half truths and watered down Gospel message is being birthed out of panic and fear. This fear is working within the Body of Christ and it is a “two headed monster.” One “head” of this monster is the fear that people are leaving the faith and we need to do something to end this mass exodus. The other “head” is the fear that maybe the Bible is not appealing to the people of this generation, young or old, and that it is losing its relevance in today’s culture. Like any good company or industry would do in fear of losing its “customers,” or maybe going out of business, the church has resorted to “new ad campaigns” to try to draw their “customers” back and to get new ones. We try to change the image and perception of ourselves. We try to promote our relevancy in this hour (as if the Word of God in its fullness is not relevant for any person, in any situation, with any need, in any generation or in any time period and era - whether in Jesus’ time or today.)

We hear the inordinate “Grace Message” that is being brought forth. I know it goes by another name. However, I refuse to give it credence by even mentioning it. Yes, grace is a very large part of the salvation message and of a person’s salvation. Yes, God loved the world and sent Jesus. However, it was not just God’s grace that sent Jesus. It was His love that sent Jesus. (John 3:16) That love included not just His grace, but it included His mercy and His peace. As we accept what Jesus did for us; as we accept the gift of love sent by the Father, we experience not just grace but we experience the fullness of His love. So much so that we can now love Him, where before we could not (1John 4:19). We can now bathe ourselves in His love which continually washes over us. We experience the continual affects of His grace (*God’s unearned favor and the ability to live a Christ like life*), His mercy (*God saw us in our need of salvation because we were destined for hell, therefore, He did something to meet that need by sending Jesus*) and His peace (*through Jesus we are restored back in oneness and relationship with God, the Father*) in our lives, everyday.

Another aspect of receiving the fullness of God’s love is that which we also experience as found in Hebrews 12:5-11. It states,

*“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord **loveth** he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but **he for [our] profit**, that [we] might be **partakers of his holiness**. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

I guess the writer of Hebrews didn’t get last week’s message that God only sees us through grace - which He does. However, He doesn’t just provide grace - He pours out His **love** to His “sons.” He pours out His love to His children sometimes in the form of correction and chastisement so that we can partake of His “**holiness**.” OH NO!!! I said that unmentionable word. I spoke that abhorrent, religious and most pharisaical of pharisaical words - “holiness!!!” Yes, I’ll say it again, “Holiness.” Yes, I’ll shout it from the roof tops for all to hear, “HOLINESS!!!”

God’s love, which includes His grace, His mercy and His peace, is bestowed upon all of those that accept His free gift of love expressed in Jesus. That Love was given to us, not to do what we want or what we please. It was not given so that we have “freedom” in and of our selves. Quite the opposite is true. Yes we are free, “*free from the law of sin and death*” - Romans 8:2. However, we are also called the “servant”

of the Lord - 1Corinthians 7:32 ("servant" - Gr. "doulos" - *a slave, bondman, man of servile condition; one who gives himself up to another's will; those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men; devoted to another to the **disregard of one's own interests***)

In the above scriptures in Hebrews it tells us that the reason for our salvation is not just to be "free in Jesus" and now we can do whatever is "right in our own eyes." No, it means that we are now to be God's sons and "*partakers of His holiness.*" When we wander off that path or we (should I dare say it?) "miss the mark" and sin, God will "chasten those He loves" so that we can get back on that right path of "holiness." But hey, this is not a popular message. After all, who wants to be "chastised?" That is not the picture of God we want to present. Hasn't God gotten a bad rap all these years as being a bad guy? That is not good public relations. Let's remake His image. Let's make Him a "Cool God." To that I say, just as my old High School football coach used to say, "Hogwash!!!"

God does not need an image makeover. He is God - the same yesterday, today and forever. Where has "holiness" gone? Whatever happened to "holiness" in the Body of Christ? It is wonderful to hear about God's grace and mercy. It should be proclaimed and taught to every born again child of God. It should be expressed and proclaimed to the entire world. However, along with that proclamation must be the truth that, when we receive God's grace, mercy and peace that is all wrapped up in God's unconditional love, our heart's desire should be to desperately please the heart of our King. We do this by being those "disciples" (those who change their lifestyle to the One they are following) and true worshippers that worship Him with a lifestyle of "holiness." We do not do this to strive for and earn His acceptance. We know we have that because He loves us unconditionally. We do this because we love Him and want to do anything and everything that would bring joy to His heart. This becomes the attitude of the believer's heart. It becomes all about **HIM** and not about me.

If you are old enough to remember, or if you have read history books, President John F Kennedy at his inaugural speech made the famous statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." This should apply to us as members of the Body of Christ. For the believer it should be, "Ask not what God can do for you (He already has done it all). Ask and desire what you can do unto Him as acts of worship that would bless the heart of my King." I believe one of His answers would be, "Be ye Holy as I am Holy."

Leviticus 11:44, 45 - "*For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy.*"

1Peter 1:15, 16 - "*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.*"

The scriptures tell us that we are the priests unto the Lord. We are to be a Holy priesthood.

1Peter 2:5 - *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

The priests wore miters (head pieces) that had a golden plate on which were written the words "Holiness to the Lord" expressing the understanding of the importance of coming before God with an attitude of heart of holiness, reverence and awe. As His holy priesthood, this is now written in our heart.

Exodus 28:36, 37 - "*And thou shalt make a plate [of] pure gold, and grave upon it, [like] the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be.*"

At the bottom of this essay I have simply but the definitions for “holy” and “holiness” that are found in the scriptures from Hebrew and Greek words used. I will let them speak for themselves. However, I would like to bring to your attention that the most important aspect of those definitions of holiness is not moral purity. It really infers being “apart,” and separated from the lifestyle and culture of this earth. The Body of Christ needs to rethink their “ad campaign.” We should be different. We must be different. Jesus died on the cross so that we can be different then the world and its culture. He died so that we can be resurrected into a new life, His life, a lifestyle of holiness just as He walked and lived on this earth.

It is not, and will not be easy. That is why the history of Christianity is filled with martyrs for the faith. They were different then the cultures they were in and they were willing to die for it. We should not walk in fear of losing people and people leaving our doors. What we must have is the “fear of the Lord.” We must honor, respect and reverence Him. We must not be pleasers of men. We must be pleasers of God. What pleases God? Faith (believing in and adhering to His principles and precepts and living it as a lifestyle) is what pleases God - Hebrew 11:6.

We must stop the deception that Holiness is a “bondage” situation. It is so far from being a bondage lifestyle. Again, the opposite is true. It brings tremendous freedom. I do not want to sin. I stay away from sin. I separate myself from situations that may place me in unholy situations. I do this in, and with, the power of the Holy Spirit that now lives and dwells within as well as leads and guides me as a Born Again child of God. If I do mess up, I know that I can go to the Father and “own up” to my fault because He has already forgiven me of it. I “own up” to it because I respect God and give Him that respect by being truthful and open with Him. I do not take His love, grace and mercy for granted. That is true freedom in the Lord.

Isaiah 6:3 - *“And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory.**”*

Revelations 4:8 - *“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**”*

What happened to “holiness?” The answer is - nothing happened to holiness. It is and always will be a characteristic of God. Just as God was and is and always will be, so shall holiness always be a part of the true worshipper’s, the true believer’s life and lifestyle. Jesus is coming back for His Bride that is to be without spot or blemish. By His blood He has washed the Bride so that He chooses to see her cleansed and pure. Although Jesus chooses to see His Bride spotless, does that give the Bride the right to roll herself through the mud? By the Blood of Jesus we are washed. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we have the ability to walk and live a chaste, holy life. As we live a lifestyle of holiness we can then truly join with Spirit and say, “Come.” (Revelation 22:17a - *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.”*)

Hebrew and Greek Definitions of Holy/ Holiness From Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

Greek - Holy

Hagiazō (verb) - Holy (translated also to the English word - "sanctify") occurs 29 times

- 1) to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow
- 2) to separate from profane things and dedicate to God
 - a) consecrate things to God
 - b) dedicate people to God
- 3) to purify
 - a) to cleanse externally
 - b) to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin
 - c) to purify internally by renewing of the soul

Hagios/hagnos (adjective) hagios occurs 229 times; hagnos occurs 8 times

- 1) a most holy thing, a saint
- 1) exciting reverence, venerable, sacred
- 2) pure
 - a) pure from carnality, chaste, modest
 - b) pure from every fault, immaculate
 - c) clean

Greek - Holiness

Hieroprepēs (adjective) occurs 1 time

- 1) befitting men, places, actions or sacred things to God
- 2) reverent

Hagiasmos (masculine noun) occurs 10 times

- 1) consecration, purification
- 2) the effect of consecration
 - a) sanctification of heart and life

hagiotēs (feminine noun) occurs 1 time

- 1) sanctity
- 2) in a moral sense: holiness

Hosios (adjective) occurs 8 times

- 1) undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure holy, pious

Eusebeia (feminine noun) occurs 15 times

- 1) reverence, respect
- 2) piety towards God, godliness

Hagiōsynē (feminine noun) occurs 3 times

- 1) majesty, holiness
- 2) moral purity

Hosiotēs (feminine noun) occurs 2 times

- 1) piety towards God, fidelity in observing the obligations of piety, holiness

In the New Testament the Greek words translated to just the terms "holiness" or "holy" in the scriptures are used **306 times**

Hebrew words translated to the word "Holy"

Qadash/ kā·dash' - (verb) - occurs 173 times

- 1) to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate
 - a) (Qal)
 - 1) to be set apart, be consecrated
 - 2) to be hallowed
 - 3) consecrated, tabooed
 - b) (Niphal)
 - 1) to show oneself sacred or majestic
 - 2) to be honoured, be treated as sacred
 - 3) to be holy
 - c) (Piel)
 - 1) to set apart as sacred, consecrate, dedicate
 - 2) to observe as holy, keep sacred
 - 3) to honour as sacred, hallow
 - 4) to consecrate
 - d) (Pual)
 - 1) to be consecrated
 - 2) consecrated, dedicated

e) (Hiphil)

- 1) to set apart, devote, consecrate
- 2) to regard or treat as sacred or hallow
- 3) to consecrate

f) (Hithpael)

- 1) to keep oneself apart or separate
- 2) to cause Himself to be hallowed (of God)
- 3) to be observed as holy
- 4) to consecrate oneself

Qadowsh/ kā·dōshe' (adjective) - occurs 116 times

- 1) sacred, holy, Holy One, saint, set apart

Hebrew words translated to the word "Holiness"

Qodesh/ kō'·desh - (masculine noun) - also used and translated as "holiness" - occurs 470 times

- 1) apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness
 - a) apartness, sacredness, holiness
 - 1) of God; of places; of things
 - b) set-apartness, separateness

In the Old Testament the Hebrew words translated to just the terms "holiness" or "holy" in the scriptures are used **759 times**