

This Is How We Know: Holiness
March 11, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

Think how much the Father loves us. He loves us so much that he lets us be called his children, as we truly are. But since the people of this world did not know who Christ is, they don't know who we are. My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be hasn't yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is. This hope makes us keep ourselves holy, just as Christ is holy.

Everyone who sins breaks God's law, because sin is the same as breaking God's law. You know that Christ came to take away sins. He isn't sinful, and people who stay one in their hearts with him won't keep on sinning. If they do keep on sinning, they don't know Christ, and they have never seen him.

Children, don't be fooled. Anyone who does right is good, just like Christ himself. Anyone who keeps on sinning belongs to the devil. He has sinned from the beginning, but the Son of God came to destroy all that he has done. God's children cannot keep on being sinful. His life-giving power lives in them and makes them his children, so that they cannot keep on sinning. You can tell God's children from the devil's children, because those who belong to the devil refuse to do right or to love each other. (1 John 3:1-10 CEV)

God is love. If we know Him, we know love. If we know love, we will reflect love in all we say and do. If we reflect love in all we say and do, then holiness becomes the inevitable by-product of a life lived in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit. This week we will talk about how we know the importance and meaning of holiness.

Digging Deeper

Holiness is the DESTINY of every believer.

- Holiness does not come by trying to follow all the rules, but by following Christ and loving like Jesus loved. If you are looking at your "holy" neighbor to establish some kind of a moral baseline, remember, we aren't called to live like other Christians, we are called to live like Christ. Have you been guilty of comparing your actions to those of someone you deem as "more Christian" or "holier" than you? How do comparisons such as these set us back in our own faith development?
- Do you truly believe that holiness is your destiny? Have you allowed perceived shortcomings (which by the way are just the devil's deliberately planted lies) to place you in the stagnant mindset of one who sees sin as inevitable? How can we use His Word to break these thought patterns and begin to live into who we are as children of the Most High God?

Holiness is DEVELOPED by loving God and others.

- We can never measure up to God in terms of holy conduct, but we can mirror His loving motives. And when we do that holiness is developed as we truly love God and others. What can we learn about God's love for us and how He expects us to love each other from reading John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16? Is loving others in such a complete way difficult for you? Why or why not?

- If we believe it is important for behavior to mirror intentions, in what areas would you say you lack follow through in turning how you feel for someone into what you will do for them? Do you allow space in your heart for God to develop new (or deepen current) relationships?

Holiness results from radical DEPENDENCE on God.

- God's existence is not dependent on His relationship with us. But, our physical and spiritual existence are dependent on our relationship with Him. Since we cannot achieve holiness on our own, we must give ourselves over to God and trust that His plans are greater and His ways are better. What changes do you need to make so you will be totally dependent on God in all things?

Conclusion

The word holy is used hundreds of times in the Bible. In one example found in 1 Peter 1:14-16 we read that "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" We are all made in God's image so as He is holy, let us also be holy. But what does God mean when He asks us to be holy? When we read about this word in the Bible, the primary idea is that which is set apart, unique, or different. Holiness is a gift of God's grace. So if being holy means being different, then we should never want to be the same again. And when being different in this way becomes our normal, this is how we will know holiness.