

HOLINESS – Small Group Notes from Sunday 7th February 2010

SIMON CRAGG

→ What comes into your head when you think of the word 'holiness' or the thought of 'being holy'?

→ Simon described Holiness as 'simply becoming who we are' or 'becoming what God has created us to be' – is this a helpful definition?

→ When you think of holiness in regard to God, what do you think of? What kind of God is a holy God?

Holiness:

1. God is Holy
2. We are called to be Holy

But how?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-21

1. Holiness requires determination

Verse 13 – 'prepare'

- Doesn't happen automatically.

- 'prepare': refers to custom of tucking in one's long robe and getting ready. Peter is saying "roll up the sleeves of your mind". Throw off casual, lazy, relaxed attitudes in regard to your holiness.

→ Is holiness a top priority for you? Why is it so hard sometimes? How could we, on a daily basis, be more determined to be holy people?

2. Holiness involves transformation

Verse 14 – 'don't conform': they had begun to compromise their holiness.

- Through the Spirit they will conform less and less to evil desires they had when they lived in ignorance.

→ How have you changed since becoming a Christian? Are there patterns of thinking or behaviour that you find yourself falling back into?

e.g. materialism, insecurity, anger, drunkenness, sexual immorality (not that anyone will admit it!).

3. Holiness consists in imitation

- Verse 15-16: it involves understanding who God is, and imitating his holiness, particularly seen in Jesus who is 'God in human clothes'.

- This is to do with personal holiness- Integrity, genuine, veracity, faithfulness, love, compassion, benevolence, grace, mercy, persistence.

- And social holiness: Creating a society and communities where people are treated as God would treat them - with respect and dignity, where people avoid poverty and are drawn into relationship with God, where justice rolls like an ever-flowing stream...

4. Holiness needs motivation

- Verses 17-21 - With the high standards we are called to reach and fierceness of the battle we fight, we need some good motivation – Peter points to fear of God and redemption in Christ.

1. Fear: *is fear a healthy motivation for living holy lives?*
2. Our redemption: that God has redeemed us with something precious.
→ We all need motivation in life. What is your motivation for growing in faith, in love for Jesus, and in holiness? What is your motivation in life? What gets you up in the morning?

Some questions:

- Is there a consequence for not living a holy life?
- Where does grace fit into this? Is it wrong to feel guilty when we fall short?
- What would your life look like if you were more holy?
- What would our church look like if we were more holy?
- What would our society look like if we were more holy?
- How can we maintain a desire for holiness without creating self-righteous, 'holier than thou' attitudes in ourselves and our church?
- Do you think we have lost a sense of God's holiness in the Western church?

Conclusion

Simon quoted CS Lewis:

"Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of – throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but he is building up a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less"

Does this fit with your experience? Has 'becoming holy' been a painful experience? Why? How?