

Holiness

by George H. Alquist Jr.

As Christians, we are called to live a holy life, separated unto God, and to reflect His character in our words, thoughts, and deeds.

Topics: "Christian Living", "Sanctification"

Description

George H. Alquist Jr. preaches on the importance of holiness in the service of God, emphasizing the need for believers to live holy lives in anticipation of the return of Jesus Christ. The sermon highlights that holiness encompasses one's entire lifestyle, including words, thoughts, actions, motives, attitudes, and emotions, and that the lack of holiness in Christians' lives has brought shame upon the work of Christ. The message stresses the urgency of living a holy life, as time is running out to serve the Lord and reach the unsaved before Christ's return. Practical holiness is essential for believers, reflecting their positional holiness received through salvation in Christ.

Transcript

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" II Peter 3:10-12.

Holiness. You are called unto holiness in the service of the Great King.

"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," I Peter 1:13-16.

It is evident that God desires and, indeed, requires that His children be holy. In both passages quoted above the Lord speaks of holiness of conversation. Conversation in the original language speaks of one's entire lifestyle (words, thoughts, actions, motives, attitudes, emotions). The ministry requires holiness. Modern day Christianity has come under much attack because of the lack of holiness in the lives of so many Christians. Worldliness and lack of self-control have brought shame upon the work of Christ. The

world around us watches to see if the faith we profess is genuine. The world expects more of Christians than they do themselves in the area of holiness, and so it should! James 2:18 says,

"I will show thee my faith by my works."

The world cannot see our faith; they can only see the works which are a result of our faith. What kind of a message are they receiving?

In the passages from I Peter and II Peter we also find reference to the return of Jesus Christ. His return should be an incentive to holiness and godly living. Several things are apparent concerning the expected soon return of Christ. First, we will meet Him face to face and give an account of our life unto Him. He will judge our holiness by the standard of His Word, the Bible. Second, time is running out to serve and to please the Lord. Surely His return is near. If we are going to be obedient children and live holy lives we must begin today. Third, time is running out for the unsaved. Those who are lost in sin need to be reached with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ before it is too late. For many the return of Christ will seal their doom to an eternity in hell without hope. We who know Christ as Savior have the responsibility to make sure that our lives measure up to our lip and that our walks are in agreement with our talk that the lost might be saved. Fourth, we must keep in mind that all of the world's goods will be destroyed. The earth itself will one day dissolve under God's judgment of fire. Only the lives we lived and the works we did for Christ will have any eternal value beyond the grave or this world. These are strong incentives given by the Word of God to encourage us toward holiness. Fifth, we should be holy because we are His children. As children represent the parents we represent God. He is holy therefore we should be holy as well.

II Thessalonians tells us,

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth".

According to this verse, we are sanctified unto God by the Spirit of Christ. Sanctification is the English word for the Greek word *hagiasmos*, which means separation unto God. Believers have been separated, set apart, for God and for God's use. This requires holiness.

"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," I Thessalonians 4:3-4.

Here the word sanctification has the meaning of a resultant state and conduct befitting those separated. This is called practical holiness. Practical holiness is the outworking of our positional holiness which we have by virtue of our salvation. When you received Christ as your Savior you received positional holiness because you are now found in Him. This positional holiness should then find its expression in your lifestyle or practical holiness.

Here are five principles for guiding the believer's conduct: 1. Is it expedient? (I Corinthians 10:23) You must ask yourself if the activity you are considering is profitable and not merely convenient. Will a certain activity be profitable for the furtherance of the gospel? Is it something that will encourage someone to come to Christ? 2. Is it edifying? (I Corinthians 10:23) We must ask ourselves if what we are about to do will build up other believers. Will it help other Christians grow in their faith, will it strengthen them, or will it lead them into sin? 3. It may be all right, but is it in the best interest of others? (I Corinthians 10:24) We cannot allow ourselves to get into the 'am I allowed?' mode of thinking. We should be more concerned

with 'should I?' instead of 'can I?' 'Should I?' considers the interest of others and not only one's rights. Too often Christians are more concerned with what they can get away with instead of what they can get away from. Some Christians are afraid of becoming too holy. They want to see how close they can live to the world and still be on the right side of the line. Step back! I Thessalonians 5:22 tells us to

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Why? Because of others. 4. Can I ask God's blessing on it? Of course this immediately brings up the question of whether or not what we are contemplating is in accordance with the Word of God. If it violates any part or principle of the Word then God's blessing will not be upon it. Will what I am going to do, say, or think glorify God? Someone has suggested asking ourselves the question, "Would Jesus do, say, or think it?" If not, you and I should not either. 5. Will it be a stumbling block? Will my actions or words prove to be a stumbling block to the Jews, God's chosen people? Will my actions or words prove to be a stumbling block to the unsaved, adversely affecting them toward the gospel? Will my actions or words prove to be a stumbling block to Christians?

Holiness will also include our associations.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteous? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of god with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." II Corinthians 6:14-18.

You will become like the crowd you run with! Be careful to keep your associations with those of like precious faith and godliness.

Throughout the old and new testaments we are enjoined to be holy in word, thought, and deed. It would be of great benefit to you to do a word study on holiness. My friend, you will fail God and bring shame unto His name if you are unholy. It will require the grace of God to resist the temptations of this world. The grace of God is that enabling power that only He can give which will enable you to 'resist the Devil,' 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' 'eschew evil,' and 'flee youthful lusts.' If twentieth century Christianity needs anything it needs Christians and Christian leaders who are committed unto holiness for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Be that man!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-h-alquist-jr/holiness/>

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