

The Holy People

1 Peter 1:13-16

I. Scripture reading: 1 Peter 3

II. The Holy People... *The apostle has given us such beautiful and emboldening pictures of who we are as a people, and now we have begun to work through what we are called to do as a people. We've seen that we are meant to be mentally ready for action/movement, to be self-controlled, and to set our hope fully on the grace to be given us when Jesus comes for us. Now we are coming to consider the command of our Master to be holy and put aside the evil desires we once had.*

III. Holy... *'Holy' is one of those words we often use without clearly understanding what it means.*

Set Apart - *Throughout the Scriptures we see the word 'holy' applied to God and priests as well as places and objects. When used of people or objects, the word denotes the concept of being set aside for God's use and purpose. This is the primary use of the word for the process of worship in ancient Israel.*

Sacred – *The word 'holy' has always carried the sense of being set apart from the common or profane. The people and objects chosen by God are not to be the same as those things that are common to the unfaithful. Peter picked up on this part of our identity when he called the saints "strangers in the world" and "aliens". As a people we are not meant to be 'common' or like everyone else in the world.*

Pure, Clean – *In order to be useful to God, we must be pure and clean. The Old Covenant worship demanded that the objects and people who were gathered before God in his sanctuary or temple be clean and pure. Holiness, then, has the very clear connotation of being pure and clean for God's use. How can an unclean and soiled person or object be used consistently by the Holy God?*

IV. Granted and Demanded... *What we find throughout the Scriptures is that God makes people holy but He also demands that they demonstrate their holiness. What else can we conclude about this when we read the words, "Be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 3:16, quoting Leviticus 11:43-54 and 19:1-2)? If he commands it, mustn't we conclude that we have a choice in the matter and that it is possible for us to obey the command? So, holiness is possible for us, and it is a mutually active process between God and the people who are holy unto Him.*

V. Granted...

This morning we'll focus on God's part in the process of our holiness:

The Holy Spirit – *We are sanctified (i.e. 'made holy') through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Even by receiving the gift of God's Spirit, we are set apart from the common by God. [see Rom.15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13]. Remember that Peter wrote we are chosen "according... to the sanctifying work of the Spirit."*

Faith in Christ – *We are set apart for God and made clean for his use when we trust the Master, the Son that He sent to save and lead us all into the eternal kingdom. We cannot be reconciled to God without embracing His Son who was sent for the very purpose of reconciling us [see Acts 26:18; Thess. 2:13]*

Christ's Sacrifice – *The sacrifice of the precious and blameless Lamb of God has set us apart as holy by making us pure and spotless in God's eyes. Our pasts are forgiven and our spirits are transformed in a new birth "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." How could we hope to be holy for God's use without the purifying power of His sacrifice for our sins? (see Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 9:13-14; 10:10, 14, 19; 13:12)*

VI. Conclusion – We Are Holy... *There is no getting around it: holiness is not only possible for us, it is already true of us. God has already made us holy through his Spirit, through the truth of Christ we have embraced by faith, and through the sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood. Now, we must live as holy people. God*

willing, we will focus our part of holiness next week. For now, let us take to heart the work our Father and our Master have done to set us apart for themselves and cleanse us for His use and purpose. Amen.