

LIVING THE CHRIST-LIFE I

Living Holy

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The first Lord's Supper developed in an environment laden with fear, treason, and uncertainty. However, the whole environment was immersed by the holiness of the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Time has passed, but the stage hasn't changed much. On occasion, the truth of the revelation has been betrayed; at other times, fear has invaded large areas of the church, and uncertainty has multiplied in the ministry and faith of the mission fields. But always, in the hopeless crises as well as in the uncertain decisions, the radiant figure of the Lord's holiness has covered the church and its ministers with glory. It is as true now as it was before that: He lives and is the Lord of the church.

We are a step away from the twenty-first century. Looking back with gratitude and ahead with hopeful perplexity, we find that the greatest need for the church and for the world is that of producing men and women who know, live, and communicate holiness. This is not a simple statement; it is an urgent demand—not only from God, but from a mankind paralyzed in amazement by so many moral crises and so many spiritual disappointments.

What Is the Model of Holiness?

There have been—and still are—good models of holiness. God has placed men and women in each era who reflect his holiness. They are attractive and convincing, but the true model is Jesus Christ. An imitation of Christ is a poor copy of a model that cannot be imitated. Authentic holiness exposes and displays itself from the inside out. We have imitated the exterior of Jesus' life, and that replica consists of reproducing his miracles, teachings, promises, and even his charisma. The results have not been very convincing. We get the mistaken impression that the one who makes miracles, or astonishes with his biblical discoveries or his charismatic gifts, is a saint. We can be wrong when we use this reference as a standard.

Holiness, as well as the total Christian life, should be a reproduction of Jesus' inward life—not his exterior life—of the pure and transparent character of Jesus Christ. The holy person does not imitate Jesus, he just looks like Jesus. The world is continually searching for people who look like Jesus. We have had a sufficient number of gifted

people and eloquent speakers. We desperately need saints with the fragrance of Jesus Christ and the aroma from heaven.

The Price of Holiness

When we speak of *price* we think of the cost we have to pay or we think of sacrifice, renouncement, self-denial, or of taking up the cross. We are mistaken if we begin from this viewpoint, as if the core of holiness has to do with us. This could explain our natural unconscious rejection of holiness.

When we truly speak of holiness, we speak of renouncing; of crucifying, of dying. This is true and it is painful. But the pain is a profitable exchange. We renounce even that which is good, to obtain that which is better. To renounce is not always to lose; it is to yield to God all things—even the most beloved—so that he will return them beautified and enriched with the touch of his approval. It is an exchange. Paul expresses it with these words:

I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

We look at the marks of the Cross. Paul spoke of the marks of Christ in his life. This is the difference between religion and holiness.

Holiness reflects itself in the suffering of humble pastors in poor villages of the Third World, but it also should reflect itself among computers and high-tech equipment. The price of holiness is the renouncement of all so God can beautify everything that touches our lives.

Holiness is the presence of God in our lives. Not only do you have to desire it, you have to claim it. Moses was boldly clear; "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exodus 33:15, KJV). And God heard him. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord. He knew his precise need and said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26, KJV). And God responded: "For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (v. 28, KJV). This is holiness—to claim the presence of God. This is our struggle with God. This is the cost; we must say, "If thou go not with me, I go nowhere; and if thou dost not bless, I will not let thee go." If we cannot say this, we will know a great deal of the theory of holiness but very little of the reality.

The true price of holiness is what it is worth, what it signifies, what it represents, and what it produces in our lives in relation to the model which is Jesus Christ. The cost of holiness is insignificant, overwhelmingly insignificant compared to the price we pay for it and what we receive. Holiness is attractive, optimistic, contagious, and exuberant.

The Urgency of Holiness

Everyone demands urgency for their priorities. There is an urgency to evangelize. There is an urgency to pray. There is an urgency for missionaries. There is an urgency for the return of Jesus Christ. But all these urgencies are under the urgency of holy lives.

When we look at the model of holiness, which is Christ in us, we discover the true price of holiness. As we examine our motives, our ethics, our finances, our relation toward others, and the secret world of the heart that only God knows, then we perceive not only the importance of, but also the urgency for, men and women who are holy before God and have the approval of men.

Yet, I ask myself some questions:

We have many specialists that are a great help to the church, but where are the special men who look like Christ?

Every day there are more and more doctorates in our modern churches and the fashion continues to be in obtaining the greatest amount of credits to gain the greatest amount of approval, but where are the saints who look like Christ?

Our colleges and seminaries are being directed by excellent and experienced professionals, but where are the prophets of God who can say with the overwhelming authority of a saint: "Thus saith the Lord," and at the same time have a resemblance to Jesus?

A holy life, a holy church will evangelize, pray, and open new mission fields with greater efficiency and better results than any other priority out of the context of a holy life. Holiness is not a magic touch or an instantaneous prescription, but it involves an instantaneous decision and a process that embraces the whole life. Lausanne I produced one of the best statements of faith in history. Lausanne II should produce the best people of faith in history. Men of God, holy men; women of God, holy women—that is our greatest need and our greatest goal.

LIVING THE CHRIST-LIFE II

Christian Community and World Evangelization

Roberta Hestenes

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32, RSV).

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left (2 Corinthians 6:3-7, NIV).

So much of our thought and energy is devoted to the visions, methodologies, and strategies for worldwide evangelization that we need the help which Scripture provides to sort our priorities. To what will we give our major attention? Of all the things which should or could be done, which ones will capture our energy and our commitment?

We are finite human beings with limited time and energy. While we can accomplish great things by the grace and power of God, no one of us can do everything which needs to be done. We are not the saviors of the world; we are ambassadors for Christ who alone is the Savior. We must make choices. The need of the world does not determine our particular and specific callings. Only through prayer, worship, and attentive study of Scripture can we determine what God is calling us to and what our priorities should be.

Priorities not only relate to which work we do but also to the ways in which we accomplish our work. Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament said little about specific methodologies and strategies; however, they said a great deal about the character and relationships of those who are sent by God into the world to proclaim the gospel and make disciples.

Large sections of the Epistles are devoted to the themes of Christian character and Christian community. A foundational assumption of biblical Christianity is the membership of each Christian believer in the body of Christ—the church. The Great Commission is given to the church, the whole community of believers. The empower-

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