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"Preaching Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and risen to a condemned world"



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A HOLY GOD

By Michael Burnham

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. —Proverbs 9:10.

Without the fear (afraid of offending, of displeasing) of the Lord, no teaching is of any great profit. My Lord has finally revealed to me, after a great amount of study, the real meaning of *fearing the Lord*. But it didn't come from the study of the word fear, although I did, it came after I had done a serious study of *holy*. Although I knew what the fear of the Lord meant, I didn't have that inner understanding that compels a person to respond. 'This verse tells us why I didn't have that inner understanding. Understanding comes with knowledge of the holy God, Heb. 12:28.

How many of us are *extremely cautious* or *very, very careful* in our worship of God? Do you believe in your heart that after services at 11:00 Sunday that you have worshipped God? The word holy is plural and corresponds with Isa. 6:3, where God is called "Holy, Holy, Holy," and is equivalent to the

most high God. The only knowledge worth having, and which is profitable for the practical purposes of life, is the knowledge of God, who He is, what is His character.

In understanding the holiness of God we come to know ourselves, who and what we are, what constitutes the real excellence and nobility of human character and what does it take to elevate it. All other learning is as nothing when compared to this.--Pro. 2:1-9 (especially verse 5). These two ideas, the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God act together. Just as without fear of God there can be no knowledge of Him in its true sense, so the knowledge of God will increase and deepen the feeling of fear adding to it awe and reverence. The teacher is the *knowledge of the Holy*.

There is only one place we can go for this knowledge and that is God because only He can give us wisdom and knowledge of the all-holy God.--Pro. 30:1-6. In verse 3, Agur says, "*that with all my eager striving and longing I did not attain to such wisdom that I could have the knowledge of the holy.*" He exceeded the grasp of any earthly intelligence in this world, Job 11:7,8. The ques-

A Holy God

tions in verse 4 compelled Agur to acknowledge his ignorance and nothingness as he thought of the glory and power of God. "*Who is He that has ascended up into heaven, or descended?*" Look at how Jesus put it, Jn. 3:13. Who can restrain or release the invisible wind at his pleasure? Who can hold up the clouds as if in a garment, even when they are filled with water they do not fall upon the earth? *What is His name?* It is not enough to acknowledge the power and providence of this mysterious being; Agur longs to know more of His nature; who He is, what is He?--verse 5.

Every declaration of God in the inspired Bible (Torah) are pure, as if refined by fire, true and sincere. *Shield*. He is perfect protection to all those who flee to Him for refuge. Agur is saying that knowledge of the holy God can be obtained two ways --- By His revelation in His word, and by the experience of those who trust in Him. Verse 6. . . God's will in His recorded word is to be

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simply accepted and acted upon, not watered down, not overstrained. Speculations or traditions have no place mingled with the word of God.

Isa. 57:15. . . the idea of holiness is so central to biblical teaching that it is said of God, "*Holy is His name,*" Ez. 39:25. The first petition of the Lord's model prayer is, "*Hallowed be His name*" which means, man may hallow (sanctify, honor, make holy) His name here on earth. His name is holy because He is holy. He is not always treated with holy reverence. His name is tramped through the dirt of this world as it functions as a curse word. That the world has little respect for God is seen by the way the world regards His name. No honor, no reverence, no awe.

I want us to study, to understand what the holy is. There can be no worship, no spiritual growth; no true obedience without it. It defined our goal as Christians. God has declared, "*Be ye holy, for I am holy.*" 1Pe. 1:15, 16; 1Th. 3:13, 4:7. The standard of moral obligation is there is no shadow of turning or variableness, Jas. 1:17. There may be changes in social values but that doesn't make them right because the standard is God's holiness, not man's inventions. The ultimate reason and ground for us to be and do right is because God is holy, 1Pe. 1:16, Mat. 5:48.

Holiness is lord in the being of God. All of His attributers are submissive to holiness. For instance, in Christ's redeeming work, though love makes the atonement, it

A Holy God

is violated holiness that requires it. Christ's sacrifice satisfies the demands of God's violated holiness. Though the lost may cry out for God's love at the judgment, His holiness forbids it because holiness demands justice. Without Christ's substitutionary sacrifice they must pay the penalty of His violated holiness or God would violate His own holiness, He would have to lay aside justice, which would destroy His righteousness. Since He would then no longer be holy, no longer always just, no longer always right, His word would also be subject to change at His whim, He would no longer be all knowing, all wise, etc. In other words, He would no longer be God. Without His absolute holiness everything would be chaos (total disorder) and absolute truth would not exist because it would be ever changing like with man. It's no wonder that the psalmist says, "Rejoice for the Lord our God is holy."

The atonement, if man was to be saved, was necessary, not primarily on man's account, but on God's account. The wisdom of God is best shown, not in reconciling man and God, but in reconciling the holy God with the loving God. The declaration that Christ is "*the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" implies the existence of a principle in the divine nature which requires satisfaction, before God can enter upon the work of redemption. That principle is holiness. Christ's sacrifice was a completed offering before Calvary, being seen by the Father, with whom all things are present, before it was seen by the

world, Rev. 13:8; 1Pe. 1:19,20, Rom. 3:24-26. Without His eternal council, it was impossible for Him to have done any work of creation.

Even we were chosen before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4. Creation is built on redemption lines, that is, the incarnation and atonement were included in God's original design of the world. God may be merciful, but He must be holy. Wisdom and knowledge must be controlled or they may become craft and cunning, omnipotence must be controlled or it may become tyranny, oppression and cruelty, mercy and love must be controlled or there would be no justice. It is the holiness of God that regulates and controls all of His attributes.

DEFINING HOLINESS

It has been customary to define holy as: "*Purity, free from every stain, wholly perfect in every detail.*" In fact, purity is the first word most of us think of when we hear the word holy. The Bible does use the word this way. But the idea of purity or of moral perfection is only part of the meaning of the term in the Bible. When the seraphim sang their song, they were saying far more than that God was "*purity, purity, purity.*"

The primary meaning of holy is *to separate, to cut*. It refers to *a cut above something*. When we find a garment or another piece of merchandise that is outstanding, that has a superior quality, we use the expression that it is *a cut above the rest*. The theological term for holy is *transcendence*

A Holy God

and means to *exceed usual limits*. To transcend is to rise above something, to go above and beyond a certain limit. When we speak of the transcendence of God we are talking about that sense in which God is above and beyond us, Psa. 89:6-8. For instance, what does the Bible say about His ways and thoughts? Isa. 55:8,9, about where He dwells? Isa. 57:15, His greatness, Psa. 145:3, His understanding, Psa. 147:5. The word is used to describe God's relationship to the world. He is higher than the world. He has absolute power over the world. The world has no power over Him, Psa. 93:1-5; 99:1-3,5,9; 113:1-6. Transcendence describes God in His consuming majesty, His exalted loftiness. It points to the infinite distance that separates Him from every creature. He is an infinite cut above everything else, Rom 11:33-36.

When the Bible calls God holy, it means primarily that God is transcendently separate. He is so far above and beyond us that He seems almost totally foreign to us, Isa. 40:18, 25. To be holy is to be different in a special way. The same basic meaning is used when the word holy is applied to earthly things, Ez. 22:26, 44:23; Lev. 10:10.

Holy ground, holy Sabbath, holy convocation, holy nation, holy place, holy linen coat, holy house, holy tithe, holy censers, holy bread, holy covenant, holy anointing oil, holy jubilee, holy field, holy ark, holy city, holy word, holy ones, holy of holies. This is by no means a complete list but it shows us that the word holy is applied to all sorts of things besides God. In every case

the word holy is used to express something other than a moral or ethical quality, (purity). The things that are holy are things that are set apart, separated from the rest. They have been consecrated, separated from the commonplace, unto the Lord and to His service. They are different in a special way.

None of the things in the list is holy in itself. To become holy they must first be consecrated or *sanctified* by God. God alone is holy in Himself. Only God can sanctify something else. Only God can put the touch on something that changes it from the commonplace to something special, different, and apart, because only God is holy, Rev. 15:4; 1Sa. 2:2.

Whatever is holy has been separated from common use. It may not be touched; it may not be eaten; it may not be used for common matters. It is special.

Where does purity come in? When things are made holy, when they are consecrated, they are set apart unto purity. They are to be used in a pure way. Purity is not excluded from the idea of the holy; it is contained within it. But the idea of the holy is never exhausted by the idea of purity.

When we use the word holy to describe God, we face another problem. We often describe God by compiling a list of qualities or characteristics that we call attributes. We say that God is a spirit, that He knows everything, that He is loving, just, merciful, gracious, and so on. The tendency is to add the idea of the holy to this long list of

A Holy God

attributes as one attribute among many. But when the word holy is applied to God, it does not signify one single attribute. The word is used as a synonym for His deity. The word holy calls attention to all that God is. It reminds us that His love is holy love; His justice is holy justice; His mercy is holy mercy; His knowledge is holy knowledge; His spirit is Holy Spirit; all His works are holy works, Psa. 145:17.

We have seen that the term holy calls attention to the transcendence of God, the sense in which He is above and beyond the world. The term holy also calls attention to God's purity, righteous and just and free from all moral impurity, De. 32:3,4; Job 8:3, 34:10,12; Gen. 18:25. We have also seen that God can "reach down" and consecrate special things in this world and make them holy. His touch on the common makes the common suddenly uncommon. Again, nothing in this world is holy in itself. Only God can make something holy.

When we call things holy that are not holy we commit the sin of idolatry, which is giving to common things the respect, awe, worship, and adoration that belong only to God. To worship an idol involves calling something holy that is not holy.

The clearest sensation that a human being has when he experiences the holy is an overpowering and overwhelming sense of "creatureliness". That is, when we are aware of the presence of God, we become most aware of ourselves as creatures, as can be seen by the seraphim and Isaiah. When we meet the absolute, we know im-

mediately that we are not absolute. When we meet the infinite, we become conscious that we are finite. When we meet the eternal, we know we are temporal.

Isa. 6:1. . .The king was dead. But when Isaiah entered the temple he saw another king, the ultimate king, the one who sat forever on the throne of Judah. He saw the Lord.

Notice how in Isaiah 6:1 the word "Lord" is printed. It begins with a capital letter and then is finished with lower case letters. This stands in contrast with the word "LORD" that occurs later in verse three. Sometimes the word Lord appears in all capital letters. The reason for this difference is that two different Hebrew words are used in the original text, but both are rendered in English by the word Lord.

When the word Lord occurs in lower case letters the translator is indicating to us that the word "Adonai" is found in the Hebrew Bible. "Adonai" means "Sovereign One". It is not the name of God. It is a title for God, the supreme title given to God in the Old Testament.

When LORD appears in all capital letters, it indicates that the word "Jahweh" is used in the Old Testament. Jehovah/Jahweh (English pronunciation and the Jewish pronunciation, like Jesus/Yeshua) is the sacred name of God, the name God revealed Himself to Moses with in the burning bush, Ex. 3:14,15, meaning that He is of independent, self-determining existence. The word Jeh/Jah is the sacred name of God, and

A Holy God

Hayah/Hovah/Hweh means "to be, exist, the timeless one", the very foundation of all existence. This is the unspeakable name, the holy name that is guarded from profanity in the life of Israel. Normally it occurs only with the use of its four consonants--- Yhwh, the unspeakable four letters. In Psa. 8:1,9; we see "O LORD, our Lord" or "O Jahweh, our Adonai", or "O God, our sovereign one". The title " Adonai" was given to Jesus in the New Testament. When Christ is called "Lord" (Kurios) He is invested with the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament "Adonai", John 20:28. Jesus is called the Lord of lords, the King of kings, 1Ti. 6:15, gaining a title that beforehand was reserved only for God, the supreme sovereign of heaven and earth.

When Isaiah came to the temple, there was a crisis of sovereignty in the land. Uzziah was dead. The eyes of Isaiah were opened to see the real king of the nation. He saw God seated on the throne, the sovereign one.

Isa. 6:2. . .As angelic beings they are still creatures, and even in their lofty status as consorts of the heavenly host, it is necessary for them to shield their eyes from a direct gaze on the face of God. They are equipped by their creator with a special pair of wings to cover their faces in His majestic presence, an expression of reverence. They have a second pair of wings to cover their feet as if concealing themselves as much as possible, a sign of their nothingness and unworthiness in the presence of the holy God. If pure and holy angels showed such reverence in the presence of the holy God,

with what awe and reverence and fear should we, polluted and sinful creatures show?

Isa. 6:3. . .The song of the seraphim reveals the awesome message, the Lord our God is a most holy God and cannot be trifled with. Disobedience brings justice. The repetition is a form of emphasis. When we want to emphasize the importance of something in English we can underline the important words or print them in italics or boldface type. We may attach an exclamation point or set them off in quotation marks. The Jew used repetition as one method of emphasis. To mention something three times in succession attaches to it emphasis of super importance. For example, the dreadful judgment of God is declared in the book of Revelation 8:13, by the angel in midair who cried with a loud voice: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." Only once is a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, etc.

Isa. 6:4. . . The door frame began to shake. The smoke probably indicates His holy anger at Judah.

Isa. 6:5. . .The doors of the temple were not the only things that were shaking. The thing that quaked the most in the building was the body of Isaiah. When he saw the living God, the reigning monarch of the universe displayed before his eyes in all of His holiness, Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me!"

A Holy God

The word woe has special meaning. On the lips of a prophet the word woe is an announcement of doom. In the Bible, cities are doomed; nations are doomed; individuals are doomed--- all by the uttering of woe. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he pronounced the judgment of God upon himself, calling down the curse of God upon his own head.

Immediately following the curse of doom, Isaiah cried, "For I am undone." To be undone means to come apart at the seams, to be unraveled. In that single moment all of his self-esteem was shattered. In a brief second he was exposed, made naked beneath the gaze of the absolute standard of holiness. As long as Isaiah could compare himself to other mortals, he was able to sustain a lofty opinion of his own character. The instant he measured himself by the ultimate standard, he was destroyed, ruined.

We are fortunate in one respect; God does not appear to us in the way He appeared to Isaiah. Who could stand it? God normally reveals our sinfulness to us a bit at a time. God showed Isaiah his corruption all at once. No wonder he was ruined. He saw the holiness of God. For the first time in his life, Isaiah really understood who God was. At the same instant, for the first time Isaiah really understood who Isaiah was.

Isa. 6:6,7. . .The holy God is also a god of grace. He refused to allow His servant to continue in his grief and mourning for his guilt and sin. His sin was taken away and

his guilt (iniquity) removed. In a moment the undone prophet was whole again. He was clean. This is the only way we can come into the presence of the holy God, cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Only through Him can we come to the throne of grace and not be undone like Isaiah was.

Mark 4:35-40...Here we have an event that made a special impression on the disciples. Jesus controlled the fierce forces of nature by the sound of His voice. He uttered a command and instantly nature obeyed. The wind heard the voice of its creator and ceased and the sea recognized the command of its Lord and became like glass.

Notice the reaction of the disciples---verse 41. That the storm and raging sea frightened them is understandable. But once the danger passed and the sea was calm, it would seem that their fear would vanish as suddenly as the storm. It didn't happen that way. Now that the sea was calm, the fear of the disciples "increased." How do we account for that?

They cried out, "What manner of man is this?" They were looking for a category to put Jesus in, a type that they were familiar with. If we can classify people into certain types, we know how to deal with them. We respond one way to hostile people and another way to friendly people. But they could not find a category adequate for Jesus. He was beyond typecasting. He was in a class by Himself. They had never met a holy man, a man who could speak to winds and waves and have them obey him.

A Holy God

Jesus was different. He possessed an awesome difference. He made them uncomfortable.

Luke 5: 1-7...Peter was tired. He had been up all night and was frustrated by the lack of success in his fishing. When Jesus finished speaking Peter was ready to go home and go to bed. Instead, Jesus wanted to go fishing. You can imagine the frustration Peter felt. But no sooner had Peter dropped the nets where Jesus told him that it seemed as if every fish in the sea of Galilee jumped into them.

Notice Peter's reaction in verse 8. He became desperately uncomfortable. His initial response was one of worship, he fell to his knees before Christ. Instead of saying something like, "Lord, I adore thee, I magnify thee," he said, "Please go away. Please leave."

The history of the life of Christ is a history of multitudes of people pushing through crowds just to get close to Him. But not Peter, why? Peter recognized that he was in the presence of the holy and right away he saw himself, a sinful man. The transcendent standard of all righteousness and all purity stood before his eyes. Like Isaiah before him, Peter was undone.

Christ is no longer walking the earth. He has ascended into heaven. Yet the threatening power of His holiness is still felt. Sometimes it is transferred to His people. As the Jews at the foot of Mt. Sinai fled in terror from the dazzling face of Moses, so people today get uncomfortable in the mere pres-

ence of Christians.

Let's look at some passages in the Old Testament that some find offensive, and appear to be unjust.

Lev. 10: 1-3...Many think that God was extreme in His judgment upon Nadab and Abihu. The Lord reminded Aaron of the original consecration of the priests. They had been set apart for a sacred task and solemnly charged with the precise requirements of their office. They had the privilege of ministering before a holy God. Each vessel in the tabernacle was made to precise specifications and each item was sanctified by elaborate measures commanded by God, they were holy unto the Lord. With respect to the altar of incense, Aaron and his sons were specifically instructed in the proper procedures, Ex. 30: 9,10.

The instructions had been clear. The altar of incense was declared by God to be most "holy". When Nadab and Abihu offered strange or unauthorized fire upon it, they were acting in clear defiance of God. It was an act of blatant rebellion, showing no respect for God or what He had set apart. Holiness to them meant nothing, they profaned that which was holy, Ez. 22:26.

God's judgment was swift. In verse 3, "Aaron remained silent". What else could he do? He held his peace. He could think of no excuse to offer, no protest to make.

Was this punishment cruel and unusual? If we struggle with the story of Nadab and Abihu, we meet even greater difficulty with

A Holy God

the story of Uzzah. When the ark of the covenant was returned by the Philistines it was placed in safekeeping. Now David wanted the ark back and placed in a position of prominence in the midst of the nation, 1Ch. 13:3,4. The ark was the rallying point for the nation. The sacred seat of the most high, the throne of God. It was to be housed in the holy of holies.

1Ch. 13:7-11. . . Even more than the case of Nadab and Abihu, the execution of Uzzah stirs protests from readers who have been taught that God is a god of love and kindness. The Bible says of God that He is long-suffering and slow to anger. It sure didn't take His anger long to reach the boiling point with Uzzah. He touched the ark and wham! Surely Uzzah's reaction was instinctive. He did what any pious Jew would do to keep the ark from falling in the mud. He reached out his hand to steady the ark, to protect the holy object from falling. It was not a premeditated act of defiance towards God. It was a reflex action. From our vantage point it seems like he did the right thing.

What was Uzzah's sin? To answer that we must look back in Jewish history to the formation of the priesthood and the special commands that God had given them. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. A special family branch of the Levites were the clan of Kohathites. The Kohathites were consecrated by God to a highly specialized task. They were trained for one basic job---to take care of the sacred articles of the tabernacle, Num. 4:4,15-20.

Uzzah was a Kohathite. He knew exactly

what his duties were. He understood that God had declared that the touching of the ark of the covenant was a capital offense. No Kohathite, under any circumstance, was ever permitted to touch the ark. No emergency was grounds for breaking the inviolate command. Only the poles could be touched by man and inserted into the rings for purposes of transport. Then it was the task of the Kohathites to carry the ark by these poles. No provision was made for hurrying the procedure by transporting the ark by an oxcart. What was the ark doing on an oxcart in the first place? 1Ch. 15:12-15

Was his act right? No! It was an act of arrogance, a sin of presumption. Uzzah assumed that his hand was less polluted than the earth. But it wasn't the ground or the mud that would desecrate the ark, it was the touch of man. The earth is an obedient creature. It does what God tells it to do. There is nothing polluted about the ground.

God didn't want His holy throne touched by that which was contaminated by evil, that which was in rebellion to Him. It was man's touch that was forbidden. Uzzah was not an innocent man. He was not punished without a warning. He was not punished without violating a law. There was nothing arbitrary or whimsical about what God did in that moment. That which is holy is not to be taken lightly by man, because God does not take holiness lightly.

What God does is always consistent with who God is. He always acts according to His holy character. As a holy God, He is utterly incapable of an unholy act. God does not al-

A Holy God

ways act with justice. Sometimes He acts with mercy. Mercy is not justice, but neither is it injustice. We may see non-justice in God, which is mercy, but we never see injustice in God.

Let's look at one more passage that seems rather harsh to us, Deut. 7:1,2. In the conquest of Canaan, God explicitly commanded the slaughter of men, women, and children. The assumption of some commentators is that God wiped out innocent women and children in Canaan. There were multitudes of women living there and multitudes of children. But there was none who were innocent. The conquest of Canaan was an expression of God's righteous judgment on a wicked nation. He also made it clear to Israel that she was also not innocent. It was not as if God destroyed a wicked people for the sake of a righteous people. To the Canaanites God poured out justice. To the Jews God poured out mercy, De. 9:4-6.

The holiness of God is at the heart of the issue of the conquest of Canaan. It was because of His holiness that the act was ordained. On the one hand He moved to punish the insult to His holiness that was daily perpetrated by the Canaanites. On the other He was preparing a land and a nation for a holy purpose. God commanded that no mercy be shown toward the inhabitants of the land. In De. 7: 3-6, He explained why. God did not choose Israel because Israel was already holy. He chose them to make them holy. Israel was called to be holy in two senses. She was called to be different, Deut. 14:2, to be set apart as a vehicle of

God's plan of redemption. She was also called to be holy in the sense of being purified. Pagan practices were to be absent from her. She was to be sanctified by drawing near to God. The promised land was to be the breeding ground for the coming Messiah. There was no room for pagan shrines and pagan rites. God ordained a scorched-earth policy to purge that land for future salvation.

Since it is out tendency to take grace for granted, it may be that God also found it necessary from time to time to remind Israel that grace must never be assumed. On occasions He showed the dreadful power of His justice. He killed Nadab and Abihu. He killed Uzzah. He commanded the slaughter of the Canaanites. It is like He was saying, "Be careful. While you enjoy the benefits of my grace, don't forget my justice. Don't forget the gravity of sin. Remember that I am holy."

BE YE HOLY

Christians in the early church were called "saints", Col. 1:2; Phi. 4:21,22. The word saint conjures up images of a super-righteous person, a person of extraordinary piety and spirituality.

The Bible uses the word "saint" for the rank-and-file believer. In the New Testament all of the people of God enjoy the title "saint". The word means "holy one". It seems odd that the term is used for believers who were struggling with all sorts of sin. Paul addresses the people as saints and then goes on to rebuke them for their fool-

A Holy God

ish and sinful behavior, I Cor. 1:2.

The saints of Scripture were called saints not because they were already pure, but because they were people who were set apart and called to purity, 1Th. 4:7. The word holy has the same two meanings when applied to men as it has when it is applied to God. We recall that when the word holy is used to describe God, it first calls attention to that sense in which He is different or apart from us, and second calls attention to His absolute purity. But we are not God, we are not transcendent; we are certainly not pure. How then can the Bible possibly call us "holy ones"?

The Bible calls us "holy ones" for two reasons: first, we are holy because we have been consecrated to God. We have been chosen and set apart. We have been called to a life that is "different", 1Pe. 2:9 (peculiar). The Christian life is a life of nonconformity, Rom. 12:1,2.

The simplistic way of being nonconforming is to see what is in style in our culture and then do the opposite. If short hair is in, the nonconformist wears long hair. The extreme case of this may be seen in sects that refuse to wear buttons or use electricity because such things are too worldly.

A superficial style of nonconformity is the pharisaical trap. The kingdom of God is not about buttons, electricity, or hair. The concern of God is not focused on what we eat or what we drink, Rom. 14:17,18. Jesus said, "It is not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of his mouth."

Anyone can avoid physical things but what is difficult is to control the tongue, to act with integrity, to show forth the fruit of the spirit. A true nonconformist is a person who stops coveting, he stops gossiping, he stops slandering, he stops hating; he starts to practice the fruit of the spirit.

What we are ultimately called to is more than nonconformity; we are called to transformation. We notice that the words conform and transform both contain the same root word form, which means, "the characteristics of a person or thing". The only difference between the two words is found in the prefixes. The prefix "con" means "with". To conform then is to be "with the structures or crowds." We sometimes say a person is "with it". He has the same characteristics as everyone else and the same life-style, thoughts and beliefs as society condones.

The prefix *trans* means "across" or "beyond". When we are called to be transformed, it means that we are to rise above the structures and crowds of this world. We are not to follow the world's lead but to cut across it and rise above it to a higher calling and life-style. The key method Paul underscores as the means to the transformed life is by the "renewal of the mind". This means nothing more and nothing less than education; disciplined education in the things of God. It calls for a constant reading, studying, and practicing of the word of God. It's people whose lives have been changed because their minds have changed.

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Don't build your house on the sand!

A Holy God

True transformation comes by gaining a new understanding of God, man, and the world. What we are after ultimately is to be conformed to the image of Christ, Rom. 8:29; 2Co. 3:18. Christ in His life and character is the supreme example of the divine holiness. In Him it consisted in more than mere sinlessness: it was His entire consecration to the will and purpose of God. The key to spiritual growth is in-depth Christian education that requires a serious level of sacrifice.

To be a saint means to be separated, 2Co. 6:17,18. Second, it also means to be in a process of sanctification, purified daily in the growing pursuit of holiness, Rom. 6:22; 2Co. 7:1. God's people have a distinctive character given by God. The fruit of the spirit are marks of that character and of a person who is growing in holiness, Gal. 5:22. These are the virtues we are called to cultivate and practice, 1Th. 4:7. We are

Schedule of Services

Sunday Worship..... 12:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer..... 7:00 PM
Our meeting house is located at 50130 S. Caswell Loop just south of the intersection of Bendapole Road and Passtheba Avenue

to be partakers of His holiness, Heb. 12:10.

God is holy, holy, holy. He is far above us, awesome, majestic and pure, Psa. 113:4-6. The fruit of our growing love for Him is the increase of reverence for His name. We love Him now because we see His loveliness. We adore Him now because we see His majesty. We obey Him now because His holy spirit dwells within us, leading us to holiness, 2Pe. 3:10-14; Psa. 33:21.

Someone wrote: "If you could in a vision see yourself the man God meant, you could never again be the man you are---content."



Brother Michael Burnham, a former member of Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church is now present with the Lord. He researched and wrote this article before his death. It was previously unpublished.