

Holy Living – Sunday July 8th 2012.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Colossians 3:17;23-24

Beloved in the Lord,

God is calling us to Holy living and not just Holy moments. There is a world of difference between Holy Living and observing Holy moments. This is something many people do not really understand very well and that is why it is so important for us to unpack this idea and go a little deeper with it.

The first thing that we need to be clear about is why God created us in the first place. God created man in order that we may live in fellowship with Him. God desires that we live in a close and loving relationship with Him. Because God is Holy then we must understand that our call is to be holy. To live a holy life.

In the beginning all was well. Adam lived in obedience to God and the fellowship was sweet. We read in Genesis, that God would come down from Heaven and in the cool of the evening He would walk in the garden with Adam. They would enjoy a time of fellowship. Adam was tasked with naming the animals, so I can well imagine they discussed what names Adam had given. No doubt they discussed many other things.

Rebellion, disobedience wrecked the relationship. Through disobedience man became sinful, unholy, tarnished, and as a result could no longer abide in the presence of a Holy God. That is why after they had sinned Adam and Eve hid themselves in the garden. God was forced to throw them out of the garden and they became mortal.

This however, did not change God's desire nor intentions for man. He continued to love man and to desire fellowship. He continued and does to this day, desire for us to love Him and serve Him, to live in fellowship with Him.

This fellowship is only possible when we are reconciled to Him. The price of reconciliation was innocent blood of an unblemished lamb. God provided the Lamb in the form of His own dear Son. God sacrificed His guiltless, innocent Son, in order to reconcile us to Him. Jesus shed His blood to pay our sin debt in full.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

When we believe on Jesus and accept Him as our personal Saviour, then our sin debt is paid in full by His blood and we are reconciled to God. From that moment we begin to live a Holy life.

In his letter to the Romans Paul wrote:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 12:1-2

It is clear from the Greek, that Paul is not talking about a one off event, but a continual giving of oneself, a continual presentation of oneself to God as a living sacrifice. It means to consciously offer yourself to God every day. To submit your will to His will every day. To seek His ways and His Kingdom above all else.

Jesus taught this in teaching His disciple's to pray:

Our Father in Heaven; Holy be Your Name. Your Kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread....

Everyday anew we submit to Him, offer ourselves to Him in love, as a living and holy sacrifice. To offer ourselves as a sacrifice is to give it all. Not a partial sacrifice but a whole one. Paul put it this way in writing to the Galatians:

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Galatians 2:20°

The key to a sanctified life, to a holy life is to put to death our ego. Pride, boastfulness, self glorification, seeking the praise of others is a major enemy to our life. We need to daily crucify our self and submit our will to His will. Not my way, not my will, but Yours O Lord.

Paul writes a little further in his letter to the Galatians:

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.” Gal.5:16-18;23-24

So we see that in order to live a holy life we must walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit is to trust God in all things and with all things. As Paul said: ***"In Him we live, move and have our being." Acts 17:28***

Latvian Pastor Janis Smits writes in a sermon on service:

"I wish to emphasise that the Christian life; absolutely all of it, is service to the Lord! Everything we do, if we are truly saved, is service unto the Lord! If we speak then we speak as God's Word – to His glory. If we go to school, then we do so to God's glory. We find our life's partner in the Lord and to His glory. We have children to His glory. We serve in the Church to glorify His name. We work at our secular jobs, so that we can provide for ourselves as well as to give to others, all to God's glory. We pay our taxes, as levied by the government, to the glory of God. We strive to be honourable citizens, we strive for the good of our country, in which God has ordained we spend our time of sojourn to the glory of God!"

What the Apostle Paul, what Pastor Smits, what I am trying to get you to understand is that whatever we do in word or deed we should be doing to the **Glorify of God!** As Christians our whole life is service to God.

Our motivation in service should not be to receive praise, honour and thanks from man, but to glorify God.

In our foundation text Paul writes:

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

As we live a Holy life, we do everything as unto the Lord and with thanksgiving. Last Sunday we considered that praise gives us a right perspective in our lives. Praise protects us and keeps us in the truth.

Many people stumble in their walk with the Lord and are stunted in their growth, simply because they have not grasped the concept of Holy living. They make the mistake of dividing life into two parts: worldly and spiritual.

This is neither blessed nor right. If we are in Christ, there can be no division between secular and spiritual. Our whole life is spiritual in the sense that we live and walk in the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean that we all must study at seminary and become pastors or evangelists. That is not what God desires.

Paul spells this out in his illustration of a body with many members, but each one having a role to play:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. " 1 Cor.12:12-18

Please notice that God has created us and given us a part as He desired. When we understand this and allow His Spirit to lead us in Holy living then He is glorified. When we live a Holy life and not just observe Holy moments, the body (His Church) functions well and we are all blessed. Not to us, but to Him be the glory now and forever. Let us live a Holy life to His glory.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.