

From I Peter: Be Holy!
I Peter 1:1-2:12

Introduction:

- I. We often talk about being holy when we discuss the Scriptures. We read verses such as Leviticus 11:44 – “You shall be holy as I am holy.”
 - a. However, to some people it may not be as simple as it sounds. It may seem as though someone is telling us, “Build a motorcycle engine,” and we feel as though we will never be able to be holy. We get discouraged and become comfortable in our present position of holiness and faith in God, and as a result, we do not grow.
 - b. Really, some of the time it may not be completely our fault, because we really do not know how to go about becoming holy. All it would take to get us excited about being holy and sanctified for God is an introduction on how to become and stay holy.
- II. That is one of the reasons that I prepared these lessons for today and this evening. We will be discussing the significance of our calling to be holy this morning, and exactly what that includes this evening. We will discuss practical issues and attitudes. It is not rocket science. It is simple, and in fact it is one of the *core* virtues of the Christian life.
- III. This morning our lesson will come from I Peter, the first and second chapters. In this lesson we will discuss:
 - a. The worth of the Christian.
 - b. The purity of the word of God.
 - c. The purity that we are called to have.

Discussion:

1. But first, what does it mean to be “holy?”
 - a. Being dedicated or consecrated to the service of God
 - i. Of humans, this refers to being consecrated to God, pure, reverent
 - ii. It is often used interchangeably with purity to symbolize perfection and worthiness of God.
 - b. This is an adjective in the Greek language. However, adjectives can often stand for nouns in Greek sentences (like “raising the dead,” where “dead” is an adjective used as a noun). When “holy” is used as a noun, it means “saints.”
 - c. Why say that? We often refer to all Christians as saints. This means that all Christians, in order to be saints, *must be holy*. Otherwise, they are accepting a title they are not wearing. The same goes for calling themselves “Christians.” It means “like Christ,” and if we are not striving to be like Christ, then we are hardly Christians at all. This is why Peter says in his second letter, “Be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure” (II Peter 1:10). We do not need to accept a title that we are not willing to live up to.
2. The worth of God’s people
 - a. The first problem that most people have in this country (perhaps aside from poor money habits) is low self-esteem and self-worth. You may be wondering why.

- i. In your opinion, are you rich or poor?
 1. Most people, especially in this part of the country would say, “Well, I’m not rich. I’m poor.”
 - a. However, the average income in the United States is between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per year.
 - i. In Haiti, it is less than \$400 per year.
 - ii. In Bangladesh, it is about \$98 per year.
 - iii. What most Americans make in *one day* is more than what the average citizen of Bangladesh makes in *one year*.
 - iv. Are you poor? Why do we think we are poor? We do not think we are worth very much.
 - ii. Why is there such a problem with low self-esteem in this country?
 1. In some countries, young people are told what their career will be. They are told who they will marry and where they will live.
 - a. It would seem that these would have self-esteem issues, would they not?
 - b. However, those who must make a *decision* in these areas are often worried that they will not (or perhaps cannot) make the right decision. Guess what: low self-esteem sneaks in.
 2. In some countries, everyone, young and old, is expected to work hard labor every day of the week. They have little time for family and get paid very little. Furthermore, they have to walk everywhere they go, and their food supply is almost never what it should be.
 - a. It would seem that these would have self-esteem issues.
 - b. However, the fact that they constantly are working hard and constantly walking and working their bodies causes them to be healthy, even though they have what we would call a “tough life.”
 - c. In America, many people have easy jobs (compared to the rest of the world). Many people do not work until they are teenagers, and most people stop working around the age of 65. We do not have to walk anywhere, and almost everything we need is available at the push of a button. Sounds great, huh?
 - i. Well, there is scientific proof that exercise not only leads to physical health, but emotional and mental health as well. Therefore, in order to be *happy*, one must do some strenuous work, right?
 - ii. Since our society is so comfortable and easy, we do not get that work, and we have to invent work to do (exercise). Those who do not do this are most often less healthy than those who do. Those who do this often are pressed for time and stressed.
 - iii. It is funny, is it not, how we are in what is called the best time in history in the most privileged country in the world, and yet we have self-esteem issues running rampant through our society.

- b. However, God sees his people as worth more than gold! The people of God are worth more than gold, because when it is tested and purified, it still eventually perishes. God's holy people will not perish. Our testing and purification results in a joyful expectation of Christ's coming, which will bring about our salvation (something the angels are curious about).
 - c. The prophets were our servants, to tell us about the coming and nature of Christ, his sufferings and glory, to be preached in the good news of our salvation (10-12).
 - i. Seeing our worth, we should keep ourselves pure (not as a mint-condition antique to be left for dust). We need to take care of ourselves and *keep purifying* ourselves, so that we will be preserved until the coming of Christ (13-16).
 - 1. Warning – If God judges based on deeds, and not on “favorites,” it does not matter if we were at one time his chosen nation. We have to have our deeds pure, bringing us to holiness, preserving us (17).
 - 2. We were found as an artifact left to perish, but the Father found us, cleaned us up, and is wanting to keep us.
 - d. The cost for ransoming us and allowing us to be cleansed was more than gold (Christ's blood and body, 18-20).
 - i. He was foreknown in those prophecies, but revealed to us in the flesh for our sake, that we may be saved.
 - e. Therefore we obey him, to the purifying of our souls, and must then love one another with a pure heart, being born again of imperishable seed, through the word of God, which also is imperishable. Gold and silver may perish, but we will never perish, for we are born of the imperishable word of God (21-25).
3. The *purity of the word* (Chapter 2)
- a. Peter brings back two of his major themes from the previous chapter and puts them together. The Christian saved by the good news (the word of God) is to be pure, and so it only makes sense that the purity comes from the word of God, requiring the word itself to be pure (1-3).
 - b. Then we may approach Christ, who is also chosen and precious (valuable), being built around him (the cornerstone) as living stones to be a temple for God. We are his dwelling place, from which come spiritual sacrifices and priestly worship through Jesus Christ (4-8). Not all can approach him in this way; some looked at the deity of Jesus as impossible, and his Messianic claims as false, and so they stumbled at him (probably because he was hung on a cross; this was a curse to the Jews).
 - c. Since we are his chosen nation, we are to proclaim his greatness for allowing us to become his people, and since he is holy, we must be holy (9-10).
 - i. We cannot expect to be born through the *pure* word of God, ransomed by his *pure* son, Jesus Christ, and associate with the *pure* God who allowed this to transpire, and still defile ourselves with the world. We have to stay pure or we will be thrown out (11-12).

Conclusion:

- I. We see from these two chapters several things that are very worthy of our consideration:

- a. We have a lot to be proud of in Christ
 - i. We are not worthless (even though our country may display a low-self-esteem).
 - ii. We are worth more than gold to God. He was willing to send his son to die in order to save us from perishing.
 - 1. However, he is going to refine us and purify us. This means we need to be ready to face trials, stay strong, and glorify God all the way. Only after we have faithfully proven our loyalty to God will he forgive us and allow us entrance into the home he has prepared for us.
 - 2. Be cleansed; wash away your sins, and keep yourself holy as he is holy. Love God with all of your being, love others as yourself, and remain faithful to God until death, and you will be saved.