

His Great Holiness Mike Vestal

It has well been said, "What health is to the heart, holiness is to the soul" (John Flavel). Of all the attributes of God, holiness is arguably the most comprehensive and significant. No other attribute of God is emphasized more frequently or solemnly; for that matter, no other quality is three-peated (cf. Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). Everything associated with God is holy, and knowledge of God and His holiness should be deeply desired by every Christian (John 17:3; Prov. 9:10). Consider the following pertinent matters concerning holiness.

Holiness - It's Emphasis

God is "glorious" in holiness (Exod. 15:11), and "there is none as holy as the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:2). "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17). "To whom will you compare me, that I should be like him? Says the Holy One" (Isa. 40:25). Our God is holy and true (Rev. 3:7), and is jealous for his holy name (Ezek. 39:7, 25). To study Scripture is to see repeatedly and remarkably its awesome emphasis on the holiness of God.

Holiness – It's Meaning

Three main concepts come together to help our finite minds grasp something of the infinite holiness of God. The first concept is that of separation. He is a cut above; is infinitely transcendent and beyond all comparison (Isa. 40:18). The second concept is purity / moral excellence. By this it is meant that God is wholly, wholly holy. He is absolutely free from stain or anything that pollutes; he is perfect (Hab. 1:12-13). A third concept to consider is that of glory or light (cf. Isa. 42:8; John 1:18, 8:12). While in one sense God's holiness is unattainable, in another legitimately biblical sense holiness is to characterize the life of every child of God (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:11-14). While Scripture refers to the holiness of God in a variety of ways both explicitly and implicitly (e.g., through the use of symbols like "light" and "fire"), the perfect embodiment of holiness is Jesus himself (John 8:29, 46, 14:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26). The holiness of God required that something be done for sin and the love and mercy of God provided it in Jesus. The very holiness that made Jesus the perfect sacrifice for sin also made his bearing of our sin even more painful (Matt. 27:46; 1 Pet. 3:18). O help me understand it; O help me take it in. What it meant to you - O God, to take away my sin!

Holiness - Its Pursuit

Holiness is no mere suggestion, nor is it just a polite request; it is a command (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). Holiness is about the passionate pursuit of loving what God loves and hating what God hates (Ps. 97:10; Amos 5:15). In this sense, it is a matter of separation for us. While we are in a world full of sin, we don't have to engage or indulge in it! In that we genuinely and sincerely seek to live God pleasing lives, there is the concept of purity or moral excellence (Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 5:8). By properly speaking out against sin and positively reflecting the beauty of Jesus, glory is given to God (1 Cor. 10:31) and we show the light of our blessed Lord (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15). Hebrews 12:14 simply and eloquently states, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no man will see the Lord." Every Christian and

every congregation would do well to engage in a serious study of holiness. It might be called, "Holiness 101."

Holiness - Its Application

Why is holiness so important? Why is it absolutely essential in Christianity? Many good answers might be given, but consider these four. First, God is holy and he wants us to be like him. Second, Jesus died to make us holy. A failure to appreciate holiness means we love what killed Jesus! Third, holiness distinguishes us from the world and is a powerful form of evangelism. Are we really any different from the world, and is it a refreshing difference? Finally, only the holy know peace, joy and blessed assurance from God! (Isa. 57:2; 1 Chron. 16:10; Rev. 22:1-5).