

The Holy Place

by

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“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” 1 Peter 1:14-15 (ESV)

What is holy? Is it possible for an imperfect sinner like you and me to be holy? There’s a lot of misunderstanding on this requirement, because we most often think it is about personal changes that we make that perfect us into pure goodness. If this were the case, none of us would make the cut. So let’s look at it. Oswald Chambers has insight into this question. He said:

*“Conviction of sin, the marvel of forgiveness, and holiness are so interwoven that it is only the forgiven man who is the holy man, he proves he is forgiven by being the opposite to what he was, by God’s grace.”
Chambers – My Utmost for His Highest*

It is important that we make the connection with Chambers wisdom that *“only the forgiven man is the holy man.”* It is then that *being holy* begins to make sense that it is attainable. I cannot earn or work myself “up” to being holy. But through God’s forgiveness I can be made holy. So the question is, *“How can I know for sure that God has forgiven me, and that I can be holy?”*

I dug out my old “Gospel Train” illustration the other day. Have you ever seen it? It helped me understand how to view the facts of forgiveness verses the feeling of being forgiven. It goes like this:

The Engine of the train is to be seen as *FACT*. It pulls the Gospel in our life. But a train needs Fuel to run. So the Fuel of the train is *FAITH*. Our faith in the fact of our forgiveness is the power of the Gospel. So remember *fact and faith* must always be running in conjunction in our life. Our feelings come at the end of the train. It is the *Caboose*. The Caboose on a train, along with our feelings is not necessary, but it is good to have it trailing along in our life. It feels good, if they are right. But bad feelings sometimes can also be symptomatic of something that is not right. We must listen to them, for they might be telling us something is wrong within us. Let me explain.

I came to know Christ early in my life. But I had no idea what unhindered fellowship with Him looked like. I also had no power in my life to resist the temptations that came upon me, and all I could do was try to manage my sins the best I could. But I failed miserably in my efforts. This is where the symptom of miserable feelings going on in my life (Caboose) told me that something was wrong *within me*. I couldn’t explain it. Life was good in so many other ways. But inside I was depressed and “lonely.” I now know that this is when the *discipline* of the Lord was being applied to my life, until I came to see my sinful condition and turned from it. It was through this process that I found God’s forgiveness through repentance and I entered into that *holy place* that is mentioned.

I said that I didn't know how to have unhindered fellowship with Christ. It was definitely hindered, and I could feel its effects. You see, an ongoing practice of a sinful condition in our life, such as was happening with me, can hinder our fellowship with Christ, and cause us to grieve the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is in our abiding relationship (fellowship) with Christ that we come to experience a deeper awareness of His love for us. It is here that we begin to have a love relationship with Him and find the motivation to see sin in our life as Jesus sees it. Without this intimate fellowship with Him, we basically follow our own strategy and drives in life, which most often lead us astray. We just cannot fully see how offensive our sin is to Him, until we understand Who we are hurting and what He must endure as he lives in us. Oh yes, our sin is painful to the Holy Spirit who lives within us. The Apostle Paul says it like this:

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30 (ESV)

When Jesus went to the cross, He suffered and endured its pain for you and me. The physical pain was not His greatest pain. No, it was the weight of all sin past, present and future that He endured. Because of your sin and my sin, He endured the suffering of the cross for our redemption. But it doesn't stop there. When we receive Jesus into our life and escape the eternal death that awaits us, we are given His Holy Spirit as a deposit for our redemption. He comes to live in us and sanctify us until we come to the end of our life. It is important that we understand that Holy God has come to live in us in the form of His Spirit, and He will never leave us, even though He may want to. Sin is as offensive to Him, if we cherish it and practice it in our life, as surely as it was offensive to Him before our redemption. So, understand that sin is offensive to God at all times. But He will never leave us. He must stay and suffer with us through it. He is committed for the rest of our life to live with us, no matter our condition. To do this He must stay and suffer with the sin that offends Him and this causes His grief within us. Just like Jesus did on the cross, the Holy Spirit grieves and suffers until we repent and turn from our practice of sin. But the grief of the Holy Spirit doesn't stay there. He shares it and it then works its way to the surface of our life. This is why we have feelings that do not align with our faith, until we get things right. We are miserable, for the Holy Spirit in us is also miserable. He makes us miserable with His misery. It's kinda like the old saying: *“If Big Mama's not happy, ain't no one gonna be happy.”* But the risk for us is much worse.

The love relationship we have with Christ is our motivation for wanting to be holy before Him. To “repent” means to turn around and go in the correct way. It means to not just be sorry, but to live out our godly sorrow by hating the sin that had captivated us. It is to be in agreement with God that I have sinned, and to ask to be forgiven so that I may turn from it. We will continue to return to this sin if we do not fully agree with God that we have sinned against Him, who lives within us. We will return to this sin if we think it is only about being sorry. It is to be sorry to the point of brokenness, to tears, to true repentance because we see how we've made our Savior continue to suffer for us, while in us. But that can change, and it will be well for both you and the Holy Spirit within you if it does change.

If you have never experienced repentance such as this, begin praying and asking God to give you this kind of repentance right now. Follow the Spirit's lead as He leads you into repentance and His complete forgiveness. Believe me, it will be well for your soul if you do this and there will be a wonderful condition that will enter your life. That condition is called ... **Holy**.