

July 24, 2016

Holiness #2
Pastor Charles Mendenhall

In an earlier teaching regarding holiness, we found that it has to do with our conduct, that conduct is something which we grow in and mature in, to become like Jesus which is our goal, we are predestined to be conformed in His image, that is His plan. There is always the positional truth and there is the experiential truth also. Positionally, we are in the image of Jesus right now, that is how the Father sees us through His Son. The Father doesn't see all our imperfections, He sees Jesus in us.

Rom 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." KJV

As we study the epistles to the church, we begin to work out our salvation, where we become like Jesus. The basic passage for this teaching will be taken from Ephesians chapter 4.

Rom 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" KJV

v. 1 - *does not say our spirit, but to be holy, our reasonable service, and in regards to conduct is not unreasonable, it will be a sacrifice, because we will setting ourselves apart more and more.

v. 2 - (taken from the Message bible) "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you." Message

Being transformed or changed is what holiness does for us. Exodus chapters 18,19 and 20 tells of God coming down to the children of Israel in order to bestow blessings on them and in order for them to receive the blessing they would have to set themselves apart, but because they did not, they were unable to receive. There was a lot of ceremony for them to observe which hindered them.

However, positionally today Jesus is our holiness, we are not bound by ceremony like the children of Israel were. We are growing and maturing to become like Him, and we are set apart for His use.

1 Cor 3:1-3 "However, brethren, I could not talk to you as to spiritual [men], but as to nonspiritual [men of the flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates], as to mere infants [in the new life] in Christ [unable to talk yet!] 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not yet strong enough [to be ready for it]; but even yet you are not strong enough [to be ready for it], 3 For you are still [unspiritual, having the nature] of the flesh [under the control of ordinary impulses]. For as long as [there are] envying and jealousy *and* wrangling and factions among you, are you not unspiritual *and* of the flesh, behaving yourselves after a human standard *and* like mere (unchanged) men?" AMP

Paul was talking to born again believers, but was unable to teach them because they acted like unbelievers, their carnal nature dominating their actions, their flesh dictating to them, their conduct being that of unchanged men. There is a human standard of behavior, not allowing our conduct to be governed and not allowing us to grow and mature. There are a number of things which attribute to the human standard of behavior; envy, divisiveness, divisions, unforgiveness, bitterness and a lot of hurt. Paul was unable to teach them because their conduct was still governed on the human level. Our prayer should be "Lord help us not to live our lives by human standards but help us to grow to the place that we are living by spiritual laws"

The following scriptures in Ephesians chapter 4, will teach us how troubles will plague believers of the church. We cannot isolate ourselves in the church and not recognize the needs of people outside the church as well as those inside, who are hurting and looking for answers. We are new creatures in Christ, old things are passed away and behold all things are new. Let us become who we are really called to be, sons and daughters, help us to be conformed to your image and your likeness. We are talking about our bodies being set apart as a living temple for the Lord and taking on the image of Jesus. Working biblical principles into our conduct is challenging, being changed into His image is challenging.

Eph 4:17-24 "And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion. But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and **working itself into your conduct** as God accurately reproduces his character in you." MESSAGE

These following verses could be titled "what it means to allow Jesus to be our Lord." There is a difference in being saved or born again and letting Jesus be Lord. The epistles are written specifically to the church. The book of Ephesians are called the "Alps" of the church, the first 3 chapters take us into the heavenly, the next few chapters deal with the practical side of living life, talks about the home, getting along with one another, different callings on our lives, how the body of Christ is built up and edified, talks about speaking truth in love, not in a doctoral way, then the end verses talk about putting on the whole armor of God and how we are victorious in the earth.

Eph 4:22-31 "That ye put off concerning the former *conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be *renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on *the new man, which after God is *created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speaking every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:" KJV

v. 22,23,24 -*conversation meaning life style, continually or constantly renewing your mind, putting on the new

man, righteousness which we have received through Jesus, true holiness is our conduct, which is the meat and potatoes of the gospel keeping us on the right track.

True holiness is our conduct, our conduct is to be different than the conduct which is in the world. Grace empowers us, gives us the ability to have that kind of conduct. This is what is meant having Jesus as Lord of our lives.

v. 25-30 - no lying, not angry, give the devil no place, steal no more, give to others, watch what is being said, grieve not the Spirit of God (there is a difference between quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit - quenching means to not allow the Holy Spirit to move in a service, or we don't yield our lives to Him - grieving the Spirit means that we are not obedient to Him, we go off in areas of sin

v. 31 **bitterness** - is a serpent is in every garden that has greatness in it, if there is greatness, the serpent will get in your garden, it will come to defile, to keep you from ever attaining to greatness, ever fulfilling Gods plan in your life it is there. *root of bitterness will control us if we are not in charge, taking a firm steady hand and it is a dangerous area tending to an apostasy meaning a departure from the faith. Bitterness big or small at the time hurts, if you have never dealt with it, never forgave, some people don't even know that they have hurt you. We play the bitterness over and over in our minds, like a video each time it becomes bigger and bigger and it is stuck in your mind and you don't know how to get it out, have kept it alive by thinking on it, it has become a poison on the inside of you, it perverts your thought life, can make you slightly insane, can't see life as it really is, sick at heart and build walls which need to come down in relationships, bitterness is the result of not forgiving and grieves the Holy Spirit, it is not the behavior of believers

*Heb 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any *root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" KJV

"looking diligently, a firm steady effort; fail or fall; Gods grace empowers us to deal with the root of bitterness, because we are incapable of dealing with it in our own strength, Gods grace empowers us to conquer those things we can't conquer on our own, we have to put a firm, strong steady effort forth to not allow a root of bitterness be planted in our garden by the serpent

v. 31 **wrath** is something that is outward, explosive, is an outbreak of temper or anger, it boils up and blazes and then subsides, usually when a person is given to wrath and the outburst is over, everything is alright, it is like a tornado, you don't realize the damage that has been done to the other person, it may take weeks or longer for them to get over the hurt if they don't know how to deal with it. That behavior as believers is not becoming in being conformed to the image of Jesus.

v. 31 **anger** is on the inside, doesn't show but can be detected by the look on face or by body language that they are an angry person, they aren't letting it out, but are holding it in, begins to hold resentment and offense for years, anger will take on revenge or getting even, because of all the hurt, people in the church need to deal with it if they are to become like Jesus

v. 31 **clamour** is evil speaking, arguing, uncontrolled shouting, verbally putting down someone, not interested in what they have to say, your way is right, no listening to others with empathy, intent is only to confirm your argument, not to understand another person, it is selfishness all about you, how you are hurt. Christian people should learn how to deal with it, anytime and anyplace they might be.

v. 31 **evil speaking** saying something on purpose with the intent of hurting someone, sarcasm, takes on the meaning of gossiping and having a superiority about knowing something about an enemy that you can pass on, slanderous speech, saying something deliberate to hurt or put down someone who we feel that we are better or above

v. 31 **malice** is a settled determination to get even, you lay awake at night just trying to figure out a way to make it happen, we lock the door of our life, we are in control, building a wall they will not be able to get in,

you'll never hurt me again.

Paul is telling us to get rid of bitterness, we came into our new life in Jesus with a lot of baggage and we need radical surgery, a circumcision of the heart, getting rid of all those things trying to hold us back, spiritually we must submit to the Holy Spirit cutting away of things that are not pleasing to Him. Paul tells us to put away all these things, there is no need pray or get council about it, he says to "put it away". Paul is not asking us to do something that we can't do, it is possible to put it away with God's grace, there is always a starting place and we may flounder but there is always an ending in which we get it done.

For a flourishing relationship to thrive or survive any of these things that will hinder. It never means that we will do everything right, many mistakes will be made, but the attitude is this, we missed it but pick up and go on. In forgiving and understanding let us be men, but in malice be like children, they forgive and forget quickly.

1 Cor 14:20 "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." KJV

How do we forgive or forget? We forgive and forget by going on. We are to replace the bad things that have been our lives, there has to be a desire and we make a decision to change and move on, God forgives us totally and completely based on what Jesus did for us on the cross. We become the lender not the borrower, the giver not the taker. We won't get there over night, it becomes a continual effort on our part, we become a bestower of forgiveness we have an abundant supply of forgiveness. Sometimes forgiveness is getting rid of the evidence of what caused the unforgiveness originally, it needs to be destroyed, it is like a poison. Forgiveness is not divine amnesia but maybe can work into it but it is getting rid of the poison in your life, Jesus died for that person or thing that we hate so much.

Eph 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." KJV

Mark 11:25 "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." KJV