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Holiness - Preparing For The Return Of Christ
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Rev 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." KJV

This scripture tells us that the church or bride has made herself ready, the Lord has not made her ready. We are in a season where many people are waiting for the return of the Lord, He is coming for a bride that is free from spot or wrinkle, but is adorned and ready for His return.

2 Pet 3:11-14 "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." KJV

Peter is talking about the first earth that was destroyed, not from Noah's flood and that the earth will be destroyed again but this time by fire. He is asking what kind of people should we be? If we are looking forward to the coming of the Lord, then we should be walking in holiness and godliness. How can we be that way? Many churches teach that holiness is by outward works, but this is incorrect, holiness is the result of a changed heart. Jesus is our holiness, which is a positional truth and with every positional truth, there is an experiential truth or a manifested truth that is worked out into the natural realm. It is difficult or challenging to walk in a truth without first hearing the truth, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. It is important that we hear in relationship to holiness, faith, prayer, the fruit of the spirit, the gifts of the spirit. We have to hear the entire truth of the Bible. Grace empowers us to walk in holiness, grace and holiness become lopsided if we don't hear the full truth. Learning to walk in holiness always has to do with our conduct; it will allow us to take on the character of Jesus, keeping our flesh under control, totally separate from righteousness.

Colossians chapter 3 teaches us that we have been chosen to be holy. Holiness or sanctified which means to be set apart. Taken out of the world and set apart for Gods use.

Exodus 19 and Exodus 20 as the Lord began to speak to Moses, He told Moses that He wanted the entire nation to be priests unto Him, began to set boundaries with the children of Israel, the Lord said that He was coming down on Mt. Sinai and that His presence or holiness would be there, they would not be able to touch Him. He gave them things that they were to do, they first agreed for whatever the Lord said, but in the end they chose to have Moses meet with God, bring back to them the word that God gave for them. They never became that group of kings and priests. However, because of what Jesus has done for us, we have been made kings and priests, and as we begin to walk in holiness we put ourselves in a place to be blessed by God.

Because of holiness we have kingdom blessings which put us in a place where we are able to receive the best that God has for us, we are no longer in a "pit". God never intended for us to be in a "pit" but has always made a way out for us, it is our choice what we will do about getting out.

We are called to come out from among the world in order to be used by God, we once were in the kingdom of darkness, but are now in the kingdom of light. We have been called to change the world, to be an influence, salt and light, unfortunately sometimes we allow the world to change us. We cannot set our own boundaries, we don't have that choice, God sets our standard of living.

Growing can be challenging and painful, time consuming and Paul tells us in chapter 2 of Philippians "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling". God gives the power and desire in order for us to do that. Some of the boundaries that God has set for us can be found in the following scriptures, the epistles which are written to the body of Christ, the church, gives direction and hope. Paul is writing to the church, the Christian people not unbelievers.

Eph 5:1-5 "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." KJV

These things mentioned here are not to be found in believers or Christian people. Fornication is a combination of all types of perversion, foolish talking or jesting are types of vulgar talking or dirty jokes, it is wrong conduct. If anyone is practicing these vices mention in verse 5 and putting flesh above everything else, they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

There is a kingdom of God in Christ on the earth, there are 3 heavens, the 1st kingdom of heaven is where we are now, the 2nd heaven is where Satan rules where he attacks trying to destroy everyone, the 3rd heaven is where God rules or His throne is.

Col 1:13 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" KJV

The church is unaware of their inheritance and has walked below what has been set up for them, but if they are practicing the things mentioned above they have forfeited their inheritance, have taken themselves out of God's blessings even though they have accepted Jesus, there is no victory, having no faith, none of the blessings which have been provided for them.

Eph 4:20-24 "But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 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." KJV

We don't set the rules, where is truth? In what we or others think? Truth is in Jesus and we receive righteousness, a free gift received at salvation, because of Him we should not have a sense of shame or guilt because of that righteousness and we put on holiness which has to do with our conduct, it sets us apart.

The world may partake of the things that have been mentioned in Ephesians 5 and our flesh will try to take over, but we are different. We are in right standing, our behavior has changed, we must put on holiness or right conduct, those things mentioned are not right conduct. We will be deceived if we think that we have an inheritance here on the earth, we may become demonized. Our flesh will become strong, want to fight and try to act ugly, it has a strong voice wanting to do

all the things listed in Ephesians 5 verses 1-5.

Eph 5:6-11 "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." KJV

Children of disobedience are those who talk right, having all the right words and actions, but don't live it. Don't be deceived by them, you are in the light and not darkness, having no fellowship with them, reprove them does not mean what we say, but what we do, letting our actions be acceptable to the Lord.

Holiness is not an impossibility or drudgery, it is a progressive truth in our lives. It is a growing period in our lives, God sees us through Jesus as righteous and holy as we are growing. The church many times will judge, wanting to see changes made immediately from new believers but God gives us time to grow and sees us whole while we are growing.

Rev 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." KJV

How do we get ready for the coming of Jesus? How do we continue to walk in kingdom principles in the earth?

Gal 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." KJV

There are 17 specific works of the flesh with extra workings associated to them and they can cause people to be demonized by opening the door to demonic activity, part of demonic activity will cause a person to not be able to hear the voice of God due to the commotion around them.

v. 21 reminds the believer that if they are practicing these things as a life style it will be challenging to partake of the blessings of God.

Holiness and sanctification always refers to our conduct, they are something that we grow in. Galatians chapter 5 tells us how we do this, how to quit following after the works of the flesh and begin following after the Holy Spirit, walking by the spirit, if we follow the Holy Spirit it will displace the works of the flesh in our lives.

Gal 5:1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." KJV

Works of the flesh are bondage and we are free.

Paul was always dealing with religious people and the following scriptures mention some of the problems that he encountered because of different teachings from them, causing confusion.

Gal 5:13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." KJV

Gal 5:13 "For you, brethren, were [indeed] called to freedom; only [do not let your] freedom be an incentive to

your flesh *and* an opportunity *or* excuse [for selfishness], but through love you should serve one another." AMP

Gal 5:12 "I wish those who unsettle *and* confuse you would [go all the way and] cut themselves off!" AMP

Gal 5:12 "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." KJV

Gal 5:16 "But I say, walk *and* live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to *and* controlled *and* guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings *and* desires of the flesh (of human nature without God)." AMP

Gal 5:16 "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." KJV

Learning to walk after the spirit will cause growth in our lives, this pleases God, we are not the same person that we used to be.

2 Tim 2:20-21 "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." KJV

Paul was encouraging Timothy because of some men who were causing trouble, trying to deceive the believers, bringing false doctrine. Paul was teaching him how he could be a vessel of honour, set apart and ready for the Lord to use.

If we have some of the things mentioned in the scriptures working in our lives, we are not ready to be used by God, we have to cleanse ourselves, it is time for repentance. We must repent, turn around and go the other way, we are not ready for Gods blessing. Repentance is not just saying we're sorry it is a change of behavior. Jesus teaches that after repentance comes the blessing.

2 Cor 6:16-18 "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" KJV

2 Cor 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." KJV

We ask God to forgive us then we have a responsibility of beginning to deal with these fleshly things causing us to fall short of the glory of God that is the challenging or difficult part. Cleanse ourselves through the washing of the word of God. Hope comes from Jesus being our holiness and He gives us grace to walk in it, if we stumble, get up and continue on.

Rom 12:1-2I "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

Holiness is not to be feared it is not something to be afraid of, it is basically our reasonable service to God. Not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind, proving what is good, acceptable and perfect, the will of God. Quit following the flesh, learn to follow the Holy Spirit and watch what we are saying with our mouths.