

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 310
Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21
Today's verses: John 17:19
Today's Topic: The Passing On Of Holiness
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John 17:19 MKJV And I sanctify Myself for their sakes, so that they also might be sanctified in truth.

Why be holy? Because it affects those that follow us. Our spirit touches their spirit, our holiness passes on in the spiritual realm and becomes their holiness and our sins become their sins and even more so. In 1984, as a young pastor, I quickly learned that whatever sins I had soon became the sins of the entire congregation! And whatever disciplines I had slowly but surely also passed on to others also. This was an “invisible” process. It was a medium sized congregation of about 250 students. Many did not see my behaviour – but they followed it none the less. Therefore we must sanctify ourselves for the sake of all who follow our leadership.

If Jesus had not gone to the cross for the disciples would the apostles have been willing martyrs for the gospel? Probably not! Followers rarely out pace the leader! Where the leader stops travelling with God - there they will stop also, and often a little short of it. If the leader has daily quiet times, most will try three times a week, if the leader lives a very simple lifestyle, they will still retain a few luxuries.

The writer to the Hebrews states it thus:

Hebrews 2:11-12 MKJV For both He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified *are* all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers, (12) saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

There is a close spiritual connection between “He who sanctifies” and “they who are sanctified” – so much so that they are “one”. They are a unity, a spiritual brotherhood of those being made holy. To the extent that Jesus calls us His brethren.

Thus holiness is passed along a strong spiritual connection between Christ and Christians and I also believe – between pastor and congregation. We can preach all we like but it is our lifestyle and our sanctification that they will follow.

Who has ever been sanctified by following a televangelist – no matter how good the teaching? The lifestyle is wrong! The listeners may hear the gospel but they will follow materialism.

A terrible plague is about to be unleashed on US churches – a plague of immorality! How can I say that – because fully 37% of pastors confess to having a serious problem with Internet pornography! They may do this sin in private but they defile their spirit in so doing and when they stand up and preach on Sunday morning it is that defiled spirit which passes through the congregation. They will lead their flocks into serious sexual addictions and bondage!

We must sanctify ourselves so that those who follow us may be holy also.

Who becomes loving simply by listening to sermons on the four Greek words for love? Rather

do not we become loving by being loved, and by seeing love demonstrated and lived out before our eyes? Can grumpy critical pastors produce loving disciples – no matter how good their exegesis? Love, joy, faith and hope are caught from those who have sanctified themselves in these things and dedicated their lives to practicing them.

Jesus sanctified Himself by going all the way to the cross so that we also might follow in His footsteps. He died so that we might die also – dying to sin, to self and to the world. Jesus did not renege on His commitment to show us the perfect example.

Now none of us are perfect examples. But we can be committed to being better examples, to sanctifying ourselves and fully setting our lives apart for God in all holiness and truth.

A holy life can have a great impact. For a very holy person will attract disciples and the lives of the disciples will be different also and in turn will attract others. Thus a small handful of men and women living holy lives can change a city.

Who can be sanctified by folly? Or made holy by boastful clattering and worldly performing? I am truly alarmed at the unholy, careless nonsense I hear from many pulpits. First of all the pastor must be a saint – after that is achieved then he can go about being a good communicator.

When we look over Church history it is the people of exceptional consecration and holiness that we treasure – St Francis, Augustine of Hippo, John Wesley, the Moravians, Mother Teresa, and so forth. The multitudes of powerful popes, archbishops and professors are lost to us, despite their fame and glory in the own time. It is the saints we value and it is the holy ones we learn from. Think of your own life, of those who have deeply affected your own walk with God – has not holiness impressed you also?

The CEO/leader model of Christian ministry has maximized effectiveness and minimized holiness – yet holiness is the most effective long-term strategy for building the Kingdom of God! The CEO model makes easy familiar demands, that can be easily quantified and which suit the age we live in. It feels powerful and looks good – it just fails to make people holy! As a result the Church has become like the world.

We need first of all to be like Christ -with His mind, His attitudes, His behaviour, His compassion, His mercy. Then we need to be dedicated to His purposes – seeking and saving the lost, preaching the gospel to the poor, opening the eyes of the blind, and undoing the works of the Devil. That is holiness!

Holiness is far more than a list of church behaviours, it is godliness in action, consecration, living simply that others may simply live and standing out from the lusts of the world and the pride of life. This attracts people and transforms the world and we must dedicate ourselves to it – and as we do so others will observe, watch and wait – then quietly join us in living the consecrated life.

The time for preaching holiness and practicing worldliness is over – we must sanctify ourselves unto God so that those who follow us may also be holy! Lets close with the words of the apostle Peter: [1Pe 1:2](#) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification

of *the* Spirit, to obedience and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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