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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,

Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: June 13, 2010
Series: The Church of God's Intention
Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be
Section: Holy
Topic: Holiness
Message Title: **God Intends the Church to be Holy – Part 2**
Short Title: Being Holy
Text: Various
Key Words: Holy, Holiness, Sanctify, Sanctification

Message Outline

- The Church is Holy – Part 2 (Deb, use in sideways heading.)**
“Being Holy” (Deb, use as heading of the Outline above the two points.)
- A. **Knowing** God's God's Holy One
 - B. **Making** Holy **Choices**
 - C. **Growing** in **Holiness**

Related Scripture

1. 1 Cor 1:2
2. 1 Peter 1:14-16
3. Lev 11:44ff; 19:2; 20:7
4. Isaiah 6:3
5. 2 Cor 6:16-7:1

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Does the fact that Christ has made you holy call you to inactivity?
2. How is our holiness related to our holy living?
3. How are we to be holy in an unholy world?
4. How does our right thinking about God and ourselves in relation to Him help us be holy?
5. What choices can we make to live holy lives?
6. How would God have us grow in our holiness?
7. How will you now respond to un-holiness in your life?

Memory and Meditation Verse

“...like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY’” 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)

4. Being Holy – Much To Do about Nothing

Last week I brought before you that God's intention for His church includes His intention for the church to be holy – set apart from the world with Him for His holy purposes and comprised of His holy ones. I argued that our holiness has been secured for us by Christ and His indwelling Holy Spirit. We are holy because God has made us so in Christ. Paul refers to “the church of God which is at Corinth” as “those who **have been sanctified in Christ Jesus.**” Because of their union with the Holy One (Jesus) they are “saints”, literally, “holy ones.” See 1 Cor 1:1-2. Speaking of the unrighteous defined by their unholiness Paul later in the same epistle says, “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). Eph 4:24 says, “and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Yet, for all our holiness already secured by God's work, Peter still calls us to “be holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16) and we rightly feel compelled to respond to this call by doing holy actions. It is as if we want to say, “If God has called us to be holy then let's roll up our sleeves and get at it!” The last point on our outlines last Sunday dealt with how we execute the mechanics of holiness. I gave you the one thing we needed to do to be holy, do you remember what it was, or should I sit down now realizing that you don't remember a thing that I say anyway? I argued that the thing we need to do to be holy is, “NOTHING!”

Nothing we do causes (brings about as an effect of our action) our holiness; rather it is our God secured holiness that causes (or at least should cause) all sorts of holy doing. If it doesn't, then we are not being Holy, i.e., we are not living the lives God has called us to live – we are not being “saints by calling” (1 Cor 1:2) and we are not being the church of God's intention.

Your holy actions are not the means to the end of your holiness;
 God's holy actions are the means the end of your holiness.
 But, none the less
 God calls you to holy actions in keeping with your God given holiness.

Do not think that holiness is unimportant. It is very important! Just don't regard your holy activity as instrumental in securing your holiness, it does NOT. God secures, has secured, your holiness.

I conceded that knowing this may leave you unprepared to live holy lives amidst the constant pressure to unholy living that is upon all of us all the time. So I gave you one tool to employ in your quest to be holy – the tool of **thinking.**

Today I'd like to develop that for you a bit so that we don't permit ourselves to live unholy lives saying, Pastor Johnny said holiness wasn't about **doing** but **being** so I'm just being lazy selfish lying... old me, and its all good because I'm a King's kid and He has made me holy.

I'm not saying, "Let us do evil that good may come" (Romans 3:8 & ctx). Recognizing God's goodness in extending His grace to us in spite of our un-holiness Paul says in Romans 6:1-2, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²**May it never be!** How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"

What I am saying is that the doing of holy actions must play second fiddle to our being holy ones – a position in relation to God we find ourselves in only by God's grace to us. Further I'm saying that our participation and response to God's legitimate call upon us to be holy is first **thinking** rightly about the world, thinking according to the reality God has redeemed.

Thinking seems to stand between being and doing. Right thinking is enabled by God's sanctifying work upon us and right thinking is our first action in living out our holiness. Our thinking is enabled by God and then employed by us in response to His calling.

When we throw ourselves first into holy activity as a response to God's call to be holy, we get the proverbial cart before the horse. That expression, by the way, has almost lost its meaning hasn't it? I wonder if it is time to replace it with more modern terms. Think of those 18 wheeled tractor-trailers that move just about everything we buy from the warehouses to the stores along our roadways. When we throw ourselves into holy activity as a response to God's call to be holy, we get the trailer before the tractor. What do you have when you see a tractor-trailer rig flying down the highway at 60 mph **in reverse**? You have a wreck about to happen! Driving in reverse is good when you are backing up to a loading dock, but it is disastrous for driving from NYC to SFO. You can't see well, you can't maneuver as well, it is not designed to function that way!

So it is with our holiness. Doing holy actions is meant to follow along **behind** being holy and its first action: thinking. It is not that doing is unimportant or not desired or not expected by God, it is all those things; just bring it across country behind your being and thinking. Then when you get to your destination, go ahead and put it in reverse (reverse is not bad) and back it up right into that loading dock. Mission accomplished.

So how are we to **think** about holiness as we seek to "be holy" and live our lives in a holy manner consistent with the holy status that God has given us? How are we to think in such a way that our holy actions will follow along behind that thinking? How are we to live in the reality of our lives where unholy activities fall all over themselves to invite us to join them?

I don't know if you have noticed it or not, but our culture seduces us to unholy pursuits: wealth, sensuality, physical fitness at the expense of spiritual fitness, indulgence with all things that appeal to the flesh... The majority who sell product would have you believe that what others have (or what they portray others as having) you should have too. "Come lie with me" calls the seductress of our age.

Thank goodness for TIVO. Skip. Skip. Skip. But none of us can move completely away from her. She is too pervasive. She is the world apart from God and she is flaunting herself. And to those she doesn't attract by her blatant parade, she attracts with more subtle enticements of higher thought and justifications for self indulgence. "You are

good, you have given a lot, now it is time to pamper yourself. Relax. Take of this fruit it is good, has He really said you should not eat from it?"

To be holy as God has called us to be, we must first think rightly. I read Proverbs 23:7a to you last week, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." This is probably why Paul urges us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:1-2). How are we to be holy, how are we to live holy lives?

We are to be holy, i.e., live holy lives by:

a) Knowing God's Holy One & Ourselves in Relation to Him
[italics not on TC]

In John 6 speaking with Jesus, "⁶⁸Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.'" (See also Lk 4:34 where an unclean demon calls Jesus by this same title; and Acts 3:14 where Peter calls Jesus, "the Holy and Righteous One.")

Jesus is "the Holy One of God" and God has given Jesus to us that we might know Him. We will not know God without considering/thinking on His Son Jesus.

[John 1:18](#) -- No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has **explained** Him.

[John 14:7](#)

[*Oneness with the Father*] "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you **know Him**, and have seen Him."

Jesus' first century disciples came to know Him by spending time with Him, listening to Him, following Him... But how do we come to know Him who even the Scriptures themselves testify is not here but is risen (Mat 28:6) and seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places (Eph 1:20)? How do we know Him we can not see? Well we have to put our minds to it. We bridge that gap with the minds God has given us, we think on Him. Listen to Paul who began his dealings with Jesus not as a disciple of His but a persecutor of those who followed Him. Listen to how he pushes in to know Christ.

(6) *Knowing Christ*

(a) Phil 3

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes

from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

(b) How do we know Christ?

(i) We Read the Scriptures that Speak of Him

What are the Scriptures but God's revelation of Himself as He worked in history and through His prophets to bring about His purposes.

John 5:39

[*Witness of the Scripture*] "You search the **Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that **testify** about Me;"

Paul helped people know Jesus by showing how the Scriptures spoke of Him

Acts 28:23

When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly **testifying** about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the **Law** of Moses and from the **Prophets**, from morning until evening.

We have seen in Sacred Space that all of Scripture speaks of Jesus. From Genesis 3:15 forward God in His actions and in His prophets is getting us ready to be able to know Him who would reverse the curse of our estrangement from God and restore the intimate communion that had been lost, the relationship for which for which God had originally created us to share with Him.

That after all is the kind of knowledge God intends for us to have. We are to know God in the sense of sharing intimate communion with Him. It includes but far exceeds knowing about Him. It is the knowing shared between a husband and a wife and then some. It is being naked and not ashamed before our Creator in whose image and likeness He created us for that very purpose of fellowship with Him. Such knowing has been made possible only by the work of the Holy One of God, whose perfect righteousness has been applied to our account, into whose perfect union with Him we have been welcomed.

We know Jesus as the Son of God by reading the Scriptures which testify of Him. How else do we know Him?

(ii) We listen to the His Holy Spirit who also testifies of Him.

John 15:26

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the **Spirit** of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will **testify** about Me,

Knowing Jesus and therefore God follows our thinking about Him and thinking about our relationship with Him.

(7) Knowing Yourself in Relation to Christ

1 Corinthians 6:19

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are **not your own**?

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 7:23

You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, **new** things have come.

Galatians 6:15

For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**.

There are many ways in which we are related to Jesus: He is our King, our Lord, our Savior our Redeemer, even our friend. But perhaps most seminally our relationship can be described as a union. As God the Father is united to God the Son and God the Spirit, we are related to Jesus in this same way. According to His grace and by His work He has placed His Holy Spirit in us joining us to Him. (John 15, 17) Refer back at union with Christ message (about p.110)

The NT is full of references describing our relationship to Jesus as being "in Christ." These point to our union with Him. God has joined what was separated by sin into the intimate communion of His original intention. We are branches attached to, nourished by, living with and because of Jesus, the Son of God who is one with the Father and the Spirit. Who are you? You are the redeemed of God. You have been born again and given new life by His Spirit, new citizenship in heaven, new identity.

Think on that. Know that! It will enable you to be holy!

(8) Knowing Ourselves (the church)in Relation to Christ

Not only are we individuals in union with Christ, but we are by our common union to Him, joined with each other – none complete without the rest. Jesus is the head of the church the body of Christ and each who is joined to Him is a member of that body making each part an integral member of every other part.

Ephesians 2:20

having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, **Christ** Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

1 Peter 2:4-5 ⁴And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

The church is the new people of God – The redeemed and reconciled community.

The Body of Christ – 1 Cor 12, Eph 4

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the **head** of the wife, as **Christ** also is the **head** of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Think on that. Know that! It will enable you to be holy, to live out a holy life!

Example

It strikes me that we can look at our life as a series of choices linked together. Successfully living in the reality of our holiness takes place one choice at a time. We live holy lives by...

b) Making Holy Choices

Holy choices are nothing more than choices that reflect the reality of:

(6) Christ as Our King & Lord

We are not our own. You are a disciple of your Master, a servant of your Lord, a subject of your King, the redeemed of your Redeemer...

Faced with your next choice, remember that Christ is your Lord and live accordingly!

(7) God as Our Father

We have been adopted into God's family and He is our loving Father who has not spared even His only begotten Son from suffering and dying that you may have new life in union with Him. He is the Father pictured in

Jesus' parable of the prodigal son. The father that runs to meet the younger brother separated by his self indulgence and leaves the party to call the older brother separated from him by his self righteousness. Faced with your next choice, remember God the Father, is your Father who has come to you and made you a part of His family. That makes you an adopted son or daughter of God. You were once lost but God has found and adopted you welcoming you into His family as one of His own.

Remember that, then make your choice and live accordingly!

(8) Spirit as the Presence of God in Us

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You may think you are you and that is that. But the Scriptures indicate that after having heard the gospel and after having believed the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13f). God is not only with you (Immanuel) He actually dwells in you. You are the temple of the Spirit. We, collectively as the church, are the temple of the Spirit. Think on that! Make your choices in light of that reality.

The Spirit empowers you to live as God has called you to live. You can't do it on your own. But you have Him and it is clear that all things are possible with Jesus. The Holy Spirit did not just give you a warm fuzzy feeling that one time, He has given every believer the power he or she needs to be His witnesses. He is not the visiting power that comes and goes as a traveling salesman. The church and each of her members is the ongoing dwelling of Christ in the Spirit.

Remember that when the world pulls at you to eat the forbidden fruit and choose and live accordingly!

(9) One Another as Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Holy choices regarding members of the church reflect the reality that we are: Fellow heirs of the kingdom, the loved of God, the people God has providentially brought into each other's lives that we might build each other up using what we have for each other's eternal good including each other's Christ-likeness (Eph 4). We are to love one another, not use each other for our own advantage. As we look around this room see those God loves. The people you meet today are not just any old people, they are God's family and the objects of His love. They are family and God expects you to love them as He loves them. Far be it from us to hurt a brother or sister.

Remember that we are brothers and sisters in the same family and live accordingly!

(10) *The World as those God is Calling to Himself*

That person outside the church whose unholy life you find so offensive and reprehensible... such were each of us before God called us out of the world into His marvelous light. In the universe of those outside the kingdom of God live those who God is still calling to Himself through the gospel. Are we to give up on those whom God has not? Are we to close the door on those for whom God may be opening it?

Consider the world outside of the church the pool of people from which God is still calling people to Himself. Does that leave any room for lack of integrity in your business with them? What are you to them then but salt and light, messengers of the King making God known to them through the gospel of Christ.

Living a holy life is nothing more than making life's choices in light of these realities. Remember what God has done in Christ and live accordingly! There is one more aspect of being holy that I'd like us to note. If we are to be holy, we will be ...

c) Growing in Holiness**(6) *God's Intent for our Growth***

Our holiness has been secured by God in Christ and His indwelling Spirit, yet He intends us to progress in our holiness.

Your child is your child no matter how old, yet you want that child to grow and mature to be all he or she can be. A redwood tree starts very small, but God has created it to grow tall and strong and able to withstand the elements. God has caused us to be born-again and in our new birth He has made us holy; yet He does not want us to remain infantile or even juvenile in our spiritual maturity. Rather He wants us "to mature", "to grow up in all aspects" into the "fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:11-16). He wants Christ to be fully formed in us (Gal 4:19).

He wants us to grow in regards to our holiness. We don't become more holy in the eyes of God as much as we live more fully as His holy ones ought to live. As God transforms us, we grow up in our Christ-likeness, we leave behind childish thinking and childish actions, we mature and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

(7) *God's Means of our Growth***(a) The Mind of Christ****1 Corinthians 2:16**

For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? **But we have the mind of Christ.**

(b) Christ Himself[Colossians 1:27](#)

to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the **glory** of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ** in you, the **hope** of **glory**.

(c) The Spirit of Christ**(d) The Word of Christ**[Romans 10:17](#)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

[Colossians 3:16](#)

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(e) The Church of Christ

Eph 4:11-17 -- ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

d) Conclusion: Babies, carts, bath water and horses

When it comes to holiness we don't want to get the cart before the horse (trailer before the tractor), neither do we want to throw the baby out with the bathwater, i.e., we don't want to get the cart of holy living before the horse of His sanctifying work. His sanctifying work pulls/leads out our holy living. Neither do we want to throw the baby of holy living out in the bathwater of works righteousness.

God has made every Christian holy by Christ's sanctifying work on the cross and His giving of the Holy Spirit to make each of His people the temple of the Holy Spirit. Holiness is not a reality we achieve by our own holy doing. Holiness is the work of God on our behalf. We are those who were unclean made clean by the cleansing of God.

If you think you have to **do** to be holy, you have misunderstood a fundamental truth about God and what He has accomplished in Christ. Anyone can do holy looking actions. Most people do holy actions to serve the unholy purpose of self advancement. If you want to be holy, don't do step 1, step 2, step 3..., don't do anything, just understand the sanctifying work of Christ in you.

Now with your holiness established as the unshakeable gift of our merciful God, you **should** rightly ask, "How do I live out my holy life in a holy manner according to the holiness that Christ has secured and worked in me? And we should ask this in light of the unholy world in which we live with its temptations that pull us: the flagrant sins we all can identify as unholy and the subtle sins that lie just beneath the respectable veneer of our lives – the sins of our thoughts, those cloaked in religious actions applauded by all because they look so selfless but you know them to be tainted by self-serving motives.

What do you do when tempted to live in a manner not worthy of the calling of God and the holiness he has secured for you? What do you do when you look at your life and you know that you are living as if Christ had not made you holy? You rethink who Christ is and who you are in your relationship with Him and you live accordingly.

My daughter and her boyfriend are sailing. They are not just out on the bay for a nice sail on a beautiful day, they left Monterey in January and may be gone over a year. A little over a month ago they left the coast of North America and headed West across 2700 miles of open ocean shooting for the Marquesa Islands – the most North-East islands in French Polynesia. They make use of an auto pilot device that can keep them on a certain heading relative to the direction of the wind. With their GPS they can identify where they are in the ocean and set a heading towards the Marcquesas and set their auto pilot to hold that heading. But they have to keep checking their location because the winds change directions as weather systems move by and the currents pull at them. Conceivably if they just set their auto pilot up to head to the Marcquesas and then did not check it again but went below to get a good nights sleep, they might wake up heading in the exact same bearing relative to the wind, but a storm system could have passed over them during the night and the winds that were blowing from the North when they set their heading at sunset are now coming from the South. If this happened they would wake up to the tell tale sign of the sun rising in the West. A flag should be raised in their minds, why is the sun rising in the west this morning?

Well, I put out to you that unholy actions coming from a holy person should be a flag raised in our minds. It indicates that somewhere along the way the wind has changed and we have gotten off our spiritual course. No longer are we pointed at Jesus, but we are pointed away from Him. It is time for a course correction.

It is not time to beat yourself up and think what a completely unworthy good for nothing you are. Before God had called you out of the world, that was absolutely true. But in Christ nothing could be farther from the truth. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. But there is correction and training in righteousness. Whom the Lord loves He disciplines. Feel the sting. But know it comes from your loving Father who is making you more like Christ – growing you and training you. Let un-holiness in your life be as the sun rising in the west. It should alert you to set your sights afresh on Jesus the author and finisher of your faith.

Even better yet, don't leave the ship of your lives on auto pilot. Think on Jesus by knowing Him more completely each day and remembering who you are in relation to Him. Think of Jesus and thereby make holy choices. Think on Jesus thereby growing in your holiness. As you endeavor to be holy according to the calling of God, use the tools He has supplied you with: the mind of Christ, Christ Himself, the word of Christ and the body of Christ. And by all means let the unholy actions or thoughts raise the warning flag that it is time to reset your eyes on Jesus. Note where Christ is and note which direction the wind is blowing. Set your course accordingly.

By the way, why do we bother "being holy"? Why do we bother living holy lives and taking every thought captive and thinking rightly? It is not so we can pat ourselves on the back and think how good we are, neither is it so people will think we are so holy. It is for the glory of God – making Him known, being His witnesses in all the world.

Let's pray.

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