



THE HOPE OF GLORY

At the beginning of the year I started with a series called The Hope of Glory. In it we started to explore the theme of the glory of God. Why? Because when we understand just what God is like, it changes us. It changes our outlook on life, it changes our relationships. When we perceive God's glory, our universe gets bigger, our understanding of God gets bigger, and we get smaller, as do all our problems and pressures of life.

We looked at how we perceive God's glory in several ways – creation, the moral glory of God and the grace of God.

COLOSSIANS 1:27

In this second half of the series, we have started to look at glory in quite a different way. Glory is not something that we experience as onlookers, but something that in Christ, is our hope – that which we are becoming part of. As many of you will know, I have always encouraged each of us to understand and claim the promises God makes to His people – we need to appropriate all the blessings God freely gives to His people in Christ. And one of them is the hope of glory: *Colossians 1:27 God's plan is to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God.*

YOU GOTTA HAVE FAITH

Last week we saw how important faith is in appropriating God's blessings and experiencing God's glory in our lives. We saw that building our faith was something that can be asked for but also means we must place ourselves in the position where the Holy Spirit can work in us. I talked about practical things. Pray. Read God's word regularly. Look for what God is doing in your life and in the church. That's why I am encouraging you to share your testimonies. Not just what God did for you in the past, but what He's doing now! Share in your small groups, share here on a morning service, write something to put online, get videoed so it goes on the website. Be encouraged by what God is doing in your life and in the lives of others!

VERSE HEBREWS 12:1

But there was another aspect and that was get rid of things in that give us a faith and growth problem, because if our lives are not right then however much we may know about the promises of God and the glory of God, we are not in a good position to receive. If you are like me and enjoy the benefits of sunshine and warmth, you won't find much of them at the south pole.

IF YOU WANT WARMTH THEN PUT YOURSELF IN THE RIGHT PLACE!

Which brings us to our subject this morning because holiness is key to being in a right place before God. We've looked at holiness before. We saw that our God is a holy God.

HOLY=SET APART

Holy means simply set apart. God isn't the same as us, He's different and calls His people to be holy, different, set apart too. We often think mysterious things about the word "holy" don't we. But it just means set apart. So, in some churches they have holy things,

consecrated things. What are these? Just things set aside for the worship of God. They are used just for that purpose. In the Old Testament system, there were places and items that were set aside for the worship of God.

TABERNACLE

In the tabernacle access was limited only to "holy" people – priests. The items were all consecrated. They were set aside. Jews had various purification rituals to do. What was the purpose of all these? To recognise that God is different, set apart, holy and much of who we are and what we do is not clean, not fit for His presence.

The problem for the Jews, which Jesus pointed out, was that washing for purification and the like were only outwards signs for what was supposed to happen inside. The problem with outward religion is that however we may purify our bodies in rituals, if our heart is wrong then it's all pointless show. The Christian faith is about being, not doing.

VERSE BE HOLY BECAUSE I AM HOLY

We are God's people and we are called to be a holy people: *For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy." NLT*

We are not called to do but to be. Be holy. Holiness isn't something that we do, but what we should be because God can't pour out His blessings on a people who are marred by sin. Why?

AUSTIN MAXI

Let me give you an analogy. In my younger days I used to do all the work on my own car. My first car was an Austin Maxi. It was a typical 70s car – badly made and after about 5 years old became a rust bucket. So what did I have to do. I had to remove the rust, fill the holes up and then respray it. To get a perfect respray job you have to remove all the rust, get it down to bare metal and filler, rub it down to a perfectly smooth and completely dust-free surface and then spray it with rust inhibitor, undercoats and topcoats. Purity is essential because the paint will not key in properly and the finished job will not look its best – think of all the rubbish DIY car jobs you've ever seen on boy racer cars in Felixstowe!

God's blessings can't take root in lives that are not set apart for Him, where the surface isn't right because the product won't reflect His glory, all of what's wrong will quickly show through. It's why we are called to be holy as He is holy.

HOW DO WE BECOME HOLY?

1. In Christ.

If we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ this morning, if we know Him as saviour and Lord, then God has already set us apart for Himself. He has already made us His children. We are already fit for His presence. We are a new creation.

VERSES FROM 1 CORINTHIANS

1:30 But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free.

When Jesus died, when His blood was shed, our sins were dealt with and as we have decided to trust and follow Him, we have been set apart as God's people. We are His holy people.

2. God is in the process of making us holy

It's true that we are fit in every way to be in God's presence – indeed we learned earlier

that Christ is in us. We have the Holy Spirit within us. Not because we are wonderful people but because in Christ, we have been made fit for God's presence. However it won't have passed your mind that each of us are less than perfect. Our sin may have been dealt with, we may be fit for God's presence, but we are less than pure, less than holy as God is holy – sin characterises our lives still. Our Christian lives are or should be in the process of becoming more like Him. How does that happen? It's something that comes from Him as He only has the power to change us.

Here's a verse to illustrate that – *1 Thess 5:23 May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being--spirit, soul, and body--free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you will do it, because he is faithful.*

3. We should sanctify ourselves

God can and will make us holy, but we've got to want Him to. It's an act of our faith and of our will. We've got to want that. We may be a new man or woman in Christ, but we've got to make the conscious decision to put Him on too.

Ephesians 4:22-24 So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to--the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.

The truth is, that anyone who knows Jesus, who follows Him should want to honour God, should want to be holy. The will should be there, otherwise I would wonder whether they have genuinely trusted Jesus at all.

But however much our will may be, there are pressures in life and from the spiritual battle that may discourage and distract us and today is a re-affirmation of our spiritual situation. God wants to make each of us holy – if we that is our desire – and it should be to any true believer – then by His Spirit He gives us the power to do so.

As with faith it is all about putting ourselves in the right place to receive from Him. How do we do that? By prayer, through meditating on His word, through the encouragement of others He has called us to journey with – His church.

HOW DO WE BECOME MORE HOLY?

So you want to be more holy. You want to receive more of His blessings? Then start with His word.

So what should characterise a holy life? I've given you a sheet (reproduced below) which tells us the things God loves, the things God hates and how God blesses through a holy life. I could go through it but I'm not. It's given to you to read it, search the scriptures and pray for yourselves. I could pontificate and moralise, but I'd sooner let the Holy Spirit speak the word of God into your lives as He will do a much better job!

So take it away and use it. Study it alone, study it with someone else. Most of all allow God to challenge you about a holy life so that each of us may honour Him and receive all the blessings, that we may both understand and reflect His glory.

Spend time with God. Take time to be holy.

*Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.*

*Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.*

*Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.*

Let me close with some things other people have said:

"Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervours, or uncommanded austerities; it consists in thinking as God things, and willing as God wills." John Brown, Nineteenth-century Scottish theologian

A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine. D.L. Moody.

How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets real thing, it is irresistible. C.S. Lewis



What does God Love and what does He hate?

Psalm 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

1. Some of the things that God loves

- a. Galatians 5:22-23 – *Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, self-control, faithfulness, goodness, kindness.*
- b. Heb 11:6, Rom 4:19-22 – *Faith*
- c. Col 3:1-3 – *Heavenly mindedness*
- d. Micah 6:8; James 1:27 – *Care for the poor, widows and orphans*
- e. 2 Cor 9:7 – *Cheerful giving*
- f. John 9:24 - *Worship*
- g. Phil 2:1-8 – *Humility and servanthood*
- h. Eph 4:32 - *Forgiveness*
- i. Prov 1-9 - *Wisdom*
- j. 1 Tim 5:17, 6:1 - *Honour*
- k. Phil 4:8 – *Whatever is true, honourable, right, pure, lovely*
- l. Psalm 45:6-7 - *Righteousness*
- m. 2 Tim 2:1; 2 Pet 1-2 – *Grace and peace*
- n. Rev 5:8 - *Incense of prayer*
- o. Psalm 133 - *Unity*
- p. 1 Peter 2:12 – *Honesty and integrity.*

2. Some of the things that God hates

- a. Proverbs 6:16-19 – *Pride, haughtiness, lies, hands that shed innocent blood, hearts that devise wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, false witnesses who utter lies, ones who spread strife.*
- b. Gal 5:17-19 – *Immoral, filthy and indecent actions, the worship of idols and witchcraft, making enemies and strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, arguments and broken relationships, envying, drunkenness, orgies.*
- c. Jude 18,19; 1 John 2:15-17 – *Worldly-mindedness*
- d. 1 Cor 6:9-10 – *Sexual permissiveness, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, perversion, stealing, covetousness, slandering, swindling*
- e. Eph 4:18-19 - *Hardness of heart, sexual impurity, greed*
- f. Matt 23 – *Religious spirit*
- g. Hebrews 3, 4 – *Unbelief and disobedience*
- h. Matt 18:21-35 – *Unforgiveness*
- i. Eph 4:29 – *Harmful words*
- j. Eph 5:4 - *Filthy language, vile jokes*
- k. Rom 4; Gal 3 - *Self-righteousness*

3. As you draw close to God each day ask Him to:

- a. reveal His heart to you concerning what He likes and why;
- b. reveal His heart to you concerning what He doesn't like and why;
- c. show you the things that you have done that He likes and why;
- d. show you the things that you have done that He doesn't like and why.

4. What is your response?

Some of the rewards of holiness

1. Psalm 45:6-7 – *Anointed with the oil of joy*
2. Psalm 24:3-6 – *Ascend the hill of the Lord*
3. Heb 12:14, Isaiah 35:2-8 – *See the Lord*
4. Rom 6:22 – *Everlasting life*
5. Ex 34:29-35, Matt 17:1-2 – *Shining face*
6. Isaiah 60:1-3 – *Appearance of glory*
7. 1 Thess 3:13 – *Established hearts in God*
8. Acts 1:8, Isaiah 35:2-10 – *Experience kingdom power*
9. 1 Chron 16:29, Psalm 29:2 – *Know the beauty of holiness*
10. Is 6:1-9 – *“Sent one”*
11. 2 Chron 5 – *The temple will fill with glory*
12. Josh 1:1-11; Deut 28:1-13 – *Victory and success*
13. Josh 3:5 – *See wonders*
14. Luke 1:6 – *Chosen to bring forth special purposes (i.e. Zechariah and Elizabeth)*
15. Rev 19:6-8 – *Prepare us as the Bride*
16. Rev 21:9-27 – *Prepare us to enjoy heavenly glory*
17. Gen 49:22-26 – *Blessed with a heavenly blessing to the “utmost bounds of the everlasting hills”.*

Praise God! None of these lists is exhaustive!

A Prayer of Dedication

Father I thank You that You have called me by my name to know, to love and to serve You. This is a wonderful and very awesome invitation. With all my heart, I dedicate my spirit, soul and body to You Holy Father and I invite You to perform Your sanctifying work in my life.

I draw close into relationship and fellowship with You in the Holy Spirit. Teach me to love what You love and hate what You hate. Help me to experience a rich and glorious relationship with You.

Grant to me a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Christ, His holiness, His love and His wisdom that I might be filled with all the fullness of Your heavenly glory. Thank You Father.

Accept my life as a sacrifice that will bring forth a sweet aroma of Your presence in every place. In Jesus' name I dedicate myself to Your holiness. Amen