

## Holiness of God VI In the New Testament #2

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Let's talk about different religions for a minute. This will tie in with *The Holiness of God In the New Testament*. Today we're going to learn the difference between a 'religion' and our relationship with God.

There are many people who have *a religion* that fits their needs, either ethically, as in the case of Jews; or mentally, as in the case of different denominations that they all agree. They have *a religion* that suits them, and every single one of them are inclined to tell God what they will and will not accept.

- Jews
- Catholics
- Mormons
- Baptists
- Seventh-Day Adventists

*The whole thing!*

They have *a religion* that pleases themselves, and in doing so, they automatically limit or cut themselves off from God to a certain extent. Take the Orthodox Jews:

- Do they keep the Sabbath? *Sure!*
- Do they keep the Holy Days? *Yes!*
- Do they have God's Holy Spirit? *No!*

Because *they do not go through Christ!* They have *a religion* that fits what *they want!* I guess the best way to phrase this is:

- What is it that God wants out of our lives?
- What do we want out of our lives in relationship to God?

*It works both ways!*

In thinking about how I would speak to a Jewish group, it's been very perplexing. I do know that when we had a group for one of the Holy Days, I did pretty well lay it on the line to those Baptists about keeping the commandments.

So, I don't know whether God wants me to do something that is going to be of a witness type for them, because there's such a thing as a witness. Like Jeremiah standing in front of the temple (Jer. 7)—where he says, 'Don't come and say the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these'; that we're given to do all these abominations. Will you lie, steal, cheat, commit adultery, burn incense to other gods and say, 'This is in the name of the Lord'?

That is one kind of thing that could be given to someone. I know that years ago with Christmas we used to send out anti-Christmas cards. You're called, converted and brought into the Church; you've sent out Christmas cards every year and you found out you shouldn't keep Christmas so you sent out anti-Christmas cards. Too many people got offended.

So, it leaves you perplexed on how to handle it. So, I appreciate your prayers on how to handle it. If I could preach the New Testament to this group—which in talking to the rabbi, he says, 'We have meetings on Friday night, Sabbath and Sunday—if I accept a Sunday one then I might be more inclined to preach out of the New Testament, because I would not be 'polluting their sabbath.' It is *their* sabbath!

We're observing the Sabbath of God! They're observing *their Sabbath* on God's Sabbath Day. Does that make any sense? Let's see where that makes sense:

Matthew 18:19: "Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request, it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together **in My name**... [in the name of Jesus Christ] **...there, I am in the midst of them**" (vs 19-20).

That's how we are able to keep *God's Sabbath on His day*, and not have *our* Sabbath on God's Day. This ties in with the Holiness of God. This ties in very carefully with our calling.

I know that it did for me in building this series together. I tend to derive a great deal more out of God's Word by building sermon on sermon at one time then we build upon that, and then we build upon that. It will give us a broader understanding. And I know that in going through *The Holiness of God*, I will guarantee you one thing: *Today there is not one Scripture that I'm going to cover that we have not read or study sometime in the past!*

But I know that with the things that we've covered, with *The Holiness of God*, and if we put the other sermons together with this one, it is going to be far, far more meaningful. We are going to understand more about God's calling to and for us, because it is a fantastic and magnificent thing! Absolutely mind-boggling!

That's why David said, 'What is man that You are mindful of him? And the Son of man that You visit him?' *That's quite a staggering thing when you think of it!*

Christ is here visiting us *now!* His presence is here! Though our fellowship is with each other, is with God, and that's why the Sabbath Day is so special. That's why you can never accomplish any other day at any other time the same thing you do on the Sabbath when you come and we're all together and Christ is here in our midst, because He is fellowshiping with us.

You think about all the people that you might like to be friends of; you think about all the important people in the world that how many people would just give their right arm to be called 'their friend.' I think we need to vastly expand our mind concerning that in relationship to God.

We've seen that with *The Holiness of God* that it talks about His great *majesty*, *His power* and everything of God's love and Holiness has got to do with:

- His power
- His wrath
- His Spirit
- His mercy

The key is this: ***Wherever God puts His presence that is Holy!*** The Sabbath is not Holy to these people out here driving around and don't know God. His presence is not there with them. His presence is wherever people are gathered *in His name!* That makes it Holy. God said of the Holy Days... Let's see how important it is. I have read this so many times; how many Feasts have you heard this? How many times have we gone over this?

Leviticus 23:2: "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, '**Concerning the appointed Feasts of the LORD...**'" Can we conclude that anything that belongs to God—Who is Holy, Almighty, all powerful—belongs to Him; it is *His!*

"...which you shall proclaim *to be Holy* convocations..." (v 2)—because therein God puts ***His presence*** for those who call upon His name; it has to be the name of Jesus Christ. Then He starts out with the Sabbath and all the Holy Days.

Let's see just a couple of things concerning Christ, then we will talk about *our calling*. Remember the sermons on the Holy One of Israel in the Old Testament, then you know all the Scripture that say concerning Christ that He was the Lord God of the Old Testament, that He was Creator of everything that there is, etc.

Mark 1—here we have a time when Jesus was casting out demons, and notice what the demons said when He was casting them out:

Mark 1:23: "Now, in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit; and it cried out, saying, 'Ah! What have we to do with You, Jesus, *the Nazarene?* Have You come to destroy us?...'" (vs 23-24). That's quite an interesting statement.

Sidebar: Can God destroy demons? I would have to say that if they're asking if they are going to be destroyed, it's possible. I can't answer the question definitely. One of these days I will, at the resurrection we'll know.

It's another thing also, there were people who were demon possessed in the synagogues from time to time.

"...**I know Who You are—the Holy One of God!**" (v 24). That establishes along with all the other Scriptures I might mention that Christ is the Holy One of God!

Just in case someone would say that how can you prove it because a demon said it that it is so. Let's see where *the apostles knew* that He was the Holy One of God! Notice God didn't say the Holy two or the Holy three, the Holy twelve or the Holy million. It says *The Holy ONE!*

After they healed the man at the Gate Beautiful. We always look back there and say, 'I wonder what that was like when they walked in there and healed this man? You can almost picture it in your mind with him leaping and running into the area of the temple praising God that he was healed. Everyone knew that this was the cripple out by the door. You think that this would be fantastic.

There is still something about miracles in the human mind that are tantalizing, even to us. They really are. I would have to conclude from that that any miracles that are to be done, let's wait and have God do them. Let's not be drawn away of men, miracles, doctrine; let's follow the Word of God.

Acts 3:12: "And when Peter saw *it...*"; all the people running together, just like a mob. They had a little different psychology then than we do now. We're sort of laid back and casual because we have so much television, media, newspapers and we've seen all, heard all, know all, everything like that. Not these people. Anything that happened they'd run to see it, just almost a stampede, thousands of people gathering around.

"...when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people, 'Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this? And why are you looking upon us so

intently...” (v 12). That’s the way people are; their eyes glued on someone.

I know when I saw the pictures comparing Roosevelt and Hitler; that the people were just glued, just hypnotized when Hitler came by. You could just see their eyes, wild eyes. That’s the way people are when something happens. We have them today; they’re gawkers, rubbernecks, when something happens on the freeway.

“...as if by ***our own power or Godliness...***” (v 12)—Holiness; no one has their own Holiness. That’s why ***no man can proclaim some other day Holy***. It’s as simple as that! No one can proclaim Sunday to be Holy, because only God can make something Holy.

“...we have made him to walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers...” (vs 12-13). To the Jews that means something! You’re coming clear back the very roots that they look to. You’ll have to save the Jews because they know from whence they came. We do not! We have good idea in understanding about Israel in prophecy, but we do not have genealogies like the Jews do, or history.

So, when he says, v 13: “The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers... [now he had their attention] ...has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, after he had judged to release *Him*. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One...” (vs 13-14). See how human nature does?

“...and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you” (v 14). That was very inspired for Peter to say this. This was one Jew speaking to another Jew, so I suppose he could get away with it at that time.

I suppose that if I went down into a Jewish synagogue and said that I would be on my way to being marched out. There are accounts of being ‘gnashed on’ with the teeth.

Verse 15: “And you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses.” That’s something! There are times when you really feel something down deep inside.

I wonder what it was like when John and Peter, and all the apostles, saw Jesus raised? That must have been absolutely stunning! They knew that He had died. John stood out there and watched it to the end. He was the only disciple that watched it to the end. All the rest ran off, they couldn’t stand it. Only John and all the women, including the mother of Christ, imagine how she felt. Later she was converted. Imagine how she felt! Remembering all these things: about the birth of Christ, the prophecies

of the angel. Talk about things welling up in your mind.

Just think what she thought the three days and nights that He was dead. It’s really something, and then to have this kind of thing happen. Absolutely incredible; what a witness.

Rom. 1 will tell us a little bit more about Jesus Christ. It will also tell us more about the Apostle Paul. I think with the conviction, and this is so very important. Brethren, nobody can put conviction in you. I can’t put it in you; you can’t put it in me. You have to be convicted yourself. You have to believe and *know that you know*.

Romans 1:1: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle...” That means *one sent bearing the authority of Christ!* That’s why no one should appoint himself an apostle.

“...set apart to preach the Gospel of God, which He had promised before through His prophets in *the Holy Scriptures...* [look what he’s leaning on for authority, proof and verification] ...concerning His Son... [our Lord] ...Who came from *the seed of David* according to *the flesh*, Who was declared *the Son of God with power...*” (vs 1-4).

Remember what Jesus said when He ascended into heaven? *He told His disciples, ‘All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me!’* That’s a fantastic statement, brethren! If you feel somewhat insignificant in that, that’s good.

“...according to *the Spirit of Holiness...* [this Holiness is going to have to do with us] ...by *the resurrection from the dead*—Jesus Christ our Lord... [there’s been no one else resurrected from the dead to eternal life] ...through Whom we have received grace...” (vs 4-5). I tell you, we need that absolutely, totally all the time!

“...and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations, in behalf of His name” (v 5). So, Christ now sits at the right hand of God, raised by the power of Holiness.

Let’s review one other Scripture in the Old Testament. Let’s think about our calling, and let’s understand about it, and why we should not be exalting ourselves. Frankly, none of us had a thing to do with our calling, except that we responded. Think about it! None of us had a thing to do with our calling, except that we responded and repented. All the rest was from God. Everything that has to do with it comes from God.

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit,

to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

With that in mind, I want you to think—and if we can grasp it—I’m sure it’s something we grow in, and I want us to grow in this: that is to **comprehend the calling that God has given to us and to everyone whom He calls**. We’ve seen the greatness of God, the fantastic nature of God. We’ve covered the Scriptures showing about His throne and Jesus Christ, and all the fantastic, magnificent heavenly things.

This God, Who is Creator of everything, **has called us!** Just dwell on that! Make that a point of meditation this week. Think and meditate on that! God has called us! Everyone He calls He does it individually and selectively.

I know we always ask: Why did God call me? I think I can answer it! Very simple! *He chose to do so!* There are people who would say:

- ‘I was such a great sinner, God had to call me.’ *That’s vanity!*
- ‘I was so righteous, God had to call me!’ *That’s equally vanity!*

That’s why it’s **by grace that we are saved! God chose!** Think about that! Next time you’re watching a sunset or sunrise, or you’re out and there’s no fog, smog, clouds and you can see the stars, or you pick up a book and that shows this far out galaxy, way out there, *just think about the God that made that has called you!* That’s a pretty humbling thing.

The reason that it has to be this way is because God is the One Who is in charge and He’s the One Who is going to call.

John 6:44—Jesus says: “No one can come to Me... [very simple, but a meaningful and profound statement] ...unless the Father, Who sent Me, **draws him...**” This gives us another whole perspective concerning the brethren of God from the point of view of a minister. It is the people that **God has called!**

Therefore, we look back and we see all of the abuse against the brethren by church leaders, and is that not a stench in God’s nostrils? The politics and the use of it that everybody has done? Even the thing with the death of Mr. Armstrong, *don’t send flowers, send money!*

When viewed with what we have just said, look at how absolutely appalling that kind of thing is. But the reason that we cannot see it is because we don’t see God. When we really see God, I mean in our mind’s eye—as Job said, ‘Now my eye sees You!’—then we can view things more from a Godly

perspective.

Verse 44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...” God has to do it Himself. What process God uses I have no idea!

I know that it says that ‘many are called but few are chosen.’ I know that the reason few are chosen is because few repent. But nevertheless, there it is! The greatest Being in the universe—God the Father—called *you*, called *me*, called every person that He calls His own—whether here or in some foreign country speaking another language, another color, whatever it may be, *they’re all the children of God, and He has called them!*

Verse 63: “It is the Spirit that gives life; **the flesh profits nothing...**”—spiritually—it profits something physically. That’s why God does not call all beautiful people, because then they would say that, ‘God has called us because we’re beautiful.’

“...The words that I speak to you, *they* are Spirit and *they* are Life” (v 63). It’s done spiritually. That’s why the presence of Christ is here now! We don’t see Him, but it is here now! Same way with the words that we read, it’s just so much black ink on white paper as far as words, and no different than any words in any other book. Except that these are *inspired with God’s Spirit!* Whoever reads them, it imparts to them spiritual knowledge.

Very profound! That’s why with God’s Spirit you can pick up the Bible and you can read and study, and you can walk away and know that you’ve receive something inside of you. But if someone walked up to you and asked what you received, you’d say, ‘I really couldn’t tell you except that I know that I’ve received something of God.’ It’s spiritual and that’s why you can’t tell them. You can relate it to other people who have God’s Spirit. *These words are Spirit and Life!*

Verse 64: “‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from *the* beginning who were the ones that did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, ‘For this reason, I have said to you, **no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father**’” (vs 64-65).

In other words, God the Father has to grant the permission. He has to call, He has to draw, He has to bring that person to Christ. It’s an ongoing situation!

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; **no one comes to the Father except through Me.**’” I want you to understand with that how absolutely precious, special and dynamic—every marvelous adjective

you could add to it—you calling really is. The One Who inhabits eternity, *has called you!* And He's gone one step further, more than one step further, as we will see!

Let's see what 1-Cor. 1 says about our calling. We've read this many times, but let's really think on it. Let's draw out of here the precepts we find in the Word of God: *precept upon precept; here a little, there a little.* It grows more and more each time.

1-Corinthians 1:26: "For you see your calling, brethren..." That's quite a statement in itself. Why are we called *brethren*? Brethren means that *we're family members.* Why? *Because of the calling of God!* The thing of being brethren is far more special than just a trite saying.

"...that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh..." I would have to conclude that we're certainly no big deal. I don't any one of us who are magnificent specimens of flesh. We're not!

"...not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you.* Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world..." (vs 26-27).

Remember Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name *is Holy*; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit...'" With the humble

1-Corinthians 1:27: "...so that He might put to shame those who are wise..." Can you imagine what it's going to be when all of these scientists are standing face-to-face with God and God tells them, 'Why didn't you know Me with all your wisdom and knowledge?' They will say, 'We have plumbed the depths of the universe and of the organisms, but we never saw God.'

Isn't that something? ***But we do!***

"...and God has chosen the weak things... [that's where we fit in] ...of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—..." (vs 27-28). As far as the world is concerned we don't exist except we have a social security number and they want our taxes. We're not big deal in the world!

"...in order that He might bring to nothing..." (v 28). Think about that for a minute. Think about the fantastic civilizations there are right now. They are nothing compared to the calling that God has given us. I'm not saying that to exalt ourselves; I'm just saying that the Truth is a spiritual reality. That's the way it is. What did Jesus say? *What it you gain the whole world and lost your soul?*

"...bring to nothing the things that are; so that

no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him **in Christ Jesus...** [John 14:6] ...Who was made to us wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (vs 28-30). Those are powerful statements! Powerful words!

What does it mean to be sanctified? *We have been made Holy,* even though we are in this corruptible flesh! "...even righteousness..." Only through the grace of God does that happen.

Verse 31: "So that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord.*'"

I was thinking about why people are deceived. Because of the evil? *No! Because of the good!* People look to the 'good' that they do to justify whatever evil is there. They are deceived by the 'good.'

- how good we are
- how right we are
- how long we are relating to history or lineage
  - ✓ how long we have existed
  - ✓ our great history
  - ✓ all the good things

That's how they're deceived.

Let's see about our calling, see what it is called. If God calls us it is what?

2-Timothy 1:5: "When I remember the unfeigned faith... [no pretentiousness about it] ...*that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to **stir up the gift of God that is in you...**" (vs 5-6). There are times when we have to do that:

- through prayer
- through study
- through just crying out to God in supplication
- through meditation

***Stir that up!***

"...by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, **but of power...**" (vs 6-7). I think we really need to concentrate on really using the very powers of God in overcoming; that's how we overcome, *through Christ!*

"...and of love, and of sound-mindedness. Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake* of the Gospel, according to *the power* of God, Who has saved us and called *us* with **a Holy calling...**" (vs 7-9). Just

like wherever God puts His presence, *it is Holy*. God calls you so it is “...a **Holy calling...**” because God has done it.

I’ve read this how many times, but it really has not sunk to the depths that it has until going through this for this sermon. It is “...a **Holy calling...**” We don’t have to get all uppity-uppity and say ‘lottie-da.’ God has called us and it is “...a **Holy calling...**”

“...—not according to our works...” (v 9). Remember what Paul said concerning works? *Blameless concerning the Law!*

“...but according to **His own purpose...**” (v 9). That’s something else again, too. *God’s own purpose!* That’s fantastic! Jesus said, ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions.’ It’s part of His purpose.

“...and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus **before** the ages of time” (v 9)—because He’s the Beginning and the End and He knows! How that fits in to how we come into existence, born and called, we’re just going to have to ask God to do a little retracing of that when we see Him so we can understand it completely.

Verse 10: “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel.” *According to God’s own purpose!*

That’s why our calling is so precious. Now maybe we can live the words that Paul said, ‘What shall separated us from the love of God? Life, depth, height, depravation? *Nothing will separate us from the love of God!*

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing...**” Think about the *Holy Spirit* that God has given! Think about the *calling* that God has given!

“...in the heavenly *things* with Christ” (v 3). We’re going to come to a conclusion that is just one step beyond this. The Holy Spirit comes directly from God the Father.

(go to the next track)

Romans 8:30: “Now, whom He predestinated, these He also called... [we’ve been talking about our calling] ...and whom He called, these He also justified...” Forgiven all of our sins, brought us into right standing with God through His grace. We are justified, ***made right before God through the action of God!***

“...and whom He justified, these He also

glorified” (v 30). We know, brethren, that we’re not glorified spirit beings. But having the Spirit of God is minute from God’s point of view—but the way we should view it, it is fantastic that God *that God would give us of His glorious, Holy Spirit!* Think about that! So, in a sense, because of our calling, we—as much as can be in the flesh—*have been*, by receiving God’s Holy Spirit—*glorified!* Again, *not to exaltation!*

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual **blessing in the heavenly things...** [of God’s Spirit] ...with Christ; according as He has **personally chosen us...** [God is the One Who has done it] ...**for Himself before the foundation of the world** in order **that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love**” (vs 3-4).

This is absolutely a mind-blowing statement! That is really something! Let God’s Spirit in you inspire you to understand what that means. That’s why the grace of God is so profoundly important.

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us... [the ones He has called] ...for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will.” That is God’s own purpose. *He has called us to His purpose!*

Verse 6: “To the praise of the glory of His grace...” I don’t think we should get out and jump up and down, stomp our feet, clap our hands, and run around and do summersaults and have a ‘Pentecostal holiness’ type meeting here.

I think that mentally and spiritually within, it should do a tremendous amount for us in understanding what God is doing for us. I don’t want you to feel good *about yourself*, I want you to ***feel good about God!*** Then you don’t have to worry about feeling good about yourself.

Verse 6: “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*.” We’re accepted of God! You don’t have to worry *about being accepted of human beings*, but of God!

Verse 7: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will...” (vs 7-9). That’s outstanding! ***The mystery of God’s will!*** How many people are out here trying to find out:

- who they are?
- where they are?
- what they’re going to do?

They interviewed this movie star—Anthony Quinn who did Zorba—and at age 65 he said he was ‘trying to find himself.’ I thought how tragic! But that’s the way so many people are in the world.

But because of God’s Spirit and God giving us of His Spirit, His Word and understanding of it, and because of Christ, **He has made known the mystery of His will!** That’s wonderful! That is tremendous!

“...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself; that in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of **His own will**” (vs 9-11). I want to emphasize that it is the will of God!

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ... [there have been a lot who have trusted in Christ since that time] ...in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 12-14).

In a sense we have been glorified—minutely—because of God’s will and own desire, through His Holy Spirit. That’s why it is a *Holy calling*, because the Holy God has called us. That’s why we are called *Holy brethren!* See how much more love we can have for each other and for God when we all understand that?

God has called all of us! As Jesus said, ‘Who are we to judge another man.’ That now maybe these and some of the other statements will make more sense. What happens when people exalt themselves over others? *They put the other person down!*

That’s why the keeping of the commandments will never save you. You will never be saved without keeping the commandments of God. Those are not contradictory statements; keeping the commandments of God is conditional after God has called you. It’s a *Holy calling!*

Hebrews 3:1: “Because of this, **Holy brethren...**” that means a whole lot more to me than it ever did before. I finally figured out what it means to give each other a ‘Holy kiss.’ Have you ever wondered what it is a *Holy kiss*? I’ll tell you exactly what it is.

You see all these people, like the Russians,

who kiss each other on the cheeks. You know those atheists don’t mean anything. The most obnoxious thing that I could ever picture in my mind was when Brezhnev kissed Pres. Carter at the signing of the Salt II treaty. Old Brezhnev came up and kissed Carter and I thought: *you talk about a hypocritical kiss if there ever was one!*

Now I’ll tell you what a ‘Holy kiss’ is: there would be that true affection motivated by God’s Spirit—which is Holy—and it’s not pretentious, not of human nature, not of lust, but **strictly of love through God’s Spirit!**

Verse 1: “Because of this, Holy brethren... [when you sit down to eat a meal you partake, you eat] ...**partakers of the heavenly calling...**”

- not just a cause because people are out there picketing
- not just a slogan because there was injustice done

But “...*the* heavenly calling...” because the great heavenly Father **has called us!** I don’t know about you, but that make the hair on the back of my neck stand up!

“...consider the Apostle and High Priest of *the faith* we profess—Jesus Christ” (v 1). Again, you see how all of this comes back to Christ.

1-Thessalonians 4:7: “For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to sanctification”—Holiness. What does that mean? **IF** we have the Spirit of God, *which we do*, and it is called the Holy Spirit of God, *which it is*, **IF** we keep the commandments of God, *which are Holy commandments*, and the commandments of Jesus Christ, what are we walking in? **Holiness!** He has called us *unto Holiness!*

Just let your mind expand to the resurrection. That’s quite a statement! Now maybe we can better understand why we need to flee sin! I think that the more we know and understand this and live by it... I’ll guarantee you that if we’re all inspired by what we’re going through here now that you’re not going to be that inspired tomorrow. You have to keep coming back and keep walking toward the Light. That means, as you do so, leave sin behind!

1-Corinthians 6:19: “WHAT!...” Look at all the sins that were going on there in the Church at Corinth; what a terrible thing! When you really think about it, what a terrible and horrible thing! Paul said:

Verse 19: “WHAT! Don’t you know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...**” God does not dwell in temples made by hands! Where does He dwell? *With His Holy Spirit IN His*

children!

“...which you have *within you* from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (vs 19-20). In other words, they belong to God!

I don’t know about you, but I’ll guarantee you that there is no other book on the face of the earth that you can go over so many times and become so excited about than the Bible and the Word of God. It is absolutely fantastic! That’s why we always need to strive toward God’s way. I don’t know how anyone can possibly be bored with the Bible.

2-Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creation...” You are new, but nobody else knows it. God does, you do! Your way of life has changed and you are a *new creature/creation!*

“...the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (v 17). Isn’t that true? *Everything you do takes on a whole new perspective!* “...old things have passed away...”

Go back and look at the things that made you excited as you were growing up, or that motivated you before God called you. They don’t mean a thing! They’re “...passed away...”

Verse 18: “And all things *are* from God, Who has **reconciled us to Himself...**” That’s what the calling of God does, it reconciles us to God! That’s why repentance is so important. We are reconciled, and to be reconciled means to be in harmony with God. That’s a wonderful thing—isn’t it? This is why in putting sin out of your life you do it through God’s grace, because you’re never going to get rid of it.

You let God get rid of it, and realize that ***you are reconciled with God!*** That’s tremendous! You don’t have to brag about it; you can just be happy and thankful that you are right with God, because God has made it right, and you put away all the weakness of the flesh, all the difficulties and problems you have on a day-to-day basis.

Hopefully I’m doing it less and less as I understand God more and more. It works that way. The more you understand God, the less and less things are going to captivate you and rule over you. *That’s walking in Holiness!*

“...through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; which *is*, that God was in Christ, reconciling *the* world... [God is going to reconcile the whole world] ...to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and He has

entrusted to us *this* message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us. We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, **‘Be reconciled to God’**” (vs 18-20). That is that whole congregation with all this evil going on.

If there is any message I could say to the people in other Churches of God: **“...Be reconciled to God.”** If everyone would be reconciled to God and get down off their high-horse and turn to God, maybe we could all do something together.

Verse 21: “For He made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him.” That is so tremendous, such a gracious thing!

Think about what gift you could give to someone. What if someone handed you a hundred million dollars? *You’d think that is fantastic!* But notice what God has given: “...that we might become *the* **righteousness of God** in Him.” That’s marvelous.

So, when God looks at us, we have a humble and contrite spirit. You don’t put it on; you don’t turn a switch on and have a humble and contrite spirit and be kind of like a robot. *No!* Now you can understand:

- why the ‘letter of the Law’ kills
- why there is no physical thing we can do to compel God to give us eternal life

It requires the righteousness of Christ that only He can give to us. We can’t earn! We do not deserve it! God has called us and has given it to us and that is marvelous!

Remember, we read where God has revealed unto us the ‘mystery of His will.’

Colossians 1:26: “*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations...” If there be any one way to really penetrate the Jewish mind, I don’t know how to do it except that if they ever understood that they’re missing out on so much... It was hidden, but now it’s known.

“...but has **now been revealed** to His saints; to whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory” (vs 26-27).

- Was Christ Holy? *Yes! He was ‘the Holy one!’*
- Is Christ in us? *Yes! That’s why we’re ‘Holy brethren!’*

Christ in us is the whole key! Let’s see how God is putting this all together *His way*.

Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father.” That’s wonderful. When you get down on your knees and you pray, ‘Our Father, in heaven...’ you’re talking to *the Boss!* You’re talking to *God*, the greatest Being there is! That’s marvelous! That is mind-blowing when you really comprehend! That’s why prayers become more meaningful! What you do becomes more meaningful!

Verse 19: “So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God. You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone in Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing...” (vs 19-21). That’s why we have to grow in grace and knowledge and in God’s Spirit.

“...into a Holy temple in *the* Lord... [because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit] ...in Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 21-22). That’s marvelous! That’s absolutely wonderful!

You go back and think when you were baptized and had hands laid on you and you started keeping the commandments of God and all these things, what a tremendous thing that it really is. It’s just exactly like ‘babes’ in Christ.

- Does a babe know that it’s a human? *No!*
- Does a babe understand a hand or a foot? *No!*

But as we grow up in Christ we come to a greater and fuller awareness and knowledge of God’s way, His grace, love and His Spirit, and it gives us the mature spirituality that can only come from God. That is so absolutely tremendous!

This all gets down to how we should live. When we leave here, as inspired as we may be of God’s Spirit, the next thing is how we live tomorrow!

Romans 6:11: “In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, **do not let sin rule** in your mortal body...” (vs 11-12). It does say it won’t be there, but don’t let it get the upper hand. That’s what it’s talking about.

“...by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For **sin shall not rule over you...**” (vs 12-14). You can overcome through Christ! Not through yourself,

*but through Christ!*

“...because you are not under law, but under grace.... [I hope we all understand that even more] ...What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants...” (vs 14-16)—‘doulos’—slave. You want to know who you can depict as a true slave of sin? *A full blown cocaine or heroin addict is a slave to that, because it is master over them!* The must have it!

Verse 16: “Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you; and having been delivered from sin...” (vs 16-18)—ruling over you.

I think we can all truly say that sin does not rule over us. I think we can also truly say that we have sins that we do that God forgives, but it doesn’t rule over us.

“...you became *the* servants of righteousness” (v 18). Are we the servants of righteousness? The slaves of righteousness? *Sure, because Christ is in us!*

- wanting to do the things that please God
- being led of God’s Holy Spirit
- keeping His commandments

Verse 19: “I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh; for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now **yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification**”—unto Holiness!

This thing of Holiness is a whole condition that we grow into as spiritual mature Christians before God. We yield ourselves unto Holiness. Let’s see how that is done.

Romans 12:1: “I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy...” How do we present ourselves Holy? *By not yielding ourselves to sin, but to the Holy Spirit of God!* Holy and acceptable to God!

“...and well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**... [there’s where it all takes place] ...in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (vs 1-2).

1-Timothy 2:15—talks about yielding ourselves to Holiness in talking about women: “But she shall be saved through the childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with self-control.” Well, that applies to men just as well. ***Yield yourself unto Holiness!***

Hebrews 12:10 talks about correction. Why do we need correction? *Because we’re carnal!* “For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them; but in the second case, ***He chastens us for our own benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness.***”

Maybe we can begin to rejoice in trials. When we understand that the purpose is to “...be ***partakers of His Holiness.***” Remember what God said? *Be Holy, for I am Holy!* That’s how it can be done.

As we go through 2-Peter 1 and read the words of God, with God’s Spirit let it expand our mind to really comprehend what God is telling us. In your own mind:

- think about all the things that Peter went through
- think about all the things that he experienced as recorded in Matt., Mark, Luke, John and Acts
- think about his whole life, the things that we don’t even know about, but you can imagine

Here Peter is writing at an old age, 2-Peter 1:13: “For I consider it my duty, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by causing *you* to remember *these things*; knowing that shortly the putting off of my tabernacle *will come*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has signified to me” (vs 13-14).

In other words, he’s writing this just before he dies. Here is Peter as an old man, called when he was a young man, a fisherman.

- he’s experienced all the things that he’s experienced
- preached to all the people whom he has preached to
- performed all the miracles and healings and everything he has done

He writes, v 1: “Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained ***the same precious faith...***” And precious it is, brethren!

“...as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ... [because of God’s Holy Spirit] ...Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according

as His Divine power has given to us all things...” (vs 1-3). Understand that God calls things that are not as though they are. God has given us all things! We know that means the universe.

“...that *pertain* to life and Godliness... [that’s what we have now] ...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which ***He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises...***” (vs 3-4). There’s no other way that you can give a description of it. Super abounding, beyond comprehension *precious promises!*

“...that through these you may become ***partakers of the Divine nature...***” (v 4). He’s writing this as an old man and seeing the flesh wither, knowing he’s going to die! “...***partakers of the Divine nature...***”

That is something; absolutely magnificent! We have partaken of the Divine nature with God’s Spirit. We are going to have entirely the Divine nature at the resurrection. I tell you, that gives a lot of hope! You can put so many things in the past, and count them as Paul did, as just ‘dung.’

“...having escaped the corruption *that is in the world through lust*” (v 4)—because sin doesn’t have dominion over you.

Verse 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides...” This tells us what we should do, and these are the things that guide our actions:

“...add to your faith, virtue... [good behavior] ...and to virtue, knowledge... [grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus] ...and to knowledge, self-control...” (vs 5-6). I’m sure you’ve found a greater degree of self-control knowing more of God’s way. You’re progressing. You are on the trail, the path, the way!

“...and to self-control, endurance [patience]; and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*. For *if* these things ***exist and abound in you...*** [alive and growing] ...they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 6-8).

Let’s see Peter’s last words, 2-Peter 3:18: “Rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the* day of eternity. Amen.”

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 18:19-20
- 2) Leviticus 23:2
- 3) Mark 1:23-24
- 4) Acts 3:12-15
- 5) Romans 1:1-5
- 6) Isaiah 57:15
- 7) John 6:44, 63-65
- 8) John 14:6
- 9) 1 Corinthians 1:26-27
- 10) Isaiah 57:15
- 11) 1 Corinthians 1:27-31
- 12) 2 Timothy 1:5-10
- 13) Ephesians 1:3
- 14) Romans 8:30
- 15) Ephesians 1:3-14
- 16) Hebrews 3:1
- 17) 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 18) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- 19) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- 20) Colossians 1:26-27
- 21) Ephesians 2:18-22
- 22) Romans 6:11-19
- 23) Romans 12:1-2
- 24) 1 Timothy 2:15
- 25) Hebrews 12:10
- 26) 2 Peter 1:13-14, 1-8
- 27) 2 Peter 3:18

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Jeremiah 7

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