

## **The fall of Man, the loss of his holiness and it's restoration.**

Last time we looked at Mankind's loss of knowledge when he fell in the beginning. This week we move onto his loss of holiness. But what exactly is that?

"Hold on, sorry!"-

*Shirt illustration/demonstration (notice a mark on a white shirt and try to clean it making it worse. Then try to clean some dirty water with a cloth)*

Of course that was just an illustration, but keep it in mind because it makes an important point when it comes to us and God.

The concept of holiness is about being pure and consecrated. That is, to be set apart from anything defiling, and instead, to be dedicated to God.

To say that God is holy, is to say that He is eternally separate and distinct from all impurity and if it comes near it is burned up in a holy fire.

If knowledge is related to the head (the mind) then holiness is related to the heart.

A good way to think about it is that;

Knowledge is, obviously, *what you know*, holiness is *who you are*, and righteousness is *what you do*.

Holiness is related to the *affections* and righteousness to the *will* of a man. Holiness is what you live for, what you worship in a sense, righteousness is your actions because of that fact. We're made to worship God, but, because of our sinful nature, we worship other things instead. We worship people and pleasures for example which, in the very act, make us defiled, like offering a forbidden sacrifice on an idolatrous altar. Our lives should be like a sacrifice to God, but instead we worship and serve things beneath us, unworthy things which spoil and ruin us.

God created man after His own image. This means that Adam, while he was without sin, was wholly consecrated to God. In the Old Testament we find this concept carefully developed in the system of worship revealed by God through Moses. There was the high priest, the tabernacle, and the various offerings. There were the divine ceremonies. And the basic idea of holiness was always prominent. Holiness meant "being set apart to the Lord." In Adam's case this was not a matter of ceremonies, or sacrifices. It was, in his case, a matter of heart devotion. He was holy because he found his supreme delight in the Lord. Far from being afraid (before he sinned), Adam felt at peace in the presence of God. He was "set apart" unto the Lord in all things, by a willing desire. He was, in this sense, truly a priest. When he fell into sin his heart had turned from full devotion, he'd betrayed God and been spiritually unfaithful. This made him impure and unclean in his desires.

Think of a tree. The health and vigour of the tree is like holiness and only because of this can it do the work of producing good fruit. This is like a man, if he is holy in the heart he can produce the fruit of righteousness. Now a man can do good works without being holy, but is that really good fruit? No, it's like the wild grapes talked about in Isaiah, empty deeds from wrong motives, fruit with no flavour, rotting on the inside. God will not accept your works.

Or think of clothing.

Unholiness means we are unclean spiritually, like the unclean clothes of a leper.

Unclean desires of the heart turn to unclean actions of the will (unrighteousness)- thoughts, words, deeds. The body will make the clothes unclean. I'll come back to this picture later.

So we must keep in mind this idea of being pure and separate from defilement. Of course this means that to be unholy has to do with impurity and uncleanness. But how exactly do we become spiritually unclean? Well, remember it's about your heart. What did the Lord say about this?; Matt 15

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me"

"he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

"Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth (words) come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

So this is unholiness, and washing is a symbol of how we must get rid of our condition.

"But Sir when you tried to clean your shirt you just made it worse" EXACTLY, I want you to remember that, because if we try that spiritually we'll get the same outcome. Why? Because sin corrupts and changes your character, ruins it, spoils it, defiles it. Can you just try to change and become clean? You've been affected and it will be impossible to go back to that innocence. Sin like this, works without you realising it. It desensitizes you. The influence of bad friendships, those films with the unclean things in them, the swearing, sexual content, the violence, the human worship. Those music videos, those images. Do you think you can consume that content into your heart and it not affect you? How are you going to unwatch those things, unlove those things?

So the answer is for God to change you, change your affections, and for Christ to wash you clean.

He gave the disciples a physical lesson of this when He washed their feet: John 13.4

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

The Lord said this of Judas. You see, Judas wasn't a true believer so he hadn't been cleaned. A Christian is someone washed clean at conversion, restored in holiness. After conversion a person will actively strive to be more consecrated to his new found God and to be more separate from those unclean things he used to love. The power of sin is broken and

we're accepted, but there is an ongoing work of daily washing- sanctification which won't be completed until we get to glory in heaven. This is how it works:

In justification the penalty of sin is taken away.

In sanctification the power of sin is taken away.

In glorification the presence of sin is taken away.

After Christ's death they thrust a spear into His side and out flowed water and blood. A symbol of the remedy for guilt and pollution. Justification and what we call Expiation. That's why the Bible says we need to be washed in the blood of Christ. A strange concept if it wasn't talking spiritually.

So that work in salvation is God's. We often talk of being given Christ's righteousness in justification, but less often the taking away of sin and defilement in expiation. But this expiation is vital. How can you be acceptable to God in unholiness? Some people think they can't become a Christian because they're not that sort of person. They're right that they're not that person, but wrong that they can't come. God deals with the sinner and changes their character at conversion, makes the unclean clean. Your desires will change, you'll have a new heart.

Old Mr Spurgeon used to have an illustration of an artist. This artist wanted to paint a homeless man. So one day he saw such a man and asked if he'd come to his studio. So the next day the man arrived but, to the artist's disappointment, the man had tried to make himself more acceptable on the outside by putting on some cleaner clothes and putting a comb through his hair, and even though he was just as unwashed and smelly, he looked different. The artist said, "I'm sorry this won't do, I wanted you just as you were."

It's the same with us, come just as you are and you'll be more than an artist's subject, you'll be the great physician's patient, and he'll cure you of the loathsome disease that corrupts your soul.

We should have kept our heart. What do you love, what do you live for, what are you dedicated to, what slavish desires do you worship and serve?

Do you know your chief sins of the heart? Is it self serving pride which will slowly harden your heart and you'll have no humility to learn, unteachable, especially with the Gospel; because you'll always think you know better.

Is it lust- that corrupting sin that makes heart and mind unclean? Your desires will ruin you and then ruin others as you set your desires on them, lust is infectious.

In the end you won't be able to hide these sins. They will come out when stirred in speech and action like dirt disturbed when a stagnant pond is stirred. Everyone will soon see from the outside something of what you are on the inside.

Think about that person who can't stop making innuendos or making dirty jokes or talking about sexual things, even reveling in perversity, glorying in being the 'rebel heart'; but they're deceived, they've become thoroughly corrupted, unclean and filthy inside out. Yes there is the moral part to human beings. And we know full well that we can become morally corrupt. Don't you feel it in your conscience? If not, pray that the Lord would bring your senses back for your souls sake.

So what can we do about it? Clean ourselves? Impossible, you'll end up like the shirt, worse than when you started. Pollution grows worse, the mind and heart getting more perverse.

Until the conscience may get alarmed. Then the Devil puts forth his old temptation to self salvation. "Try to be a good person", he says. After playing the rebel they play the saint and even succeed in fooling a few people, and then they like the idea of being seen as a really good person. You see the celebrities that a few years previously had been leading the charge in rebellion and drugs and allsorts, now becoming champions of charity and global causes! There seems to be a move towards being seen to follow the causes of the world that seem righteous and politically correct, to do right by the world, to be seen to be virtuous in a secular way, but this is just a new form of whitewashed tombs like the Pharisees. The only way to be clean is inside out, not outside in, and this is a *real* healing of the unclean disease, like Jesus healing the lepers. And *He* must work the miracle. If we think we can do it we're not only corrupted but self deceived.

Christ healed diseases and cast out unclean spirits to show us what He does in the heart.  
Luke 6.17-

"And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their *diseases*; And they that were vexed with *unclean* spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."

He healed them *all*, not just *some*. He heals all who come to Him, and if you come to Him He'll heal you also, just reach out to Him by prayer in faith like the woman who touched the hem of His garment and her issue of blood was stopped and she was made clean.

The Priest was a foreshadowing of Christ's work of holiness. The Priest must be clean and offer a pure spotless offering, undefiled. They would wash themselves and put on clean white priests garments. And so Christ is the fulfillment of this picture, offering Himself as the High Priest and the offering, in one act, on the cross of Calvary, *doing* what we cannot do, and *being* what we cannot be, for us. To make us acceptable to God. What a wonderful thing!

The priests, of course, weren't really clean of heart themselves, not like Christ, and they knew it. They needed expiation (the removal of sin) just like everyone does.

A great picture of all this is in Zechariah 3.

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD (Who is Christ), and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?(saved from the holy fire of hell, in other words) Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (just like we've been talking about), and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him (expiation). And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head (the head piece of the priest). So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by."

See how the Lord fights our cause before Satan and deals with our state and condition with a free gift. This is why we can come as we are.

The clothes represent righteousness, but the cleanliness of them is holiness. And especially that 'fair mitre'. Do you know that it had a golden plate attached to the front of it. Do you know what it had written on it?

Ex28.36

"And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD."

Of course!

So there we have it. How we can return to a Holiness acceptable to God. Washed clean.

I once visited Hierapolis not far from Laodecia in the middle east. There they said were waters that, if you washed yourself in them, would turn your skin young and fresh again, like the skin of a baby! Well, I never tried it, so I don't know about that. But I do know that God will clean your heart better than any Turkish waters. I *have* experienced that, and can testify to it's truth.

So, with your affections, turn to the Lord and consecrate, dedicate yourself to Him, to love and serve Him with all your heart.

Here's some verses about the turning away from our sin in repentance:

Jer31.19,

"Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

Psalms 51.17,

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

2 Cor 7.10

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of(regretted)"

And here are a couple of verses about the One we turn to in faith.

John 4.42 when the Samaritan's heard what happened to the woman who met Christ at the well.

"And (they) said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

1 Thess 2.13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

And in Hebrews 10.10 Christ's work:

By the which will we are sanctified (that is consecrated, made pure and holy) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

We don't need priests in the Church today as in a sense all believers are priests going to God through our High Priest Jesus Christ and dedicating our lives to worship and serve him. So, love the Lord with all your heart and live for Him, not for the unworthy, corrupt people and things in the world which are beneath you and can never satisfy you. To be separated unto God is to be betrothed to Christ, to love and live for the Lord is to keep the

commandment of God in Jesus Christ. Washed and enabled to walk in His ways;- a royal priesthood, a holy nation. May you be a member of it.

Let's pray.