



The Book of Hebrews 3:1_The Holy Brethren

March 10, 2024

Holy Text: Hebrews 3:1

Initial Thoughts on our Text:

1. "Wherefore." The author anchors the coming command to "consider Christ" in all the things previous written...
 - Because God, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son. (1:2)
 - Because Christ is the brightness of *His* glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...(1:3a)
 - Because Christ has purged our sins and sat down at God's right hand... (1:3b)
 - Because Christ is made so much better than the angels (1:4)
 - Because the Captain of our salvation has been made perfect through sufferings (2:10)
 - Because Christ has sanctified us, declared unto us the Father, and sings about us... (2:11-13)
 - Because Christ has defeated the devil, given us eternal life, and delivered us from the bondage of the fear of death... (2:14-15)
 - Because Christ is the Seed of Abraham, connecting all who believe in Him to the Covenant Promises of God...(2:16)
 - Because Christ is our merciful and faithful High Priest (2:17)
 - And because Christ suffered temptations that He might succour us who are tempted... (2:18)
2. So because of all these truths, the hearers (at least a good percentage of them) are "**Holy Brethren.**" They are "**partakers of the heavenly calling.**"
 - These titles (which aren't gender exclusive) are incredibly humbling. The sinner is called **holy** and the deservedly hell-bound is called a partaker of the **heavenly!**
 - Also, they both *descriptive* and *prescriptive*. They describe who we are in Jesus and prescribe how we should live because of Jesus.

Romans 6:1-6 (KJV) *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: **6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

3. In context, the author is calling upon all of the truths taught so far, including the picture of divine reality in our text concerning the believer, to set up his next argument: **a call to faithfulness and perseverance.** (More beginning next week)
4. A part of that argument is reminding the hearer of WHO THEY ARE... and through the Holy Scriptures, WHO WE are as well...
 - We have been *made holy* by the sacrifice of Christ and gifted with eternal life. Therefore, in light of all Christ has done, our lives should be characterized by holiness and heavenliness...purity and praise...circumspection and celebration!

- In Greek, a common word for holy is *hagios*, as in our Text. It means “*sacred—physically pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially consecrated.*”
- Our short lives on earth should declare and display our soon-coming destination! Our living should shout our LORD’s love and mercy! Our witness and watchfulness should comport with the immensity of God’s wrath poured out upon His Son: Christ’s suffering and death! Our representation of Him should say to all, “He is Risen!”

5. We ARE the Holy Brethren, Partakers of the Heavenly Calling, because of The Apostle (or Sent One) and the High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.

Three Propositions

1. In our day, the Church has rightly emphasized propitiatory holiness (Christ’s holiness laid to our account), but underemphasized it’s outworking: practical holiness.
2. We’d rather be called “Loving Brethren” than “Holy Brethren,” as if we can have one without the other.
3. Our embrace of love without law has resulted in a severe loss of the Fear of God.

The fear of the Lord is the love, reverence, awe and passion that prompt the believer to obey God. It is that state of mental and emotional sanctification where the believer sees God as holy and a reverent trembling results. It is the necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship where total obedience to the commands of Christ is seen as a loving response to a loving God.

It is a behavioral restraining element even in the heart of those who do not follow Christ. In other words, it is a cultural acknowledgment within man’s conscience of the Law of God (Ro 2:15). It is a necessary component of any Godly and moral society.

It is the understanding that God will one day judge the earth and all who ever lived.

Three Questions

1. What is the modern, western church characterized by? I would submit that it is not *love*, and certainly not *truth* or *holiness*, but it is instead *pragmatism* (truth of practices defined by success or acceptance), which eventually results in *compromise*.
2. What is the current trend: *reformation* (recovering biblical truth and holiness) or *deconstruction* (ashamed of and moving away from such)?
3. Why is recovering holiness so important? My take: in part because of the designed witness and prophetic voice of the local assembly.

Ten Observations about Holiness

1. Holiness is characteristic of God!

Revelation 4:8 (KJV) *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

- The Scriptures that declare God’s holiness are ubiquitous. And for many reasons:
 1. His holiness focuses us on His majesty of God and not ourselves.
 2. His holiness makes us aware of our deep need for practical cleansing.
 3. His holiness helps us understand our own unworthiness.
 4. His holiness produces fear and trembling, carefulness and propriety.

5. His holiness, rightly understood, changes the way we see things. For example, in worship, it lifts us to heaven and into His throne room; it encourages us to leave the worldly or carnal behind...another healthy thing!¹

2. Practical, day to day Holiness is commanded of New Testament believers.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (KJV) For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (KJV) Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: **15** Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

1 Peter 1:13-16 (KJV) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: **15** But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; **16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

3. Nevertheless, holiness, and it's proponents, are often called legalists.

- Although legalism (going beyond the biblical standard or exalting man's word over God's Word, Matt 15:3) can often have a "shew of wisdom" (Col 2:20-23), it is sinful. It binds heavy, man-made burdens upon men's shoulders. (Matt 23:4)
- **Biblical holiness, however, is not legalism. It's love!**

Deuteronomy 7:9 (KJV) Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (KJV) And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, **13** To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

John 14:15 (KJV) If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:21 (KJV) He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 14:23-24 (KJV) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. **24** He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

1 John 5:2-3 (KJV) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

¹ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2020/3/raising-our-reverence-pt-1-the-holiness-of-god-2020>

4. Holiness isn't anti-grace or in conflict with love.

- On the contrary, grace teaches or trains us in righteousness!

Titus 2:11-14 (KJV) *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

- The unmerited love and favor of God (grace) humbles us. It overwhelms us with His love. It reminds of His sacrifice. It asks us, "How can you not live for the God who hath saved thee, and do so with all thine heart, mind, soul, and strength?"

5. Holiness is the goal of the Gospel, in salvation, sanctification, and glorification.

- The first New Testament statement on the Gospel is given in Matthew:

Matthew 1:21 (KJV) *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

- The purpose of the Gospel, the sacrificial death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, is to make the unholy holy and the unrighteous righteous! It is to deal with our sin, or unholiness problem! This is the only way we can be saved from God's just wrath against all transgression and iniquity!

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 (KJV) *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. **20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. **21** For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

- We we are saved (from God's wrath) and sanctified (set apart as holy) **positionally**, through Christ. **Practically**, throughout our lives, God continues to sanctify us by His Word and Spirit. One day, our sanctification will be **Perfect**...in glory!²

6. Therefore, Holiness should be the normative desire and state of the truly transformed.

- We should have the attitude of David...

Psalms 19:7-14 (KJV) *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. **10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. **11** Moreover by them is thy servant*

² <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2024/1/the-book-of-hebrews-211-13all-are-of-one>

warned: *and in keeping of them there is great reward.* **12** *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* **13** *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.* **14** *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

7. It's greatest work is internal, in the heart and mind.

- Jesus' salvation is powerful! He changes our hearts and transforms our desires!

Ezekiel 36:25-27 (KJV) *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Romans 12:1-2 (KJV) *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

8. Holiness is both a state (by His grace) and a call to battle. It suggests daily, and sometimes difficult applications of the Scriptures to life.

- The call to be holy brethren forces us to decide if we truly believe the Bible. Some things God commands are directly opposite of what we want to do, what the world does, and what the devil tempts us towards.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Hebrews 2:1 (KJV) *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

9. It is a powerful witness to a lost a dying world.

- Why? Because the holy brethren demonstrate the transforming Power of Jesus Christ and the commanded *Distinction* or *Difference* of God's people, which God has always desired.

Matthew 5:13-16 (KJV) *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Leviticus 10:10 (KJV) *And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean:*

Ezekiel 22:26 (KJV) *Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.*

Ezekiel 44:23 (KJV) *And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.*

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (KJV) *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

10. It is absolutely hated by the flesh, the world, and the devil.

- Satan wants us to sin, to rebel, to disobey God and walk in pride. So does the world and so does our flesh. The holy brethren must, in faith and by His grace, resist them all!

Ephesians 2:1-10 (KJV) *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Beloved, let us be the holy brethren. Let us, with love and humility, live like those who are partakers of the heavenly calling. Let us do so for the glory of our King, and the good of the Kingdom. Amen.