

# HOLINESS

## Hebrews 12.14: Without Holiness No One Will See the Lord

I would like to talk about holiness this morning.

- There is a statement made in the Bible about holiness that I think is worthy of reflection.
- (1Cor 1.30) To begin, please understand that Christ is our Holiness.
  - ✓ Positionally, in Christ, we are holy (Christ is our sanctification). This is our "position" in Christ.
- Practically, however, we are to grow in holiness... and that is what I'd like to talk about this morning.

And that brings us to our main text for this morning: Hebrews 12.14.

### I. Holiness: What is it?

**A. Holiness (holy, sanctified, etc.) simply means "set apart for God's use." For example...**

1. In Genesis 2 the Bible says that God "sanctified" the seventh day—He made it "holy" in that He set it apart for His own use.
2. When Moses approached God in the burning bush, the Lord told him that the ground he was standing upon was "holy"—it was dirt like all the other dirt around it, but it was set apart for God.
3. There is much that is called "holy": The Holy Place, the Most Holy Place, the Holy Scriptures, etc.

**B. Holiness, then, implies two things:**

1. (2Tim 2.19) First, holiness implies a separation from sin.
  - a) To be holy we must separate from sin—we must depart from (forsake) iniquity.
  - b) To be holy means that we stop doing that which is wrong—sin, iniquity, wickedness.
2. (Rom 1.1) Second, holiness implies a separation to God.
  - a) To be holy means that we separate unto God (specifically: unto His use in the Gospel).
  - b) The Christian stops doing what is wrong (he separates from iniquity) and he dedicates himself to doing the will of God.
3. That is true holiness.
  - a) It is not some sort of mysticism or some "other world" experience.
  - b) It is separating from sin to God for the cause the Christ.
4. And Hebrews 12.14 says that without holiness, no one will see the Lord...

### II. Without holiness, you will not see the Lord.

**A. (Mat 7.21-23) Without holiness, there is no true conversion to Christ.**

1. Note: Holiness does not save you. Salvation is not by works, and that is not what we are saying.
  - a) Rather, the Bible says that a true conversion to Christ will result in holiness in your life.
  - b) (Mat 7.17) Holiness is part of the fruit of a genuine conversion.
  - c) Without holiness, you have no reason to believe you are saved. Without a conscious effort (at least a desire!) to separate from sin to God, you have no biblical assurance that you are saved.
2. (v22) One can say they know the Lord... One can even do many "wonderful works" (including miracles!). But...
3. (v21, 23) If they do not do the will of God... if they continue to work iniquity (i.e., if they are not holy unto the Lord)... then they are giving strong indications that they not saved.

4. This addresses the wide-spread and popular false teaching of "salvation without repentance."
  - a) Many say that all you have to do is "believe" to be saved, but that's not necessarily true.
    - (1) James says that the devils believe! And they are not saved (Jam 2.19).
    - (2) (Acts 16.30-31) The proper response to the Gospel is to believe, yes! But it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith results in you following a new Lord!
    - (3) True saving faith is repentant faith: You turn from sin and self to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b) If you do not repent of your sins (confess and forsake them), you can "believe" all you want—you can say "Lord, Lord" all day long—but you will die and go to hell.
  - c) Without repentance, there is no salvation—you will perish in your sins.
    - (1) That was Christ's message: (Luke 13.3, 5) "...*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"
    - (2) That is Paul's message: (Acts 17.30) "*God... commandeth all men every where to repent.*"

**B. (Mat 7.16-20) Therefore, good fruit is a visible indication of a good conversion (salvation).**

1. (v18a) "Cannot": A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit.
  - a) If someone converts to Christ, they become a new creature—a "good tree"—and there will be good fruit (the fruit of holiness: a separation from sin to God).
  - b) Yes, obviously, we still battle the old man. But in a true Christian there will be some good fruit (especially fruit "meet for repentance" because he has turned from sin to God, to serve Him).
2. (v18b) "Neither can": A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit.
  - a) If a "believer" simply cannot live in holiness... or if he has no desire for holiness... Why on earth would we believe he is saved just because he says so.
  - b) Haven't you ever wondered why it is that so many "Christians" don't act like Christians?
    - (1) Why don't they stop sinning? Why don't they read their Bibles? Why aren't they concerned for souls? Why don't they feel the "tug" and "pull" of their duty and responsibility in Christ?
    - (2) What you are seeing is a lack of holiness: They follow sin and self, not the Lord.
- c) (v23) The habitual worker of iniquity is giving clear indication he is not saved.
- d) (v21-22) But, don't miss the context: The professing believer who has no interest in doing the will of God (even though he is dedicated to his religion, his beliefs, and even good works) is also giving clear indication that he is not saved... regardless of what he says or believes.
  - (1) (v21) These are the "believers" to have no interest in doing the will of God—they have no interest in learning what God's will is (Scripture), and even less in doing His will.
  - (2) (v22) Rather, these "believers" name the Lord, but they do the works that seem right in their own eyes (rather than doing the works of God's will). We call that pragmatism today.
  - (3) These "believers" are giving clear indications that they are not saved...
    - (a) (John 8.47) He that is of God (a true believer) hears God's Word, but he that is not of God does not. The "believer" with no interest in Scripture and God's will is not saved.
    - (b) (John 8.31) The true convert is the one who follows Christ and His Word (God's will); the person who says "Lord, Lord" but does not follow Christ and His Word is lost.
- e) (v19) Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.
  - (1) Holiness (separation from sin to God) is fruit of a true conversion to Christ.
  - (2) Everyone that is saved has turned from sin to God, and God has made him a new creature through the new birth. There will be radical changes (small, maybe! but there will be fruit).

**C. (Mat 7.13-14) There are two gates and two ways.**

1. Note: You do *not* have to go through a "gate" in order to go to hell. Everyone who is born into this world is already under the condemnation of sin (we are born in sin; born dead, separate from God).
  - a) What God is showing us here is the difference between true and false conversions.
  - b) Each gate is a "conversion" that puts the "believer" on a path...
2. (v13) The Wide Gate: This represents a conversion without repentance.
  - a) This is what Paul calls "believing in vain" in 1Corinthians 15.2 (we'll look at this later).
  - b) The gate is wide (it's easy to get in!) and the way is broad (plenty of space for you to move about and do whatever it is you want!).
    - (1) All you have to do is "believe" (you say "Lord, Lord") and you get your "fire insurance."
    - (2) And after that, since you have "eternal security" and "liberty in Christ," you can do what you want! It's all grace! grace! grace! and love! love! love! ...and a license to sin.
  - c) The wide gate of "just believe" puts you on the broad path of a false conversion.
    - (1) There is no holiness. There is no separation from sin. There is no devotion to God.
    - (2) There is no seeking the will of God to do it, there is only what seems right in your eyes.
    - (3) There no repentance... no holiness... no true conversion... and no salvation.
3. (v14) The Narrow (Strait) Gate: This represents a true conversion of repentance and faith.
  - a) The narrow gate of repentance puts you on the narrow path of holiness.
    - (1) This is why the narrow gate is called a "strait" gate: *strait* means difficult, distressful (we talk about "being in a strait between the two"). Repentance means death to self!
    - (2) This narrow path has limits: You walk according to the will of God only!
  - b) A true conversion results in holiness: (v21) It results in a believer who does the will of God.
    - (1) (John 8.29) Christ, the perfect picture of perfect holiness in a man illustrates this point perfectly. A Christian (follower of Christ!) is a doer of the will of God only!
    - (2) And this puts an end to the arguments over the wickedness and idolatry of pragmatism!

**D. (1Cor 15.1-2) Paul gives the same testimony: Without holiness, you are giving indication you are not saved.**

1. The Gospel is that which saves. But, how can we tell if someone is truly saved or not?
2. The true convert will "keep in memory" that which was preached unto him. He will hear the Word, keep the Word, and bring forth fruit with patience (over time, because "time proves all things").
3. If someone "says a prayer" and "accepts Jesus" but...
  - a) ...never stops fornicating... never stops looking at pornography... never stops gossiping and backbiting... never puts an end to his covetous lifestyle...
  - b) ...or if he never has a desire to read his Bible, pray, see souls saved, or to become like Christ...
  - c) ...if he has never separated from sin to God...
  - d) He has believed in vain—he has believed without getting saved (believed without repentance).
4. (2Cor 13.5) This was Paul's concern for the Corinthians when he saw consistently bad fruit in their lives and in the church.

**E. [Review] Without holiness, you will not see the Lord.**

1. Holiness does not save you; the Bible does not teach that you must be holy to be saved.
2. Holiness (separating from sin to God) is fruit of a true conversion to Christ because...
  - a) Conversion is first of all repentance (it is turning from sin and self, forsaking it!).
  - b) Conversion is also faith in the Christ as Lord and Savior (turning to God in Christ).
3. Without the fruit of holiness, the Bible gives you no assurance of salvation.
  - a) Rather, the Scripture says that without the fruit of holiness, you will not see the Lord.
    - (1) You have believed in vain. Your conversion was false.
    - (2) You have passed through wide and easy gate of a false conversion and that has placed you on the wide, comfortable, and spacious path to your destruction in hell.
  - b) But there is also another implication in Hebrews 12.14... and it is for us (Christians)...

**III. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord in us.**

**A. Our Mission: To be and make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Why are we here? What's the point? What are we doing here—what are we supposed to be doing here? Why did God leave us in this wicked, filthy, violent, perverse world?
2. God left us here on purpose: He has given us a work to do—our Mission (the primary focus of which is seeking out the lost for their salvation).
  - a) (Mat 28.18-20) We are to go and teach all nations—we are to go and make disciples of all nations (the other "Great Commission" passages tell us exactly how that is done).
  - b) (Mark 16.15) We are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.
  - c) (Luke 24.26-27) We are to go out to the lost and preach repentance for the remission of sins.
  - d) (Acts 1.8) We are to go out to where they lost are in this world and witness to them.
  - e) (Rom 10.13-17) We are to go to the unbelievers and preach the Gospel to them.
  - f) (2Cor 5.18-20) We are to take the word of reconciliation to the world.
3. And He also expects us to speak the truth in love one to another (to teach Scripture with loving admonition to apply it / to do it) so that we grow in Christ-likeness.

**B. Our Great Need: GOD!**

1. (1Cor 3.6) We can plant seed and water it all we want... Who gives the increase? GOD!
2. (Ps 127.1) If God is not with us, we labor in vain.

**C. Our Responsibility: Holiness!**

1. (Deut 23.12-14) If we desire for God to walk in the midst of our camp... If we desire God to be among us so that we do not labor and fight in vain in our mission... we need holiness!
2. (Deut 23.12 cf. Heb 13.12-14) We need to go "without the camp," and for us today our place "without the camp" (outside the camp) is the cross of Jesus Christ.
3. (Deut 23.13) We need to out to the cross and bury our filth! We need to go to the cross and repent of our sins—confess them there! bury them there (under the blood of Christ)! leave them there!
4. (Deut 23.14) For if we do not... if we refuse holiness (refuse to separate from the filth of our sin), God will not walk among us. He will not bless us. And we will fail Him in the Mission He gave us.

5. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord *in us*, nor will they see Him *among us*.
- a) Without turning from sin...
    - (1) From gross sin: fornication, pornography, covetousness...
    - (2) From common sin: gossiping, back-biting, division, dissension, selfish (self-centered) living, apathy, indifference, inactivity...
  - b) Without turning to God (intentionally *learning* His will in Scripture to *do it* just as intentionally)...
  - c) ...without holiness, we labor in vain. God will not manifest His presence among us.

**Conclusion: The Bible says in Hebrews 12.14 that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.**

**1. Without holiness, *you* will not see the Lord.**

- Holiness is part of the fruit of a true conversion because it is the result of repentance *from* sin and faith *in* the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Holiness does not save us. But holiness does manifest itself in every true convert—every Christian.
- Please examine yourself today to see if you are in the faith. Are you growing in holiness? Do you *desire* to grow in holiness? Or could you not care less...?

**2. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord *in us*.**

- Holiness is necessary in the Mission because without it, no one will see the Lord in and among us.
- Our lives as Christians will either be stumbling blocks to the Gospel, or they will adorn the Gospel.
- Without holiness (separating *from* sin *to* God), we labor in vain because God will not touch the unclean thing... He will not walk among the filth in our camp.
- Let's finish with this exhortation: 1Peter 1.15-16.