

# St Martins C3 – October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## *The Holy One – Knowing God*

### **Sermon Notes:**

Today, we are exploring the holiness of God, which is declared as a central characteristic of God, sitting above all others.

### ***Read 1 Samuel 2:2***

The writers mean that God is completely different to the gods of the nations around them. He is separate and above His creation. God's holiness means that He is set apart from everything He has made. Everything associated with God is also seen as holy.

The most common image of God's holiness is the image of fire. Fire is useful, but it is terrifying. The same fire that warms can also burn. When we encounter God's holiness it is like encountering a wildfire. That is what Moses finds when he first meets God.

### ***Read Exodus 3:1-6***

When Moses meets God's holiness, He encounters Heaven come to earth. He must remove His sandals because of the dirt and excrement attached to them. When Heaven comes to earth it consumes the things that are not compatible with it.

***Read Exodus 12:8-9; Exodus 19:3; Exodus 27:3; Exodus 40:38; Leviticus 6:13***

Fire becomes a symbol of God's distinctness and holiness.

***Read Isaiah 6:1-7***

God's holiness is like fire. It nourishes us, but if we come too close without respect we will be consumed. To know God we need to appreciate that He is separate from us.

But even in His separateness, God longs to be known. Through Jesus we see the holy God bring heaven to earth. He reaches out to the unclean, the diseased, and the sinful and he transforms them into the clean and pure way of Heaven.

When we become Christians we take on the holiness of God. Just like on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit rested on people like a fire.

We get to be part of God's holiness. We are called to live in that holiness. In the same way that a lifeguard wears a uniform that identifies them as distinct from the swimmers so we are filled with God's holiness and called to live like we are distinct in the way we live.

***Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:5-12; Hebrews 12:14***

We have two challenges. The first is to respect the fire of God's holiness. He is the one and only and demands that we treat Him with the humble fear that He deserves. The second challenge is to discover sin in our lives and seek to remove it so we can live in the holiness of God.

## **Questions for Connect Groups:**

### **Sermon Reflection:**

*What stood out to you from this week's message?*

*What do you think it means that God is holy?*

*What experiences have you had with fire? How could it be a good symbol of God's holiness?*

*What is the significance of the seraphim touching Isaiah's lips?*

### **Life Application:**

*What does it look like to come to God with humility and approach Him as the one who is completely other than we are?*

*What are the implications of God calling us to be holy?*

*What might lead us to become casual in our response to God?*

*How can our holiness help others know God?*

*Have you ever encountered God's holiness, where you realise you are unworthy because of His greatness? What happened?*

*If you haven't had that experience, imagine what having that experience would change in you.*

*What obvious behaviours and subtle attitudes might God be calling you to change so you are more holy?*

## **Monday Devotion: Holy to the Lord**

***Read Exodus 28:35-38; Zechariah 14:20-21***

When Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, he also received instructions on the creation of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was the place where Heaven and earth met. The presence of God in a tent.

As a result, it was known as a holy place. The instruments used at the tabernacle were holy, the priests were holy, and the festivals were holy.

One example of this is the medallion that the High Priest wore when he came into the presence of God. This was pure gold, sealed with the words: HOLY TO THE LORD. It was an awesome thing to be associated with God. However, it was only for a few select categories.

Yet God desires to share His Holiness with the world. A foreshadowing of this is the last words of the second to the last book in the Old Testament: Zechariah. In this chapter he speaks of the ultimate hope – the day when God himself will rule over the earth and life will flow out to the nations.

The climax of this hope is that the harness bells of horses will be inscribed with the words: HOLY TO THE LORD. God longs for His holiness to fill the whole earth. That even the most common parts of creation might be sacredly transformed.

Pray and commit yourself to God, asking that He might reveal His Holiness to you and include you in His holy plan.

## **Tuesday Devotion: Be Holy**

***Read Leviticus 11:44-45; Deuteronomy 14:2; Colossians 1:22***

No one is more Holy than God. His holiness is fearsome and shows His great and awesome power.

What is Holiness? God's holiness means that He is set apart from everything He has made. Holiness is not simply God's moral character (although that is part of it), but also His otherness. It is the distinction between the Creator and the creature, the infinite distance between God's deity and our humanity.

Yet, God calls His people to be holy like he is. How could they achieve this?

First, holiness is not something Israel was to try and achieve, it was a status they had as God's elect. Simply by being associated with God they were already holy. Their task was then to live up to that standard.

The same is true of us. We have been saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus. When we believe in Jesus we are filled with His Holy Spirit. God Himself dwells inside us, the flame of His Holiness forever cleansing our being.

We are also responsible to take what God has done and make sure we gradually become closer to the holiness that He embodies.

Pray today and thank God for His saving work. Ask to become more aware of His Holy Spirit inside of you.

## **Wednesday Devotion: Distinct and Sanctified**

***Read Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 1:4***

When we were saved by God we were filled with His Spirit. This act of God makes us distinct from the world around us. We are now His children and holy because of the in-filling of His Spirit.

However, we are not completely holy. If you are anything like me you will look at your life and see a myriad of ways you do not look like God. Some attitudes and behaviours still do not line up with His holiness.

In Romans 12, Paul encourages his readers to consider their response to God's mercy. He tells them to lay their lives down before God as living sacrifices. To make themselves holy. There is a demand on all followers of Jesus to ensure their life lines up with the high calling He has for them.

Part of this calling is to be more like God and less like the world around us. So, Paul tells his readers to not conform to the pattern of the world but be transformed by the renewing of their minds.

We will look at ways to achieve the distinctiveness He is talking about, however, it is important to note that this is not a quick and easy process. The Biblical word for the process is sanctification. It means to take something holy and make it even more so. It begins by aligning yourself with God and not the world around you.

Ask for Him to reveal how you can become more like Him.

## **Thursday Devotion: Holy and Separate**

### **Read Colossians 3:1-9**

So, we are called to be holy and distinct from the world. What does that look like? Here, in Colossians 3, we see two ways we can step into the holy life that God has for us.

The first is by removing from ourselves the moral filth of this earth that clings to us. Instead, God calls us to the values and ways of Heaven.

We are freed from sin, yet its call is strong and many things still lure us into its grasp. Look at this list of sins and consider which of them are lurking inside of you:

*Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world ... But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other. (Colossians 3:5-9)*

These things represent the way of the world we were once caught up in (verse 7). Now, we have been redeemed and we choose to live a new way (verse 1). We have a choice of whether we share in His glory or partake in His anger (verse 4, 6).

Some of the things we need to take off are obvious. Start with them. Others are more subtle and we will need the wisdom of God to reveal their grip on our life and His strength to remove them. Pray today and ask God to help you remove these things and live the new way He has for you.

## **Friday Devotion: Remade in the Image of God**

### ***Read Colossians 3:10-17***

Holiness is not just about separating from the things of the world that pollute God's holiness in us. It is about identifying ourselves with the positive things of God.

We no longer have the ritual commands of the Old Testament to be holy. In the New Testament, holiness is defined by aligning ourselves with the character of God.

This is why Paul continues to say that Jesus' followers are "being renewed...in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:10), which results in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and above all love.

So through Jesus' death and resurrection, we become the true humans we were made to be, holy and pleasing to God. We can partner with God in recreating the world and living in holiness.

As we live this way, we reflect the character of God, showing the world what God is like. We were created in the image of God and through this holy life, we can be recreated in the image of God.

Pick one of these characteristics and prayerfully make it a part of your life so that we might be more like Him and draw more people to His holy name.