

HOLINESS IN FASHION.

In these days of quickly fading out fashions, even some essential basics of Christian faith have also certainly gone out of fashion. Anyone would quickly point out that it is the Holiness preaching and the return of the Lord.

I do not want to talk about the sin scale of the world but rather would like to turn the spot light inside the Church. Lately I do not remember hearing a message on ascribing to the standards of holiness which Jesus Himself has set. Two days back this thought came to me so suddenly as a flash. I was thinking about the verse where Jesus says that if you even lust about a man or a woman in your heart you commit adultery.

Jesus placed the source of holiness even in our thinking. But these days it seems like no one believes it is possible. But suddenly it struck me, if Jesus has set the standard not to even sin or lust in our thinking then that should be possible. Jesus came to this world as a man, with all the feelings and passions, so that He would show us the way how we could live without sinning even in our thoughts. I tell you my brothers and sisters, it is possible to live without sinning even in our thoughts. The key to live like that is to ask God to keep us holy and pure. If we think we can keep ourselves holy then we will fail miserably. But when we ask God to do it for us then He would gladly keep our faculties from sinning, right from our mind to the instruments of the flesh.

¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:13.

We have to consciously submit ourselves wholly under the Lordship of Jesus Christ so that He can keep us from falling.

We may wonder how could we even think holy when everyday we are bombarded on all sides by the leering smiles and inviting peagantries. Then my mind started going back to my

favourite stars of the Bible. More than now, Babylon was then a nation sold out on sexual sins of all kinds, straight, queer, perverse... Yet there was a young man who DECIDED that he will not defile himself. Daniel 1,8

Even years before him, Joseph was sold into a similar debauched country of Egypt. Even his master's wife kept on pestering Joseph to sleep with her. But when Joseph knew things were going beyond, he even left his garment, which could be taken as a solid evidence and ran away. When the woman had his garment it would be an unassailable evidence of rape. But Joseph was much more concerned about his soul and what God will think about him, rather than what his reputation would become. To the world he was a rapist. Joseph

rather preferred to have a reputation of a rapist than to have had hidden sin with God and falling out of favour with God.

Joseph ranked his relationship with God above the relationship he had with the people. He had his priorities well set. He says very poignantly to that wench,

There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?

Though Joseph is a very loyal servant to his master, he is very clear that his soul and body is God's property. He says how can I do this great evil and sin against God?

I think this is the key for Holiness for all of us. We should have that God

consciousness inbuilt in us. No matter where we are, no matter in what compromising situations we are in, no matter how deeply secretive something can happen, we should still always know that my God is watching me. I cannot run away from Him, or have an unnatural/ clandestine relationship without His knowledge. His eyes would still be watching me.

Just as Daniel said, to live holy is a conscious decision of the mind, the will. If we base our holiness on feelings and emotions, we will fall everyday get up the next day and fall again on the third day and the cycle will continue. Such decisions will deprive you of things that is good according to the standards of the world. When Daniel could say no to the wine and meat of the King's table,

he can also totally cut off all the other baggages that come along with it, which would have surely included the choicest women. To abstain from eating good food will not please our feelings and emotions, but it is the will of the mind to grit the teeth and say no. This is how holiness is. To decide I do not want that though it seems pleasing and looks good.

And the person has to always be conscious of God's eternal presence in their lives. To know He is always there and to know He is concerned about our every behaviour will really change our attitude. We will respond to His presence and His love and the things of this earth will become strangely dim.

So it all comes down to getting closer to God more and more. Nothing else will make us holy and this holiness is not a distant unreachable dream, but this is the Promise God holds for all of us. You be holy just as I am holy, says the Lord. It is to live holy one day at a time. To start the day entrusting all of me, y body, mind and soul, into the hands of our Holy God and asking Him to keep me holy. It is not impossible my friends, but then so many things just become so easy. You become so fruit bearing so easily, effortlessly. God's image is reflected in your life and people are so drawn to you. That is joy, real joy as streams of pure water gurgling happily through the sin sick streets of the world and whoever will come to drink of your

life, will be healed, saved and adopted into our big Family.

Dear Jesus, you would really never set a standard if you know that we are not capable of. But since you have lived not even having sinful thoughts in your mind, we now believe we can also live like that. Strengthen our belief in this Lord, and help us to live a holy life, just as you have lived. Lord I give my thoughts, my body, my soul into Your safe keeping. Guard our hearts O Spirit of God that we may grow purer every passing day. In Jesus name. Amen.

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4, 7*