

Prayer of the Week:

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

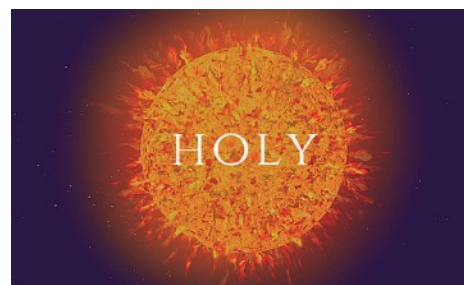
(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Eleven)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.



Practical Holiness

Romans 8:12-25 (NRSV)

July 19th, 2020

Recap

Holiness -

Is for all (people, places, things, time)

Cleanses impurity rather than requiring purity

Is limitless in nature and always moving and working

Results in healing and restoration

How do we apply these concepts of holiness to our lives?

Choices Matter

Romans 8:13, "for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

We have a certain obligation to choose which way we will live; according to the flesh or by the Spirit.

These choices have clear trajectories: life vs death.

Those who choose to live the life of the Spirit are not left to slave it out on their own, rather they are brought into the family, made siblings with Christ and children of God, beneficiaries of the life and power promised to us.

However, holiness is not about perfection in action; it's about openness to the transforming work of the Spirit.

This leads us to our first key for successfully living a life of holiness. *When we fail, individually and socially, will we be quick to confess and seek reconciliation?*

If the answer is yes, we are walking in the way of holiness.

Hope In Action

Romans 8:18-19, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God"

The life of faith and holiness is not one devoid of suffering. How do we process the idea that God's work in us and the world is making any difference? Verse 24 holds the key—HOPE.

Romans 8:24, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope."

We long for things to get better. We long for victory over burdens or addictions. We long to see all people be treated with equity and given the same chance at life and happiness despite the color of their skin. We know what we are aiming for, but it seems so far away.

Should we just give up? Quit? Throw in the towel? We can't give up. God's kingdom does not give up!

This leads us to our second key for success in living a life of holiness. **Apathy, complacency, inaction—these are not qualities of holiness. Life lived with the Spirit is a life of action and intentionality.**

When it comes to recognizing injustice, pain, hurt, brokenness, and death, holiness calls us to compassion, mercy, generosity, effort, and camaraderie.

As we heard in the message last week, we are invited to lay the healing leaves of the Tree of Life on the hurts we experience, both personally and socially.

Considering how to take action against the brokenness, hurt, and pains we experience personally and socially is challenging. And just like childbirth, there is no quick fix.

You must commit to the process; good, bad, and ugly. But take courage that you are not alone, the Spirit is with you, and your fellow Christians are with you.