

Prayer of the Week:

Grant us, O Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who can do no good thing apart from you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

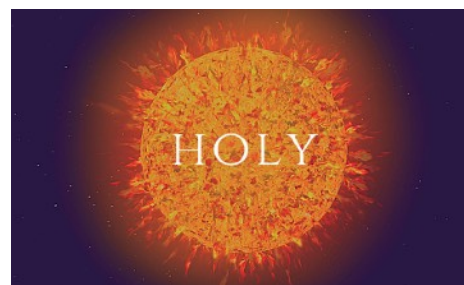
(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Eight)

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.

**Holy - Week Five**

**Eph. 2:14-22 (NRSV)
John 7:37-39 (NRSV)**

July 5th, 2020

Recap

We've been on journey over the past few weeks seeking to understand what it means to be holy.

We began by learning that the word holy means unique and set apart.

At first, God's holiness was seen as dangerous and incompatible with human impurities, but two prophets had visions that challenged that notion. Isaiah stood unclean in the temple of God when a seraph touched his lips with a piece of coal from the altar and made him pure. Ezekiel saw a river flowing from the temple bringing life to all that it touched.

Jesus came as the embodiment of Isaiah's vision.

But what about Ezekiel's vision? How does that image anchor our understanding of holiness?

New Testament authors pick up the imagery of Ezekiel's vision in interesting ways.

Ephesians 2:14-22 (NRSV)

God's New Temple

Paul's argument in this passage is that Christ has broke down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles and is forming around himself a new humanity defined by peace and reconciliation.

The passage ends with Paul using the imagery of a building. He says we are now members of the household of God. This house is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (the people through whom God announced the Good News of the peace of Christ) with Christ as the cornerstone. When you join the pieces together it grows into a holy temple.

The temple was the residence of God and, as such, was the place where heaven and earth intersected. Paul, along with other New Testament authors draw upon the imagery of the temple and apply it to the new humanity in Christ.
God is now building a new temple, but not with brick and stone - with people!

The living God now makes his home in us! Heaven and earth now intersect in us! People encounter the presence of the living God through community with others!

Water Springs Forth

New Testament authors were quick to pick up on the imagery of the temple and apply it to the people of God. Listen then, to what Jesus says about people who put their trust in Him.

*"Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."
-John 7:38b (NSRV)*

Jesus picks up on Ezekiel's vision and says that those who place their trust in him shall have rivers of living water flowing out of them.

The implication is clear! Holiness in our lives is going out into the world to share in the life-giving water of Christ.

*"The sanctification of the disciples has a threefold purpose: to enable them to enter into and live in that relationship with God, which was intended from the beginning; to make them one with either in love, and to enable them to acts as agents of that reconciliation in the world."
-Kent Brower, Holiness in the Gospels, pg. 80*

First, we are purified by God by placing our trust in Him. He does the work of transformation, our part is opening ourselves up to Him. Having placed our trust in God, we are made part of a community of people. In this community, we must learn to love well, for these are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Having learned how to love and live reconciled with one another, we are set loose in the world to proclaim the peace of Christ.

Christian holiness is a social phenomenon, not an individual one.