

Prayer of the Week:

O God, your never-failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and on earth: Put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things that are profitable for us; 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 Four**

Luke 4:38-40
Luke 5:12-13
Luke 6:6-11
Luke 7:11-15

June 28, 2020

Recap

Holy means set apart and unique. In the Bible; God, time, people, things, and places are all called holy. In this series, we're exploring how we are invited to participate in God's holiness.

At first, God's holiness is seen as dangerous and incompatible with human impurities.

Then, two prophets have visions. Isaiah sees himself in the temple when a seraph touches his lips with a coal from the altar and makes him clean. Ezekiel saw a stream of water coming out from the temple bringing life to all that it touches.

These two prophets have these revolutionary visions, but in everyday life, nothing really changes. They don't really know what to make of it.....and neither do the people who read their writings after they died.

Until Jesus comes.

Jesus Shows Us Holiness

One of the groups that was consistently at odds with Jesus were the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a religious and political party that insisted the law of God be interpreted and followed just as the scribes intended.

Their primary confrontation with Jesus is over the definition of holiness. For the Pharisees, holiness meant separation from anything and anyone that would render them impure. Jesus, however, seemed to take a totally different approach to holiness.

When Jesus began announcing the arrival of God's kingdom, he was drawn to people considered unclean and unfit to enter God's presence in the temple.

In each of the stories read this morning Jesus put his own purity at risk by touching an unclean person. But, in each case, the holiness of Jesus was greater than the impurity.

Jesus is just like the coal in Isaiah's vision!

For Jesus, compassion for the marginalized and oppressed always trumped concerns about purity. He went to victims of injustice and proclaimed a new day when justice will roll down like a river, and all things will be made right.

Jesus' main problem with his opponents (whether they be the Pharisees or not) was that they missed the central point about God's holiness!

"Holiness, in the view of Jesus, was not maintained by ritual purity, but by the integrity of being identified wholly and unreservedly with the purposes of God in compassion and redemption for His lost and dying world."

-Kent Brower, Holiness in the Gospels, pg. 115

Jesus Teaches Holiness

In Luke 15:1-2, the Pharisees were grumbling that Jesus ate and seemed to befriend those who were unclean.

In the midst of their grumbling, Jesus tells three stories:

Story of the Lost Sheep (Lk. 15:3-7)

Story of the Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10)

Story of the Lost Son (Lk. 15:11-32)

With these stories, Jesus was inviting the Pharisees to join him in celebrating that the impure could now be counted among the people of God!

Jesus is the embodiment of Isaiah's temple vision. He represents a radical redefinition of holiness.

"No longer is holiness to be conceived of essentially as separation. Rather holiness is contagious, outgoing, embracing, and joyous."

-Kent Brower, Holiness in the Gospels, pg. 59)