

Prayer of the Week:

O Lord, from whom all good proceeds: Grant us the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may always think those things that are good, and by your merciful guidance may accomplish the same; 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 Six)

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 Two
Exodus 3:1-6**

June 14, 2020

Introduction & Recap

Holy means set apart and unique.

In the Bible, God, time, people, things, and places are all called holy.

From this we learn that God's holiness is meant to be shared. God's holiness doesn't distance us from him. Rather, it invites us to participate in his own holiness.

However, God's holiness hasn't always been understood as inviting.

READ Exodus 3:1-6

Did you notice that God said to him, "Don't come any closer!" and that Moses was afraid and covered his face.

Early in the biblical story, the presence of God is seen as dangerous to the impure person!

This had significant implications for temple worship. Remember, the temple was the place where God's holy presence dwelled. Israelites that wanted to worship had to go there. Priests had to work there. If God's presence was dangerous to an impure person, how could priests work there or worshippers gather there?

Purity Laws

The solution was that the priests and others had to become pure.

There were two types of impurity:

Moral impurity meant you had committed a sin and your sin needed to be atoned for through animal sacrifice.

Ritual impurity came from contact with anything related to death like diseased skin, dead bodies, even some bodily fluids.

God gave Israel detailed instructions on how to become pure in order to enter into His presence. The instructions are detailed and hard to manage (examples are found in Leviticus 11-15).

For a long time the people of God lived within this framework. Always worried about whether they were clean or unclean. It was a big weight to carry.

Holy Love

Having a longer history in mind, we have come to know, through Christ who is the full revelation of God, that God's single disposition toward humanity is love. The fullness of His holy presence is love.

But, that holy love can be dangerous...if we choose not to receive it. Theologians throughout history have articulated this:

"Love is....unquestionably given commonly to all. But love's power acts in two ways: it torments sinners, while at the same time it delights those who have lived in accord with it."

-Isaac the Syrian, 7th century

"It is not God who is hostile, but we; for God is never hostile." -John Chrysostom, early church father

God's holy love is inviting us to forgive, love our enemies, free the oppressed, see the value in every life and if we participate in this love then we are transformed by it. If we refuse this love, we are tormented by it.