



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST • Jerry Bridges

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Before speaking further of holiness in ourselves, it is well that we also consider the holiness of Christ. We need this, first of all, to be firmly grounded in our security in Christ. As we study more fully the implications of “Be holy because I am holy,” we will see more of our own sinfulness. We will see the wickedness and deceitfulness of our hearts, and how far we miss the mark of God’s perfect holiness. As this happens, the true Christian will in his heart flee for refuge in Christ. It is important, therefore, that we understand the righteousness of Christ, and the fact that His righteousness is credited to us.

On numerous occasions the Scriptures testify that Jesus during His time on earth lived a perfectly holy life. He is described as “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15); as One who “committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22); and as “Him who had no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Apostle John stated, “In Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5). The Old Testament describes Him prophetically as “the Righteous One” (Isaiah 53:11), and as One who “loved righteousness and hated wickedness” (Psalm 45:7). These statements, taken from six different writers of Scripture, show that the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is the universal teaching of the Bible.

Even more compelling, however, is Jesus’ own testimony concerning Himself. On one occasion He looked the Pharisees squarely in the eye and asked, “Can any of you prove Me guilty of sin?” (John 8:46). As someone has observed, it was not their failure to answer His question that is so significant, but the fact He dared to ask it. Here was Jesus in direct confrontation with people who hated Him. He had just told them they were of their father the devil, and that they wanted to carry out his desires. Surely if any people had a reason to point out to Him some careless act of His or some flaw of His character, they would. Furthermore, Jesus asked this question in the presence of His disciples, who lived with Him continuously and had ample opportunity to observe any inconsistencies. Yet Jesus dared to ask the question because He knew there was only one answer. He was without sin.

But the holiness of Jesus was more than simply the absence of actual sin. It was also a perfect conformity to the will of His Father. He stated that He came down from heaven “not to do My own will but to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38). On another occasion, He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34). Perhaps His highest testimony to His positive holiness was His statement, “I always do what pleases Him” (John 8:29).

Such a positive declaration must include not only His actions but also His attitudes and motives. It is possible for us to do the right action from a wrong motive, but this does not please God. Holiness has to do with more than mere acts. Our motives must be holy, that is, arising from a desire to do something simply because it is the will of God. Our thoughts should be holy, since they are known to God even before they are formed in our minds. Jesus Christ perfectly met these standards, and He did it for us. He was born into this world subject to the law of God that He might fulfill it on our behalf (Galatians 4:4,5).

Clearly then, the sinless, holy life of Jesus Christ is meant to be an example for us. Consider then His statement, "I always do what pleases Him." Do we dare take that as our personal goal in life? Are we truly willing to scrutinize all