

Be Holy
September 1, 2010
1 Peter 1:13-21

Hello it is Wednesday, September 1st and welcome to another edition of “Soaring Through the Bible”. I am Steve Adams one the members of the “Soaring” Team here at South Shore Community Church. This week we soar through the book of 1 Peter and today's text is from 1 Peter 1:13-21.

Most scholars believe the book of 1 Peter was authored by none other than the apostle Peter himself. But because of the formal Greek writing used, it is commonly believed that Silas, one of Paul's companions, may actually have acted as the intermediary scribe. Peter probably knew Greek, but was not educated in writing it formally. The date of the writing of the book is somewhere between 60 to 68 AD during the early years of persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. As was the practice of the early church the letter was written to be read and then dispersed to other churches. This particular letter was intended for the Christians located widely throughout Asia Minor.

In this passage Peter deals with the idea of being holy. What exactly does it mean to be holy? The word for “holy” in Greek is *hagios* which means to be set apart or to be sacred. I used to struggle with this definition because I was not sure what it meant to be set apart. I pondered over several questions in my mind. First, why did I need to be set apart? And second, how did I become set apart? Not until I studied 1 Peter 1 did I start to understand the answers to my questions.

In verse 15 Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44 which says, “I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.” It cannot be any clearer. God wants us to be holy because He is holy. You might be thinking to yourself, if God is holy, if He is spiritually pure and totally without sin, then how in the world can I be holy? The answer is...you can't. At least not on your own. The first step in becoming holy is accepting God's gracious gift to us, His son Jesus Christ. God bought at a great price your salvation by freely allowing His son to die for you as a substitute for your sins. Verses 18 & 19 state, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” Christ's blood covers your sin and you become pure in God's sight.

But, and this is a big “but”, even after you become a Christian, you still sin. Two things entice you to sin. First, your own sinful nature (often called the flesh) wages war against you daily. Even though you know you should not lie, you still lie. Even though you know you should not break the law by speeding, you still do. Second, Satan loves to entice you to sin. Very subtly he tells you lies through the TV, the internet, movies, just to name a few. In and of themselves these things are not bad, but being influenced by them to actively do things counter to God is wrong.

So how do we start to become holy? It does not happen all at once, though certain sinful habits of your former life may change quickly. The process of becoming holy is called sanctification. In Men's Fraternity we learn from Mark 8:34, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” It is the sustained willingness to

yield oneself to God to allow him to work through you by following what He says. I like how the Message states verses 13-16, "So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, "I am holy; you be holy."

So actively pursue holiness. Don't become lazy and go back to doing those things that kept you from being holy in the first place. Ask God to help you work through sins that may entangle you. Through the power of Jesus' resurrection you can be confident that when you ask for forgiveness your sins will be forgiven. Soberly understand though you can fall back into old sinful habits. Let God work through you and yield to Him daily.

Thanks for listening and I will be with you again next Wednesday for another edition of "Soaring Through the Bible".