**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #6**

**Holiness in the Old and New Testaments**

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (Part 2)**

*This lesson on Holiness repeats last week’s sections on Righteousness, Sanctification and Holiness. George has added a long letter from Philemon at the end. - Bob*

***1 Corinthians 1:30*** *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,* ***31*** *So that, as it stands written, “Let the one who would boast, boast of the Lord.”*

**Righteousness of God as the Person of Jesus**

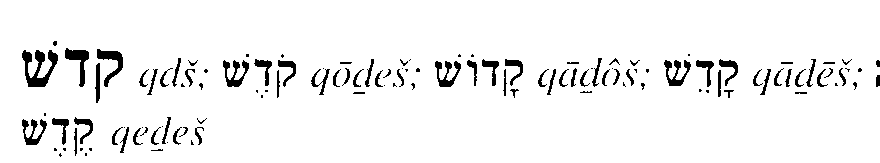
Jesus the crucified Christ did put right our communion with God. Around that theme we have not just one word, righteousness, but some others words that point to actions:

1. Reconciliation: “*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!* *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us*” (2 Cor 5:17-21). It is God’s action that continues in the “ministry of reconciliation.” God was in Christ, not separated from Christ or pouring his anger on his Son.
2. Put away the old self and be clothed with the new life (Paul reminds those in Ephesus): “*that is not the way you learned Christ! For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness*.” (Eph 4:20-24). Any prudent reader will notice the two words: righteousness and holiness, for both are the two marks of the life of Jesus. Then no one can fail to see that the right life is in Christ in a new life and a constant renewal. The image of this new life becomes more clear in Colossians 3:8-15, and the center of the teaching is Christ who called all to be in him, in Christ which is the “right” way of life for sinners.
3. To be in Christ who dwells in us (Eph 3:17) so that we may know him:  “*Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead*” (Phil 3: 7-12)

**Christ is our Sanctification**

Sanctification comes from Latin, [etymologically](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology) from the [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Language) [verb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb) [*sanctificare*](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sanctificare) which in turn is from [*sanctus*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctus), "holy.” So what is sanctification or holiness?

**Holiness - The OT Background**



***qds, qodes, qados, qades, qedes***

QDS - This Hebrew word for “holiness” is a verb and all its derivatives have no synonyms. The word is used approximately 842 times in the OT. It is important to notice that, in the OT, it was used ….

152 times in Leviticus

105 times in Ezekiel

102 times in Exodus

80 times in Numbers

73 times in Isaiah

65 times in Psalms

1. “Holiness” means something consecrated and [the word] can’t be used at all except for what it was “consecrated for” as in Exodus 29:21, [describing] priests and their vestments, everything that comes into contact with the altar, the worship utensils, and any sacrificial material (Exod 29:37; 30:29; Lev 6:11), or any article used for the sanctuary (Deut 22:9).

2. “God is holy,” means “shows himself to be holy” by manifesting his unique and unchangeable divine holiness before Israel (Exod 29:43) and the nations (Ezek 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:16; 39:27).

3. Something can be described as “holy according to the law of worship” such as the Sabbath (Gen 2:3; Exod 20:11).

4. The sense of “be made holy”; be holy/consecrated or “is sanctified” as someone is consecrated (Exod 19:22; Lev 11:44; 20:7). God “shows himself to be holy” (Ezek 38:23) because God consecrates himself to save Israel. Humans bring themselves into the condition of consecration or purity without any mention of the particular ritual (Num 11:18; Josh 3:5; 7:13; 1 Sam 16:5) or “is sanctified” (NRSV “keeping themselves holy,” 2 Chrn 31:l8).

5. “To make holy, consecrate, offer, surrender to God as a possession” (Josh 20:7; 1 Chron 23:13; 2 Chron 29:19; 30:17). God can declare something or someone to be consecrated to him (Num 3:13; 1 King 9:7). One can “view something/someone as holy” (Num 20:12; 27:14; Isa 29:23).

6. The noun ***qodes*** “holiness,” is the most frequently used word, referring to the sacrifices and the offering to God of Leviticus 19:8) and the “sanctuary” (Ezek 4 1:21) and for anything touched by holiness, including the sacrifice for sin “most holy” (Lev 6; 24 ff; Num 4:4; Lev 21:22).

*The moral quality of holiness that means “to be without sin” is not known in the OT.*

**Holiness - The NT Background**

1. The Holiness of God in the NT rests on the OT foundation. Holiness is certainly God’s own life; the Father is the Holy One (John 17:11; 1 Pet 1:15). In the Lord’s Prayer, our petition is made that God’s name should be hallowed (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:12). The name stands for the Father who now reveals himself as Father, not just “Yahweh” Himself (Matt 28:19).

2. Jesus Christ is also Holy (see Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; John 6:69; 1 John 2:20; Rev 3:7; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30). In Luke, it is grounded upon His miraculous birth when the Holy One came on Mary who was overshadowed by the divine Shekinah like the OT temple (Luke 1:35).

3. We shall leave all the references to the Holy Spirit in the NT.

**The Holiness of the Church**

1. The letter to the Hebrews says that the church is just like the OT temple (Heb 8: 5), but here it is the people who enjoy God’s dwelling. It is remarkable that Jesus the “Anointed” one was crucified in the city where the Temple was (Acts 4:27-30), and in verse 30 the Holy Spirit filled not the place but the people. Jesus suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem “in order to sanctify the people” (Heb 13:12), and in vv.13-14 we have the holy people of God who offer up “*sacrifices of praise that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*”

2. The NT people are called just as those of the OT, “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*” These words (Exod 19:6) are now applied to the church (1 Pet 2:9; 1:16).

3. More vivid is the powerful historical identification of Paul of the people of God, the Church of Christ, and the body of Christ of the Holy One. The new people of God are now the new branches from the Gentile world have been engrafted (Rom 11:17), and the stump sanctifies them. The stump is obviously Christ (Rom 15:12) ordained to rule over the Gentiles. He has given Himself for the church that he might sanctify her, i.e. cleansed her by the washing of water with the word (Eph 5:26). His church is sanctified not merely as the people of the OT but it is now a state of being (1 Cor 1:2) by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11; Rom 15:16). Jesus by his death and resurrection extended the “commonwealth” of the blessing, and his promises to the Gentiles (Eph 2:12) are extended by Christ to the whole Christian world, so that now Gentile Christians are no longer strangers but fellow citizens with the saints (Eph 2:19), built on the cornerstone Christ, over the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Here the saints are citizens who have the “right” to be in communion with God the Father.

4. This will help us: read carefully in Ephesians 5:27 about why the members of the church are holy and without blemish. There is no distinction in Paul between the holiness of the church and that of the members because the church – and that is the community – receives holiness from Christ. This is why Paul addresses the communities as that of the saints (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2), because where the Spirit of the Lord there is holiness.

5. The “holy” or the saints are members of the worshipping community grounded in the sacrifice of Christ because they are “*God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved and as the Lord has forgiven them so they must forgive*” (Col 3:12). Ephesians 1:18 speaks of the glorious inheritance in the saints, whose glorious riches are to be known by Christians. Inseparably related is the verse in Colossians that must be quoted in full, “*giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.* *This transformation is the divine act that makes the church live its inheritance*” (Col 1:12- 13).

**The Holy Life of Christians**

### 1. As the Church is a holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:17; Eph 2:21), so the life of Christians should be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship (Rom 12:10) so that the Christian life is an acceptable offering sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16).

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2. In fact, grace – the charismata, adoption, salvation, and eternal glory; in a word, all the manifestations of the divine life – are referred sometimes to Christ, sometimes to the Spirit. Thus “we live by the Spirit” and nevertheless “Christ is our life’’ (Gal 5:25; Col 3:4; Phil 1:21). The Holy Spirit is the dispenser of all the charismata, and yet these are conferred “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”(1 Cor 12:11; Eph 4:9) It is by Jesus Christ that we received the adoption of sons; nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption and “*all those who are moved by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*” (Eph 1:4; Gal 4:5-6 and Rom 8:15) The dead will rise from the dead “*by a man*,” Jesus Christ, and yet God will raise us “*because of the Spirit*” or “*by the Spirit that dwells*” (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:11) in us.

3. Let us add still another fact often pointed out: the equivalence of the two formulas “in Christ” and “in the Spirit.” This equivalence does not go so far as is usually supposed, far from it; but it is nevertheless suggestive.

Some examples show this:

a. Justified in the Spirit = justified in the Lord.

b. Sanctified in the Holy Spirit = sanctified in Christ Jesus.

c. Holy temple in the Spirit = holy temple in the Lord.

d. To be sealed in the Spirit = to be sealed in Christ.’

e. Joy in the Holy Spirit = joy in the Lord.

f. Peace in the Holy Spirit = peace in the Lord.

To explain this phenomenon, we must say that Christ operates in the Holy Spirit. For the identity of operation on the part of Christ and the Spirit in the lives of the believers there exists a much deeper cause. Jesus is called Christ because as man He possessed the fullness of the Spirit and was to cause it to be poured out upon us as soon as he had accomplished his redemptive work. Then, at the moment of the resurrection, he becomes actually for himself and for us a “life giving spirit” for himself, since the grace with which he abounds fills his body and renders it spiritual, and for us, because he communicates to us lavishly all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit himself.

Henceforth, Jesus is the head of the new humanity who brings the Holy Spirit to our life. We live by the Son and also by the Spirit; or, more exactly, we live by the Spirit sent by the Son. It is an identity of operations without confusion of Persons.

Let us take, for example, the gift of adoption. This gift comes to us from the Son who has adopted us and causes us to be accepted as brothers; God “*predestines us for it by Jesus Christ*” and confers it upon us by faith and baptism; that is to say, by the act and rite which put us “into fellowship with the Son of God.” The Holy Spirit is nonetheless called the “Spirit of adoption,” and all those whom he leads are truly “sons of God.” This is because God adopts us as sons by giving us his Spirit, and Christ adopts us as brothers by sending us his Spirit: “*for if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*” The proof that “*you are sons is that God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, where he cries: Abba, Father! Therefore now he is not a slave but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.*” The Holy Spirit is the witness, the messenger, the agent, and the pledge of our sonship.

***1 Corinthians 1:30*** *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption …*

***Colossians 1:27*** *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

**Letter from Abba Philemon**

1. **In What Way Is Christ ‘In Us’?**

The Apostle Paul said “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col 1:27) We have to recognize these two important elements of that great gift of communion between us sinners and Jesus Christ our Lord.

The first one is that Christ lives among us as the Good Shepherd who has this office to protect his sheep.

And second, he is our Savior and Physician who attends our sickness and failure and this office is his commitment to those who are called to inherit the kingdom of heaven. He attends us as a Physician who comes to visit the sick: sometimes to comfort, sometimes to admonish or to rebuke us with His extreme tenderness and compassion. I have limited myself to these areas because this is what I experience myself. As the Shepherd of my life he calls me sometimes in the inner voice where we can hear his voice clearly while we are praying or walking or in that dangerous moment when we are about to sleep and are not fully aware we exist. Sometimes I hear the voice of the Lord speaking to me clearly. He quotes the scriptures and that gives me great joy because I get to know the words of the Scriptures which he loves to quote to me and I repeat them in my prayers saying to him, “You have told me these words which you have spoken to the Prophets and the kings of Israel and the Apostles.” What a privilege and joy that the Shepherd calls us the lost sheep, tells us about His love, and leads us to the fold where we learn how to abide. This office of Christ as a good Shepherd allows the Lord to be in our life as the one who guides and protects and brings enlightenment. He sees the dark spots in us and treats that by a word of knowledge.

Our Lord Jesus Christ as our Physician sees our sickness in both the soul and the body. He cares more about the sickness of the soul and puts His divine wisdom into the service of healing. As for the sickness of the body, that will perish in the dust. But he also takes care of the sickness of the soul which is more important. It doesn’t matter whether we are healed physical or not because that healing is not eternal, but it does matter if we are inwardly and eternally healed. I have not been physically ill as some of the brothers in the community. In fact, I enjoyed very good health and have not suffered long illness. I thank God for that but my eyes are focused on the inner sickness and I believe that Jesus my Physician dwells in us as a physician who does not give us a prescription but a dose of His life. I have seen in my heart the deep longing of the Lord to make me obedient to the Father as He was and is, but that has not matured in my life to the extent of what I have seen in the life of my enemy who never uttered a word except that of the Scriptures in the name of the Lord. He does this whenever we talk to him, even when we ask him about his health and how he feels he will quote verses from the Psalms or from the New Testament. One day he told me that the Lord Jesus Christ submerged his mind in the Holy Word of the Bible; that he felt that he must not utter anything at all but the words of the Scriptures. I have not reached that level yet but here is a man who has enjoyed the indwelling of Christ in his heart that he limited his inner life to the Word of God. At the moment I am enjoying the silence of the monastery where guests are not allowed during lent. And I lock myself in my cell to ask the Lord to reveal to me the depths of His indwelling in my sinful life. Let me warn you that the offices of Our Lord which I have mentioned are my very limited experiences but there are more that we should learn in our fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Lastly, that mystery of Christ’s indwelling in us cannot be defined because we sinners have the tendency to control what we define and that is why the indwelling of Christ is the hope of the glory to come; we have a sense of his presence that points to the perfect union. What we have in this life in a limited way in order that we may remain faithful to the Lord, and wait for others to join us.

1. **How should we recognize Christ in us?**

I must say that our weakness is the first realm in which our Lord manifests his indwelling in us. Do not be surprised because even in the struggle of Antony the Great, the Lord told him that he was waiting for Antony to call for help. We have inherited from the first Adam the tendency to be autonomous and independent mind. This is one among many other illnesses that captured our being and remained in our life ever since then.

Autonomy of the mind is the self-awareness only of the self, and thus becoming unaware except of what is in us and interests us.

Our Lord sometimes waits for us to experience drowning, like the drowning Peter when he tried to walk on the water. We need to learn that we are left alone to learn our weakness and to learn that the Lord does not despise the weak but carries them on his shoulder. Then in weakness we discover our inability to be independent and alone but for Christ.

My elder said to me one day, “Is the eternal inheritance in heaven your goal of being here? And if this is so, do you think that you will have that without fellowship and communion with the Lord? If your answer is negative, then learn how to do everything with Christ and for Christ. This does not come to us just by thinking and accepting but by two great powers: love and fear.” I was not expecting to hear about fear. He realized I was puzzled and added, “Fear of being outside the Kingdom of heaven in the outer darkness will encourage you to purify yourself from false autonomy. Fear will show you the dark and hidden corners in your heart where your autonomy is hidden.” Now after these years I learned how to be for Christ and to live for him. It was not easy.

First, it is the intention of the heart to seek and to please our Redeemer.

Second, we struggle between self-satisfaction and seeking the Lord. This is the true crucifixion of our being and that takes years. Gradually I have noticed that love closes the gap between my autonomy and self-satisfaction and the Lord. I say, “For your sake Lord I accept nothing at all and I do not want to be anything. Your love is the greatest prize. Your love alone is the cure of the false autonomy.”

It took me a long time to understand our union with Christ. There was no teaching given to me when I was consecrated a monk, but my spiritual father was a good monk and he guided me first to this deep relationship by meditating on the union of the divinity of our Lord with us, and by that I mean his humanity. Then he told me that the great events in the life of our Lord were a declaration of the progress of this union. The incarnation remains the foundation of that union. His temptation is our victory over the devil. Jesus did not exorcise demons before his temptations in the wilderness, not because he was not able to do that but because Jesus wanted our humanity to be victorious. Before his temptations he received the Holy Spirit on our behalf to keep the Spirit in communion with our humanity. Then, comes his teaching and the miracles, which revealed to us this new teaching of Jesus and his power. As for the cross is was preceded by the transfiguration to reveal to us that Jesus is the Lord of glory. On the cross our Lord defeated death and crucified condemnation and abolished its power bringing to us total freedom. What should we learn?

1. That we are not forsaken at all even if we sin, because our sins demand healing and care. This is the work of Christ.
2. Our Lord assumed his offices as the teacher of life and as the priest who reconcile us with God the Father, not because the reconciliation which he established by his death and resurrection is repeated when we sin, but Jesus our Lord reconciles us by renewing in us the flow of his life.
3. When we say that Jesus is the priest and the sacrifice, let it be clear to you that his duality means that the offer of his life as the eternal sacrifice is once for all (Heb 10:10), but this offer does not come to and end for this offer is what makes Jesus the Eternal Priest who offer himself to us uniting his sacrifice and his priesthood in his One Person to clean us up. Thus the sacrifice of Jesus and his priesthood work together because Jesus as divine is the Priest and as Human is the sacrifice and both are in the One Lord. Jesus comes to dwell in us as the sacrifice and as the priest of the love of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Being the priest Jesus cleanses us constantly when we call on him to heal us.
4. **The Power of Divine Love**

For days I asked the Lord to tell me why love is the foundation of everything in the new covenant. I threw myself on the floor of my cell begging the Lord to speak to me and to give me this grace. I started to read and to recite the whole NT, begging the Lord Jesus Christ open my stupid and dull mind. Days passed and I was determined not to give up. I prayed the Jesus Prayer\* and added to the words, “*Open my heart to discover why love is the foundation of everything*.”

It was about the week before the feast of Lord’s Resurrection, when the Lord in the inner heart told me that I am foolish indeed, because I am asking about the reason why his nature is love. Jesus told me:

*“What kind of nature do you want me to have other than love? If you think of power alone without love that will be what humans want to have to fulfill their dreams and their lusts. Power without love is the slavery which sinful beings seek. The whole creation was given the freedom of choice. Freedom is the foundation of love. Those who deviated subjected love to their knowledge of how life should be according to their knowledge and distorted their being by mutilating their freedom of choice and directing it to their lusts. The devil and humans lost the perception that true life is the gift of love. Both consider that their life is theirs and that the Father denies them freedom. They do not know that if freedom does not spring from love, but springs from their desires to be other than and image of us (the Trinity), then in that fallen state life and love and knowledge are separated. Freedom is no longer freedom but is slavery to sin. Knowledge no longer proceeds from love but proceeds from self-preservation. This kind of blindness is what many humans have. You follow me, carry your cross, the cross of your distorted life and I will liberate you.”*

That was hard but his inner voice gave me hope because Jesus my Lord asked me to follow him.

Second Dialogue

April 1960

\* The Jesus Prayer: *“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”*

***Pope’s Notes***

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