

“Be Hopeful, Be Holy” | Rev. Jordan Griesbeck | January 26, 2020

SCRIPTURE 1

**Isaiah 6:1-8**

6 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train<sup>[a]</sup> of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

<sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

SCRIPTURE 2

**1 Peter 1:13-16**

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action,<sup>[a]</sup> and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former

**Introductory Question:** Is “weird” how people think of Christians? Are we eccentric (that is “off center”) for Christ, as author Mark Ross would say?

**Background:** In the way that others sometimes see Austin as weird, the Bible has instructions for us and examples of those who are not seen in the way the world would have them conform. They are different, weird and look for fulfillment in all sorts of things that others don’t understand. Those of the world reach for what they claim brings them contentment and fulfillment, even as it obviously does not. Peter recognized after the night of fishing what Jesus was and what Peter was not. Christ comforted him and called him to hope in Christ in a life with Christ set apart from others. Peter’s letter is to Christians forced to a foreign land, an unfamiliar place. He gives encouragement and instruction in dealing with their situation: have hope in God and be holy like God. Don’t give in to the world.

**1. HOPE**

The recipients of Peter’s letter are in a difficult place for them. There they are faced with two temptations: a) lose hope and be crushed by circumstances or b) just give in, assimilate, adopt local attitudes and make life more comfortable. Instead of these things, Peter instructs and encourages them to hope.

NY pastor Tim Keller says humans are essentially hope-based. To learn about a person, find out their hopes. That hope for many typically comes from one of three “hope clusters.”

- i. Career, money, achievement, status, recognition
- ii. Love, romance, marriage, family, beauty, sex
- iii. Politic and social causes – “I will change the world.”

Keller believes most people don’t diversify, but tend to one of these as their primary source of hope. These can all be good things, but they do not fulfill. Jordan quotes actor Jim Carey and others as expressing that these success items do not truly satisfy. The mirage constantly moves and the finish line can never be attained. Peter, however, says the hope in God is not a mirage. The blessing of the inheritance with Christ’s return are real and they will be there. Life will be fulfilled in Christ.

Hoping in God for a good job, house, children, relationships, etc. that are not received are not hoping in God, but actually in the things of this world. Hope isn’t easy. Hope in God doesn’t just happen. It needs preparation, discipline, focus. It also requires seriousness of purpose. As Peter admonishes in 1 Peter 1:13, “be sober minded.” When life is difficult, don’t reach for some kind of earthly crutch like the bottle. When one does that, they forget where they are headed and who they are. Know that the suffering will not last forever. Jordan uses the musical term of *audiate*,

ignorance,<sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,<sup>16</sup> since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

(SCRIPTURE 3)

### **Luke 5:1-11**

5 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,<sup>2</sup> and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.<sup>3</sup> Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.<sup>4</sup> And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”<sup>5</sup> And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”<sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.<sup>7</sup> They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”<sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,<sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”<sup>11</sup> And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

hearing and understanding music even when none is occurring. Likewise, this is how it is with the reality of God and hope in him. It is there. Call God and that hope to mind. Whatever seemingly grand goal we seek determines our life. If it is with God, we will become different. When we hope in God, we will become like God.

### **2. HOLINESS**

In Austin in 2020, holy is not a topic of conversation. So, ask ourselves what about God makes him holy? He is set apart, not on our terms as our buddy or friend. In Isaiah 6, the vision of God is nothing like that. He doesn't fit with our earthly ideas. Peter quotes from Leviticus 11, “be holy as I am holy” using the Hebrew word *Kodesh* which means to be set apart, separate, cut off or set apart to God. He is holy because he is set apart. To refer back to the original Biblical dietary strictures, they direct us to set ourselves apart from the passions of the world. With Christ, even if many of those public health limits do not now apply, it still means that the eternal nature of God is being set apart. Jordan describes the Trinity having a continuing flow of love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That flow will always be and serves as an example of displaying holiness. Jordan also points out that holiness has this aspect which is best displayed in marriage, or as described in the old days “Holy Matrimony.” The couple sets themselves apart for each other, not just following rules but being close. Holiness of the Bible is about being close, being close to God, which means being close to our neighbors, and in the process being closer to who God made us to be.

How does one grow in holiness? Not by being a better rule follower, but by becoming a better lover of others, refusing to give ourselves to other things that are not of God. Rule following does not get us close to God. An act of God does this. Coming into contact with holiness undoes us. Isaiah and Peter both were undone, but God cared for them; guilt and sin taken away by God, raising the two men up. And they left everything behind to follow God the Father and his Son. As Jordan said, if we believe and trust in Jesus, we are growing holier and holier. Jesus does what we can never do. He saves us. What happens when one encounters holiness? Truly memorable, it stays with us, we can't get away from it. We ask how it happened. To ask that is a process to discovering God. Our holy lives do not matter, the one who made us holy does.

#### **Application Questions:**

1.) In what do I hope? If I am truly honest with myself, how have these things shaped my life, how I am seen as a Christian? Are there things or circumstances to which I aspire that are not of God? What are circumstances that would provide that reassurance of having hope in God? How would I explain them in light of Peter's message of hope?

2.) Do I understand being set apart? Can I explain it to myself and to others? Consider a meeting with someone or circumstances that are holy. Describe them to myself in a way that I would to others. How do we look for closeness with others in a manner that befits holiness and the example Jordan uses of the relationships in the Trinity – what has been forever and always will be that closeness given by God?

#### **Prayer**

Lord, my prayer is to know the hope in you and have the path to holiness before me under your guidance. Amen.