

## Holiness: A Gift of God's Grace ~ Part 2

***"I am Adonai, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Therefore you are to be holy, because I am holy."* ~ Leviticus 11:45**

***"Following the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in your entire way of life; since the Tanakh says, 'You are to be holy because I am holy.'"* ~ 1 Kefa 1:15-16**

In my last post, we looked at the definition of holiness. In this post, I want to explain the connection between grace and holiness.

To live by grace is to base our entire relationship with God, including our acceptance and standing with Him, on our union with Yeshua. It is to recognize that we bring nothing of worth to our relationship with God, because even our righteous acts are like filthy rags in His sight (Isaiah 64:6). Even our best works are stained with mixed motives and imperfect performance. We never truly love God with *all* our heart, and never truly love our neighbor with the degree or consistency with which we love ourself.

Yet God requires perfection. Yeshua said, ***"Therefore, be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."*** (Matthew 5:48). When we take Yeshua's words seriously, we are forced to say with the psalmist, ***"Your command is without limit."*** (Psalm 119:96, HCSB).

What is the answer to this dilemma? All Believers recognize that we are justified - that is, declared righteous - solely on the basis of the righteousness of Yeshua attributed to us by God through faith (see Romans 3:21-25). But few of us fully recognize that we are also sanctified through faith in Yeshua.

Holiness is essentially conformity to the moral *character* of God. We normally think of sanctification as progressive, as an inner change of our character whereby we are conformed more and more to the likeness of Yeshua. That is certainly a major part of sanctification, but that is not all of it.

Scripture speaks of both a holiness we already possess in Yeshua before God and a holiness in which we are to grow more and more. The first is the result of the work of Yeshua *for* us; the second is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit *in* us. The first is perfect and complete and is ours the moment we trust Yeshua; the second is progressive and incomplete as long as we are in this life.

The objective holiness we have in Yeshua and the subjective holiness produced by the Ruach are both gifts of God's Grace and are both appropriated by faith. However, the perfect holiness we have in Yeshua is the answer to our dilemma of how we can appear daily before a perfectly holy God, when even our best deeds are stained and polluted.

### Yeshua Our Holiness

Sha'ul wrote, ***"It is His doing that you are united with the Messiah Yeshua. He has become wisdom for us from God, and righteousness and holiness and redemption as well!"*** (1 Corinthians 1:30). In other words, it is God Himself who chose us to be in Yeshua.

But the truth I want to call attention to in this passage is that Yeshua has become our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. That Yeshua is our righteousness is an accepted and well-understood truth and the basis for our justification. But Yeshua is also our *holiness*. This fact is not as well understood. All Believers look to Yeshua alone for their justification, but not nearly as many also look to Him for their perfect holiness before God. The blessed truth, though, is that all Believers are sanctified in Yeshua, even as we are justified in Yeshua.

We need both forgiveness from our guilt and cleansing from our filth. Through justification we are forgiven and are declared righteous in the courtroom of God's justice. Through the perfect holiness we have in Yeshua, our moral filth is removed, and we become fit to enter into the very presence of an infinitely holy God and enjoy fellowship with Him.

Hebrews 10:10, 14 help us see this objective aspect of sanctification - the holiness we have in Yeshua alone. Verse 10 says, *"It is in connection with this will [of God] that we have been separated for God and made holy, once and for all, through the offering of Yeshua the Messiah's body."* Note that *we have been made* holy. This speaks of a completed work. The emphasis here is on the holiness we have in Yeshua through His once-for-all sacrifice.

Verse 14 (HCSB), on the other hand, says, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified."* This verse mentions *being made holy* - the work of the Ruach in progressive sanctification. But this verse also refers to our completed, objective sanctification in Yeshua when it speaks of those He *has perfected forever*. So, in one aspect of sanctification you are already holy because Yeshua's holiness is imputed to you. You have been made perfect forever. In another aspect, you are being made holy day by day through the work of the Ruach imparting Yeshua's life to you.

Holiness should be an objective for your daily life. But to live by grace, you must never, never look to the work of the Ruach in you as the basis for your relationship with God. You must always look outside of yourself to Yeshua. You will never be holy enough through your own efforts to come before God. You are holy only through Yeshua.

We never reach the point where we can look inside ourselves to find the holiness we need to stand before a holy God. But God, in His grace has provided a perfect holiness in the person of His Son. Through our union with Him we have been made holy.

In my next post, we will continue to explore this relationship between grace and holiness.