

Book	1-Peter
Study	Study 4
Topic	The Need to be Holy
Reference	1 Peter 1:13-21
Date	24 April 2019
Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

1. The meaning of being Holy
2. How do we become Holy?
3. Why should we become Holy?

1. THE MEANING OF BEING HOLY

1 Peter 1:13-16 (ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, **"You shall be holy, for I am holy"**

So, the whole issue is being holy. We are talking about holiness. The idea in catholic church about holiness is the priest who is holy, but it look a bit odd because they always look solemn, passive, boring and holiness is 'do not do'. Of course, as a young man I ran away from being holy because I want to be happy, I don't want to be holy. So there are some ideas about holiness which we don't quite understand yet. Yes, holiness is righteousness and morality but it is actually more than that. The Hebrew word is 'qadowsh', which means to cut.

To be holy means to be cut off, or separate, from everything else.

- Dedicated to special purpose
- Includes being morally pure

This passage, **be holy because I am holy**, is actually taken from Leviticus which is the book written when they were going through the Sinai Desert and it is taken from Leviticus chapter 11,

Leviticus 11:43-44 (ESV) You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them. **44 For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.**

How are you going to be holy?

46 This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, 47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

So holiness for the people of Israel going through towards the promised land in the Sinai Desert involve eating. So they have been saved through the Exodus event, which is basically salvation and they are all the way to Mount Sinai where they were given a law and at Mount Sinai you have got a visible display of God's holiness, glory and power and the mountain shook. Then there is holiness revealed in His law, civil, ceremonial and moral law which is basically the Ten Commandments to guide your holy living and the rest food laws and sacrificial cleansing.;

Now holiness is an expression of His character as His people. Here you actually have a very important verse in Exodus. When He brings them out towards the Promised Land, half way through the desert, he says,

Exodus 19:4-6 (ESV) You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

His requirement for the holiness is based on an event and that event is a salvation event, which means as slaves they were saved from slavery from Egypt. So therefore when he asks us to be holy it is basically in response to something he has actually done for you. That's why He says,

5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

So, it is very simple. I save you; you follow my character and in doing so you become the holy nation and my special people, cut away from everybody else. So you have got a whole bunch of laws. So, what's the deal with all that. Why are these laws? There are various theories and some of the people like Seventh Day Adventist think that this is due to hygiene. God knows which is good for you and which is bad for you. The hygiene question is not really valid because a lot of these animals that are unclean are not necessarily unhygienic.

The other idea is that these laws were given because some of the unclean animals were actually used in cultic practices, which means in other religions they use to go and sacrifice them. So if the other religions use to sacrifice them then if you use it that basically it is dirty, it is undefiled, it is wrong, He wanted to symbolize that, but a lot of other cultic religions also use sheep, lamb and goat. So there is an overlap, not a very good theory.

The other one is symbolic. These people think that the clean and unclean animals are divided among their behaviour of the animals. A pig is unclean because it will roll around in the mud and dirt whereas the cow is clean because it is eating the grass and then vomits it out and chew it, that is like us meditating on the will of God. This is also not a good theory.

The other one is arbitrary, meaning God just decided, He like sheep but not the pigs. The last theory is sociological because there is a work done by British Anthropologist, Mary Douglas and she proposes that

- Culture specific concept of fitness or appropriateness. That means in that culture itself, some animals were considered good animals, some animals were not considered so nice. For example, would you like to keep a pet dog, yes. Would you like to keep a pet snake?
- God employed existing cultural perceptions
- Uncleanliness is a picture of sin
- Israelite couldn't turn one way or another without facing the demands that God's holiness had placed upon his or her life.

Let me give you an example. During Rembrandt's time a fat lady was considered beautiful. In 1960s, a petite girl was considered beautiful. Today, a fit woman is considered beautiful. So, beauty is culture specific. So what God is doing is that, he is taking things which are specific to the culture and saying this is good and wholesome and this is clean, whereas things which are not.

In every culture, there is this culture specific idea of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. So the function is clean and unclean, Jew and Gentile. God wanted to put a separation between Israel's special status as God's holy people and the rest of the world. So their diet is limited to certain meats in imitation of their God who restricted his choice among other nations.

If you look at the word holy

Isaiah 6:3 (ESV) And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Exodus 15:11 asks, "Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" (ESV)

1 Samuel 2:2 declares, "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." (ESV)

Jonathan Edwards defines holiness as

"the very beauty and loveliness of Jehovah Himself. 'Tis the excellency of His excellencies, the beauty of His beauties, the perfection of His infinite perfections, and the glory of His attributes

Lets say we talk about someone who is love, justice, mercy, wisdom and somebody can be very poor in patience, in wisdom and mercy, somebody can be averaged, somebody can be good, somebody can be excellent, somebody can be super and God is above all of this. God is like above the charts. He has perfection and magnificence in every characteristic. So, God's holiness is that essence of who he actually is. It is basically is Godness as it were. Since our wondrous calling is actually to be holy as he is holy. In fact, if that is our calling in life. We are made in the image of God and if He is holy, we are supposed to be holy. We are set apart for him. We are supposed to reflect him and when we refuse that we suffer punishment. If we look at Romans chapter 1, the whole problem with the people

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Which is basically, instead of being like God we choose to be like animals. This is so stupid. This is a travesty of our calling.

Is it true that all these things are bad for you? If we look at Jesus himself. He says,

Mark 7:18-23 (ESV) And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, 19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

So actually, Jesus said, even though you have got clean and unclean foods in actuality they are symbolic. Because, whatever you eat really doesn't actually make you defiled, because you eat and they goes out of your body. What makes you defiled is what comes from the heart. So therefore since it is a symbolic, the clean and unclean division was finished when the church came in the new covenant, Jew and gentile, the border was broken down and we actually have only one church. If there is one church, so therefore this breakdown of the food laws is already removed.

2. HOW TO BE HOLY?

1 Peter 1:10-12 (ESV) Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

So basically what we talked about last week, was that the prophets who were prophesizing were actually looking at the end of time when Christ would come and salvation come to world but they didn't realize what they were prophesizing, they thought was in the end was actually in the middle. This salvation is so wonderful, planned beforehand, all the prophets were hoping it would affect them, actually it didn't affect them, it affects the New Testament church. In the light of that, we should be holy. That's your motivation. So holy life is integrated life. It is actually thinking,

1 Peter 1:13-16 (ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded,

Now this is a bit odd. Most people think being holy, is just the rules and deal with that, take the rules and follow the rules but Peter is saying, being holy involves integrating your minds with the way you live. Mind is very important. The word preparing in Greek is gird up your loins. In those days, the man will wear skirts. So, whenever they want to fight, they basically wrap up their clothes. So, prepare your mind. The modern equivalent is 'roll up your sleeves'.

The whole idea of thinking in Christianity has actually been downplayed. Some people think, faith is blind. People say drink poison, it will be okay because you have faith. So, holiness involves knowledge. That's why some people who think Christians are stupid. Richard Dawkins says,

"Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence."

"If you don't understand how something works, never mind: just give up and say God did it. You don't know how the nerve impulse works? Good! You don't understand how memories are laid down in the brain? Excellent! Is photosynthesis a bafflingly complex process? Wonderful! Please don't go to work on the problem, just give up, and appeal to God."

These are some of the criticisms non-Christians have about Christians. In fact, there was a better analysis looking at the relationship between intelligence and religiosity and it turned out the intelligent people tend to be less religious. If you look at data on scientist and general public. The number of scientists who actually attend religious service is about 18% and those who do are about from the general public is 46%. So generally, the more highly educated you are, the less likely you are to be religious.

Romans 10:2 (ESV) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

Anna Quindlen is bestselling Pulitzer prize winning author. She writes,

- *Now people need to be believing something bigger than themselves*
- *There is spiritual vacuum which need to be filled with some religious values*
- *You can get spiritual, but it does not have to change your mind*

This is what secular people think. They don't believe in God but they send their children for Sunday School. J.L. Mackie, an Australian philosopher said, *Commitment without reflection is fanaticism. Reflection without Commitment is paralysis*

We want joy and peace without having our minds changed. So we look at catholic priests and we don't see them joyful because our minds have not been changed. If your mind is not being changed, you will not see them as joyful. If you look at a soup kitchen where the people are feeding poor and hungry people, we don't see them joyful because our minds have not changed, because we see them as tiresome, smelly and inconvenient. Why, because our minds have not been changed.

Matthew 25

As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.

If you actually see every poor person as Jesus Christ walking through the door, you change. But your mind is to change in order for you to appreciate that. So holiness is an act of the mind. You can't enjoy something unless your mind is changed. Only when your mind is changed then you appreciate it, it has to be genuine, you cannot put it on.

You need to think, these are pharisees and Jesus.

Matthew 16:1-4 (ESV) And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 An evil

and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So, he left them and departed.

So when you can predict the weather, you look for signs but when Jesus comes and show you all the signs. When that happens they cannot see, because of evil and adulterous generation, because they don't want to see. They cannot see because they don't want to see. So Jesus says, you need to look with your eyes in evidence. Paul says, Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

You have to think about what I said then God's part is He will give you understanding in everything, which means the willingness of God to give us understanding is the ground of our thinking, not the substitute for our thinking. The willingness of God to give you understanding is the basis of us thinking, not a substitute. In fact, if you are anxious, you go to a meeting, got fantastic pastor or preacher he lay hand on you and you got instantaneous healing, but Jesus said,

Matthew 6:25-30 (ESV) Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you,

Jesus say think and he says, your life has meaning beyond sustenance, if God can provide for them surely he is going to provide for you because you are more valuable than the average pig. Anxiety is totally unproductive, gives you nothing. God provides so extravagantly for temporal things which by themselves expend no effort to contribute to their own wellbeing why wouldn't He provide for us who are far more valuable?

We want Jesus in a tablet or in an injection, but actually holiness involves thinking through the word of God as it were. So, thinking involves planning. For example, a guy falls down today at Gamma, an untrained person might do all sorts of wrong things, but if you are trained you will take preventive measures. Why? Because they are trained. Training involves commitment and thinking through matters. Same thing happens to being holy. It involves preparing your mind, thinking and planning and training. So, prepare your mind for action:

- How do you deal with shop assistant who gave you bad service?
- How do deal with inconsiderate driver

- My product has some core weakness in it ...how do I pitch it
- My employee has cancer and my company is doing badly do I lay him off?
- Deal with co-worker who is trying to slander you?
- Demanding parent who is also ill
- Non-Christian spouse who is not happy with Church activities

These are real life issues that everybody deals with. So, unless you think these things through, you won't be able to lead a holy life as it were. The next one is not only preparing your mind for action, its being sober-minded. Sober-minded is complete clarity of mind and resulting good judgement. If your mind is clear, you put your makeup in the right place. If your mind is not clear, your makeup is out. So basically, what is that mean. Example is Justine Bieber. He was brought up in an evangelical home, went to church, did everything, probably sang in church as well. But when he became famous, he got side-tracked. He got into all sorts of drugs, women, trouble with the law, the way he sang was sexually orientated. His life was really gone astray and then he came to know Christ again. In fact, he wanted to get baptized. He changed now and we can see that in his songs.

*Yeah, is it too late now to say sorry?
'Cause I'm missing more than just your body
Oh, is it too late now to say sorry?
Yeah, I know that I let you down
Is it too late to say I'm sorry now?*

Here is another song

*God sent an angel to help you out
He gave you direction
Showed you how to read a map
With a long journey ahead
Said it ain't over
Oh, even in the midst of doubt
Life is worth living
Life is worth living, so live another day
The meaning of forgiveness
People make mistakes, doesn't mean you have to give in
Life is worth living again*

Now he has completely different lyrics. It is like once he was drunk and now, he becomes sober and if you actually read stories about Justin Bieber, you talk to him straightaway he will talk to you about Jesus. He is all excited about Jesus. Because he was drunk and now he has sober judgment. The man is completely changed as it were. So to be sober means, you've got to work out the intoxication of life. The things, you are adopted son, you need to glorify him, you are co-heir with Christ but things come to distract you, you don't have time. So therefore we need to be sober-

mind, which means we do not get carried away by our work, our career, our thirst for success and so much so that we are basically clouded in our judgment. So we need to be sober-minded.

The next thing that we need to do is that we need to engage the world. Not only we must think, we must also act. It says here,

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

So basically you have to be obedient. Justin Bieber used to look for happiness here, the passions of your former ignorance. The pursuit of happiness based on ignorance—false promises and idol, which is formerly he was ignorant, he had passions. The pursuit of happiness based on ignorance, false promises, false idols. That's what he was before and now he has got true happiness found in God, a genuine delight in him, an eternal and unending treasuring of his glory and holiness above all else. That's why he is so excited. He is writing songs, he is telling his testimony, it's all natural. It stems out of worship. You can see a transformation in a person's life. So it is not whether you are looking for happiness or holiness, true happiness is found in holiness. If you search for happiness, you will not find holiness. When you aim for holiness, you will get happiness, because it is a design issue. If you are designed in the image of God, the only way you are going to be fulfilled in God is to be in God rather than in idols.

Psalms 1:1-2 (ESV) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

When your mind is transformed you will find it really exciting and beautiful.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Here we actually have happiness based on the fact of confession. Confession and forgiveness brings you happiness. It is a whole paradigm shift because of the way we think. There is a story of David in Samuel

2 Samuel 23:14-17 (ESV) 14 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. 15 And David said longingly, "Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" 16 Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the Lord 17 and said, "Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the

men who went at the risk of their lives?" Therefore, he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

When we obey God, it is going to be like the three men. When God says, I want some thing and you are ready to do that. So, obedience is based on devotion and delight. What about the woman with alabaster jar. She comes to Jesus and wets his feet with tears and wiped them with her hair, because her sins were forgiven. When we obey God, our mind was formerly ignorant but now when we see God for his beauty we obey out of devotion and that must happen, it is genuine.

1 Peter 1:15-17 (ESV) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

This means the way God treats you as a Christian and he treats the non-Christian, he judges. C.S. Lewis describes it best in Narnia,

- "Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion."
- "Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."
- "That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."
- "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.
- "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

What he is trying to describe to you is a huge lion who can act unpredictably, but he is good. That inculcates in us a sense of fear. Fearing God is not reverence, fear is this

Isaiah 6:5 (ESV) 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!"

I see and I fear, I am going to die because I am so sinful.

Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me,

This is the proper attitude towards God. There must be fear, real fear because you are dealing with the almighty God of entire universe, out of which everything is made and every breath you have lies in his hands. The fear of God is a response to holiness, it is a healthy recognition of God's holiness and

v 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds

So how do you actually recognize His holiness; repentance and worship. When God comes you see him as an Almighty judge, who judges the living and the dead and you fall in repentance, understanding that he judges impartially and that Jesus Christ death took all your punishment and yet the sin is still so real because he still judges that. So therefore there is real repentance in your life every single day. When you meet the living God, you fall, there is fear but there is repentance and there is also worship. When there is repentance and worship, it will then fuel, conduct an attitude.

So, when you actually obey God, it is because he is such an awesome, wonderful fearful God that you would want to obey him like you obey the king and when you loose that then your obedience becomes legalism. Your attitude and your growth fuels your life, recognition of God's holiness.

There is a letter from non-Christian,

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh

It is a beautiful description of holiness among Christians who live among non-Christian. They live like everybody else but the way non-Christian see them are completely different.

3. THE MOTIVATIONS TO LIVE HOLY LIVES

Some say,

- I have said the sinners prayer and belong to a church
- Holiness has worked for me
- I am a good person
- Guilt--Atonement

In the future,

- Honesty is best policy
- Best for business
- Avoid punishment
- Supplement Christs work
- God will reward me

Israel's motivation for holiness,

Exodus 19:4-6 (ESV) You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant

That's why they are holy and they look forward to the promised land. What about us? Our motivation for holiness,

1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV) knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Why we should be holy? Because we are paid for by the blood of the lamb. The blood of God himself. That should always be our motivation. Our motivations should not be fear or to gain points with God, but the fact that Jesus Christ died for you. That should always be on the top of your mind.

Status and value

1 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV) He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

So therefore God plan beforehand, he would come, he would die, so that your faith and your hope with the entirely with him. You look forward to the final day when you will be fully saved. This is what we call the helmet of salvation. This one keeps you focused in your spiritual walk because basically you are saved by Jesus's legal righteousness, where you are being saved by being sanctified and one day you will be taken to heaven which is basically on earth.

1 John 3:2-3 (ESV) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

By focusing on the final day is the hope, the reason because he paid the ransom for you, you are his precious possession and with the hope of salvation. That will fuel your growth.