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EXPOSITORY SERMON

August – September

TRUTHS FOR HOLY LIVING

FOOTSTEPS TO THE WAY OF HOLINESS (Series One)

Scripture Reading – Hebrews 10:1-18.

Introduction

The writer in Hebrews 10:10 declares “We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the Body of Jesus Christ once and for all.” This sums up the theme of this message. The main purpose of this letter is to bring men into the presence of God. It describes how the way into His presence has been made possible by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer also makes clear that to stand in the presence of a Holy God, men must be holy. The Psalmist was aware of this when he wrote ‘who may ascend to the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? - He who has clean hands and a pure heart!’ This

is the fundamental recognition of the scriptures. And so one of the dominant themes of the letter is holiness; the way to holiness is outlined by the writer who makes clear that Jesus died to make us holy. In Hebrews 13:12 "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His blood." Now because holiness is emphasized, the spotlight is focused on Jesus who is able to make us holy. Hebrews 10:10 "...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the Body of Jesus Christ once and for all." It is clear who Jesus is will determine what He can do for us. So it is also extremely important that we understand who Jesus is. "What kind of person is He?" "Is He really able to save us to the uttermost?" What kind of sacrifice would it take to pay the price for full salvation, and so the writer talks about Lord Jesus Christ in superlative terms. His perception and understanding of who this man Jesus is, is revealed in his letter. Certainly he is aware that Jesus is more than one of the prophets of Judaism and that He is greater than Moses. The writer knows that he stands head and shoulders above the angels, for no matter how exemplary they were, none of them fulfilled the qualifications to pay the price of our salvation. While Jesus may have some of the traits of a prophet there is more to Him than that. The writer from the beginning of his letter magnifies and exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. As John Ritchie points out that the writer portrays the superiority and the greatness of Jesus in a seven fold way in the first chapter,

i. He has appointed Heir of all things, Hebrews 1:2.

ii. He made the universe. Hebrews 1:2.

iii. He is the radiance of God's glory. Hebrews 1:3

iv. He is the exact representation of God's being. Hebrews 1:3.

v. He sustains all things by His powerful word. Hebrews 1:3.

vi. He by Himself provided purification for sins. Hebrews 1:3.

vii. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven. Hebrews 1:3. This could not be said of the prophets. This man Jesus stands unique and superior to all who came before Him. Not even Moses the great law-giver and the man who the Jews deeply revered, had these attributes. Even the angels with their

awesome power, could not measure up to the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God and John tells us that "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God." John 13:3. Jesus is God in the flesh which guarantees the perfection of His person. God designated Him to be the perfection provision to pay the price on the cross for our redemption. Jesus has blazed the trail to holiness of heart and life. The veil has been torn in to from top to bottom opening the door into God's presence for all time, and the way to living the life of holiness has been opened for all. Once again the emphasis of the power and importance the Cross is brought to the center of our thinking. It is critical then that we discover what the foundations of holy living are. There are some things that must be settled in our minds and in our hearts, before the fruits of the holiness are reproduced in our lives. So we will follow the footsteps to a Holy life. They are steps which God has taken in order that we might be made holy. We must begin with the basics. There must first be,

1. THE RECOGNITION OF AN OLD PROBLEM. Hebrews 10:12, 17.

That is why the writer pinpoints the solution to this problem in verse 10, he says "...we have been made holy through of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." To be made holy implies that there is a condition other than being holy which is sinfulness. So the problem we are to recognize is the problem of sin. This where we begin! To resolve this problem we should always recognize what it is. Note that the writer recognized its,

a. Its Reality. Hebrews 10:12, 17. The words in verse 12 point to this truth, "Jesus offered for all time one sacrifice for sins." There can be no relationship with God and certainly no possibility of living a holy life while sin remains dominant." The death of Jesus on the Cross is in fact the recognition of the reality of sin. In verse 17, sin is referred to. "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." The greatest hindrance to the life of holiness is an old problem clearly named in the scriptures as sin. It is the enemy of holiness. All through the scriptures this basic problem in man is brought to the fore. Sin

bothers God. It always has done. The removal of sin is part of the reason that He sent His one only Son, Jesus to this earth. Paul says that sin is the sting in death. It is the fatal poison in death. It is what makes death deadly. This is a reality in man. But once the sting has been removed, death loses its power and authority. But there is no hope of eternal life while sin remains in the heart. It has to be removed if life, hope and holiness are to come to man. Sin is still very much a reality in our world. At the close of the sermon one Sunday morning, one the members of the church came forward at the invitation. He was noticeably disturbed by his conviction in his life... With tears flowing and a halt in his voice he took the pastor's hand and meant to tell him that his life was full of sin. But what came out was, "My sin is full of life." As soon as he had spoken he had realized his mistake and changed it to my life is full of sin, but in reality his first statement was the real reason for the second. His sin was full of life and that is why his life was full of sin. Sin is an unavoidable reality. Furthermore the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross which is the evidence of the reality of sin provided for its,

b. Its Removal. Hebrews 10:17. The scriptures quoting the words of the Holy Spirit in verse 17 tells us, "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." God determined that the sin problem could be solved by Him and Him alone. The solution was the death of Jesus on the Cross and this would give man a way out of his dilemma. Paul Murphy, once, a former world-champion chess player was being shown over an art gallery when his gaze was arrested by a peculiar picture. The artist had depicted a chess board as a symbol of the game of life. With the contest almost concluded. On the one side sat a young man with a look of despair on his face. On the other side of the chess board, sat a representation of Satan gloating over the helpless victim. Murphy the champion chess player stood looked intently at the picture as he studied it, and then explained: "bring me a chess-board; there is a way out, I can save him yet!" His knowledge of chess was better than the artist's, and he saw a way out of the man's dilemma. Since the fall of Adam, man is cornered or checkmated by sin. Has no way out of his

prison. His predicament is terminal. This has been his plight since the fall of Adam. He feels there are no more moves to save him from his bondage. But God saw a way out and made the move. It was a costly way. A price had to be paid for man to be delivered from his sin. It would cost God His One and Only Son. But the sacrifice of His Son was the only way out for mankind. And Jesus was transfixed to an old rugged Cross by harsh nails, and they crowned him with wreath of piercing thorns, and a spear thrust deep into His side and in those moments, shed Blood infinitely more precious than burnished gold was shed for the forgiveness of sins. It is in and through that death that we are redeemed.

The poet put it this way,

“Without blood there is no remission
Thus the Lord proclaims from heaven,
Blood must flow- on this condition,
This alone, is sin forgiven;
Yes, a victim must be slain,
Else all hope of life is vain.”

And He says with unmistakable authority in this 10th chapter of Hebrews that “their sins and lawless acts, I will remember no more.” He did not say “I did not remember” as though He had a lapse of memory. He said “I will remember their sins and lawless acts no longer.” His forgiveness is deliberate, intentional and complete. He will remember their sins and lawless acts no more. They will never be charged to us again. They will never be brought up against us in the future. Sins condemnation has been lifted and judgment has been set aside. This is vital to starting out on the highway of holiness. The first step to living the life of holiness is the removal of an old problem-the problem of sin. But there is more to living the holy life than just the removal of an old problem. The writer presents to us;

2. THE DECLARATION OF NEW POSSIBILITIES. Hebrew 10:10.

The writer declares that “.....we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” In these words lie the exciting possibilities

of living the holy life. They tell us how this is possible. The foundation of these possibilities lies in the truth that the provision for our salvation is rooted in,

a.Perfect Person. Hebrews 10:10. This perfect person lies in the “sacrifice of the Body of Jesus Christ once and for all.” It took a perfect person to procure a perfect provision for sin. The perfection of His person guarantees the perfection of His provision for sin. We have already seen that He is God in human flesh. In chapter one verse 3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being sustaining all things by His powerful word.” This is confirmed in Hebrews 7: 25-26. “Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because He always lives to intercede for them. V.26. Such a High Priest meets our need – one who is holy, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.” He is the perfect person.

The great men of history and have all had their faults and weaknesses.

Biographers have had tried to gloss over or minimize these blemishes, but the picture thus presented is distorted and misleading. “Paint me warts and all,” Oliver Cromwell is reputed to have ordered the artist painting his portrait. Of one man only can it be said that there were no warts to paint. Jesus alone stands without a single flaw in His character. He is the “Lamb without blemish and without spot.” “I find no fault in this man” was the conclusion of Pilate the Roman Governor as he announced his verdict on the charges laid against Jesus. We know that he only spoke of the innocence of the prisoner in relation to Roman law, but he uttered a truth much deeper than he knew. The verdict of history is that “we find no fault in this man.” Russel V. Delong wrote that Alexander the great who lived three and half centuries before Jesus, conquered the world and created a colossal empire. He and Jesus had some things in common. Both began their careers very young and both ended at the untimely age of thirty three. Alexander was born in a mansion – Jesus was born in a manger. Alexander was the son of a king – Jesus the son of carpenter. Alexander died a worshipped king on a throne - Jesus died a mocked King on a Cross –

Alexander's life seemed like a great success; Jesus' life seemed like a dismal failure. Alexander shed the blood of millions for his own gain; Jesus shed His own Blood for the salvation of millions. Alexander died in Babylon in splendor; Jesus died on Calvary in shame. Alexander conquered every throne; Jesus conquered every grave. Alexander enslaved all men; Jesus made all men free. Alexander made history; Jesus transformed it. The person of Jesus stands unequalled and unsurpassed. Alexander was a mere human. Jesus was the God man. Alexander was a sinner. Jesus was sinless. And because He is, he is the perfect person. This truth is not simply important, it is crucial to the salvation of the world. Because Jesus is the perfect person He is,

b. The Perfect Provision. Hebrews 10:10, 12. "...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all." We must say it again, who Jesus is determines what He does. Jesus was more than martyr suffering for what He had done; the scriptures say that "He offered Himself as an unblemished sacrifice giving Himself for the salvation of the world. The perfection of His person determines the perfect provision for doing away with the sin of the world. John the Baptist referred to Him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World." John 1:29. The sacrifice of the Body of Christ refers to the outpoured life or the shed Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews mentions the shedding of Blood at least seven times." As Flanigan points out each one is expressive and instructive. Each speaks of its redemptive power and authority. The first reference is found in Hebrews 9:12, where it talks about, "His own Blood." In chapter 9:14. it refers to the Blood of Christ. In chapter 10:19, the reference is "the Blood of Jesus." In chapter 10:29. It is "The Blood of the Covenant." And in chapter 12:24, mention is made of the "blood of sprinkling." Reference is made again of "His own blood, and in chapter 13:20 "The Blood of the everlasting Covenant." These are descriptions of the intensity, the depth and the agony of the sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of the sinners. The sacrifice He made was perfect. The provision He offered was complete. The

writer to the Hebrews outlines who Jesus was, and what He was determined what impact or effect he had on the human race. In chapter 9:26 he wrote, "He has appeared once and for all... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself." There is no need for Him to appear again to sacrifice Himself on a Cross for you and me. He has done it once and for all, for He is the perfect sacrifice. The perfection of His work on Calvary is brought together in those significant words chapter 9 verse 26, "That He appeared to do away with sin." Not to counteract it – not to suppress it – and not to cover it, but "to do away with it." John in His first letter chapter 3:5, writes "you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him there is no sin...." The sinlessness of Jesus is the basis for providing a complete and perfect salvation. This great truth offers to us new possibilities in the life of holiness. The door is now open to live in the presence of God as we enter in a new way – A Holy Way - a blood sprinkled way. The old problem of sin has been removed through and in the power of the shed Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the declaration of new possibilities. Isaac Watts wrote in hymn some beautiful and significant words,

**" Not all the blood of goats, of beasts, On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, Or wash away the stain.**

BUT Christ the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away.

A Sacrifice of nobler name, And richer blood than they." "He has appeared once and for all." No longer would the sacrifices of beasts be needed because of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God, or as the hymn writer put it,

"Richer blood has flowed from nobler veins. To purge the soul from guilt and cleanse the reddest stains." He is the perfect provision for our sin. Because Jesus came to this earth and died we can know new possibilities in the life of holiness. The final step to the way of holiness described here is;

3. THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT PROMISE. Hebrews 10:10-18.

Hebrews 10:10. "We have been holy through the sacrifice of the Body of Jesus Christ once and for all." This is the covenant I will make with them after that

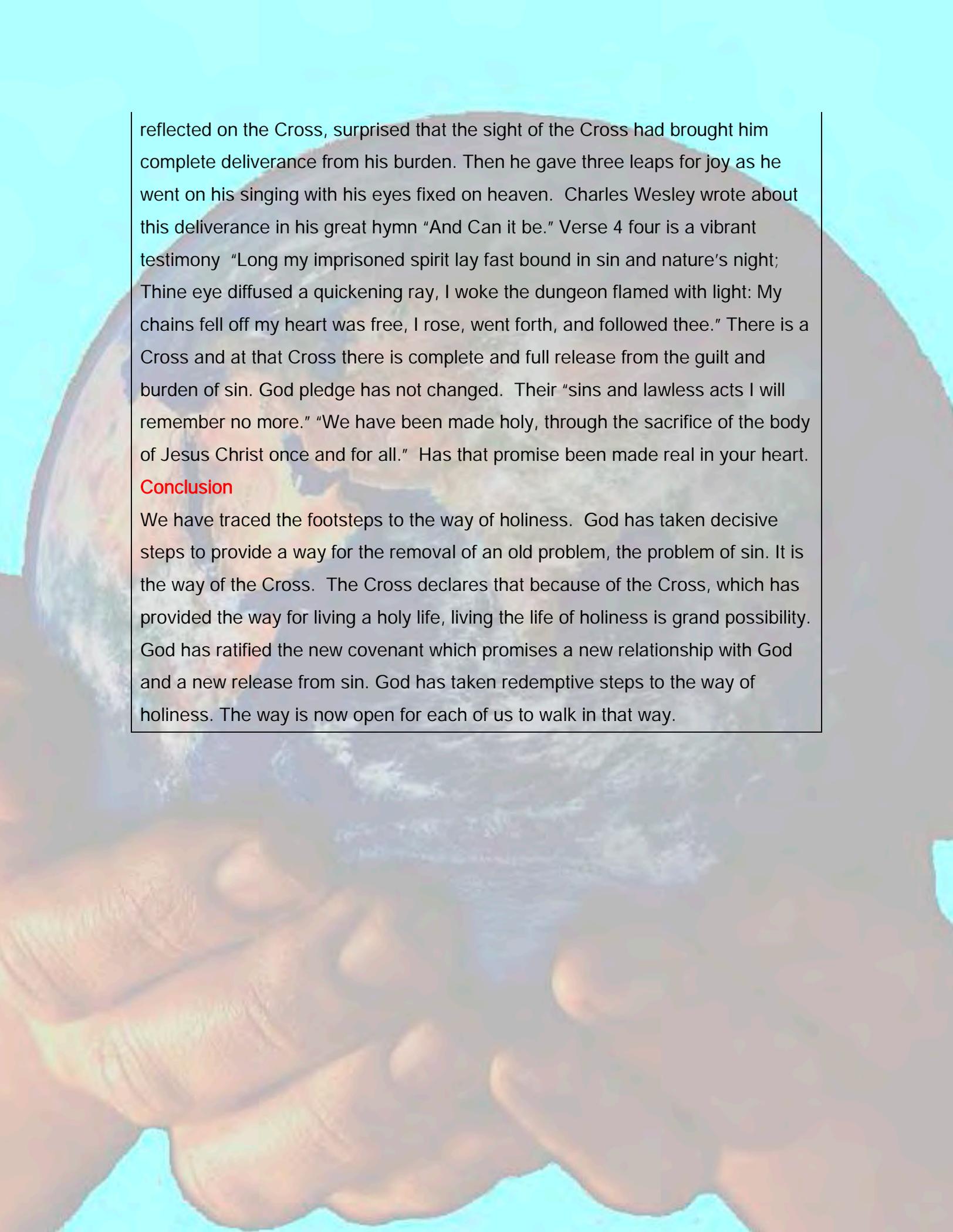
time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." The holy requirements of law written within us make us holy. This is the promise of a new covenant that God makes with men and women. This is the new agreement that God has made with men and women. It is an eternal Covenant based on who God is. The former secretary of State John Foster Dulles reported at the NATO conference in Paris dealing with the Russians is something like the situation encountered by a husband who had argued with his wife so bitterly they had stopped speaking. Finally, the husband decided to break the impasse. "You know, dear," he said, I've been thinking over the argument." "Well" she snapped. "Yes dear, I've decided to agree with you after all." "Won't do you any good." She retorted. "I've changed my mind." The Covenant of God, however is eternal. It is unchangeable. God has not retreated on His promise. This covenant promises,

a. A New Relationship With God. Hebrews 10:15 -18. The broken relationship between man and God has now been restored. No longer are the laws of God to be written on stone for God promises that He will put his laws in the mind and write them on the hearts of men and women. The desires of God which were once engraven on stone tablets, are now written on the hearts and minds of those who have come into a covenant relationship with God, and so now they instinctively live to please God to fulfill His desires in holy living. What were once His demands are now their desires. They want to live according to the laws of God. They are a spiritual people, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and because of this they are intent on pleasing God. The Apostle Paul latches on to this to explain and affirm it in Romans 8:4, "The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The child of God does not steal because there is a law which says "You shall not steal," nor do they bear false witness because the commandment says so or because the law says you shall not commit adultery. They do not do these things because they are the children

of God and do not want to do them and because they have become “partakers of the Divine nature.” 2 Peter 1:4. The will and the desires of God become theirs. (Ritchie – Hebrews p.208). It is the indwelling Spirit of God who will enable the Child of God to accomplish those spiritual desires. This is not simply because of a relationship to written set of laws, but because of a relationship with God Himself. God has written His laws on their mind and hearts. F.F. Bruce helps us here when he wrote that in the original wording of the new Covenant in Jeremiah 31:33, the Hebrew word Torah or law means more than statutory law: not simply cold requirements because it has the living and dynamic ideas of guidance, direction and instruction. This new Covenant pledges a new relationship with God. But this New Covenant promises,

b. A New Release From Sin. Hebrews 10:17. “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” The law is incapable of making this announcement of the release from sin and its burden.

In John Bunyan’s book Pilgrims Progress, which as an allegory about a man whose name was Christian, who embarked on a journey to heaven. As he started out on this journey, he carried a heavy burden which represented the burden of sin and guilt. Christian struggling and straining under the weight of this burden, “I know what I am seeking- freedom from my heavy burden. He desperately wanted to be released from this heavy weight. John Bunyan describes how the highway Christian was to travel on was protected by a Wall, and the Wall was called salvation. Burdened Christian began to run up the Highway, but not without difficulty because of the load he was carrying on his back. He ran this way until he came to on somewhat higher ground where there stood a Cross. A little way down from there was an open Grave. As Christian approached the Cross, his burden came loose from his shoulders, fell from his back, and began to roll downward until it tumbled into the open grave to be seen no more. Christian was filled with joy testified “through His sorrows He has given me rest, and through His death He has given me life.” He stood for a moment



reflected on the Cross, surprised that the sight of the Cross had brought him complete deliverance from his burden. Then he gave three leaps for joy as he went on his singing with his eyes fixed on heaven. Charles Wesley wrote about this deliverance in his great hymn "And Can it be." Verse 4 four is a vibrant testimony "Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke the dungeon flamed with light: My chains fell off my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee." There is a Cross and at that Cross there is complete and full release from the guilt and burden of sin. God's pledge has not changed. Their "sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." "We have been made holy, through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all." Has that promise been made real in your heart.

Conclusion

We have traced the footsteps to the way of holiness. God has taken decisive steps to provide a way for the removal of an old problem, the problem of sin. It is the way of the Cross. The Cross declares that because of the Cross, which has provided the way for living a holy life, living the life of holiness is a grand possibility. God has ratified the new covenant which promises a new relationship with God and a new release from sin. God has taken redemptive steps to the way of holiness. The way is now open for each of us to walk in that way.