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**Expository Sermon**

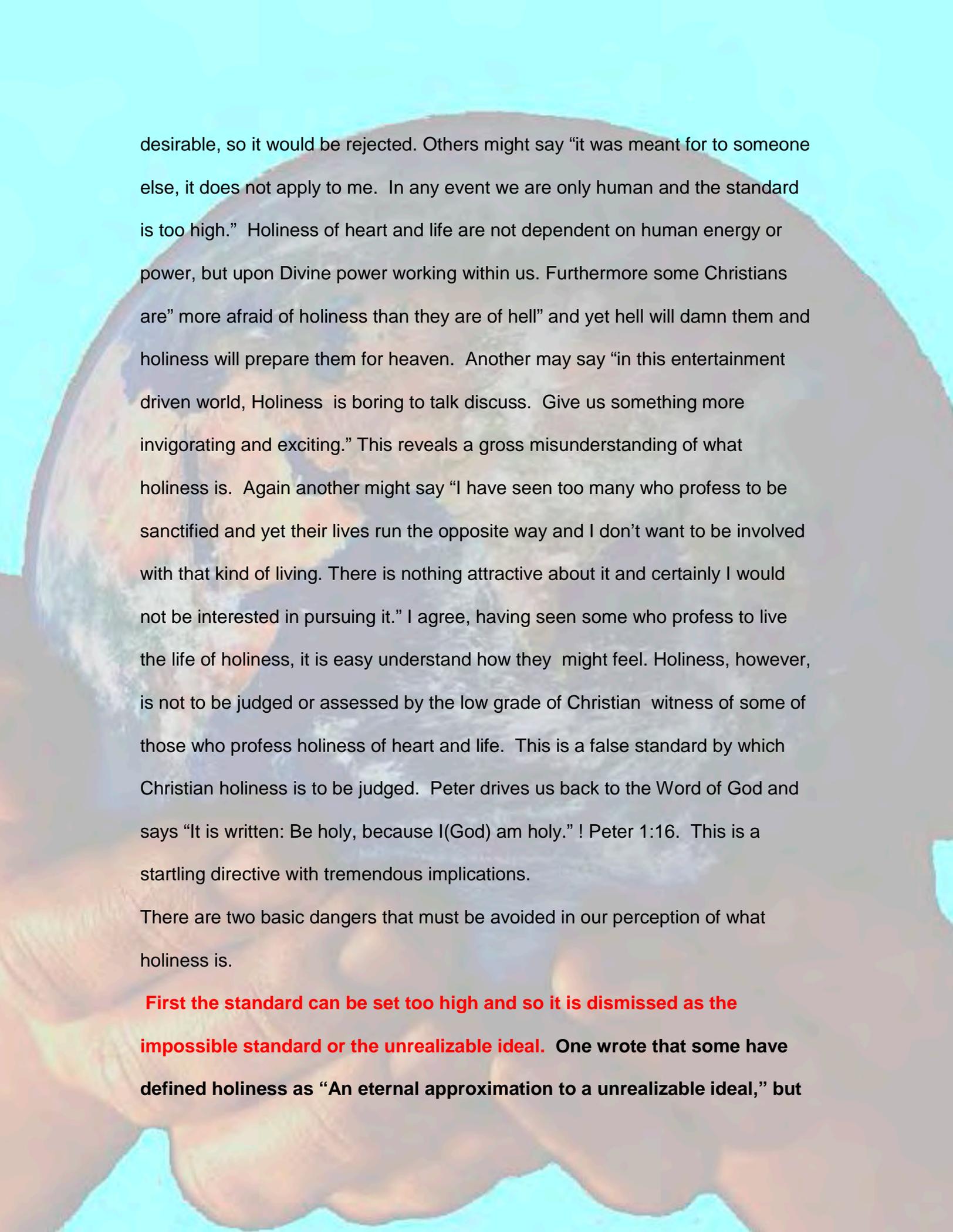
**July 2014**

**“AS HE....SO BE!”**

**Scripture Reading – 1 Peter 1:13 – 25.**

### **Introduction**

The Apostle Peter wrote “Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” Peter simply states these words as though there was nothing extraordinary about them, and yet in the pop culture holiness of life is not be considered to be possible or even



desirable, so it would be rejected. Others might say “it was meant for to someone else, it does not apply to me. In any event we are only human and the standard is too high.” Holiness of heart and life are not dependent on human energy or power, but upon Divine power working within us. Furthermore some Christians are” more afraid of holiness than they are of hell” and yet hell will damn them and holiness will prepare them for heaven. Another may say “in this entertainment driven world, Holiness is boring to talk discuss. Give us something more invigorating and exciting.” This reveals a gross misunderstanding of what holiness is. Again another might say “I have seen too many who profess to be sanctified and yet their lives run the opposite way and I don’t want to be involved with that kind of living. There is nothing attractive about it and certainly I would not be interested in pursuing it.” I agree, having seen some who profess to live the life of holiness, it is easy understand how they might feel. Holiness, however, is not to be judged or assessed by the low grade of Christian witness of some of those who profess holiness of heart and life. This is a false standard by which Christian holiness is to be judged. Peter drives us back to the Word of God and says “It is written: Be holy, because I(God) am holy.” ! Peter 1:16. This is a startling directive with tremendous implications.

There are two basic dangers that must be avoided in our perception of what holiness is.

**First the standard can be set too high and so it is dismissed as the impossible standard or the unrealizable ideal. One wrote that some have defined holiness as “An eternal approximation to a unrealizable ideal,” but**

Holiness rightly and scripturally understood does not support this thinking.

**The second danger is that, the standard can be set too low** and so we seek after that which fits our lifestyle and dismiss what the scripture sets down for us. So many want pliable holiness which will not disturb their comfort zones. This results in a superficial and low grade Christian witness which brings shame on Name of God. What is needed is to reflect seriously on it, to see what God essentially requires of us. It may true that at a cursory glance at it will give the appearance that it is a staggering and impossible demand. The sincere Christian, however, who studies the scriptures and earnestly wants to fully follow Christ will discover that there is a balanced holy life which can be realized in this life in and through the power of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's expectations can be realized in and for us by His provision in the atoning death of Christ..

Having said this, we must never forget is that Holiness! Sanctification! and Purity are some of the great truths of the scriptures, and because they are, we need to discover what the balanced and scriptural standard and meaning is.

It was John Wesley who said that there were "three elements in religion, repentance, the porch to religion, faith, the door to religion, and holiness, the essence of religion." This is true because God has purposed, planned and provided for personal holiness. Dr. W.E. Sangster who wrote, "**the purpose of God is to make him holy. Not happiness first and holiness if possible, but holiness for first and bliss as the consequence.**" This is what Peter conveys to us

in these verses.

We might ask the question “What is holiness?” There is an enormous amount that can be written about it, but Holiness in simple terms is spiritual wholeness or the health of the soul. Physical health is in fact the absence of disease and the presence of the vitality of life. Holiness is spiritual health. It is the absence of the malignant cancer of the soul(sin) which is cleansed by the power of the shed Blood of Jesus, and the infilling of the presence of the abounding and abiding life of the Holy Spirit. It includes a total surrender of who we are to the Sovereignty and will of God and a continuing devotion to Him. Sin is not an essential part of human nature. It is a spiritual cancer which will eventually destroy us. How wise and loving God is to insist that the foul thing that would destroy us must be driven out.”(H.K.Bedwell). “God’s plan is not to remove any essential power or part of our human nature, but to purify it, and remove from it the deadly disease of sin.(H.K. Bedwell) **Charles Wesley wrote:- “The seed of sin’s disease, Spirit of Health remove, Spirit of finished Holiness, Spirit of perfect love.”** Holiness is the health of the soul. How can we remain spiritually healthy if there is any residue of sin - sin which the shed blood of Christ can cleanse. When God commands us to be holy, He is mandating spiritual health for us. God does not want us to be spiritual cripples or be spiritually handicapped. He wants us to be spiritually robust and healthy. Tozer maintained that “whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death.” A closer look at these verses will reveal what is involved in the Divine demand for holiness of heart and life.

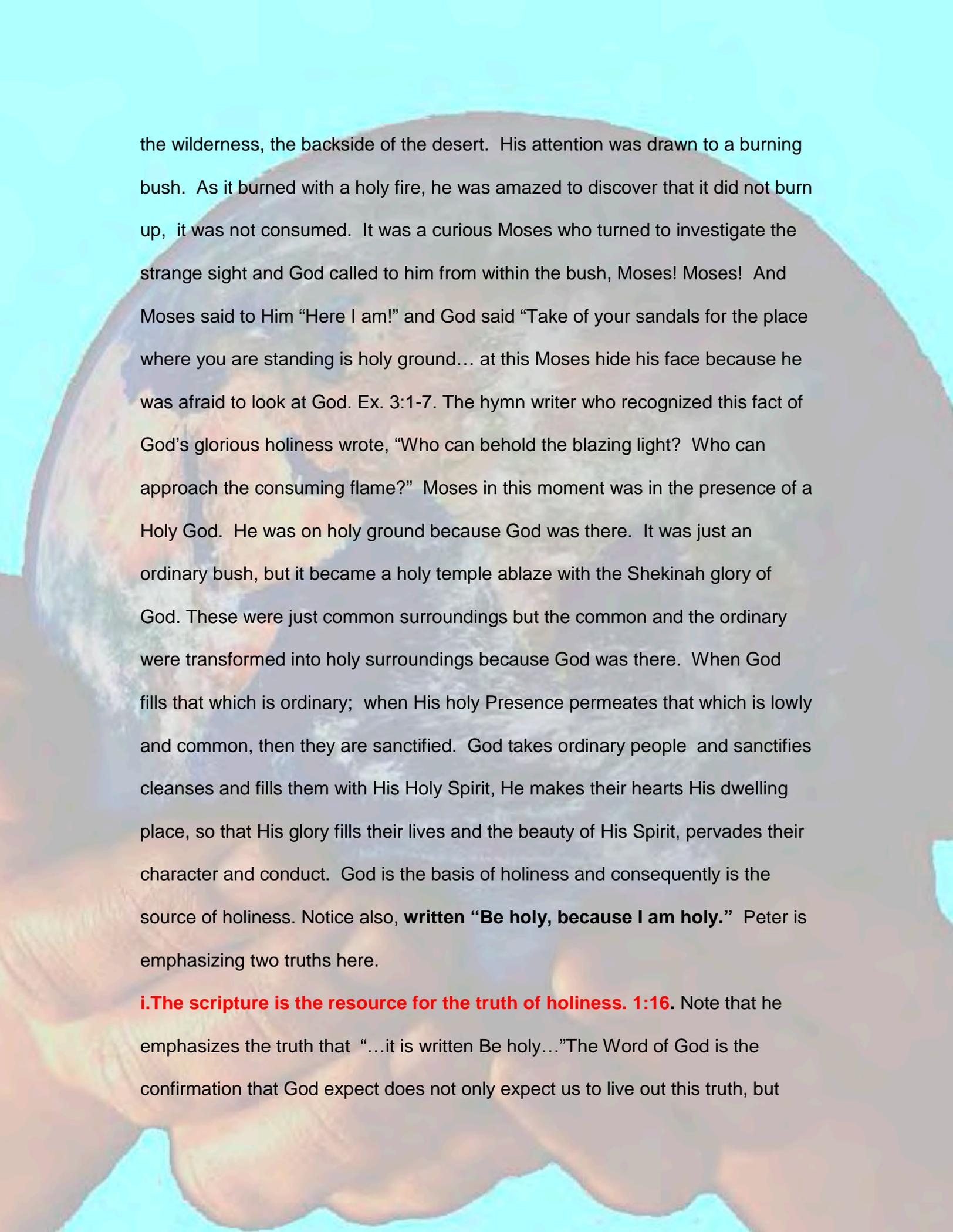
Note that,

## **1. THE SOURCE OF HOLINESS IS REVEALED. 1 Peter 1:15-16.**

**Peter tells us that it “is written, “Be holy, because I am holy.” God is the source of holiness. One has written that “God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe.”(Tozer) And because of who God is,**

**a. The Basis of His Demand is His own Character. The holiness of God is where holiness begins.** Holiness is not the invention of the human intellect it is born in the Divine Nature. It does not begin with man, it begins with God.

**A.W. Tozer said “Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard.”** Man is forever seeking to lower the standard to fit his lifestyle, but God maintains the standard of His holiness requiring that men will fit into His purposes. One has written with a discerning eye that many “Christians have what we might call a ‘cultural holiness.’ They adapt to the character and behavior of Christians around them. And as the Christian culture around them is more or less holy, so these Christians are more or less holy. But God has not called us to be like those around us. He has called us to be like Himself. Paul tells us that “we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Holiness is nothing less than conformity to the character of God. Just as the nature of the apple tree demands that the nature of its fruit be apples, so the essential nature of God demands that His children who are linked to Him by faith, be holy. The basis and thus the reason for His mandate is His character. Be holy for I am holy. Everything surrounding Him, related to Him and connected to Him is Holy. You may remember as Moses walked in the blistered wastes of



the wilderness, the backside of the desert. His attention was drawn to a burning bush. As it burned with a holy fire, he was amazed to discover that it did not burn up, it was not consumed. It was a curious Moses who turned to investigate the strange sight and God called to him from within the bush, Moses! Moses! And Moses said to Him "Here I am!" and God said "Take off your sandals for the place where you are standing is holy ground... at this Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. Ex. 3:1-7. The hymn writer who recognized this fact of God's glorious holiness wrote, "Who can behold the blazing light? Who can approach the consuming flame?" Moses in this moment was in the presence of a Holy God. He was on holy ground because God was there. It was just an ordinary bush, but it became a holy temple ablaze with the Shekinah glory of God. These were just common surroundings but the common and the ordinary were transformed into holy surroundings because God was there. When God fills that which is ordinary; when His holy Presence permeates that which is lowly and common, then they are sanctified. God takes ordinary people and sanctifies, cleanses and fills them with His Holy Spirit, He makes their hearts His dwelling place, so that His glory fills their lives and the beauty of His Spirit, pervades their character and conduct. God is the basis of holiness and consequently is the source of holiness. Notice also, **written "Be holy, because I am holy."** Peter is emphasizing two truths here.

**i. The scripture is the resource for the truth of holiness. 1:16.** Note that he emphasizes the truth that "...it is written Be holy..." The Word of God is the confirmation that God expects us not only to live out this truth, but

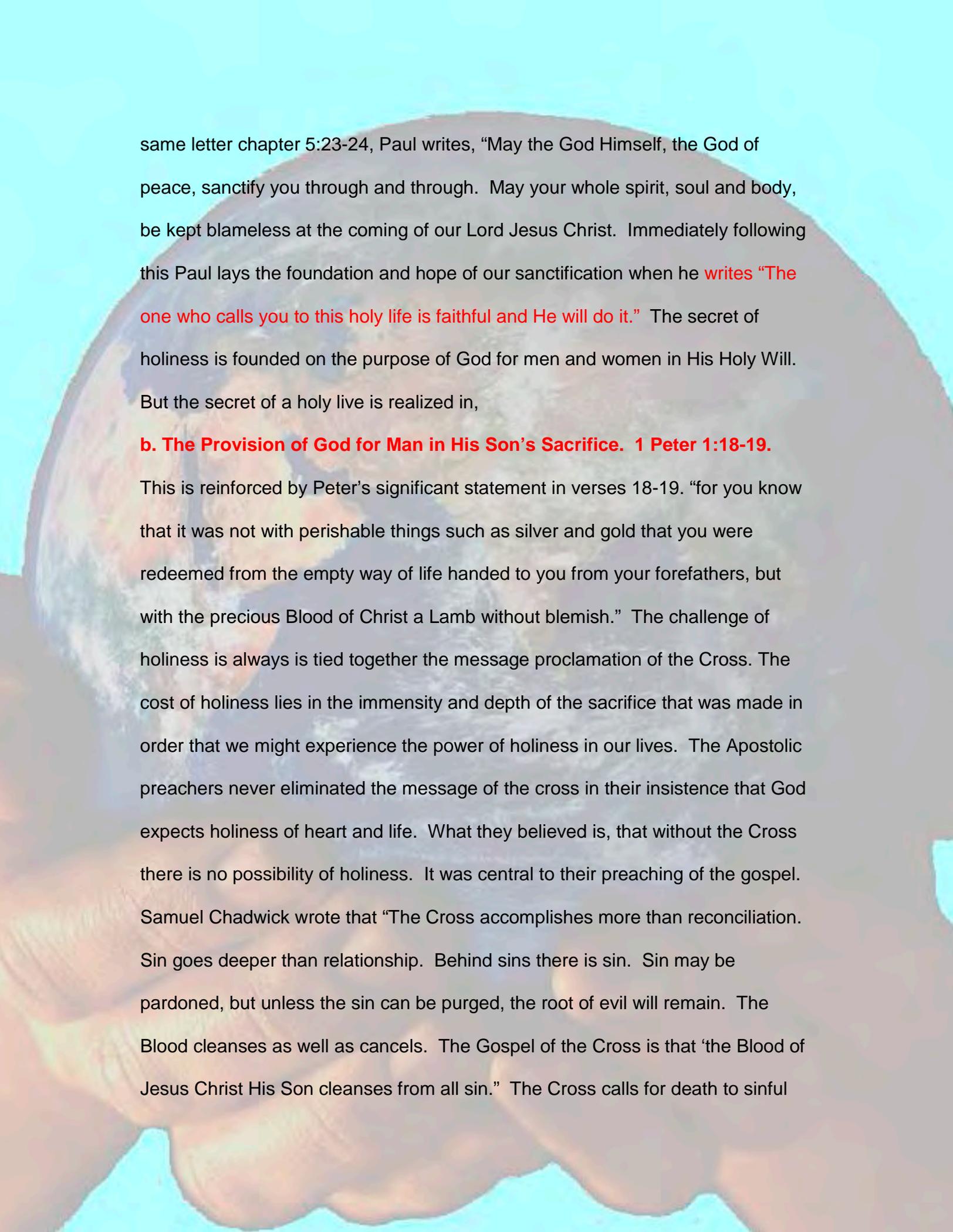
has provided the power to enable us to live this life. This truth is the **very essence of the written word.** The second fact is that,

**ii. That Holiness is not a New Truth. 1 Peter 1:16. Holiness is not the invention of the New Testament writers.** What Peter is saying here is that holiness is not a new message, for God has always expected holiness of His people. ! Peter 1:16 is a quotation from the Old Testament. It occurs five times in the book Leviticus. God's commands are always consistent with His character. God's character is unchanging there fore His expectations have not **changed.** He is the source of Holiness. Notice,

**2. THE SECRET OF HOLINESS IS DISCLOSED. 1 Peter 1:15-19,22.**

The secret lies in,

**a. The Purposes of God for Men In His Holy Will. 1 Peter 1:15-16. Just as He has called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.** Be holy. That is simple and clear and it is God's purpose for mankind. There is nothing indefinite or uncertain about that trumpet sound. It is not a mild suggestion, a benign proposal or a tentative recommendation. Just as definitely and as clearly as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "you must be born again," "God says to His people 'Be Holy.'" It is his purpose because it is His holy will. Paul wrote that it is "His will that you should be holy, and that you should avoid sexual immorality that each of you should learn to control your body in a way that is holy and honorable. Thessalonians 4:3. It is also His holy call, "for God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore he who rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God who gives you His Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 4:7. And in the



same letter chapter 5:23-24, Paul writes, “May the God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body, be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately following this Paul lays the foundation and hope of our sanctification when he writes “The one who calls you to this holy life is faithful and He will do it.” The secret of holiness is founded on the purpose of God for men and women in His Holy Will. But the secret of a holy live is realized in,

**b. The Provision of God for Man in His Son’s Sacrifice. 1 Peter 1:18-19.**

This is reinforced by Peter’s significant statement in verses 18-19. “for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed to you from your forefathers, but with the precious Blood of Christ a Lamb without blemish.” The challenge of holiness is always is tied together the message proclamation of the Cross. The cost of holiness lies in the immensity and depth of the sacrifice that was made in order that we might experience the power of holiness in our lives. The Apostolic preachers never eliminated the message of the cross in their insistence that God expects holiness of heart and life. What they believed is, that without the Cross there is no possibility of holiness. It was central to their preaching of the gospel. Samuel Chadwick wrote that “The Cross accomplishes more than reconciliation. Sin goes deeper than relationship. Behind sins there is sin. Sin may be pardoned, but unless the sin can be purged, the root of evil will remain. The Blood cleanses as well as cancels. The Gospel of the Cross is that ‘the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin.’ The Cross calls for death to sinful

self and new life in Christ. The Calvary calls for the categorical assertion that Grace does much more than save us in sinning; its great intention is to save us from sinning.” Paul in Romans 6:1-2. asks a question “What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means, we died to sin how can we live it any longer?” The cross still stands as the available power so that sin need no longer have dominion over us. The scriptures make quite clear that Jesus Christ the Son of God who was manifested on the Cross as Savior reveals the power of His saving work in twofold way. Firstly it talks about

**i. His Destructive Work. 1 John 3:8.** “For this reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the Devil’s work.” Jesus did not come simply to inspire men, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. He shared that concern. Christ did not appear in time purely as a noble example of goodness to humanity. He was not just a humanitarian or a social worker and certainly He exemplified that spirit. He came with a drawn sword. He was at war with evil. He was in total conflict with the powers of hell. His was commissioned to “break the power of cancelled sin and set the prisoner free.” He came to break the chains of sin within man to enable him to walk in the way of holiness. This was His destructive work. But the there was,

**ii. His Creative Work. Ephesians 2:10.** Paul writing to the Ephesian church said, “For we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do?” And again he says “You were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, (v. 23) to be made new in the attitude of your

minds, and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24. God is holy and the deep passion and fervent desire of His heart, held in clear focus at Calvary, is the creation of a family who will in fact be like Him. And it is in the power of the cross that he makes us holy. This is the secret of holiness. Finally please note that,

### **3. THE SPHERE OF HOLINESS IS DEFINED. 1 Peter 1:15-16.**

**“Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.”** J.B. Phillips paraphrases these verses which throw some light on the scope of holiness.

**“.....be holy in every department of your lives.”** Holiness is not some religious notion tacked onto to life. Holiness is a way of life. “Be holy in all you do.”

Explicit in this command is the necessity of,

**a. Inward Holiness. 1 Peter 1:15-16. Holiness is a state of being. Genuine** holiness gets to the heart of a man. Jerry Bridges wrote that holiness “is not a series of do’s and don’ts, but conformity to God’s character in the very depths of our being. This conformity is possible only as we are united to Christ. The center of a man must be clean if the whole man is going to be holy. There are no hindrances to holiness outside us, they are within us.” Jesus said in Mark 7:15, 20. “.....nothing outside a man can make him unclean. What comes out of? a man is what makes him unclean.” Jesus once said to His disciples “Except your righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those religious leaders sat in their hypocrisy casting stones at people. With the plank in their own eye they picked at the splinter in other people’s eyes. They easily passed judgment on the

way other people lived. They did it with a self-righteous pride. But Jesus shattered their smug, self-satisfied, stiff-necked sanctimonious thinking with surprising discernment as to the real condition of their hearts. He said” I tell you truth that tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes did.....” Matthew 21:32. Jesus went on to point out “....you make clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greed and self-indulgence, (v.26) Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish and then the outside will be clean also.” Matthew 23:25-26. Jesus came to bring authenticity, reality and genuineness to religion. Who He was exposed the phoniness of the external religion of the scribes and Pharisees. Outward conforming to the law by itself is compelled by, and based on human effort and there always will be the possibility failure. Inward holiness is depended upon the power of God’s Holy Spirit within and it is He who gives the victory over sin. Be holy means inward holiness. But Peter also talks about,

**b. Outward Holiness. 1 Peter 1;!5-16. Peter exhorts us to be holy in everything we do.** This touches on the outward conduct of the Christian.

Conduct is made of two basic activities. First,

**i. The Words We say. 1 Peter 1:15-16. “Be holy in all you do.”** The tongue is the instrument which reveals the condition of the soul. James in letter 1:26. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight reign on his tongue he deceives himself and his religion is useless. He goes to say that it is,

“a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison.” Let me say that it is impossible to sling dirt with clean hands. Paul urges the church in Ephesians 4:19 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that they may benefit those who listen.” And again in Colossians 4:6, he says, “Let your conversation be always full of grace seasoned with salt...” God says that “death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Churches have been split apart by people who have gone around causing trouble with their tongues. Reputations have been destroyed by the gossiping tongue. One has said that “gossip is always perverse, it commits abortion on other peoples reputation.’ More damage has been done by the gossiping tongue than a thousand drunkards(Stanley Jones) The smallest child can demolish and scatter the petals of a rose, but the most brilliant mind cannot put it together to its original perfection. So is the destructive powers of the gossiping tongue. Holy conduct is made up of holy conversation. Let your conversation be always full of grace seasoned with salt.” Conduct is made up the words we say. It is also made up the,

**ii. The Deeds we Do. 1 Peter 1:15-16. “...be holy in all you do.”** Holiness of life goes beyond theory. Genuine Christian holiness touches all of life and it does not retreat into isolation. Holiness is a light set upon a hill which cannot be hid.” Holiness should reveal itself in everything we do. Dr Sangster said that “the greatest scandal of Christianity is the low grade of living. The church is



despised not because it is holy, but because it is not holy enough.” Holiness wrote Dr. P Rees is the **overflow of the indwelling Christ**. But it is one attribute that will attract the world to Christ. Mahatma Gandhi asked by the missionary E. Stanley Jones how Christianity could be more acceptable to India his reply was “I would suggest, first, that all of you Christians begin to live more like Christ.” One has written “I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.” Be holy in every department of your lives.

### **Conclusion**

**Are you living the holy life? You can! “Jesus died to make men(and women). holy.” May our prayer be that of Charles Wesley;**

**“He wills that I should holy be, that holiness I long to feel,  
That full divine conformity to all my Savior’s righteous will.  
Now let thy Spirit bring me in, and thy servant to possess  
The land of rest from inbred sin, the land of perfect holiness.  
Lord I believe thy power the same, the same, thy truth and grace endure  
And in thy blessed hands I am, and trust Thee for a perfect cure.  
Come Savior, come, and make me whole, entirely all my sins remove  
To perfect health restore my soul, to perfect holiness and love**

Charles Wesley.