



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost, October 25, 2020

Holiness is Still Right

by Garland F. Pierce

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

19:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

19:2 Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

19:15 You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor.

19:16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

19:17 You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself.

19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

The elderly stewardess, dressed in her starched white uniform and her black pillbox hat, ended her testimony during Love Feast by turning to all who were assembled and declaring, “Children, holiness is still right!”

Holiness is a term that seems to be limited in use these days, restricted to a smaller and smaller circle of believers. Some will argue that it is even more limited in practice. Many find the notion restrictive, antiquated, politically incorrect, and an infringement on individual freedoms. Yet the LORD commanded Moses to declare to the children of Israel, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” Our identity as children of God is linked to and marked by holiness.

The fact that this command comes in the midst of Israel’s *Book of Discipline*, Leviticus, might cause some to think that we are to do certain things simply to be holy or to become holy or merely

to appear “holy.” It is true that Leviticus lays out do’s and don’ts for the children of Israel; but, what happens to our understanding related to the holy call of discipleship that God makes to each of us if we think about our holiness as part of our identity as beloved children of God. We are/shall be holy because God is holy and we are God’s children, therefore having within these earthen, frail jars of clay holiness, sacredness, light, love, and goodness to be expressed and lived out. We follow God’s commands not to be holy but because we are holy, already moving toward perfection. Our holy God requires us to live up to who God knows us to be—who we can be—who we shall be. The way we live affects not just us but others around us, in our family, our community, and our world. Our lives, our actions matter! This pandemic has shown us this, at least all of us willing to see, listen, and heed.

Like Leviticus, Methodism has taught us this—personal holiness necessarily leads to social holiness. What we do and how we live can change us and change the world. That stewardship was absolutely correct; holiness is a fashion that never goes out of style. It looks good on you! Holiness is still right!

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—How is holy living being expressed or demonstrated by you?

PRAY: (AMEC Hymnal, #775)

Increase in us, O Lord, a true knowledge of Your holy will, that we may devote ourselves to Your service in word and deed; and that, doing Your will with cheerfulness and diligence, and bearing all our trials with patience, we may go on, through Your mercy, into the joy of everlasting life. AMEN.

ACT:

1. Based on your reflections from the TALK section, start to think through and make a plan as to how you will be more intentional in holy living. For those US citizens, here are some practical actions to take: Participate in the current democratic process (voter registration, voting and encouraging others to do so—See: <http://www.amev-alert.org>.) For everyone, advocate by practicing social distancing as much as possible, wash your hands often, and wear face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

3. Revisit the Psalm 23 Challenge first issued as part of the March 22, 2020 set of resources.

Song:

Take Time to Be Holy
AMEC Hymnal, #286

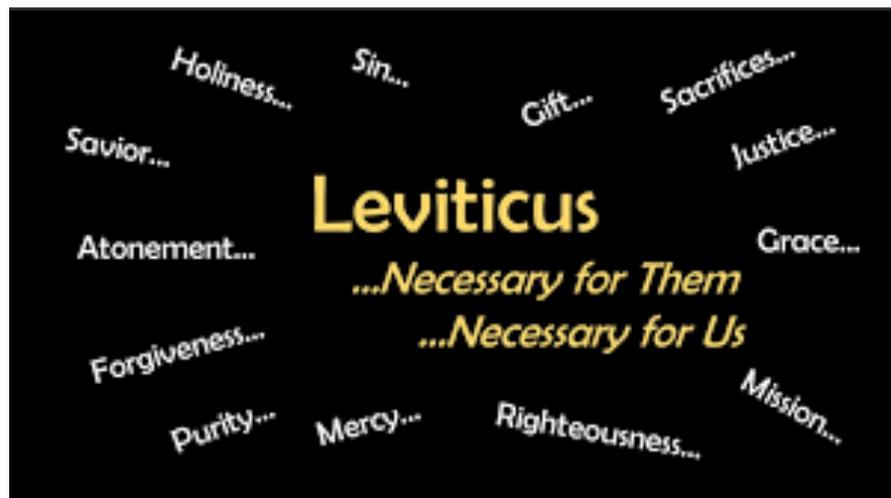
1. Take time to be ho-ly, Speak oft with thy Lord;
A-bide in Him al-ways, And feed on His Word;
Make friends of God’s chil-dren, Help those who are weak,
For-get-ting in noth-ing His bless-ing to seek.

2. Take time to be ho-ly, The world rush-es on;
Spend much time in se-cret With Je-sus a-lone;
By look-ing to Je-sus, Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy con-duct His like-ness shall see.
3. Take time to be ho-ly, Let Him be thy guide,
And run not be-fore Him, What-ev-er be-tide;
In joy or in sor-row, Still fol-low the Lord,
And, look-ing to Je-sus, Still trust in His Word.
4. Take time to be ho-ly, Be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each mo-tive Be-neath His con-trol;
Thus led by His spir-it To foun-tains of love,
Thou soon shalt be-fit-ted For ser-vice a-bove.

Alternative Song: *Holy Thou Art God* by Richard Smallwood: https://youtu.be/f6elqBpJ7_g

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.