



Articles and Sermons :: The Unruffled Reflection That is Holiness (worthwhile reading)

The Unruffled Reflection That is Holiness (worthwhile reading) - posted by tjsservant (), on: 2007/7/21 22:17

The Unruffled Reflection That is Holiness

By Dr. Helen Roseveare

Holiness should not sound drab, academic, or out-of-date to us. It should excite us, for it is God's loving plan for our lives. But remember, the devil fights hard to make these exciting goals seem unnecessary and unattractive. First century Christians laid down their lives, were burned alive as torches, and torn to shreds by wild animals for this powerful goal of the gospel. They were so excited by it and filled with its power that they were willing to die for it (1 Peter 1:15).

Holiness should be our first priority. "Be ye holy as I am holy" is more important than, for example, accepting myself. Holiness is accepting Jesus in me, seeing His image reflected in me.

When I went out to Africa thirty years ago, life was very primitive. I saw some things then that you wouldn't see today. Once when I had gone out on a bicycle, about an eighty mile journey, to hold health clinics in the mountain region the resident evangelist said to me, "Would you like to go with me to see a gold mine?" That sounded thrilling: I had never seen a gold mine. So I cycled behind him into the most backwoods part of the center of Africa.

When we arrived, I saw a large, shallow pit dug in the earth. It was full of boiling gold. I had never seen gold like that before. I'd seen a gold ring or bracelet, but here was a sea of gold—a caldron of boiling gold.

Beneath the caldron they had dug an underground brick kiln. Africans, stripped to the waist and pouring with sweat, stood around stoking the kiln to keep the fire at top heat and the gold boiling.

When gold boils, the surface blows bubbles, somewhat like a child blowing bubble gum. As I stood watching the fascinating sight, I noticed that the forest undergrowth had been cut back about ten to fifteen feet all the way around the shallow pit. One lone palm tree was left standing on one side. From the top of the palm tree a vine stretched right across the caldron and was tied to the stump of a tree on the opposite side.

"What is that for?" I inquired of the man who was in charge of the work and also our guide.

"I'll show you," he replied. Going to the palm tree he climbed to the very top. Then he called to an African workman, "Haul!" Standing on the other side of the caldron, the workman began hauling on the vine until the palm tree bent right over the caldron. There hung the man on the end of the treetop. I was terrified! One slip and he'd have fallen straight down into a boiling mass of gold.

After a moment he called out "OK" and the man holding the vine eased off; the palm tree stood up; and our guide came down the tree. As he came back to me I gasped, "What on earth were you doing?"

"I'm the watchman," he said simply.

"Fair enough," I replied, still shaken, "you're the watchman. But what of it?"

"Well," he said, "while there is any impurity left in the boiling gold, the surface bubbles, and from above I can see nothing reflected. But, when the last impurity has been drained from the gold through the burning fires, even though it is still boiling and the fire's still burning, the surface of the gold lies absolutely still. Then, as I look from above, I can see the unruffled reflection of my face."

As I cycled back home that evening, I thought what a beautiful picture that is of what God wants to do in your life and mine. I thought of all the stoking of the fires necessary to reach that goal. Usually the most heat is produced by little sticks in life. (We usually go through the big things pretty well, because all the world is watching. And when all the world is watching, we do the right thing.) The daily things that make us grumble, that irritate, that's the firing, the stoking that purifies.

And God is going to go on stoking until we are so purified by Him that when He looks into our lives from above He can see the unruffled reflection of His face. That's holiness.

By Dr. Helen Roseveare

Dr. Helen Roseveare was an English Christian missionary to the Congo from 1953 to 1973. Helen Roseveare went to the Congo through WEC International and practised medicine and also trained others in medical work. She stayed through the hostile and dangerous political instability in the early 1960's. In 1964 she was taken prisoner of rebel forces and she remained a prisoner for five months, enduring beatings and being raped. She left the Congo and headed back to England after her release but quickly returned to the Congo in 1966 to assist in the rebuilding of the nation. She helped establish a new medical school and hospital (for the other hospitals that she built were destroyed) and served there until she left in 1973.

Re: The Unruffled Reflection That is Holiness (worthwhile reading) - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2007/7/21 22:29

Quote:

tjservant wrote:

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Being conformed to His image. Amen.

Thanks for posting this TJ.