

General Topics :: A Generation Passionate For God's Holiness

A Generation Passionate For God's Holiness - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/5/29 8:37

The aim of OneDay is the gathering and awakening of a generation passionate for God's renown-that is, his fame and his name. Only this time, three years after OneDay2000, the focus is slightly different. Instead of "renown," the key words are "sacred," "holy," and "his." It would not be wrong, I think, to say that the aim of OneDay is the gathering and the awakening of a generation passionate for God's holiness. Not to the exclusion of God's renown, but because God's holiness is the reason he is worthy of renown on every campus and among every people in the world.

The Man-Centered Legacy of My Generation

Not only does our ignorance of God's holiness stand in the way, but the legacy of man-centeredness that my generation has left to you makes it almost impossible for you to sustain a passion for God's holiness-God's infinite value. We have not served you well. And I grieve over what we have taught you. We have handed down to you an almost thoroughly man-centered view of God and the gospel that does not put the infinite value of God at the center of it. The Sunday School papers you took home seldom if ever said: God passion for his holiness is greater than his passion for you.

Were you ever taught a sequence of thought like this? That before you or I ever existed, God was holy. God was of infinite value. And since God is no fool and is righteous he treasured what is infinitely valuable before we existed, namely the beauty of his own holiness. From all eternity, God the Father saw the panorama of all his perfections reflected back to him in his Son-the one who is called in Mark 1:24, "The Holy One of God." And the Father loved the beauty of divine holiness in his Son. Therefore God was supremely happy and radically God-centered before we were ever created. Therefore, when we little human creatures arrived on the scene, God did not suddenly become an idolater and put our value above his. He remains radically God-centered. He is jealous for his holiness above all things, as he says in Ezekiel 36:22: "Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name."

But my generation has said to your generation and to ourselves ten thousand times that you are at the center of God's values, not his own holiness. We have said that you are the center and goal of his creating and redeeming work-not the display of the radiance of his holiness which we call the "glory of God." We have said that you are the great treasure of the gospel. And that God is love because he makes much of you. And in speaking this way we have made it almost impossible for you to understand and enjoy the holiness of God's love, or even what love really is.

Is Your Sense of God's Love Man-Centered or God-Centered?

I'll give you a test to see if we have misled you or not. This is a test to see if your sense of God's love for you is man-centered or God-centered. Does it put your value or God's value at the bottom of your relationship with God? Here's the question: Do you feel more loved by God when he makes much of you, or when he bears the pain it takes to enable you to enjoy making much of him forever?

My generation has told you in a thousand ways-inside and outside the church-that being loved means being made much of. Some of you can't even conceive or feel any other way of being loved. You have sought this all your life. And now I am telling you: if you find it, it won't be love. At this moment I am speaking a foreign language to you unless the Holy Spirit awakens you to a new reality. And that new reality is this: You were made to feast on the holiness of God. Psalm 65:4, "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!" You were created to be satisfied with the absolute uniqueness of God's moral perfection. You exist to treasure with joy the infinite value of God above all other things.

Philippians 3:8 says, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." And who is this Christ? He is "The Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). He is the holiness of God made accessible. He is the perfection of God made visible. He is the infinite value of God made knowable. "If you have seen me you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). "We beheld his glory-the radiance of divine holiness-glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (see John 1:14). "In him dwells all the fullness of deity bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "Whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (Luke 9:48).

You were made to feast on the holiness of God. Jesus is the Holy One of God. Therefore you were made to feast on Christ.

ist. To be satisfied with him. To treasure his infinite value. To enjoy making much of him all your days. Here is your fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. Not in being made much of, but in making much of him.

Therefore what is the love of God? It is the preservation and the exaltation of his own holiness for your enjoyment forever. And what is it then to be loved by this God? It is not to be made much of, but to be given the ability, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, to enjoy making much of him forever. God loves me when he helps me be satisfied in God and not in me. God loves me when he helps me forget about me and be thrilled with Christ. God loves me when he dies in my place that I might know him and be satisfied with all that he is for me in Jesus. God loves me when he makes me passionate for his holiness. God's love for me is holy love. Therefore it exalts the infinite worth of God. It is radically God-centered.

Don't make the mistake we made. Don't put yourself at the center of the Gospel. Put God at the center and make his holiness your passion.

A God-Centered View of Sin

It will make all the difference in the way you view sin. Sin would not be seen first as damaging man but dishonoring God. And sin would not be seen as the choice of pleasure, but the loss of pleasure. Jeremiah 2:13: "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

A God's-Centered View of God's Righteousness

It will make all the difference in the way you view the righteousness of God. God would do right to the degree that he maintained an unwavering allegiance to his own infinite worth and did everything to magnify the beauty of his holiness.

A God-Centered View of the Cross

It will make all the difference in the way you see the cross of Christ. The cross will be most importantly the vindication of the righteousness of God in justifying the ungodly by faith alone. It would not be demonstration of my value, but of the dreadfulness of demeaning God's value. The cross is the revelation of God's terrible holiness and gracious protection from its wrath. The cross is the place where God's holiness changes from a fearful blast to a thing of beauty.

A God-Centered View of Love

It will make all the difference in the way you love people as God has loved you. You would not make it your aim to make much of people. You would make it your aim to help them enjoy making much of God. You would not spruce them up and give them a mirror. You would pick them up and, by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, put them on the glorious Himalayas of God's holiness for their everlasting and ever-increasing joy. Love leads people to the holiness of God for their joy and his glory.

And if we had time we would talk about the way it would make a difference in the marriage and money and deeds of mercy-and all of life.

Oh, Be That Generation!

But I close with this: When this generation awakens to a passion for the holiness of God, it will make all the difference in your engagement in missions. You can hear it in the text where we began:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

The glory of God is the radiance of his holiness. He means for it to fill the earth the way the waters cover the sea. "Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!" (Psalm 96:1-3).

When the holiness of God is your passion, you will be a generation who lays down your life to fill the earth with his glory. Oh, be that generation! For the vindication of God's holiness, for the reward of Christ's sufferings, in the power of God's Spirit, for the everlasting joy of your soul, be that generation!

For the glory of God's name!

For the reward of Christ's sufferings!
In the power of God's Spirit!
For your everlasting joy!
For the vindication of God's holiness in the earth!
In the name of Jesus the Holy One of God!

Oh, be that generation! Amen.

John Piper
OneDay 03

This article can be read in full here:
(http://www.desiringgod.org/library/topics/gods_attributes/holiness.html) A Generation Passionate For God's Holiness

Re: A Generation Passionate For God's Holiness - posted by Jimm (), on: 2004/5/29 20:09

Hello John

That was a very powerful message indeed sir. You are completely right of course. The message of the gospel is so watered down these days that very few people know what it means to be a Christian. Many people now have the impression that God owes us goodness and mercy, at our own convenience. Scriptures such as, "see the Lord is coming with fire and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury and execute judgment on ALL men, and many will be those slain by the Lord." Isa66:15-16 are shrugged off as being for the "bad".

Again, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Rom11:22

To access a holy God we must be sanctified and made Holy ourselves through Jesus Christ. As it is written, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Jhn17:19

We are so self righteous these days that we often forget all about the need to worship and give praise for our free gift of God. We certainly live in those last days which Isaiah spoke of where the Spirit of God is being poured out, but this great privilege carries with it responsibility as the scripture says, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Matt12:31. Ananias and Sappira in Acts 5 are proof of how easy it is to do this if we do not keep the Holiness of God in our heart and minds at all times. Let us also remember that Ananias and Sappira were Christians, just as we are. A weepy confession of our sins at the altar does not make us invincible to the Holiness of God.

Your son in Christ

James

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/5/29 22:16

Quote:
-----The message of the gospel is so watered down these days that very few people know what it means to be a Christian. Many people now have the impression that God owes us goodness and mercy, at our own convenience.

James, I appreciate your comments about this article! But I must confess that I am not "John Piper" :-). I read it on his website 'Desiring God.org' after a recommendation of this talk he gave at 'OneDay03'.

I love his passion for the glory of God.

In Him, channin