

Jesus, Holy and Anointed



Gary Wilkerson November 19, 2018

Accepting Our High Calling to Share the Joy of the Lord

There are two elements of Jesus' life that are meant to be part of our lives too. That is, we're called to be holy and anointed. Some Christians might be intimidated when they hear this. "Sure, I live a moral life, and I do my best to be godly—but holy? And anointed? How could that happen with all my failures?"

Yet here it is, straight from Peter's pen: "It is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (*1 Peter 1:16, ESV*).

The only way this could ever happen is if Jesus gave us his own holiness and anointing. And that's exactly what he did, through his perfect sacrifice for us. Christ lived 33 spotless years on earth, with all his motives, speech, and actions perfectly holy. If he had been guilty of just one sin, he couldn't have paid for all of ours. But through his perfect life on earth, his payment for our sins—and the sins of whole world—is thorough and endless.

Yet Christ's work for us—his crucifixion, death, and resurrection—did more than cleanse us of sin. Through it, he also imparted to us his righteousness. Think about what an amazing thing this is: *While all our sin is on him, all his righteousness is on us.*

You see, one of the sins God cleanses us of is our deep belief that our behavior makes us righteous. We can never earn our way to a higher level of righteousness; we're made righteous by him alone. That's where our victory lies. As Paul testifies, "I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith" (*Philippians 3:9, NLT*).

You may feel holy only on days when you're doing well, worshipful, conscious of God in every way. But don't mistake that for a state of holiness. You can never be holier than Jesus' blood makes you *even on your worst day*. So, by his power, we're his worthy witnesses not just in good times but in bad times as well. His sacrifice not only frees us from sin and makes us righteous but empowers us to speak for him.

All of this is meant for a specific purpose: so we can share the joy of the Lord with others.

Despite Christ's incredible gifts to us, some of us are convinced we're not worthy to represent his gospel. Yet that contradicts the very nature of the gospel: We become his holy representatives not by our ability but by God's work in us: "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (*Philippians 1:6, ESV*).

Peter was probably the first Christian to be taught this powerful truth. In Acts 10, he was staying in Joppa with a tanner named Simon. One day while praying on the roof, Peter had an eye-opening experience about "uncleanness" that would affect the spread of Christ's gospel down to today.

Peter "went up on the flat roof to pray...and...he fell into a trance. He saw the sky open, and something like a large

sheet was let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then a voice said to him, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat them.' 'No, Lord,' Peter declared. 'I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean.' But the voice spoke again: 'Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.' The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven" (*Acts 10:9-16, NLT*).

Peter was puzzled by it all. Then suddenly a group of men showed up at the house. They were sent by Cornelius, a military man who had an encounter with an angel. The angel instructed him to send for Peter, who would tell him what God wanted him to do.

As Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, 'Three men have come looking for you. Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them'" (*10:19-20*).

The men told Peter, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can hear your message" (*10:22*).

Now Peter understood why God gave him the vision. He went with the men, and as he entered Cornelius's house he declared, "You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean" (*10:28*). Peter asked why Cornelius had sent for him and Cornelius told him about the angel.

Peter then preached Jesus Christ to all that were present and said: "He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name." (*Acts 10:43 NLT*) While he was saying that the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard the Word, and they were baptized after that.

As a result, everyone present that day called on Jesus as Lord. These were probably the first Gentiles to hear the gospel and to be saved. Before then, Peter and the other disciples thought of the Gentile world as closed to the gospel. But God's revelation to him opened the door to take his healing, saving power to the world.

Jesus' gift of holiness is meant as more than a personal blessing to us; it's meant to empower us to do his works.

As Peter says, "You know that God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (*Acts 10:38, my emphasis*). The Greek word that Peter uses for "anointed" here means "rubbed off on." The very definition suggests God's gifts are meant to be shared. And that's what his anointing on us is for: to go about doing the good works he has called us to do.

Not long ago, I had finished speaking at a leadership conference and I took a shuttle to the airport. A young woman sat just across the aisle from me, and I could feel her staring at me. Finally, she leaned over and asked, "Were you one of the speakers at the conference?"

I told her yes, and she said, "Oh, it was brilliant!" I'd never heard that word used to describe any of my messages. Then she added, "The way you described mid-15th-century German art was incredible!"

Obviously, we'd attended two different conferences. "No, that wasn't me," I laughed. "But you're an artist?" "Yes, I live in New York City," she said. "What do you do?"

"I've got the best job in the world," I said. "I get to travel around the world and tell people Jesus loves them."

"Wow," she said, shaking her head. "That's really—weird." I didn't take offense. I could tell she just meant "unusual." I told her, "Actually, it's good because deep down most people are troubled and hurting and don't know they're loved by Someone who sees it all."

"Oh," she said, her eyes widening. "I can relate to that. The whole time I was at this art conference, I felt like my work doesn't measure up to others'." Then, to my astonishment, she told me her art appeared in *TIME* magazine and the *New York Times*—yet somehow she still felt unworthy!

I told her, “There’s a way you can feel different about yourself. Let me tell you who Jesus is.”

“Oh, I’ve heard of Jesus,” she said. Yet as I explained him to her, it became clear she really knew nothing about him—for instance, that he lived a perfect life on earth. “Really?” she asked. “Nobody’s ever lived a perfect life.”

So, I told her about his perfect sacrifice on the cross. “That really happened?” she asked. “Like those little figures on crosses?”

“Yes,” I said, “and he died for you.” She gazed at me. “For me?” she asked.

“Yes,” I said, “because he loves you so much.”

Tears sprang from her eyes. I continued, “And then he rose on the third day.”

Her mouth dropped open. “No way!” she said.

“Yes,” I said, “and he’s alive right now.”

“Really?” she asked. “Where is he?”

“He’s in my heart,” I said. “And he could be in yours.”

Hope flashed across her face. “Oh, that would be wonderful!” she said.

As the bus reached the airport, we were still deep in conversation. So, we kept talking as we walked into the terminal. “I want what you’re talking about,” she said. I answered that we could pray together right then and there. And so we did, as dozens of people passed by. As we finished, she opened her eyes and said, “There’s a weird vibe in this place. Weird, but in a really good way.”

“That’s the anointing of the Holy Spirit,” I told her. “The Holy Spirit is touching your life.” She began to sob. “Oh, I can feel what you’re saying,” she said. “For the first time in my life, I feel it!”

She was being set free. We exchanged business cards and stayed in touch, and today she is thriving in Christ. Not long ago, she wrote to say her husband is an atheist and she’s praying for him to go to church with her.

On my own, I don’t think I would have ever thought to approach a world-class artist like this woman. But Jesus anointed me to do it—when I least expected it—and he changed someone’s world because of it.

When we accept his anointing, we fulfill his commission to us: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father” (*John 14:12, ESV*). There’s a whole world that needs his healing, cleansing, saving power. And that happens not by our strategy or ability, but by his perfect sacrifice—“*because I am going to the Father.*”

I’ve learned never to doubt any opportunity Jesus brings me.

The key to this is our belief that *he is at work already*. When the disciples asked Jesus to give them faith, his answer tells us everything: “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible” (*Matthew 17:20, NLT*).

Christ’s word is clear: We don’t need more faith. We need to *step out in faith*—because he has already anointed us to do good works. I urge you, accept his holiness, no matter what you think of yourself—and receive his anointing to fulfill the works he has prepared for you. He’ll open every door—and you’ll see him perform unexpected wonders. Amen!

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