

1 Peter 3:8-12

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For, “The one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

If there as a teaching that I believe would be most expeditious for us to go over multiple times, then last week’s teaching would be one of those. We need to seriously make the transition of just knowing these truths about good and evil to living these truths; specifically, that what comes from our life that is not of God, not birthed from the divine, is evil and we must turn from evil. We must not hold anything back in our fight against evil; we must reject it all. Besides, the consequences to one who is now and continually actively “doing” evil are horrifying: “the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Yes, the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. And remember, we are not just talking about being bad or doing things that are nasty; no, that is not the Biblical definition of evil. We are talking about anything, even the mundane and seemingly “good” aspects of our lives, that does not spring forth from our new nature—the **New Creation**—from our having been submitted by the Spirit of God to the Lord.

Think about it. This explains a lot in our lives. If you desire to experience that place of deepest intimacy where you know the eyes of the Lord are toward you and His ears are attending to your prayer, then you must turn away from evil and do good (remembering that only God is truly “good”). That means you must live out the design point: “I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.” You must be willing to walk the pathway of the cross and put away all those fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love which keep you beholden to your evil. And if you do, the blessing of God which He will speak over your life will be unbelievable.

But first you have to get to the place where you will actually and practically (not just theoretically) consider all in your life that you have thought to be good or not so bad as evil. Keep in mind, when it comes to evil, the standard of measure is not your perception of the way things should be, but it is all about the source. If your thoughts, emotions, and actions come from the Spirit of God who dwells in your ***New Creation***, then what comes forth from your life will be by definition good. If however such things come from you—your *Old Sinful Nature*—then it is by definition evil, no matter how spiritual it may seem. And this evil always damages and destroys; it works through lies and deceptions and its love is hypocrisy.

Second, and of critical importance, is we have to stop acting as if there is some middle ground between good and evil; the Lord does not present a third option. It is one or the other. Accordingly, we need to stop acting as if this illusion of a middle ground is a safe and not so bad of a place to be. That so called “middle ground of goodness” is really just evil. You see, as a believer, you have two

natures, not three: an *Old Sinful Nature* and a **New Creation** (which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God). Your mind and emotions are merely aspects of your being that at any given time are enslaved to one or the other nature. **Romans 6** refers to these natures as being the “masters” over our mind and emotions. Therefore, regardless of what we think or the type of religious gyrations in which we might indulge, when we live from our *Old Sinful Nature* we have in effect turned from God and presented ourselves to another master, which explains why His face is against us. We have interrupted our fellowship with Him and have sadly chosen to take our advice and direction from an enemy of God who loves evil.

Just picture in your head talking to two separate friends (who just happen to hate each other) and literally turning your back on the one, completely ignoring what they are saying, and focusing your attention on the other party. You don't even have to be doing everything the other person is telling you, but the fact that you are facing them, listening to them, and getting input from them is so hurtful to the other person and your fellowship with them. That is our dynamic that goes on day-in-and-day-out. **Galatians 5:17** says that our choices are never free from this conflict. And since our *Old Sinful Nature* is an enemy of God, when we are not listening and following God's directions, then we are by default listening and following the directions of an enemy. Again, there is no middle ground. Nevertheless, the Lord is always waiting for you to turn to Him and seek His face so He can bless you, for you were called to inherit a blessing. That is His desire; and as for me it is something I want. I want His blessing.

Accordingly, I have walked the pathway of the cross, and I will continue to walk it. I will continue to willingly die to that which pulls me away from that place of

deepest intimacy with the Lord. I will continue to deal with the areas in my life that do not come from Him. The good thing is that He is very faithful to show those to me; and He takes me step by step so I can learn to let the Spirit cause me to be submitted to Him. He wants the deepest form of intimacy with me; in fact, He yearns for it. That is always His goal. He wants complete reciprocity and mutuality; accordingly, He wants me to be as manically focused on Him, His voice, and the directions He speaks over my life as He is manically focused on my life. He yearns to bless me and He wants me to know Him so completely just like He wants you to know Him so completely. This is something we can do. He has led us this far and entrusted us with so many of His secrets because He delights in us and believes that each of us can make the choice to put away evil and do good. This is something we can do together.

This concept of putting away evil and turning from it is not a new thought in *Peter*; it goes back to, and is integrated with, three key verses. **1 Peter 1:14-16**: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance [those fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love], but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” **1 Peter 2:5**: “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” And finally, **1 Peter 2:9**: “But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Now let’s tie all of this together for holiness and the priesthood go together; in

fact, holiness is a prerequisite for serving as a priest. And just to remind you, holy literally means set apart from that which is common (or to be dedicated for a specific purpose); hence, the call for us to live as aliens and strangers in this world free from the bonds of evil. To be holy, however, does not mean to be entirely without sin. It is about living your calling and fulfilling your purpose. You have been sent into this world as Christ's ambassador; you represent the kingdom of God; you are His **beloved**; and you have been given very specific assignments and each of you has been spiritually equipped to carry out those assignments. Thus, as priests of God, holiness is to impinge or encroach upon every single part of your lives—without exception.

You must be set apart from what is common and that which is evil. And the Lord is not just talking about trying to control or change your behavior; remember, behavior is just the fruit of the decisions you have already made in terms of your holiness. This is about being set apart in your thoughts and emotions—set apart for that which is of God—such that what you do in terms of behavior is a natural byproduct of one who is holy, just as He is holy. Since we have been studying in ***Peter*** we have taken seriously the call to live as aliens and strangers in this world, but it seems the Lord is so excited for us to finish this task, so we can be those holy priests who are busy offering up spiritual sacrifices.

This is the pathway that, as a body, God is aggressively taking us down: holiness. This is portrayed in the vision we received on **04/13/13**: "I saw us all walking single file down a path that got narrower and narrower. Then there was water all around the path, and the path continued to get narrower and narrower. Then the path was gone and we were all just swimming toward the horizon and a

beautiful sunset.” Our path is getting narrower and narrower in terms of the separation that He requires of us. The beautiful part is that it ends in this ocean of grace which is a picture of our supernatural enablement to live as set apart people in this world. It is beautiful.

In our studies in **Haggai**, God asked us to be very busy and build Him a temple. He did not mean a physical church building, but a living temple. As He said in **1 Peter 2:5**: “You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” However, this spiritual house set apart for the holy priesthood is not to be built via the work of our hands (which is evil) but with our hearts: “Hands build walls, hearts build temples. Build my temple.” He told us to be serious and be about this work that He has assigned to us. He said: “Now go up into the hills and bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the Lord.” “Take courage and work, for I am with you, says the Lord Almighty. My Spirit remains among you, just as I promised when you came out of Egypt. So do not be afraid.” “The future glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory, says the Lord Almighty. And in this place I will bring peace. I, the Lord Almighty, have spoken.” But then He also said:

Haggai 2:11-17

Thus says the Lord of hosts, Ask now the priests for a ruling: If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy? And the priests answered, "No." Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean from a corpse

touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?" And the priests answered, "It will become unclean." Then Haggai said, "So is this people. And so is this nation before Me, declares the Lord, and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the Lord, from that time when one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and when one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty. I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me, declares the Lord."

We have been instructed to build His temple, a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. This will be a temple of great glory because it will be occupied by holy priests' busy offering up holy sacrifices. That is why He is now reminding us of the evil that is still a part of our lives. Even our own attempts to remove the evil which plagues us is an evil work of the hands. Evil simply has no place in the temple or in its building efforts. Yet, I am afraid that there are still aspects of His holiness—our holiness—that we have not taken seriously.

Sadly, it seems that if we are not experiencing some awful consequence of our choices that we are content with our evil. But this must not be. We are set apart, we are holy, and Jesus wants us to choose to live as His holy **beloved**. He want us to despise, reject, scorn, and put off the evil in our lives. Jesus wants us to hate everything that does not derive from the Spirit and cause us to be submitted to Him. That includes such things, which I know plague our body, as fear, deceit and

religious hypocrisy, bitterness, jealousy, apathy, unauthorized sexual indulgence, eating disorders, boundaries of self-protection, intense insecurity, gratuitous indulgence in emotions, and all the other things the Lord has shown us and asked us to purge. Thankfully, despite our stubbornness, He still made us an awesome promise (which just shows you how confident He is in us):

Haggai 2:18-19

Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the Lord was founded, consider: Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.

What a marvelous promise. And I believe He made this promise to us so we will be motivated to complete the building of this temple and to complete it from our hearts. How many of you have grown weary and have stopped working and have run back into your homes to just take care of yourself? Are you once again building your own house making sure it is furnished, beautiful, safe and secure? Have you turned back to your own wisdom for the day-in-and-day-out details of your life? Have you just given yourself over to the evil in your life because it is so much easier than fighting what seems to be impossible? Have you forgotten to daily consider what the Lord had done with us in the past (all that He took away to induce us to be about His work) and what He has promised to do for us? Get out of your houses; get out and get back to work now. We need you. The work

must go on and we must finish the task. We are building a spiritual house for a holy priesthood not an evil priesthood.

As part of this temple, the Lord has also instructed me to build Him a Sanctuary. Here are the verses that were given to me. The first one I received back in 2010 and the last two were received just this week.

Psalm 132:1-5

Lord, remember David and all that he suffered. He made a solemn promise to the Lord. He vowed to the Mighty One of Israel, "I will not go home; I will not let myself rest. I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber until I find a place to build a house for the Lord, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel."

1 Chronicles 22:18-19

The Lord your God is with you, he declared. He has given you peace with the surrounding nations. He has handed them over to me, and they are now subject to the Lord and his people. Now seek the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. Build the sanctuary of the Lord God so that you can bring the Ark of the Lord's Covenant and the holy vessels of God into the Temple built to honor the Lord's name.

1 Chronicles 28:10

So take this seriously. The Lord has chosen you to build a Temple as his sanctuary. Be strong, and do the work.

For those of you who might not know, if you study *Leviticus* you will find that there is a place marked out within the tabernacle structure (later the temple structure) that is set apart and thereby considered to be holy where only the priests of God are allowed to enter. This place is called the Holy Place or the Sanctuary of the Lord. This is not a place for the common people, but exclusively for the set apart. And this is not a place for evil, but for that which is good. In studying *Leviticus* I became exhausted just considering what the priests had to do to purify themselves in order to serve in the temple. It is extreme and what they did was their distinction as it set them apart from all others.

Thinking about it, what they did was actually not unlike what we have to do to prepare to serve in the temple. Like them we have to turn away from evil and offer up spiritual sacrifices whereby we put to death the fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love and reject the permissive, but delusional, zone of our own personal “goodness” which we tend to live in. The calling of a priest is extreme. Keep in mind, if a priest violated the requirement of holiness he was to be dragged out of the temple and killed by the entire community. Similarly, the Lord says that if we, as priests, set our minds on the flesh, on that which does not derive from the divine, then we likewise will die. The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (*Romans 8:6*).

And then within this holy place there is also a super holy place, the holy of holies, where only the High Priest was allowed to enter. In the old days, the holy

place and the holy of holies were separated by a curtain. **Hebrews 10:19-20** says that Christ, our high priest, entered in this holy of holies and tore down this curtain of separation between these two holy places. Now we are free to come into this most holy place with complete boldness. This is a life giving way which Christ opened up for us by His death on the cross; and in His footsteps we are called to follow for this place is still holy. In the same passage, in **Hebrews 10:29-31**, the Spirit says that it is a big mistake, huge, to treat the blood of the covenant which has cleansed us as if it were common and unholy. It is an insult to the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to people. Which is why the Lord promised to judge His own people, His own household, saying, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." This promise of judgment for the household of God is also given to us in **1 Peter 4:17** where the Spirit affirms that before God judges unbelievers He judges His own household. The point is that we must take holiness seriously. We are to be fully identified in the fact that we are holy priests, building a holy house to offer up spiritual sacrifices. That is who we are, that is how we live, and that is our very identity; and everyone should know it.

The Lord has instructed me to take this call to build His Sanctuary—this holy place—quite seriously. The Sanctuary He desires for a habitat, a place of His dwelling, is this body. Now, I believe that this is the life that He desires for all believers, but sadly so many believers are content living with the common and considering their own personal "goodness" as something with which God should be pleased. They have practically turned their backs on Him and His face is set against them even though they think they are doing great deeds for God. But we have begun to take serious this call to live as aliens and strangers: to separate

ourselves from the ties and connections to this world which control us and cause us to live seeking validation, worth, acceptance, honor, and glory in this world. Yes, we have taken this seriously, but He wants us to go all the way. He wants this temple to be more glorious than the prior temple. He wants to dwell in the midst of us in a way that is beyond understanding. Therefore, He wants us to purge the evil in our lives and choose to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He is so excited about this and so excited for us. I want you to consider the following:

Matthew 13:12-17

For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM." But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

God has given us so much; He has taught us so much; He has shared so many

secrets with us; He has shown us who we are in His eyes; He has taught us how to fight and how to wage war; He has given us great victory after victory; He has taught us about unity and intimacy; He has given us His wisdom regarding living life in the Spirit of God; and He has shared with us His mind on so many things. We are truly blessed. And He has so much more to give us because we have listened and in so many places (though not all) we have taken Him at His word. Accordingly, we hear, we see, we perceive, and we understand; and He has returned to us and healed us from so much. I know for me just the healing I have experienced over this past year from my own dysfunctional ways of self-protection and my own trap of personal goodness and shame has been phenomenal. I love the freedom He has given me: a freedom from myself and a freedom to love you and be loved by you. And I know so many of you have experienced similar healing. He has returned to us and He intends on completing every promise He ever made to us; we just need to let the Spirit of God cause us to be submissive to the Lord in all things and in all areas of our life. We are to be holy as He is holy.

I am asking you to join me now and seek the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. Build the Sanctuary of the Lord God so we can bring the Ark of the Lord's Covenant and the holy vessels of God into the Temple built to honor the Lord's name. The vessels being the ark, the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table of bread. I am not sure of the entirety of what is imaged in this instruction, but it sounds amazing. But what I do understand is that it means we (as individuals and a collective) will become a meeting place where the people of God can come to truly meet Him and experience His mercy. We will be the place

where prayers are offered up to the Lord on behalf of His people and the lamp of His new covenant continually shines with the oil of the Spirit of God. We will be the place where people come to know that God is their manna, their perpetual loaf of bread, their means of sustenance for all time. Yes, we have been set apart and we are to be holy as He is holy. I want you to remember the words He spoke to us on **11/19/12**: "Listen to me, you who have given your heart! ... I have plans for this body that require your undivided focus and strength." So take this seriously. The Lord has chosen you to build a Temple as his sanctuary. Be strong, and do the work.

All of this reminds me of a promise from ***Zechariah 8*** He made to me many years ago part way through my storm, as well as what He has spoken over this body in terms of the rings of light that proceeds from us and out to boulder, and the vine which shoots from our body outward and spreads all over.

Zechariah 8:20-23

This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: People from nations and cities around the world will travel to Jerusalem. The people of one city will say to the people of another, 'Come with us to Jerusalem to ask the Lord to bless us. Let's worship the Lord of Heaven's Armies. I'm determined to go.' Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord of Heaven's Armies and to ask for his blessing. This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: In those days ten men from different nations and languages of the world will clutch at the sleeve of one Jew. And they will say, "Please let us walk with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

“Be strong, and do the work” for others are depending upon us completing this task. They will want to walk with us. How exciting is that. With that said, this work is not easy; turning from what is evil is hard work because it requires death. But if you remember what we studied in ***Philippians 2:13***, “God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him.” I think this is what was imaged for us in that vision we received on **04/14/13**: “I see Jesus placing little handfuls of fire that He is getting from the fireplace inside the Castle. Jesus places these handfuls of fire inside each of our hearts. Then the scene zooms out and I see individuals chopping off the tops of pine trees outside the Castle and brining the tops inside the castle walls to put into the fireplace.” Jesus is placing in our hearts this desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him. He is giving us everything we need to complete this work. He has not asked of us anything that He has not already provisioned for us to accomplish. We just have to be willing to be strong and do the work. The fire embers He places in our hearts, like the fire ember from the altar that he used to clean the lips of Isaiah (***Isaiah 6:6***), represent cleansing from evil—the Lord is making us holy.

Are you doing the work? Are you taking seriously what He has told us over the last number of months? Cut the baggage off that weighs us down—get rid of it; remove the fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love; identify yourself by the reality that you have been stamped in the blood; swim in His pool of grace which is the power to live set apart or holy lives; accept the fact that you are an alien and stranger on this earth; remove all the idolatrous temples that you go to for comfort, security, and support; and refuse to let the enemy trick you into clothing

yourself with the dead version of you. Embrace this life as part of a holy priesthood. Remember these words given to us by the Spirit of God.

01/03/13

Live in your spiritual identity. Those who don't know, ask. Each day is training. Each day is perfectly and carefully designed—unique to each of you. Take every day as a chance to hold on to Me and be satisfied by Me—this is where your freedom from the world and its cares lies. This is not a time to waste worrying about failure. I don't care about your failure, I care about your success—your success as My Children, as My ambassadors, and as My friends.

01/31/13

I see us all in a line waiting to see Jesus on His throne. It's not the usual depiction of heaven I normally see. (It is outside, not the usual Throne-Room feel). Above the throne is a blue sky and white puffy clouds. The throne is made of a rich gold. I hear the song "Till the Very End" – I hear the specific lyrics “You can have all my fears, God. You can have all my sin. You can have all my weaknesses.” Each of us, one by one, walk up to the throne and present Jesus with a package (i.e., our fears, sin, weakness) and then walk away, free and without burdens. I know this is something we are welcome to do every day, especially at the start of every day.

10/11/12

My sweet children, never forget the big picture of what I'm doing here. Look down from the heavens and see that I am answering your every prayer. I am doing this work and it is glorious! Remember that I have asked you to take risks and remember that I am stronger and more capable than you think. This whole thing is in my hands—you each are in my hands—and I have no intention of letting you go. Whatever you are going through now is nothing compared to what I have in store for you in the future. One day we will all be together and will have an eternity of rejoicing, along with all those who have walked this same path as you. My love is your feast. And that feast never ends and never goes dry.

All of these wonderful, marvelous, and precious words are intended to burn in our hearts a desire to live set apart from all those—believers and unbelievers—who have decided to make their abode in this world. Remember, it does not matter if someone calls Jesus Lord, what matters is if they do the will of the Father in heaven (**Matthew 7:21-23**). We need to be those who do our Father's will, especially when His will for our lives is not confusing at all but has been made so clear: turn from evil; build the Temple; build my Sanctuary.

1 Peter 2:10-11 gives us the tangible steps to purify ourselves to properly occupy the priesthood: "The one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it." And if we follow through with this preparation, we will be the ones whose relationships are

unqualifiedly defined by the following: “harmonious (sharing the thoughts of Christ), sympathetic (sharing the feelings of one another), brotherly (having a firm affection for one another in love), kindhearted (tender will describe the nature of our affection for one another), and humble in spirit (considering others more important than ourselves); not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.” That is to be me and that is to be you!

Let's Pray