

### 190828-4 Godliness-CThurman

Tonight let's consider the subject of *godliness*. Godliness is a noun. It names the quality of the life that I should have as a child of God. The lives of Christians should be characterized with godliness.

In the last few days we have undoubtedly been tested in many ways. Because of the fire which was in the Caswell Lakes area, where many of us live, and the imposition of a mandatory evacuation order, some of us were constrained to live with others, or at least in close proximity to others than is normally the case. On account of this we have seen more of one another, and seeing more of one another gave occasion to faults and differences becoming more obvious. We can learn a lot from experiences like this. Hopefully we have learned a lot more about ourselves and our personal need of repentance and more conformity into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's easy to see the faults, failures, and differences in others, but did we see our own need to be changed? Maybe I talk too much. Maybe I'm too opinionated. Maybe I'm not a good listener. Maybe I have to have my way all of the time. How did I react to this crisis? Did I have a sense of the presence of Christ with me? Did I find comfort in His presence? Could I rest in whatever the will of God was for me? Was there the peace of God? Was there a difference between my behavior and the behavior of one that didn't know the saving grace of God? Was I like that mixed multitude that came out with Israel from Egyptian bondage that instantly murmured when things didn't go the way that they thought it should go?

They murmured against the Lord. Oh, the enemy is close at hand, and they're going to destroy us! Oh, the water out here isn't even drinkable! Oh, we don't have enough food! Oh, we're running out of water! Oh, the food spoiled! Oh, the enemy has the advantage over us! They're going to destroy us for sure.

Murmuring was a grievous sin against the LORD then, and it is now. Am I a murmurer? Even though God worked miraculously to deliver me from great loss did I resort to complaining because of some petty inconveniences? If so, there is

## Godliness

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no question about it, I have sinned against the Lord. Or, did I take away something in this experience that helped me to change so that I might better glorify Christ in my life?

The English word *godliness* in the New Testament Scriptures is translated from the Greek, εὐσέβεια.

εὐ, well + σέβομαι, to worship, to devote, and is once translated (tss.) *religious* in the KJV Bible.

εὐσέβεια, involves the idea of worshipping well, being well devoted ... and in our case, to be well devoted to God. In the King James Version of the Bible it is tss. *holiness* (1), and *godliness* (14). To help us gain a good sense of the meaning of this word consider also this same word, but with a Greek negative particle ἀ- attached to it, ἀσέβεια. ἀσέβεια is tss. *ungodliness* (4), *ungodly* (2). The verb form of this same noun is ἀσεβέω, and is tss. *to live ungodly* (2Pe.2.6) and *to commit ungodly acts* (Jude 15). To live ungodly means to live a *profane & irreverent* life. So, *godliness* is a holy, reverent, worshipful behavior. The question now to ask is, 'Does it describe me?'

The first time the Greek word εὐσέβεια is found in the N.T. is in Acts 3.12. Peter and John had gone to the Temple to worship God at the hour of prayer. As they came to the temple they met a man that had been lame from his mother's womb. This lame man was brought here every day by others so that he could ask alms of those that would enter into the Temple. He was hoping that some of those that had come to worship the God of Israel might be kind enough to help him in his desperate condition. As we read the following text in Acts chapter 3, the word we want to notice is the word *holiness*, which is otherwise translated *godliness* in all of the other places.

*Ac.3.4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.  
5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.  
6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

## Godliness

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7 *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

8 *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

9 *And all the people saw him walking and praising God:*

10 *And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.*

11 *And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

12 ¶ *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness (godliness, and so by the virtuous character of our lives) we had made this man to walk?*

*Holiness* refers to the kind of lives Peter and John were living. Godliness did not bring about the miraculous healing which this lame man experienced in that day. Rather, because Peter and John were living *godly* lives the Lord chose to use them as His instruments to perform this miracle to glorify His Son.

*2Ti 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these,*

*... departing from iniquity ... putting away dishonorable works ...*

*he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

It was right that Peter and John lived godly lives. It is right that we live godly, devoted, holy, reverent lives. Who knows what the Lord might be pleased to do through us as we devote ourselves to live as He would have us to live?

*2Co 7:1 Having therefore these promises (that He will receive us into fellowship with Him, and essentially never leave us nor forsake us), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

## Godliness

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The English word *godliness* is found the most often in the book of 1Timothy, and in this book it is first used ch.2, v.1. It describes a manner of life that the disciples should live at all times and in all circumstances.

*1Ti.2.1 ¶ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;  
2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life (existence, βίος) [How?] in all godliness and honesty.*

We are to pray for those that the Lord our God has set in places of authority over us that so that we might lead (how) in all godliness and honesty, (what kind) quiet and peaceable lives. Whatever the authorities decree doesn't change the fact that the character of the children of God should be *in all godliness and honesty*.

The next time *godliness* is found is in 1Ti.3.16. Here it is the *mystery of godliness*, and this describes the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is *godliness* personified.

*1Ti 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine that we derive from His words, will be in union with godliness.

*1Ti 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent (concludes) not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ...*

It is vital for us to have a right knowledge of the word of God. Attached to this is a doctrine which affects our manner of life, our godliness, holiness, reverence, and worship. Distort the word of God and these become diminished, unimportant, and quite frankly profane, commonplace. As a child of God my character should have as its object Jesus Christ and His word. Godliness is to live as Christ lived & taught! There should be harmony between Christ, His word and my life.

## Godliness

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*Tit 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, [writing] according (κατά) to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after (κατά, according to) godliness ...*

*2Pe.1.1 ¶ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

*2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

*3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (ἀρετή, excellence) ...*

Christ and His word is the object of my life. Godliness doesn't mean one thing to me and another to you, or another thing to them. It means the same thing for all of us, but there are those who have pretensions to godliness. They haven't Christ or His word as the object to which their lives should conform.

*2Ti.3.1 ¶ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

*2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

*3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

*4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

*5 Having a form (μόρφωσις) of godliness, but denying the power (the dynamic, the ability, they cannot live out) thereof: from such turn away.*

So, by becoming familiar with the word of God the Christian can detect those who have only the form of godliness and spare themselves unnecessary hurt for associating with them. Their behavior and their doctrine will reveal them.

Let me close this subject tonight with just a couple of final thoughts. I cannot say for certain, but there is something notable in what the apostle Peter writes in his second epistle. Godliness is placed after patience.

## Godliness

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2Pe.1.1 ¶ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (ἀρετή, excellence):

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 ¶ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;

Faith in Christ leads every child of God to strive for excellence. No Christian is satisfied with less.

and to virtue knowledge;

That excellence must be governed by the word of God.

6 And to knowledge temperance (self-control); and to temperance patience (to abide under whatever is the will of God); and to patience godliness ...

Can it be that the Holy Spirit is teaching us that only as we learn to abide in Christ, through whatever the circumstances might be, whether good or ill, that after patiently enduring do we begin to live after godliness? I think so. What is patience, ὑπομονή, hupomonē (a noun)? It (ὑπομένω, hupomenō, a verb) means *to abide, continue, dwell, endure, remain, stand, and tarry*. It is learning to wait upon God until we have reached an end.

Jn.15.5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

...

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

## Godliness

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*8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

How we live is important. There is so much more to this life than living for ourselves and for the here and now. Eternity is infinite. Time will one day be no more. Live after godliness. Be warned: associating godliness with the ability to amass lots of stuff is a perverse and wicked doctrine. Be guarded against it, not only in others, but be guarded against it ever rising up in my heart.

When the child of God lives according to godliness, whether he has much or little, whether he is at rest or in trouble his behavior, his devotion, his reverence, his worship unchanged. He is not moved by the things of this life. It is true.

*1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

Notice the order: first patience, then comes the devotion.

*Ps.62.1 ¶ « To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David. » Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*

*2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.*

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