

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Today is Wednesday, July 17 and we are learning what the Bible says about holiness.

OPENING PRAYER

In the morning, I seek the God who loves me. I quiet my mind, calm my breath and focus on the goodness of my Lord and Shepherd. He brings me to green pastures, leads me to still waters and guides me in paths of righteousness. He shows me the way of holiness and strengthens my steps to walk in the way that leads to life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

A highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Isaiah 35:8-10

REFLECTION

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was a self-proclaimed “man of one book” - the Bible. He was convinced that the scriptures mapped the way to holiness. The call to holiness is seen in many places in both the Old and New Testament. God is holy and God calls his people to be holy. In a beautiful passage describing the celebratory joy of the redeemed, Isaiah describes a highway to holiness. On a holy road through a land like paradise the people of God sing praises to their Redeemer. There is a way, a path, an avenue God’s people are invited to walk toward sanctification.

Isaiah’s ancient prophetic words speak to my soul this morning. There is a Way of Holiness, and I am invited by God to journey on that way. My blessed Lord has rescued and redeemed me and then provided a highway for me to travel, a path for me to traverse, a road for me to cross. He leads me in paths of righteousness. He leads me on a holy highway. I envision a sojourn of gladness and joy, a lifelong pilgrimage of the spirit where I join my brothers and sisters in jubilant singing and celebration. What is missing on this road that welcomes me? There is nothing unclean, impure, wicked, or dangerous. Sorrow and sadness have disappeared. Fear and anxiety are gone.

Perhaps the Way of Holiness has been disclosed to me, or maybe I am still searching for it. Maybe I am on the road to sanctification but am not making much progress. What might the next steps be for me on my spiritual journey? Do I need to slow down or speed up? Have I veered to the right or to the left? Perhaps I have fallen off the path altogether. Or maybe I am even going in the wrong direction. I consider whether I have kept my eye on my Good Shepherd or allowed myself to be enamored of many shiny tempting attractions along the way.

Ask: Do I choose to walk the way of holiness? How might this coming day be different because of my determination to walk this way?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord God, thank you for loving me, seeking me and finding me. Thank you for your great rescue plan for humanity made possible through your Son Jesus. Thank you for redeeming a sinner like me and inviting me to walk the way of holiness and progress in your grace. Strengthen my resolve and determination to persevere on this road through the inspiration and strength you provide. Teach me to walk the straight and narrow road as you expertly guide me. Help me to surrender myself to the Good Shepherd Jesus - trusting and obeying him at every turn. Inspire me to press on toward the goal of holiness of heart and life. Amen.