

Holiness in this world

*From a sermon delivered by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya
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(After the Sunday School Lesson Bk 21 - 263 – Holiness in this present Life)



It has been made known unto us what the Sunday school lesson of today bears upon. It is this lesson that is our focal point for today's sermon, - Holiness in this present life. Our Sunday school lesson had made us to understand that we are able to have free of charge the graces of God – the experiences of Justification, Sanctification and Baptism of Holy Ghost. Many of us are witnesses to these Christian experiences. Many visitors have come here to obtain these same experiences and are still maintaining these experiences till today. But not all of us are living in holiness.

The life of holiness is the life that characterizes the life of that person who is born again. A born again Christian seat in a holy abode and his life is surrounded by holiness, not in wearing of apparel, and not in the burning of candles and incenses. This holiness is in our character and behaviour one to another, in our walking and manner of talking one to the other and the manner of transactions with our neighbours. Well it would be needless to open the bible again because when we were been taught, we have made references to many bible texts. But it is bounding duty to us to still open scriptures for us to know where all these texts are taken from. We have been told that holiness within and without is the character of a Christian.

⁵ **Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.**

⁶ **Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. Colossians 4:5-6**

When we talk about wisdom as it is referred to in this verse, I want us to remove our mind from human wisdom because many have the wisdom to scatter homes, they have a cleverness to scatter an entire congregation and they have a cleverness by which they can turn a home upside down. The wisdom being referred to here has to do with the wisdom of God. Walk in wisdom, walk according to the word of God towards them that are without, redeeming the time. This imposes a task upon us which if we do not carry out we will fail to enter the kingdom of heaven irrespective of whatever we claim to be. Our work has to do with the outside, we have to transact with the outside world. This is in addition to the work within our household. God has called us to be mouth, the hand, and the leg so that we can be a help and a mouthpiece on to the whole wide world. This would have to do not only with the members of our own household, or not even the immediate congregation within our reach, but has to do with our relationship with the whole wide world where we cannot physically reach so that are our words and conversation will be nothing but the gospel to the extent that it will ministered grace to the hearers, to the extent that it will make the sinner who had been lost in trespasses, look for the mercy of God by which he can find the redeeming grace of Christ.

For example, among the brethren that went out, by the word of their testimonies, have got the power within it to make those who are lost in their sins who are dead trespasses, to forsake their ways and bring them to the fold of God. For an example also, that is in our conversation one with the other, among our colleagues, among our work fellows, that our conversation one with the other would be nothing but the gospel, to the extent that this would have the effect of bringing many more people into the fold of Christ. This was the testimony of the apostles in Antioch we were told that was the first place they were called Christian, because when those who were beholding the manner of their talking, the manner of conversation saw it, they were able to say – Yes truly that these people have already walked with God, therefore our conversation should be so minister with grace to the extent that it will woo many unto the gospel. But it is not like that in our lives, for our conversation is not mixed with the grace of God, whether within ourselves or to those who are outside. The way we converse is not mixed with the grace of God. It is possible among us – outside, while we are talking to one another we would be shouting and frowning one

at the other or make fun of one another, though we were not taught that in Christ and people outside see these things. At that instant the outsiders might not have realize the implication of what you have done, but later when you then invite them to the church activities, they will say to which church? That even the conduct of the members that live beside us is not inviting. You have become the stumbling block.

There are many of us in our conversation will behave like angels, but no sooner those people whom we fear departs from the scene, there is no limit to what we will say, continuing chatting and shouting one the another and the conversation does not depict the life of a Christian and of course we know that ourselves.

Hence Paul tells us in our lesson of today:

²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24

When we read this, our mind will flash back to the teaching on sanctification. Then you recall that on such a specific day, you had the experience of sanctification your mind will say 'I have got everything', but what we ought to consider is, are we renewed every day in the spirit of our mind? Well if it is only that specific day, that glorious day in which we were sanctified is what we are glorying in and nothing more, not been careful to allow our mind to be renewed daily in the spirit of our mind, if that is our position, then we have failed. It is by allowing our minds to be renewed daily and allowing the word of God to find us out, and for the blood of Jesus Christ to wash us daily, it is only by allowing these entire things can we be in the state of holiness. But this is not the case. It ought to be the case. But why is it not so? Because we are far from the word of God, we are far from the doctrines. If we are to examine those of us who are in this assembly, up to 50% of what was taught are not taken back home. Because our minds have not received them, and those whose hearts received them have failed to continue reading them, have failed to continue using these words to continue measuring their life regularly. It is not customarily of us to use the word of God in our conversation. We talk vile and vain words, idle tales. You know what you do. If we are to have the opportunity of being in a group of 2 or 3 even if we are to gather in this church, we will not converse on the word of God. If we do not talk about our businesses, we will talking on the current affairs, if we do not talk on current event in the world, we will talk about what is going on in the church.

²⁵ Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Ephesians 4:25

'Put away lying'. Lying and falsehood have become so rampant in the lives of many of us, to such an extent that those who do not really know us might not be able to identify our character. Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. What truth do I have to talk with you? It is the word of God. Which truth are you sharing with your neighbour? Let's examine ourselves. When you are seated in your private assembly, what truth are you sharing with your colleagues, is it the lesson that you heard this week, or the one of last week, or the one of the week before, what exactly is the subject of your conversation? If our conversation and all our discussions are not centred on this word which we share one with another regularly, therefore we are lying one to another. Since this organization had been established, we have never opened a commercial shop. Neither have never called a meeting where we educate people on how to go about business transactions one with other. Since this organization started we do not have people appointed as specially spokesmen for people or as gossip or as intermediary or as people who would be gossiping all about. I know that there is nobody here who can say that he has that position given to him. Where do we get our own practices from? It is our former way of life. It does not exist in this church. Where do we get our own? That is what God wants us to put away, God knows that they exist, and wants us to put them away. We have emphasized this several times, and as a result we have become enemies of one another, is that not so? To such an extent that we cannot have dealings with one another with a perfect heart and a united heart, hence we run away one from the other.

²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

²⁷ Neither give place to the devil. Ephesians 4:26-27

Be ye angry, and sin not. Many of us here should have a proper understanding of this, why? In the sense that many of us have children and when these children are naughty and misbehave, and we that are taking care of them want to discipline them, we exact the discipline to such an extent it creates bitterness in our own heart and the discipline goes beyond measure. Probably, there are those who have been dealt with as such, and now in the dealings of the father with the children though the children are not aware of what the father was doing privately, they summarize the position of the father that their father is no more as strict as he used to be, he now deals with them softly. This amounts to the fact that they want to go to heaven while their father goes to hell fire. Sometimes they may be adults in the church who say that as far as that elder is concern, he goes here and there and no more steadfast or strict on the word of God, but what about themselves, have they put their own house in order before they pick on the church. Be ye angry, and sin not. It is true that God wants us to exercise discipline, to discipline in a measure without bitterness of heart. It is not God pleasure that we are so mindful of other people's problem when our own future is under doom. Neither give place to the devil. Imagine the love of God to us. He loves us, he chastises us, and he is the same one who comforts us, and he is the one who give us the way of escape and that is the way that God wants us to chastise and rebuke others. Merely telling a child that what you are doing is not good is not sufficient, merely rebuking him is not enough, merely giving him 2 strokes of the cane when he should have been given four is not the summary of one's duty. After doing that, you will then embark on your duty for that child or person, that is to go further on your knees so that the Lord will plant in the heart of that person what you are trying to impart.

²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Ephesians 4:29

³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: Ephesians 4:31

What do we call evil speaking? It is the word which can injure our neighbour. We will not want to be injured but we will speak evil words about our neighbour. Yet there is nothing telling us that this is a shortcoming, all because we are not in the state of holiness. If we are in the state of holiness, whenever there is evil speaking with respect to our neighbour, when we say anything that will create injury to our neighbour, there ought to be a thorn that pinches to check us. Those to whom these bible texts are addressed are those who have put on the new man. In order words they may know that they are not to engage in these practices. God wants us to talk about to our neighbour, to talk good of him, not evil. God wants us to praise our neighbour, to honour our neighbour. **Is that your own practice? Is that what you do to your neighbour? NO, you just made fun and ridicule your neighbour, so that you may appear good, but you know that is evil.** Because the tongue we used to utter these words, the book of James tells us what is behind it all.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour have no place in your heart. A Christian that had been renewed must not have a bitter heart or angry. Though we read earlier that be angry and sin not. Once you are renewed, all those habits have been nailed onto the cross. You used to be angry, but when issues arises, you are patient and calm. Instead of been angry, you will take it patiently, it will be joy that will come from the heart, because there is a new man inside. When your goods are stolen or evil deeds done against you, the new man in you would not allow any evil speaking to come out of your lips. We have seen examples of such; we are not the first examples of believers. We have seen cases of those who are been stoned right and left, and in the middle of those troubles, we see such people praying for the persecutors and that was the example of Stephen. What about the case of Jesus Christ he was lead to the slaughter like a sheep and before his shearer was dumb. The spirit of Jesus that is in us is never noisy, he has no bitterness, does not talk evil, does not utter evil about his neighbour, does not envy the neighbour but does good. He is kind and repays evil with good.

³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

These are the key points that will characterise the life of a Bible Christian. We should be kind one to another. When we say being kind one to another, is not a question of ordinarily sharing food. It is not the kindness characteristics of politicians that when you are in prison, I was the one that was instrumental to your release, why don't you come to thank me? That is not the type of kindness we are talking about. The kindness that God wants us to show to our neighbour transcends all those. Seek the good of your neighbour, don't look for his downfall. Are you not looking for

the downfall of your neighbour? Please tell me?

A lady came to tell me there was a time when someone was facing a downfall, she was called upon to be a help to that person, and she said her heart was reluctant to do that, but rather she prayed that God should bring the downfall of that person to the knowledge of the overseer. But not long she found that she was very restless and had no peace in her heart. Well my friend the good turn you can render to such a person facing a downfall is to pray. For someone who had fallen, what you can do to render a help is to pray and help that person to rise up from his fallen position. For someone who is facing a downfall, the help you can render is to present to such a person the doctrines of the word of God which can help him. You should seek the peace, why? It states in the word of God that we that are in the spirit, if we find a brother or a sister caught in a fault, we who are in the spirit should with a humble mind and a contrite heart lift up the person out of the falling position because we lifting the fallen person up has danger in front of us too. Well you may be asking, that the trouble is not mine, it is not me that has faced the downfall, why should I then go to the extent of putting on humility to rescue my neighbour who is facing a downfall? If you remember the word of Lord Jesus Christ what he did, making himself of no reputation and forsaking all the glories of heaven to come to this world for your own sake, which was the subject of our lesson for the end of the year, and this was the supreme sacrifice that Jesus Christ made that you that was rebellious may be reconciled once again unto him. If you then fail to show the same kindness to your neighbour then you have already fallen. Among the messages of condolence which people sent after the death of our late Rev Akinboye, one which struck me particularly was one from a brother who said that this departed brother had a love to recall into the fold those who were in the backslidden position. In the book of John we were told that whosoever would be a help to his neighbour, to bring him back into the fold, he has already rescued such a one from the danger of hell fire.

Be kind one to another. It is not just a bread and butter kindness and they extend this kindness to those who love them not even to those who hate them. But it states, be ye kind one to another, but to those that love you and those that does not. You owe such a one the salvation of his soul. You owe such a person a duty of making him to know God, both the ones standing and the ones falling, you them duty of prayer. Why? so that you also may not fall.

Tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. We are grateful unto God that in all of his teachings he backs them up with concrete examples. God does not demand of us what we cannot accomplish. Nor does he make an unreasonable demand from us that we must do it compulsorily. But among those things which he knows that we can do and which he has given us the wisdom wherewith we can do it, and that is where he pushes us to do.

Be tenderhearted, that is don't have bitterness, instead be tenderhearted. What does that mean? That is when we were rebels and enemies, he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to die for us. You who was seeking the downfall of others or me who is seeking the downfall of others, are we better than those that have fallen? It is the mercy of God that had kept us. It is that same mercy that God wants you to have. If we are not tenderhearted, we will not be able to forgive anyone. If we are not tenderhearted, if we are not soft hearted, if we do not allow Jesus to have his way in us so that he can push or lead us whichever way he likes, it will not be possible for us to have the love of God which will make it possible for us to forgive others.

There are different aspects of forgiveness. We forgive one another, but the offence committed against us would still be in our heart.

(Unfortunately, the recording stopped at this point. We shall continue the script once we get the remaining part of the recording)