

May 26, 2019

Holy Church
1 Corinthians 3:16-17

3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

3:17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1. The People of God

The Apostles' Creed says, "I believe in the holy and catholic church." Being "holy" is one of the four qualities of the church. The "four qualities" of the church are being "one," being "holy," being "catholic", and being "apostolic." These four are summarized in the "Nicea Creed" made at the church council in Nicea. They are "one", "holy", "catholic", and "apostolic." in Latin, "unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam." The Apostles' Creed describes two of the four characteristics of the Church: "holy" and "catholic."

The church is called "holy" because the church is consecrated as the "people of God." The word "to consecrate" is written as "to sanctify" and "to separate" in Japanese. God chose various things for his purpose. What was God first sanctified? ... Yes, it is a day. God sanctified the Sabbath day and made it "holy." (Genesis 2: 3) And we were commanded to keep this day as a holy day. (Exodus 20: 8) Today, in accordance with the church tradition, we call the day of the Lord's Resurrection "Holy Day." "Holiday" is a word from "Holy Day."

God also sanctified the place. The "land of promise" God gave to

Israel is “holy land” (Zechariah 2:12) and is still called the “Holy Land.” God also sanctified books that convey his will. It is “the Holy Bible”. Sometimes it is just called “Bible” in English, but it is correctly “the Holy Bible.”

11:45 For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

And God sanctified people. In the Old Testament period, God chose Israel as “the people of God” from many peoples. So Israel came to be called “the holy nation.” (Exodus 19: 6) Not only did Israel be called the “holy nation,” they actually had to be “holy.” Leviticus 11:45 says, “For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” The word, “You shall be holy,” are repeated many times throughout the Bible.

Such “consecration” is not limited to the Old Testament. Even in the New Testament, the distinction between “sanctity” and “secularity” is made clear. The church is the people of God in the New Testament time. In 1 Peter 2:9 says about the church, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.” The Church is the “holy nation” which is completely the same as Israel, and in the very same word that God commanded Israel, it is commanded, “You shall be holy.” It is written in 1 Peter 1:15-16. “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” By saying “it is written” and quoting Leviticus 11:45, Peter wanted to show that God’s will to God’s people never changes in the Old and New Testament.

The present age is the time that the distinction between “sanctity” and “secularity” has disappeared. There are more and more people who say that there is no such thing as “holy things” that humans have to fear and respect. Even Christians reject that the church is the holy. Because keeping the “holy church,” the church becomes not popular, has a high threshold, and no one want to come. It is loudly screamed that the church should be the place more secular, happier, and more fun.

Is “holiness” a rigid thing? Is “holiness” dark? Is “holiness” to keep people away? If so, it means that there is no one who is as rigid as Jesus, the Holy Son of God. The Spirit of the Holy God, the Holy Spirit, will no longer be the light that illuminates our hearts. But no matter how loud the voice for denying the holy things, the human soul is thirsty for the holy things. Certainly approaching the holy God may be as frightening as Isaiah cried.”Ah, I will die.” (Isaiah 6: 5) But soon after that, just as Isaiah was “sanctified,” God gives those who approach him the “holiness” and fulfills the soul of the person.

We seek to be “strong,” “rich,” and “smart,” and forget to be “holy.” Many will say, “Even if you become “sacred,” you will gain nothing but a loss.” Is it true? No, being holy gives us strength. Fill our souls in a true sense. It leads us to the truth. Being holy gives us an incalculable peace. And “holiness” is “beautiful.” Psalm 96: 9 says, “Worship the LORD in holy attire.” (NAS) This “holy attire” is translated in English as “the beauty of holiness” or “the splendor of holiness” The secular thing, whatever glittering, will eventually reveal its exasperation. “Holiness” is beautiful and it shines even more beautifully.

When Peter went to the temple, he was asked money by an ineffective person from the born. Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” (Acts 3:6) Peter has no money to give, but he had the “holy” name of Jesus Christ. So he was able to heal this person. The church must be “holy” as “God’s people.” If today’s church loses “the holiness,” no matter how many people, financial power, and wisdom or knowledge they have, they cannot lead the people to the salvation and help them. We are consecrated as the people of God. We always want to return to this starting point.

2. The Temple of God

Second, the church is “holy” because it is the sanctuary (holy place) of God. The following is written in today’s passage. “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” The church is the house of God of the New Testament time and the temple of the Lord. The word translated “temple” is used to refer to the “Holy Place” of the temple. The temple had an outside court and an altar, and its area was considered “sacred,” but at its center was the “Holy Place,” the main body of the temple. In the “Holy Place” (sanctuary) there was a candlestick, a table for bread, and the altars for burning incense. It was a sacred place where only priests were allowed to enter. The Bible says, “You are ... God’s temple.” This “you” is plural, and the “temple” or the “Holy Place” is singular. This is saying that the church as a whole is the Holy Place of God.

The church as a whole is the temple of God, but every Christian is also the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is taught in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

The Christians who are the temple of the Holy Spirit gather together, and the house of God is built. 1 Peter 2:4-5 says, “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

The church is called the temple, the Holy Place, because it is the place where the presence of God appears. God filled the temple of the Old Testament with glory, and made the temple a sign that God was with God’s people. The church is “the people of God,” “the body of Christ,” and every Christian is “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” This indicates that church and Christians are chosen to bring the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to the world. The church is where people meet God. It’s not just “where people meet people.” As priests of the New Testament, we are not only allowed to touch the Lord’s presence, but to be allowed to lead people to this presence. Here, we can invite people to meet God. The church is said to be the “holy church” because it has been given this mission.

So, we must keep in mind that the church is holy. 1 Corinthians 3:17 says, “If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” When I was in San Diego, our church often had a thief or graffiti. I remember that I

wanted to write this word and put it outside the church. And, I felt very sad to see a man who put a jacket on the pulpit podium or sit on the communion table in a church. The pulpit podium and the communion table are equivalent to the incense altar and the table of bread of the temple. It is horrible that Christians lose their sense of “holiness” and their fear of the holy one disappears. When that happens, worldly things get stuck in the church, and the church is no longer “holy”. In fact, it is often thought that it is the people called Christians destroy the church that is the temple of God. We may need to post the verse of 1Corinthians 3:17 inside of the church.

This was written in an article. “Satan first persecuted the church in an attempt to get rid of the church from a certain town. But the more the church was persecuted, the stronger the faith and the more active it was, so Satan changed the policy. Brought the things of the world into the church, and instead of the message of the Bible, told about morals, psychology, lessons of life and secrets of social success, and so on, rather than the church pleasing God the church focused on pleasing people, people came to the church to achieve self-fulfillment rather than to devote themselves to God, and in that town more people are coming to the church. But there is no one who repents, believes in the gospel, no one who offers himself and obeys Christ, and there is no one who speaks or hears the gospel. Satan delights his victory.”

What is written in this article is by no means fiction. It is what happens in many churches around the world. When the fear of the holy things disappears from the people, when the holy things are removed from the church, the church is no longer God’s, even though its form and shape remain. It becomes a group of the world. What we

can do to restore the “holiness” of the church is to listen to the Word of God. And, being taught by the Word of God, being guided by the Holy Spirit, we should re-dedicate the church as a “House of Prayer.” We are the people of God, the hose of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the priest of God. Let us be firmly convinced of this, and keep praying earnestly as this fact changes us.

(Prayer)

Holy God, you have taken the church out of the world and made it “holy,” and sent it back to the world. You are asking the church for “holiness” above all. If the church loses its holiness, it will not be able to fulfill your mission in this world. If today the church does not fulfill your mission correctly, it may be because it has lost “holiness.” Once again, make us holy, your people and your temple. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.