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Sanctification, Separation & Social Distancing - A Tutorial with an Ancient Jewish King

There were many kings in the southern kingdom of Judah after the untied nation of Israel split into two in 930BC and there were but only 9 good ones. 2 Kings 18:1-18.says “In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of

Judah, reigned.” He was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 29 years in total. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. **Due to his strong religious convictions, he consciously removed the high places and pillars and cut down the idol, Asherah. He also took concrete steps to get rid of idolatry and evil by breaking the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for in those days the people of Israel had erred and they worshipped it as an idol instead of God.**



He was a good king who trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him, for he was steadfast in his obedience and faith in the Lord. He did not depart from following him, but he observed fully the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; wherever he went, he prospered. This is the secret of his victory. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not compromise to serve him. He finally destroyed the Philistines, taking from them its territory as the Lord gave him victory.

While the northern kingdom Israel under Hoshea was in the throes of death and destruction, God sent a godly man to the southern kingdom Judah—Hezekiah’s reign began at an age of 25. His did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, “according to all that David his father had done” (v.3). He made it a point to totally remove these high places and burnt down the pillars and the Asherah image, including the brazen serpent that Moses made in the wilderness. (Num 22) He basically cleaned house and Judah of all idolatrous worship. Hezekiah “trusted the Lord God of Israel...held fast to the Lord... did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses” (vv.5-6). And for that reason, “the Lord was with him; wherever he

For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.
2 Kings 18:6-7

went out, he prospered" (v.7). This phrase was also used of David, "the Lord was with him" (1 Sam 3:19; 18:12, 14) that gives us a glimpse of the success of David's endeavours. This same expression was also used to explain why Joseph was always effective in his life and work and he was promoted to the top job next to the Pharaoh in Egypt because "the Lord was with him" (Gen 39:3, 23). This is so important to our life and victory.

How do we ensure that "the Lord is with us"? If we look at Hezekiah's life in 2 Kings 18, we can learn the secrets of his victory as follows:

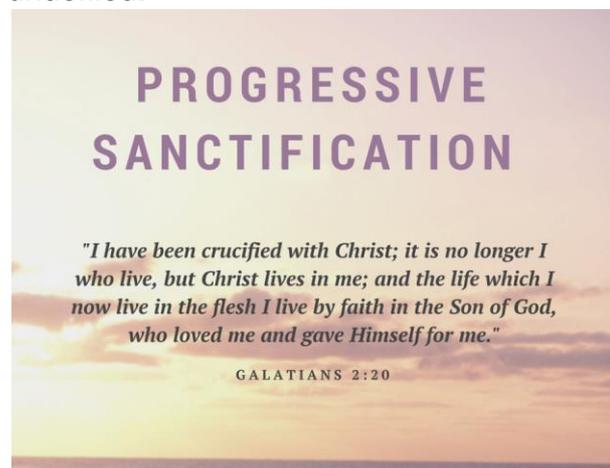
1. **Sanctification by God (v.4, "removed the high places, and brake the images and cut down the groves")**

Hezekiah was committed to a biblical standard of godliness and fought sinfulness and the idolatry and depravity of his times. He removed everything that was displeasing to the Lord so that God's holy land remained undefiled.

Progressive sanctification or growing in holiness means living a life fighting sin, being devoted to God, have the willingness to remove the evil of sin and fight against the depravity in us.

Anything in our "land" (home, church and business, school, camp and friends) that is displeasing to the Lord must be removed. Holiness is a calling from God and not an option we choose but it is also a cooperative effort and we must make a conscious effort to keep away from sin like Job in Job 1:1 who feared God and avoided evil.

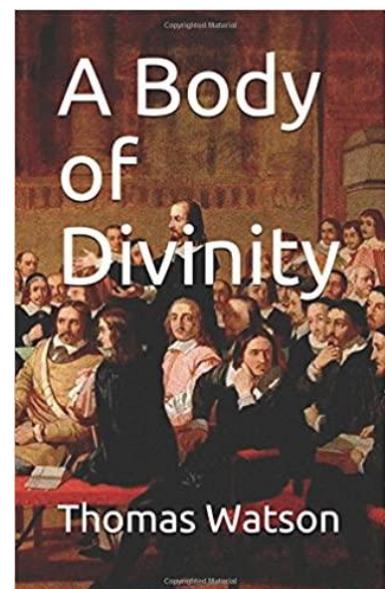
As we stay at home these 2 months, we should do a thorough house-cleansing from the contamination of sin. There cannot be any blessing from God without first cleansing it by removing anything in our house that is displeasing to God. For example, if you have bought or kept any unsound or occultic materials, books or art, videos, games or any religious objects contrary to the Word of God must be removed. We need to do it now before it does harm to us and our family. (Acts 19:19)



Holiness and Biblical Separation

The holiness of God is a central idea to the philosophy and practice of biblical separation. The thrice holy God means that He is not only separate from sin and evil, but He hates and cannot tolerate those who are engaged in it. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab 1:13). Thomas Watson said this of the holiness of God. Thomas Watson remarked in "A Body of Divinity, p.83,

"God is holy intrinsically. He is holy in His nature. His very being is made up of holiness. He is the origin and pattern of holiness. God is holy efficiently. He is the cause of all that His holy in others. God is holy transcendentally. No angels in heaven can take the just dimension of God's holiness. The Bible repeatedly declares that the name of the Lord is holy.



Statements are made by the prophets like Isaiah in Isa 57:15 whose name is holy and by Luke in Luke 1:49 'Holy is His name' demonstrates that event. The very name of the Lord is holy to His people. Because God Himself is holy, He required that all His subjects that are redeemed by Him to be holy as well (Lev 11:44, 45)".

Holiness
is not merely a feeling,
state of mind,
or good intention.
It involves practical
separation from **SIN**
and real separation *unto*
God.

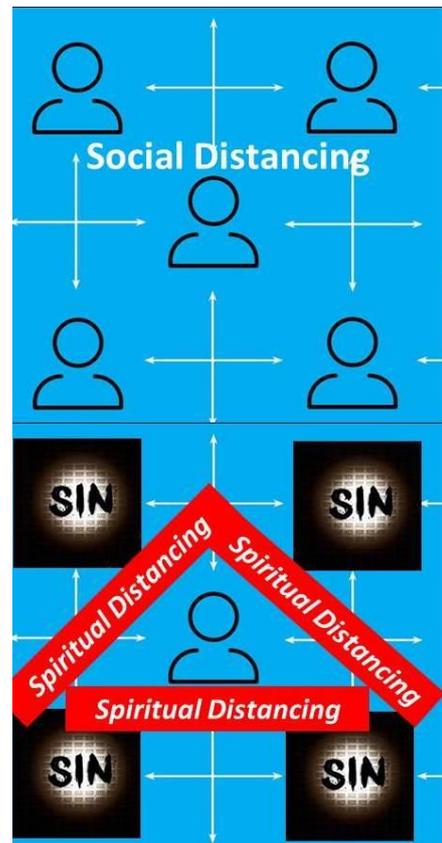
Holiness is commanded of God and is the standard of conduct for all Israel and us today. God's holiness becomes the yardstick in which we measure what is right or wrong. Man's response to God's holiness should be one of fear, veneration, worship and penitence and separation. Knowing who God really is, affects the way in which we worship God, it affects the way in which we should live today. A life of piety and righteousness and godliness is the befitting response of every child of God. **The consequent change in us is one of consecration to God and a separation from sin and all its evil alliances in the same manner we take steps to keep away from the coronavirus, washing our hands and maintaining high standard of hygiene and sanitation in our home and offices.**

Fred Mortiz said in his book, "Be Ye Holy"; on page.42, connects holiness with separation,

"The idea of separation is woven into the fabric of holiness. The truth of God's holiness affects the Christian's life and will result in an imitation of that holiness by the believer. Holiness is possible because of the work of Christ. Those who have received Him are positionally holy. Separation from sin is not isolation from the world. The purpose for the believer's holy position is that He can testify of God's saving power in the world. Personal separation (or spiritual distancing) from sin complements biblical God-centered evangelism."

Social or Spiritual Distancing for the Purity of Faith

The doctrine of holiness requires social distancing or separation from sin unto God is a fundamental principle of the Bible that is grievously ignored in the church today. This doctrine of the believer's holiness arises out of the holiness of God. Both the purity and righteousness of God (Like 1:75) are involved. *"Be ye holy; for I am holy."* 1 Pet 1:16, also 3:11, Exo 15:11, Isa 6:3, 2 Cor 7:1. The Bible does speak of cooperation (*"of one mind", "that they may all be one", "laborers together", "keep the unity of the Spirit", "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord",* also 1 Cor 12:25). Biblical cooperation is based on TRUTH of God's Word and not just love. **It involves the united effort of God's people in the spirit of doctrinal purity as we seek to be clean before the Lord. There is not to be a cooperation born of a spirit of undiscerning religious pluralism, or compromise "truth" with others of a different doctrinal conviction.** *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"* Amos



3:3. The economy of God as revealed in all of Scripture is for a sound and clear separation and serious social distancing from anything that is contrary to the will of God for us. Our lives are based on the holiness of God that produces purity in our lines, both personal and ecclesiastical as a church. **That is what spiritual distancing is as taught in Psa 1 where the godly man does not sit nor walk or stand with the ungodly or scorners, and keeping a safe distance lest he be infected with their sinful tendencies too.**

2. **Reliance on God** (v.5, *“trusted in the Lord God of Israel”*)

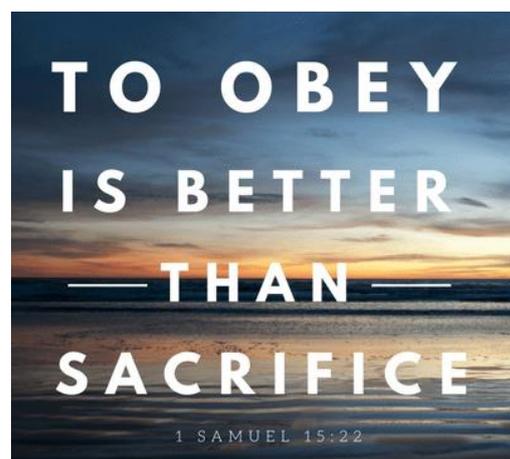
The king Hezekiah himself lived a life of separation, putting away evil and sin and set the example of putting holiness in action, he trusted in the Lord to intervene on their behalf. If you want the Lord to intervene on their behalf, you need to reject evil and sinfulness first, confess and repent of it before Him with a broken and contrite heart (Psa 51:17). We need to examine our own minds (Psa 139:23, 24) and hearts. Do I trust only in the Lord or trust in money, work, men or even self? (Psa 20:7, 56:3) In order to trust in the Lord, we cannot only do so when we are in trouble. We must trust in the Lord *“with all your heart”* all the time. Prov 3:5-6 tells us it means firstly, we must *“not lean on your own understanding”* but instead, *“in all your ways acknowledge him”*. When that happens, the Lord will *“make straight your paths.”* During this pandemic it is time for us to examine ourselves and to give up our own selfish or worldly ways as we stay at home. We are to rely totally on divine grace and intervention to see us through as the Lord leads.

Focus on God,
not your problem.
Listen to God,
not your insecurities.
Rely on God,
not your own strength.

3. **Obedience to God** (v.6, *“For he clave to the Lord and departed not from following him but kept his commandments”*):

Hezekiah obeyed the word of the Lord. Jesus said in John 15:5 that the secret of a fruitful life is obeying or abiding in Him: *“Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”* Hezekiah obeyed the Lord by keeping His commandments, so Jesus affirmed the same truth in John 15:10, that *“if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”* So if you love God, you will also abide in His will, obey His word and do them. If anyone thinks otherwise and yet God is expected to be pleased, that is deception and falsehood. **During these 2 months, we must remember that obedience is better than sacrifice as the prophet Samuel warned king Saul.**

There is to be no compromise in our faith and practice but obeying the instruction of God just like we dutifully keep to the safety and hygiene guidelines given by the authorities.



When we take sanctification or our progressive growth in godliness and the fight against the evil of sin and depravity seriously, we will practice biblical separation (2Cor 6:14-18) or spiritual distancing which is sadly neglected today. **It is more than just washing our hands and not touching our faces; we need to keep away from the contamination of this fallen and depraved world and not just the deadly virus of COVID-19 which is what social distancing is all about. More importantly, it is the infectious and deadly spread of sin that has infected and affected the**



whole human race since the fall of Adam ((Gen 3). It is a deadly disease with consequences worse than COVID-19 and leading to death which is eternal condemnation in hell if there is no Saviour to redeem us. But thank God that Christ came and died for our sins on the cross and we justified. We are to exercise faith in the Lord and obey His commandments that we will bear *“much fruit, for apart from me (Jesus says) you can do nothing.”* Do you want to be effective in your family, studies, service, work and be more fruitful in your ministry? **Do not take lightly the above pointers but apply them in our family, work and school. Seek the Lord for His covenant mercy, saving grace, divine guidance and pardon, Be Safe at Home and above all Be Saved in Christ.**

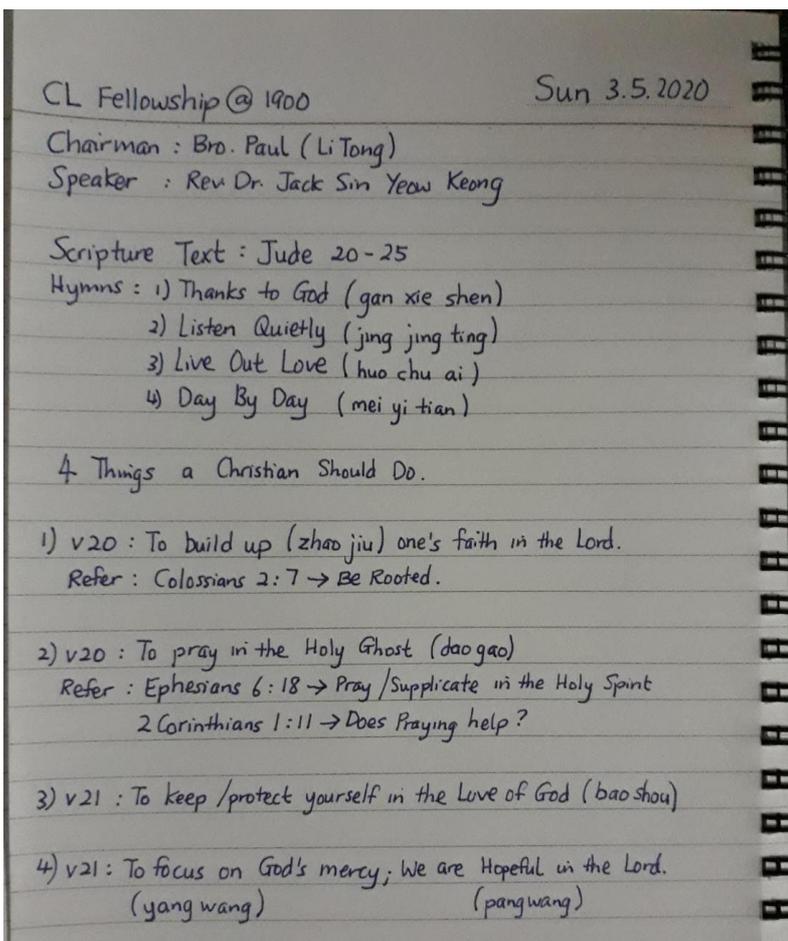
Conclusion

Social distancing, hygiene standards and the wearing of masks to prevent infection with the deadly virus will be the new normal today in our community. Likewise, so should Holy Living and Separation from Sin be our sacred duty in our walk of faith. King Hezekiah was a good example of a good monarch because of his love and fear for God, his faith and obedience in his fight against sin as demonstrated in his practice of biblical separation in his kingdom. He was richly blessed with a good reign and a godly mother just like young Timothy who had his mother Eunice. (2Tim 1:5) **As we keep ourselves safe at home, away from this infectious coronavirus, let us also seek the Lord in spiritual separation and faith and growth in holiness and leave a godly legacy to future generations. King Hezekiah’s measures and actions set a good testimony for us to emulate today even in the midst of this pandemic. We are to Stay Safe and Saved in the Lord, away from sin and to wait patiently upon the Lord till He delivers us in due season.**



Jack Sin

PhotoNews



Thank God for the continuing Chinese Fellowship on Sun night at 7pm via Zoom. You are welcome to join us. Do uphold this new ministry in prayer.

Memory Verse

Dan 5: 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Announcements

1. We thank God for many who are participating in our Facebook Live streaming worship service which will continue till early June or as otherwise informed.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks today on “Handwritings on the Wall Explained” (Daniel 5:11 - 31).
3. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on “The Prayerful Prime Minister” (Daniel 6:1 - 28)
4. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom. Kindly contact Pastor or Angie for the zoom link if you are keen to join.
5. Do join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom and WhatsApp Video Calls.
6. Those who would like to serve the Lord in any area in the church, please see the Pastor or the Deacons.
7. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
8. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
9. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mailed to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Pastors & Elders from 9 BP churches met for Fraternal Fellowship on May 4, 2020 Mon afternoon for mutual edification and discussion on Covid-19.

