

Introduction for July 11, 2010

The enriching presence of God in revival cannot be divorced from His holiness. When God comes near, His holiness is not left behind. It is who He is – the thrice holy one. His love is a holy love, His righteousness is a holy righteousness, His justice is holy, and His wrath is holy. He is the holy one of Israel.

Listen to Edwards describe this holiness. “Holiness...appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and rapture to the soul...There was no part of creature holiness, that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this, to lie low before God as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL, that I might become as a little child...”

This is the very expression of our text in Zechariah. While there was an astonishing sense of joy and gladness there was also an overwhelming sense of awe. “Shout for joy” and “be silent” are commands that fit well together and adequately describe the journey of sanctification along the highway of holiness.

In his autobiography, John Paton spoke of the enriching presence of God in this manner, “Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Savior, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. In His words, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’ became to me so real that it would not have startled me to behold Him, as Stephen did, gazing down upon the scene.” When hiding in a tree from hundreds of angry natives, he again recounts the extraordinary joy of being in Christ’s presence. “Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior’s spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship.”

These two men help us see more clearly the path of holiness. One discovering the reality of God’s holiness and its implication for his life and one who knew the enriching presence of God as the source of his unspeakable joy.

As we pray for revival and experience times of God’s enriching presence in our lives personally we will be stunned by His holiness and greatness and both sing for joy, and be silent. Oh, the joy of walking in grace by faith, trusting God and requesting that He pour out His Spirit upon us and revive His church!