February 7, 2021

10. Living as Holy People — Leviticus 19:1-18

It is generally understood that those who don’t do good things are not considered to be holy people, but those who do and inspire others to do so are viewed as such. Our key verse for this study reminds us that "[we] shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (v. 2). Being holy means there is a divine quality about us. One of the divine qualities human beings have is love. Love encourages us to make good things happen, change our environment for good, and care for others as we care for self.

I am reminded of many experiences of people doing good things as part of that divine attribute that God gave us-to share with others and make a difference in this world. When we exercise love, God becomes visible to others through us, God’s people.

A few years ago, one of our Hispanic Mennonite churches transformed a heartbreaking situation into an experience of holiness. This congregation (most of its members undocumented) woke up one morning to the most challenging news they had ever received. Four of their members and a friend from another church, who were construction workers, died in a tragic van fire on their way to work. When the pastor and congregation were notified of the accident and the deaths, they could not believe it. It was like a nightmare from which everyone wanted to wake up.

Two of the guys had some relatives in the United States, but the families of the other three were in Guatemala. The church immediately offered its support. As they gathered information and got to know the families of the deceased, they decided to put their faith and divine quality into action to help repatriate the bodies and support the affected families. They began by collecting an offering among themselves. Then they held a radio marathon to raise funds, sold food, and took to the streets and traffic lights to collect money. The work spread into the community. In two days, this congregation managed to collect about $30,000, which they distributed among the five families and repatriated some of the bodies to their native Guatemala.

What a wonderful experience and what a great example this congregation offered to their community when they decided to live as a holy people, expressing their holiness through loving their neighbors. They achieved something that for many was impossible to even think about. By doing this, they fully lived the gospel of Christ and clung to their call to love their neighbors as themselves. Their faith was transformed into concrete actions, radiating the presence of God in their lives to the entire community.

Jesus said to his disciples and us that we would do Jesus’ work and even greater things if we believed in him (John 14:12). Yes indeed, we are able to do greater things when we transmit the holiness of God to those around us.

What divine qualities have you witnessed recently in others or in the church? What divine qualities would you seek to exercise in your relationship with Jesus?

Blessings!
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Andrew Bodden, a Honduran native, serves as a program director for Mennonite Central Committee East Coast, providing leadership to the programs in New York, Philadelphia, Florida, Puerto Rico, and to the Young Adult, and Peace and Justice programs. He also connects with Anabaptist pastors and churches on the East Coast and in Puerto Rico. Andrew has worked in multicultural settings in Central and South America, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and the United States. He is an ordained minister in the Atlantic Coast Conference and serves as vice-chair of the Mennonite Mission Network board.

Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.

Resources for this session

- These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. Marnie Klassen, a fifth-year Bible student at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the presenter for unit 3, Our Holy God. The videos are free and available on MennoMedia’s YouTube channel.
- A dramatic reading of this study’s text is found as an S&L Reproducible here.