

A Reflection of God

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Date: 18 January 2026

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[0 : 00] All right, get your Bibles out. We have been in the book of Romans for quite some time, and we're not this morning.

And it says that all of God's Word is inspired.

That's what it says, right? Cover to cover. It is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable. What does it mean that it's profitable? It doesn't mean it's going to make you money.

What does that mean? It's good for us. For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness is what it says.

All of God's Word. And yet there are some books that maybe we focus on more than others. There's certainly the New Testament that share the gospel message of Jesus Christ, His life, His teachings. We look at the writings of many of the apostles and Paul, and those are wonderful.

[1 : 11] But there's also the Old Testament that also contains much that I think we can learn from and that we need to look at. And last week, as we were in Romans 15 last week, one of the things that we shared, we talked about the blessings that we have as believers.

That all the way back in the Old Testament, when God called Abraham, He said, I'm going to bless you. And your offspring that come from you, those are going to be my people.

And we know the Israelites came about, the Jewish people came about as a result of that. And God said, these are my people. And God watched over them, and God delivered them, and they would be unfaithful and repent, and God would bless them, and then they'd go away from God.

And it was that constant up and down in their lives. But then we think of our lives. We're not, most of us, not Jewish. We're what we're called the Gentiles. And in Romans 15, we talked about last week, the blessing that we have that when Jesus Christ came, He didn't come just for the Jews, but in the end, He came for everyone.

That if we put our trust and faith in Jesus Christ, we become part of those promises that God gave to Abraham. All those wonderful promises of God's blessing, of His presence, we have the promise of heaven and the place prepared for us.

[2 : 27] It says we're grafted into the tree. We become God's chosen people, even as Gentiles. Isn't that a wonderful blessing? Isn't it? Are you glad of that?

I hope we are. We need to be, and we need to praise God for that. But this morning, what we're going to look at is the fact that we need to praise God for those blessings, but we also need to understand that there's a responsibility that goes along with that.

We look at the blessings, and we give God the praise, and we need to. But the Bible also talks about our part, what we need to be doing. Often we think about what can God do for us, and the blessings that He can give us.

But you know what? The Word also talks about what we need to do for God, His expectation of our lives. And you know what? God has an expectation for us, doesn't He? Doesn't He?

Doesn't any father have an expectation for their children? You know, as a father of three, Tammy and I had expectations for our children, didn't we?

[3 : 35] And it would depend on where we were at and what we were doing, and whether it was with school, we had a certain expectation of their behavior while they were at school, of what their grades needed to be.

We had expectations. We would come to church and take our kids to church, and we had expectations for them there. Do you think that our children always met our expectation? Some of you are just laughing.

You know, we have wonderful children, but the reality, they did not always meet our expectation. They just didn't. At times, they failed in that. But you know what?

I can think about, you know, my parents are here this morning, and as I grew up, I'm certain they had expectations for me. Did I always meet those expectations? Oh, my mom said, sure.

She said, probably not. I know I didn't. God has expectations for His people. That doesn't mean that we will always live up to those expectations, but we need to understand what those expectations are.

[4 : 46] Look in Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 18 is where we're at least going to begin this morning. We're going to look at a few different places. But if we want to understand the blessing, we also need to understand the responsibility that God gives us, and that's what we're looking at this morning.

Leviticus 18, and we're going to begin in the first verse, and I'm going to ask as we read God's Word, if you're able, if you would stand as we read the Word this morning. My cold is gone.

My voice is coming back. Leviticus 18, beginning in the first verse, and this is what it says. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, I am the Lord your God.

After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein you dwelt, shall you not do. And after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, shall you not do.

Neither shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall do My judgments, and keep My ordinances to walk therein. I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them.

[6 : 01] I am the Lord. Let's pray. Lord God, thank You again for Your Word, for the truth that we can find in it. I pray, Lord, that in the next few moments that You would just speak to our hearts.

You would help us to understand the things that You want us to understand, that we would change in ways that You want us to change, that Your Word would dwell in us, that it would change us. And Lord, sometimes we are resistant to change, but I pray on this morning, Lord, that we would be willing to change, to become more and more the people that You would want us to be Your people.

So just speak to our hearts, Lord. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. You can be seated this morning. Amen. So here is God talking to His people.

And this is a commandment that He's giving Moses, words that He's sharing with Moses, but He's saying, this is what I want you to tell My people. This is the message that I have for them. And folks, the message that God gives to His people this morning that we're reading here in Leviticus is vital that they understand.

It is literally the difference between life and death, between doing the things that God wants you to be doing and not. And look at what it says. The Lord spoke to Moses in the first verse. He says, Speak to the children of Israel.

[7:16] Say to them, and this is a very simple statement, I am the Lord your God. Is that hard to understand? No. But do we fully understand what that means?

That He is the Lord our God. What does that mean? What does that mean that He is the Lord our God? He is the one over us.

Colton? He's over everything. Annabelle? He's our Father? He's the one and only God?

You know, there's a lot of ways we could describe it when it says, I am the Lord your God. But part of that is the understanding that that means He is over us, as one of you said. And that means He is in charge.

Not us. He is in charge. And that is maybe easy to understand, but is that always easy to live out in our lives? To allow God to truly be in charge and not us?

[8:23] We often have the understanding that I want to be in charge of my life. I want to make the decisions that I want to make. I want to do the things that I want to do. I want to think and have the opinions that I want to have.

But if we're saying that He is the Lord our God, that means He is in charge. That our thoughts, our ideas, are to stem from what God says. Our opinions, even, that we have in life should line up with what God says.

That's what it truly means. And God goes on to explain why this is sometimes so very difficult. Because if you look in verse 3, He said, after the doings of the land of Egypt.

So, God's chosen people, the Israelites, we all know that they had been in captivity in Egypt for how long? About 400 years.

Is that a long period of time? Yeah, that's a very long period of time. That's longer than our nation has even existed. 400 years is a long time. That you dwelt in Egypt, is what He said.

[9:29] And He said, after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you lived, where you dwelt, shall you what? Not do. What is He telling them there?

It's not hard to understand. What's He telling them? How would you say it? Don't do what they did. In other words, don't start reflecting where you lived before, the land of Egypt.

Why did God tell them that? In the land of Egypt, did they worship God? No. No. They worshiped Ra, the sun god, the pharaohs.

They had different things that they worshiped, but it wasn't God. And He's saying, this land of Egypt, where you lived for 400 years, He's saying, don't become a reflection of where you lived.

Because you know what? That happens very easily. That the things that are around us, we can start to reflect that in our own lives very, very easily.

[10:26] You spend enough time around a certain group of people or a certain place. What happens over time? You start to act like that, don't you?

You know, there's some ways that we can maybe understand that. You know, if you travel down to the south, some of you are snickering. I just... If you do, well, what do you experience there?

Some good things. I appreciate it. Sometimes they're very polite, and it's ma'am and sir, and I like some of that. But what do you notice as you travel down there? What's that?

There's snakes down there. Okay, that's probably true. But what did you say, sir? The southern drawl. They talk a little different than up in the north, don't they?

Is that a bad thing? No, that's not bad. But if you live down there for any extended period of time, what can start to happen? Yeah, the longer that you're there, you start to maybe pick up on some of the way that they speak, some of the things that they say, some of their expressions, the way that words are pronounced.

[11:36] The longer you're around that, the more that you hear that, that just creeps into your conversation, doesn't it? And that's not a bad thing. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that's bad, but that should help us to understand.

When we live in something, we start to reflect it if we're not careful. That is a natural thing. And God is saying to His chosen people here, you have to be very careful.

I do not want you to become a reflection of where you lived for 400 years, to start thinking like they thought, to start acting like they acted. Because look at what He says, after the doings of the land of Egypt, after the way that they did things, I don't want you to do things that way.

And, He says after that, after the doings of the land of Canaan where I'm bringing you, so in other words, where you were, I don't want you to act like that.

I don't want you to reflect that. Now, where I'm taking you, where you're going, yeah, I don't want you to reflect that either. Because the land of Canaan that they were going into, the promised land is what we know it as and what we call it.

[12:46] God had promised that to them, but there were already people living there. We understand that, right? But, do you know what God also said about the people that were living there? He said they were evil.

That they practiced child sacrifice and they were brutal and very promiscuous with sexual, their sexual practices and God didn't want that for His people. So He said, alright, this land where you were at, I don't want you to be like that.

I don't want you to reflect that. The land that you're going, yeah, I don't want you to reflect that either. So your past and your future, I don't want you to reflect the people that you're around.

What do you think that says to you and I today? Is there anything in that for us that we should consider in our lives? Choose carefully who you're around.

You have to live in the world, but you don't have to act like the world. God is truly cautioning to think about the world around you, to see the areas where it lines up with God's way of thinking and doing and see the ways that it doesn't and make sure in our lives that we don't just become a reflection of the world around us.

[14:11] That is not what God wants for His people. He said, don't do in the past like in Egypt, don't do in the future like in Canaan where you're going to go. Don't do like they do or walk like they do, live like they do, think like they do.

But in verses 4 and 5, so God said, don't do like that, don't do like that. Here's what I want you to do. You shall do, what's that next word?

My judgments and keep my ordinances to walk in. And He says again, I am the Lord your God.

Second time He said that. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments which if a man do, he shall live in them.

I, this is a powerful statement just these four words, I am the Lord. Why is that so powerful? I'm it.

[15:14] I am the one on the throne. I am the one in control. I am the one that created everything. I am the one that created you and gave you life. I am the one that sets the rules. I am the one that says what is right and what is wrong.

Period. Not the Egyptians, not the Canaanites, not the world around you. You need to follow what I say. That is what God is saying to His people there.

And you know what? I think that is just as true for you and I today. We have that same danger of beginning to reflect the world around us. It happens so very easily.

Without, if, if we're not consciously and consistently aware of it, we will start to reflect the world around us. We will start thinking like the world. We will start having the priorities of the world.

We will start to think what's right and wrong is what the world says is right and wrong. God is cautioning us against that. He is saying follow my judgments, follow my word regardless of what the world around you says.

[16:19] Because you know what? There is something that God wants us to reflect and it's not the world around us. What God wants us to reflect, if you're in Leviticus 18, I want you to look in Leviticus 19.

The first two verses. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, so again, same situation, God's telling this to Moses to tell the people. Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them, you shall be holy for I, the Lord your God am holy.

What did He want the people to be? Holy. What does that mean? What does it mean to be holy? That's kind of a big question. What does that mean? Righteous? What else does it mean to be holy?

Following Him? To be set apart? To be different than? What else does it mean to be holy? To be like God?

So what is it like God that we're supposed to be like? Loving, kind, culting? What's that? Forgiven? Compassionate?

[17:37] You know, holiness, being holy, that's kind of an interesting phrase. You know, when we say God is holy, you know what that really means? It means God is pure. It means God is perfect.

It means there is no corruption within God. There is no wrongness within God. That's what it really means to be holy. And He says, be ye holy. That's a big ask, isn't it?

God is saying, all right, I want you to be holy like I am holy. So God says, don't reflect Egypt, don't reflect Canaan, don't reflect the world around you.

What is it that God wants us to reflect? Him. His holiness. His purity. God wants us to reflect Him.

And I said, the way that we begin to reflect something is we spend a lot of time in it, right? You spend a lot of time down south, you begin to reflect the way that they speak. They speak. The more that you're in it, the more you reflect it.

[18:40] That's easy to understand, right? So if we want to be a reflection of God, what do you think that's telling us? We need to spend time with God.

We need to be spending time in the Word. We need to be spending time with other believers. We need to be spending time learning and growing as a Christian because the more time we spend in that, the more we're going to begin to reflect that.

Be ye holy for I am holy. God wants us to be a reflection of Him.

And you can say, well, this is the Old Testament. He was talking to the Jewish people when He said, be ye holy for I am holy. And some people say, well, that's the Old Testament, you know, and the New Testament, Jesus came and He changed everything, so that's just Old Testament.

All right. Well, if you believe that, which I don't, I think this is still for you and I, but if you believe that, I want you to turn to the New Testament. I want you to turn to 1 Peter. All the way back in the New Testament.

[19:40] I'll give you a little bit to find it. 1 Peter 2. Excuse me.

1 Peter 1. We're going to look at just this verse. 1 Peter 1. I'll give you a minute to find it. I see pages turn. And I know the verse is up here, but I want you to find it in God's Word.

In the book that you have in your hand, if you have your book, maybe it's on a phone, maybe it's on a tablet, I don't know, it's all God's Word. That's what's important. This is a New Testament in Peter.

Words that are written for you and I, for the Christian church, for believers. He says, because it is written, so it's written, and this means it's good for then and it's good for now.

Be you holy for I am holy. So what is it telling you and I as believers today? Be like God. Be a reflection of Him.

[20 : 41] Be holy as God is holy. See, folks, this is something that has not changed. You know, Norma's Kids Corner this morning, it's no coincidence. God always puts these things together. She was talking about change and the fact that God doesn't change, does He?

It's the same yesterday, today, and forever. That's what the Word says. And the truth of God's Word is the same yesterday and today and forever. And this is one of those truths that we are to reflect God to the world.

We are not to become a reflection of the world around us. And you know what? The world wants us to reflect what it says, to believe what it says.

The world tries to define what is right and what is wrong, how we should look at things, how we should view things. Doesn't the world constantly tell us how we should look at things and how we should view things?

It does. You might say, no, you're wrong. Sorry. But if you believe that, you're wrong. The world is constantly sending messages telling you what you should believe is right or wrong.

[21 : 46] Sometimes they'll say, well, you need to get out of the old way of thinking and go to this new way of thinking and we need to evolve as a human race and come into this way of thought.

Folks, that's lies of the devil. Period. We are to be a reflection of God. We are to reflect the truth of His Word to the world around us, not become a reflection of the world around us.

God says, be holy. And I said before, that's a big ask because it means being pure and reflecting Him. And you know what? Are we going to fail in that at times?

Yeah, I want you to say I'm going to fail at times. Now, that doesn't mean it's a good thing, does it? It's just the reality of it. But you know, even in that failure, you know what?

We can still be holy. Does that make any sense? How can we still be holy even when we fail? Even when we're faulty? Would you agree we're faulty people?

[22 : 52] I think we are. We're far from perfect. We're faulty. So how can we still be holy? Being humble. Asking for forgiveness.

And again, what is it when we ask for forgiveness? What is it that we can still be holy? In the midst of all the sin we have in our lives, how can we still be holy? We just celebrated it at Christmas.

Because of Jesus, folks, that is how we can be holy in God's eyes. Because of Jesus Christ, because of the forgiveness we find in Him, that is the only way we can reflect God truly in all His holiness.

Because of what Jesus Christ did when He died for us and if we put our trust in Him, our sins are erased. It says as far as the east is from the west, it says our sins are blotted out, they're gone.

That's holiness. And it only happens because of Jesus Christ in our lives. That's it. You can't determine in your mind, alright, I'm going to walk out of here and I'm going to be holy every day this week.

[23:59] Every moment of this week, every interaction I have with people, when I'm driving down the road and somebody cuts me off, I'm going to be holy and always do the right thing and think the right thing. You can determine that all you want right now.

Now, I'm not saying it's wrong to determine that. It's probably good. But does that mean you're going to succeed? If you say, I'm going to do only holy things this week, I am never going to have a wrong thought or a wrong action.

What do you think the odds are that you're going to actually accomplish that? Colton? The odds are 5%. Got our mathematician here.

I won't tell you what your odds are. I can tell you what my odds are. I would say my odds are somewhere between zero and zero. I'd like to tell you it's higher, but I'd be lying to you and then my odds would be blown right there, wouldn't they?

Folks, we're faulty. The way we think, our reactions sometimes, maybe just a simple thought that goes through our mind, we're far from being truly holy.

[25:10] But because of Jesus' presence in our lives, we can be holy. Because of His work on the cross, we can be holy. And this morning, right now, we're going to take communion.

And folks, it's really all about being holy. It's about what Jesus did for us. His work on the cross, that is how we can be holy.

But you know, before we take communion, there's something the Bible tells us to do in 1 Corinthians. It says, let a man examine himself. It's saying it's important that we think about our own life.

To think about, are we truly being a reflection of God that we should be? Are there areas that we're failing in that? Are there sins in our life that we're allowing to come in?

And it's saying, examine yourself. Look at your life. And if there are those areas, take them to Jesus and say, forgive me. Because when we take communion, we need to make sure that we are in the right place with God.

[26:10] It says, if you're not, don't take communion. It's a serious thing. Let a man examine himself. And I'm going to encourage us right now, just close our eyes, bow our heads. I encourage every eye in here to be closed.

And I want you to take just a moment in just the quietness and consider your own life. Examine your life. Is it what God wants it to be? If it's not, folks, it just simply, it requires us calling out to God through Jesus Christ and saying, forgive me.

Forgive me for those areas where I fall short. Put a desire within me to reflect the holiness of God to this world around us. I'm going to give you a moment to talk with the Father.

If there are areas in your life where you need to ask for forgiveness, ask for forgiveness. If there are areas that God brings to your mind that aren't right, take this moment right now to set them right with God. Seek the Father and seek His forgiveness in a moment of silence.

Thank you for your presence in this place and we thank you that when we cry out to you, you are a God that hears. That when we cry out in the name of Jesus and ask for forgiveness, that that forgiveness is granted. When we cry out in the sincerity of our hearts that we don't have to wonder whether we will be forgiven.

[27:30] Lord, when we sincerely come before you and through the blood of Jesus Christ, when we ask for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. We thank you for that. That we can be holy in your eyes because of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

Thank you for that forgiveness that you offer to us. and it's in His name we pray. Amen. I'm going to ask the deacons to come forward at this time.

And they're going to pass the bread. Go ahead. And as they pass the bread, I want you to remember the Bible says very clearly that this bread signifies, it represents the body of Christ.

The Son of God who came to this earth lived a perfect life and died for you, for me. This signifies His body that He allowed to be broken, that He allowed to be beaten, that He allowed to be spit on, that He allowed a crown of thorns to be placed on His head, that He carried His cross, that He was crucified and nailed to a tree.

He sacrificed that body for us so that we could be holy, so that we could be righteous in God's eyes. As you take the bread, hold it and just understand what it represents.

[29 : 04] I know sometimes I do a lot of talking while the bread is being passed and before we take the bread, but this morning I'm not going to. I'm going to simply be quiet and we're going to sit in quietness and I know there may be kids making noise, that's okay, that's fine.

But I want you to take this time and consider what Jesus Christ did for you. Think about that body that was broken for you. Think about the love that took Jesus Christ to the cross for you and for me.

Just in the quietness consider that sacrifice that was made for us. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 it said the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread.

Jesus was with the disciples that he had assembled while he was here on this earth, the men that he loved and that loved him. And it said he took the bread and broke it and said and he gave thanks.

Let's bow our heads and give thanks for this bread. Lord God we thank you for this bread that we hold that signifies the body of Jesus Christ. The body that was broken for us.

[30 : 13] What a love. What an amazing love. And Lord I pray that we would never take for granted the sacrifice that was made for us but that we would remember that we would be grateful and have grateful hearts that Jesus Christ was willing to make this sacrifice for us.

Bless this bread that we hold. Help us to always remember what it signifies and it is in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. And it says after he had blessed it he broke it and he said take eat this is my body which is broken for you.

This do in remembrance of me and as we eat the bread this morning let's remember that Christ did this for us. says after he broke the bread and after they had eaten the bread that they took the cup the deacons are going to pass the cup and I encourage you to take it and just hold it in your hand.

You know the Bible shares very clearly that the cup represents the blood of Christ and you know I always share we often don't like to think or talk about blood do we?

I don't even like seeing it it makes me a little light headed but you know blood is a pretty important thing it's life without it we die in the Old Testament blood had to be sacrificed blood had to be shed for sins to be forgiven but you know when Christ's blood was shed that was the final sacrifice for you and I that Christ allowed his blood to be shed for the remission for the forgiveness of our sins so again I just encourage you as you hold this cup as the cup is passed to the remainder of folks that are here just hold it and consider this that Christ spilled for you and for me again as we hold the cup this morning this represents the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for you and me so that our sins could be forgiven what an amazing thing and it said likewise in the same manner he took the cup and blessed it let's ask

[32:51] God's blessing on this cup Lord God we thank you again that we are in your presence right now and we thank you that as we hold this cup that we understand that we remember that it symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ your son that was shed for us that final sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven so that we don't have to sacrifice animals consistently and constantly for our sins but that final sacrifice of Jesus Christ covered it all Lord help us to remember daily the sacrifice that was made for us thank you for what Jesus did and for what this represents bless this cup that we hold and it's in his name Jesus Christ we pray amen and it said he took the cup and he said this cup is the new testament in my blood this do you as often as you drink it in remembrance of me as we drink the cup let's remember Christ's sacrifice for us for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the

Lord's death until he returns you know communion is kind of a it's an interesting thing it's a sobering thought isn't it the sacrifice it was made for us but at the same time it's something that should bring us joy you know we talk about celebrating communion because it is a celebration isn't it that Christ's sacrifice results in life for us so although it's sobering have joy in your heart as you remember that somebody loved you enough that they sacrificed their body and their life for you that's an amazing love I'm going to ask if you'd stand this morning and as we close and as we leave this place I just encourage you be a reflection of God to the world don't reflect the world and you know we read the statement a few times be ye holy for I am holy and I just would ask if we could share that together this morning be you holy for I am holy remember that as you go through the week you are called to be holy and be a reflection of God to the world around you let's close with a word of prayer

Lord God thank you again for this time we've had to share together as a family as a body of believers we thank you we thank you so very much for the sacrifice Jesus made for us I pray Lord that as we go out into the world around us that we would just reflect you everywhere we go that we would point people to you that they would be directed to you through the lives that we live help us not to reflect the world around us to go along with its way of thinking and way of doing things but help us to always think about your way of doing things your commandments your direction to us thank you again Lord for all your blessings and help us to be holy and to reflect God