

The Holiness of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 February 2022

Preacher: Keith Knowlton

[0 : 00] Before we turn to our time of prayer, I want to concentrate our prayer tonight on the country of Ukraine.

And before I do, I just wanted to share a little insight that I was given. As Rachel and I work with Mission to the World, we had a Zoom meeting on Friday night with some other MTW missionaries who work and live in Ukraine and have very close connections with the church there.

So I just wanted to share some information as we pray specifically for them. The missionaries that we know there have all moved west to the city of Lviv, where most of them are set up to help provide humanitarian aid.

But also spoke specifically of those two. There was actually a pretty good group from Kiev, the capital, and Odessa. And they spoke there briefly about their knowledge of the church there and the needs of the church.

And really some points of encouragement even that I wanted to make known as we pray. They said about a third of the church, those within the church, have left to try to seek shelter elsewhere.

[1 : 11] About a third are there staying, whether travel is too hard or they're there to serve. And about a third are enlisted to fight. And they said really the neat thing that's happened for those that have remained in the church is that they've been able to use their church.

A couple of them actually are on a ground floor or a basement level where they meet. And so during these bombing raids, they've had people come down into their church building where they have stayed and sought refuge for a few hours at a time, several times a day.

And so to see blessing come from that, to see people coming into the church building where they are served by believers, served tea and food as they wait to be able to go back into their buildings has really been just a neat testimony.

Also to see how they've been able to serve through providing food and provision to those in need.

And so let's just focus our prayer for them tonight, continue to remember them in need.

I got an email last night that said the pastor in Kiev is still there and had every intention of preaching at their church this morning. So I haven't heard anything since, but we can know that there are believers in Ukraine that continue to meet together and continue to praise the Lord despite their circumstances.

[2 : 25] So let's pray together this evening. Lord, we thank you again for this opportunity to meet together this evening. We know that it is a blessing to have the Sabbath, a day set apart for rest, a day set apart for worship, to remember your goodness and your involvement in our lives.

And Lord, we recognize the ease in which we can meet the blessings of this building, the blessings of fellowship without persecution, without the threat of war, Lord, we thank you for the opportunity for our youth to meet tonight.

We thank you for all the activities that we have throughout the week where we can build community and share life with one another and dig into your word together. And Lord, we know that that is a blessing that comes from you and that there are believers around the world who don't have such luxury of meeting together openly, who may not have church building, who may be under threat of persecution and even war.

So Lord, tonight we pray and we lift up the church in Ukraine. We know, Lord, that you are sovereign and in control. And so Lord, we pray through this fighting and this war that you may strengthen the faith of believers throughout Ukraine.

We pray that they may be a great testimony to their neighbors, that they may offer physical aid, but also spiritual aid to many who are hurting, who are many who are confused and scared.

[4 : 02] Lord, we think especially of the church in Lviv, in Kiev, these places that there is humanitarian crisis, there is a real threat of life and injury.

But Lord, we thank you for the blessing that their church building still remains, that they can open up the doors to allow people their safe haven, that they can offer tea and food and shelter and clothing to those in need.

So Lord, we pray that you give them energy for the task ahead, that you give them boldness in being able to share faith with their fellow Ukrainians. Lord, give them great resolve in standing up for what is right and in the fight against evil.

Lord, we pray that you grant them safety, not only the church, but many in Ukraine who are willing to stand for freedom, who are willing to fight the oppressor. Lord, we think of the many families and individuals, women and children who are seeking to flee the country, to seeking safe haven in other countries.

And we ask, Lord, for great response from other countries to receive these people, to provide humanitarian aid. Lord, we pray for many governments who have difficult decisions to make, that may make these decisions with great wisdom, with great compassion.

[5 : 33] And Lord, we even pray for the government of Russia. We pray for great repentance. We pray for a turning from what is evil to the turning of what is good.

We pray that you may convict. We pray that you may assert your power, that you may show yourself strong and sovereign over all. We know that countries rise and fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

And so we pray with that hope tonight. May that be the hope of your church around the globe.

Thank you again for the blessing of meeting tonight. And as we consider your holiness, may that be a truth that sinks in deep into our hearts.

As we consider your character, God, to recognize how far we are, how far we fall from your glory. And so we come confessing our sins, knowing that you are quick to forgive, knowing that you give us the righteousness of Christ. So may that bring us great joy this evening. Lord, we ask that you open our ears, that you soften our hearts to the receiving of your word.

[6 : 53] May it be beneficial to us all tonight. We pray that you guide and direct me, fill me with your spirit, that your truth may go forth in power. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I should have mentioned at the beginning, for those who haven't been with us the last few weeks, the evening service is a little bit different than what you may normally be used to. That service itself is somewhat abridged in order to allow us time to meet after the service, after the sermon, to have a time of discussion, to think about these doctrines that we've been going through and how they apply to our everyday life.

So after the sermon this evening, we'll sing one more song and we'll break into groups. We'd love to have those who are willing and able to stay. If you have to leave, certainly we understand that. But we'll be dividing into three groups in different parts of the sanctuary. So feel free to huddle up in any group if you are able to do so. So as I mentioned tonight, we're going to be considering the holiness of God.

And we'll be looking specifically at Isaiah chapter 6. But before we turn to Isaiah 6, I wonder if you've ever had an experience that you've wanted to share with people, but you just don't have the words to do it justice.

[8 : 12] You know whatever you're going to say is just not going to capture just the experience that you had or maybe something you saw. I think a lot of times when we go on holiday, we come home with pictures and stories and we want to share with other people, but it just doesn't completely translate.

Or maybe we may give a disclaimer when we show our picture and say, this is great, but man, you should have been there. You should have seen how wonderful or how incredible the scenery was. I think there's probably been those stories of those who have gone up to the highlands here in Scotland.

I think often of the United States, that story is repeated. I've heard it over and over again when people have gone to the Grand Canyon. I've never been there myself. But people show me pictures, family or friends, and they say, man, this just doesn't do it justice.

How vast it is, how wide it is, how deep it is, the vibrant colors that you see. And so I feel that I'm in a similar position tonight, that I have this impossible task of discussing with you the holiness of God.

And the thing is, the more that I feel like I've prepared and studied this text, the less equipped I feel to be able to communicate the truth of this doctrine of the holiness of God.

[9 : 23] Really, there's nothing I can say. There's no emotion that I can express that. I really feel like I can properly convey to you the depth and the richness and the glory of the holiness of God.

But that will be my task tonight. And so when we think about the holiness of God, you know, it's really not a controversial topic within the church. I don't think there's anyone here that would question the holiness of God.

That's something we see in the scriptures. That's something we talk about and sing about often. But the thing is, I don't know how often we really just meditate on that fact. How well we really know what it means when we say that God is holy.

And so that's what I want us to think about tonight. I want us, even though we recognize the limitations of our human mind and the human language, for us to consider the holiness of God and what that means for his people.

And so let's turn in the text, Isaiah 6. We're going to be looking at the first eight verses. It should be on the screen behind me.

[10 : 28] In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and exalted, seated on a throne. And the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings.

With two wings they covered their faces. With two they covered their feet. And with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.

The whole earth is full of his glory. At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and the threshold shook and the temple was filled with smoke. Woe to me, I cried, I am ruined.

For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among people of unclean lips. And my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

And with it he touched my mouth and said, See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away. Your sin atoned for. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?

[11 : 31] And who will go for us? And I said, Here am I. Send me. This is the word of the Lord. Will you pray with me again? Lord, as we consider your holiness, we see it seems to be an impossible task and personally feel so ill-equipped to do it.

So we pray, Lord, by your grace, you will give us understanding that we may have your wisdom to understand the depth of your glory and your might. May we be overwhelmed by the reality of your holiness this evening, we pray, Lord.

In Jesus' name, amen. So what I want to do to this evening as we consider the holiness of God is consider a few things. First, I want us to think about what does that really mean, the holiness of God?

I want to define that term for us and consider where we see it in Scripture. So what does it really mean when we say that God is holy? I want to consider and look at those features of holiness. How do we describe it? What effect does it have in God's character? And secondly, I want to look at the response of man. What does that mean to us as believers when we say that God is holy?

[12 : 48] How does that affect our lives? How are we to acknowledge it and receive it and pursue it? And so let's look first then at the holiness of God. I think when we think about holiness often, we may think about it in very simple terms where we think about purity or personal righteousness.

that when something's holy, we think of it as being perfect. And while that's true, that is part of the meaning of this word. There's a primary definition that I think sometimes we don't always appreciate that we see in the Scriptures.

This Hebrew word for holiness means to be separate, to be cut off, to be different. And so that which is holy is that which is other.

Something that is truly distinct and separate. So when we call God holy, we're saying that he is different and totally unique from anything else. He has no equal. There is this absolute otherness that he possesses.

And so we see this word holiness, it's used not only to describe God in the Old Testament, but we see it elsewhere used. If we look back in the Bible when we think about the Ten Commandments, the Fourth Commandment, remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.

[14 : 02] God set apart the Sabbath. He set apart this day as a day of rest that is supposed to be distinct and different than the six other days of the week. If we think of the term holiday, it's a

compound word for holy day.

It's a day of celebration or a day of remembrance, a day that is supposed to be different and distinct than all the other days of the year. If you think about Solomon's temple that was built, there was this inner portion of the temple that was called the holy place.

It was a place that was supposed to be different from the rest of the temple, a place that only the priests went to. And within the holy place, there was the altar of incense, but then you actually had the holy of holies, an even more special set apart place.

And so we see in this text, it talks about the death of King Uzziah, and it was actually part of what led to his death was him not recognizing this distinctness of God and this uniqueness of this place in the temple because he and his pride went into this holy place to offer a sacrifice at the table of incense himself rather than allowing the priests to do it.

As a result, the Lord struck him with leprosy, which quickly led to his death. And so we see in the illustrated in the gospel what this holiness really means.

[15 : 18] It's this separateness. It's the fact that God is wholly uncommon from all of his creation. And so then if we turn back at this passage, we have this vision from the prophet Isaiah.

And we don't really know how he's having this vision. It's not really explained to us, but we see as if it's a peak that he gets into heaven, as if God pulled back the curtain slightly for him to be able to see the throne room of God.

And so what does he see? At the very beginning, the Lord high and exalted. Now I want to stop there because I want to point out a difference here. We see the Lord is different from the Lord that we see later on in this passage.

This is capital L, lowercase o-r-d. Later on in verse 3, it's capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. There's a difference in those two Lords there. When we see the capitalized Lord, we know that's the name of God.

It's Yahweh. That's his proper name. But here in verse 1, it's not the capital L-O-R-D. It's capital L, lowercase o-r-d. And so that's not referring to the name of Jesus.

[16 : 24] That's referring to his title, Adonai, the Lord. He is king. He is the sovereign ruler. It's a title that's almost nearly used in reference to God in the Old Testament.

And so there's no doubt here what Isaiah is seeing is the Lord God, the sovereign one, seated on his throne in heaven high and exalted. And so next we get a description of what he's wearing, the train of his robe filling the temple.

I don't know if you've ever met anyone that has a big personality, maybe an extrovert or someone that's very loud. You may have heard them described as saying their personality just fills the room. When they come to the room, everyone knows that that person is there, right? That's literally what we see, a literal sense of this in here. His train fills the temple. It's a display of his immense, unrivaled majesty.

It shows his transcendence and his supremacy that fills the whole temple. And so then we see after that, this image of the seraphim, these kind of bizarre angelic beings with six wings.

[17 : 34] And we're not told much about them other than two wings cover their face, two wings covering their feet, and with two they fly. So we know that they're created by God.

They're created to serve constantly in the presence of God. And yet still they have to use these wings to shield their eyes from the glory of God. It's something that they don't get used to.

It's something that is wholly different from who they are. And so it kind of may remind us of other times in the Old Testament where we see this shielding of the face from God.

If you think of the story of Moses, he's helped bring the Israelites out of Egypt. He's received the law on Mount Sinai. And he asked God, show me your glory.

And how does God respond? He says, you can't see my face for man shall not see me and live. But we see what God does, right? He puts Moses in the cleft of this rock.

[18 : 30] And he tells him he's going to pass by him. And as he does, he covers Moses with his hand. And as he passes, he removes his hand to allow Moses to see his backside. For that's all that Moses could possibly be able to see and live.

And we know that after this encounter, Moses goes back to his people, the people of Israel, and he says, he describes that his face is shining because he had been in the presence of God.

So much so that he had to wear a veil because he was scaring the other people. He wouldn't approach him because his face was so bright. And so this is very similar to what we see in this

passage of Isaiah.

But it's not only the image of God that Isaiah witnesses here, but it's the announcement of the seraphim themselves. Where they say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And so this is that word that we talked about, holy, to be distinct, to be unlike any other.

[19 : 34] And this is the problem that we have with our finite minds and our finite languages that we can't fully be able to comprehend or describe an infinite God. Whether it's in English or in Hebrew or any other language, the best way that we can do it is basically by form of repetition.

So we see here the holiness of God repeated three times. Holy, holy, holy. And this is the only time we see in the whole Bible the characteristic of God repeated three times. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, God is love, love, love.

Or gracious, gracious, gracious. Certainly those things are true. But the emphasis on his holiness here, not just simply holy or holy, holy, but holy, holy, holy. I think this difficulty even goes beyond just language too.

It's difficult for us to be able to comprehend with our minds the holiness of God. I think often when we think about God, we're tempted to think about God as being on the same plane as us.

God is maybe just a bigger, better version of us as humans here. But this vision illustrates the fact that this is not a correct way of viewing it.

[20 : 45] Even though the passage starts with King Uzziah and says in the year that he died, Isaiah is not making the point where this is an earthly king who did some bad things, but this is someone better we can turn to. No, this is the king of the universe, holy and set apart, completely distinct from any earthly king.

And so likewise, when we think about God's holiness, there's a different way we need to think about it because it's different than how we may ascribe attributes to a man.

And so if I pick on Bob for a second, we may say that, well, Bob is wise. And I think most of us, probably most of us can agree to that fact. And when we say that, we're saying, well, Bob typically has good judgment.

He is deep understanding in certain things. And so we feel comfortable calling Bob wise, but his existence is not dependent on Bob being wise because Bob could gain more wisdom or lose wisdom and that doesn't affect his being.

Bob will not cease to exist if Bob ceases to be wise. Right? In the same way, Bob's wisdom may not necessarily relate to any of his other attributes. Bob may lose his wisdom, but he'll still be a friendly, affable human being, right?

[22 : 03] It's not the same when we think about this attribute of God, especially his holiness, because God's holiness never changes. He can't be more or less holy. He is and will forever be holy to the fullest because if he were to lose his holiness, then he ceases to be God.

And similarly, when we talk about his holiness, it doesn't operate in isolation. His holiness influences and affects all the other attributes of God.

So when we talk about God's love or his mercy or his power, we talk about in such ways that God's fully holy in his love.

His mercy is holy mercy. His power is a holy power. And so when we think about God, he's not just a bundle of independent individual attributes.

When we think about God's holiness, it is not simply an attribute. It is the essence of who he is. It reveals to us everything that he does and all that he is.

[23 : 11] And so these are qualities that are celebrated elsewhere in the Old Testament. If we look at the song of Hannah at the beginning of 1 Samuel 2, she sings, there is no one holy like the Lord.

There is no one besides you. There is no rock like our God. Moses and the people of Israel, they sing this in Exodus 15. Who among the gods is like you, Lord?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory? Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, to the greatest degree, unchanging and infinite forever.

And so what does that mean for us then? If this is the God of the universe who is holy, holy, holy, what is the response of man?

If God is the reigning king and is holy in all he does, how does that affect us as followers of Christ?

Well, unfortunately, I think most of us, most in society, if they believe in God at all, they probably have a tendency to shrink their concept of God, to lessen God's attribute.

[24 : 27] Maybe they think that makes God more relatable to them if they make a God that's more like themselves. Because the thing is, holiness, the holiness of God has serious implications in our lives because it's a standard that we ourselves can't achieve and most people recognize that.

Right? If you ask a person on the street, you go up to them and say, are you a good person? Probably most of them will say yes. Right? Yeah, I do good things. I think I'm a pretty good person. But if we were to ask the person, are you a holy person?

I doubt very much that many people would say, yeah, I'm a holy person. They'd probably say no. And they'd probably be pretty okay with saying no. Because it's not a standard that many people use anymore.

It's not a term that they know. It's an archaic standard that they don't live up to anymore. People are very comfortable with their imperfections because their standard is relative.

Because we like to judge ourselves based on others. Right? We can always find someone who's worse than we are. We might have done something wrong, but did you see what that person did? They're far worse than me.

[25 : 34] John Calvin puts it this way. So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we are quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue. We address ourselves in the most flattering terms and seem only less than demagogues.

And so if we keep our eyes from God, if our standard is one another, then we have this false sense of security that we can kind of perpetuate.

We can maintain this level of pride and arrogance, and that's what we see in the world around us. Because society really places no importance on holiness. That's not a level or a standard for success for everyone to say, I want to be holy.

I want to be holy in my work. I want to be holy in my relationships. You say that on the street corner, people are going to look at you like you're crazy. But when we look back at the text here, we see just how central God's holiness is to our lives.

How it can't be something that we overlook or simply minimize. Because look at verse 5. This is the response of Isaiah when he has encountered this holy God. He says, Isaiah is rightly terrified.

[26 : 54] He is expecting his own destruction. And why is that? One, he has seen the true vision of God, and because of that, he has a true and accurate vision of himself.

He understands the gap that exists between his humanity and God's divinity, his corruption and God's holiness. And so this is a pattern we see throughout the Bible, that when people come into the presence of God, they do so with trembling and great fear.

If we go back to the creation story and we think about Adam and Eve, when they've sinned, they recognize their nakedness. And what do they do? They hide from God.

They're fearful of his presence. The prophet Habakkuk, he's seen the suffering of Israel and he asked God, how long, O Lord, must I cry for help, but you don't listen?

And God responds to him. He states that judgment is coming and he says that the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before him. And he tells Habakkuk, the holy justice that is to come.

[28 : 06] And this is Habakkuk's response when he hears this. He said, I heard and my heart pounded. My lips quivered at the sound. Decay crept into my bones and my legs trembled.

We even see this in the New Testament when Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, is out fishing all night and he hasn't caught a thing. And Jesus instructs him, go further out in your boat. Put your nets on the other side and what happens?

Completely filled with fish to the extent that it almost sinks two boats. And what is Peter's immediate response? He falls at Jesus' knees and says, go away from me, Lord.

I am a sinful man. See, when we experience the holiness of God, we can't fool ourselves into thinking that our morality or our good efforts make us safe because our unworthiness and our depravity is laid out before God.

And so likewise, the holiness of God, it also exposes the seriousness of our sin. That's the whole purpose of this vision that Isaiah is having. That God is commissioning him to tell the people of Israel the judgment that is coming because of their rebellion.

[29 : 18] God in his holiness can't overlook sin. He hates sin. It is a personal affront to his own holiness. And so when we see these redemption stories in the Bible where people have sinned and they've turned back to God asking for mercy, begging for forgiveness, it's very interesting how they

characterize their own sin.

When King David has sinned against the Lord, he's committed adultery and murder. We see in Psalm 51, he says, Against you and you only have I sinned and done evil in your sight.

When we think of the story of the prodigal son, the son who has left his father, he's dishonored his father, he's squandered his inheritance and decides to come home and ask for forgiveness.

And what's the first thing he says to his father? Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. So we need to recognize when we serve a holy God that every one of our sins is a sin against God himself.

No matter how big or small, whether it's an isolated incident or it's a pattern of bad behavior, it is a rebellious act against a holy God that's deserving of judgment. I think often we just, we try to lessen the significance of our sin.

[30 : 35] We want to minimize it, right? Or justify it or ignore it. How often do we, as believers, truly grieve our sin? How often have we wept over our sin?

Paul Tripp says this. He says, we cannot repent of what we have not confessed. We cannot confess what we have not grieved and we cannot grieve for what we have not seen.

So let it be our prayer then that we see the seriousness of our sin, that it is open rebellion against a holy God. Because when we do, the passage shows us what happens.

In verse 6, it goes on, then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which had been taken with tongs from the altar. And with it, he touched my mouth and said, see, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.

And so we see while God is holy in his justice, he is also fully holy in his mercy. Isaiah thought his life was over, but he receives the purifying touch of God and is forgiven.

[31 : 45] His guilt is totally removed. And so this is foreshadowing of the mercy that is to come. It's Isaiah himself who prophesies later in Isaiah 53 of the coming Savior, one who is going to bear the sins of his people, who is going to make intercession for the transgressors.

So I mentioned earlier when we were talking about the holiness of God that it doesn't change, that it goes on forever. So we see the holiness of God being continued through the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who not only lived a sinless life, but also fully in conformity with the holy and perfect will of the Father.

If we look at John 6, 38, it says this, For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given to me, but raise them up on the last day.

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. You see, it was the holy will of the Father who sent his Holy Son to be a holy sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.

It's through his blood that we have the righteousness of Christ and that we get to share in the holiness of God. And so that may seem like a fitting ending for the evening, to be able to rejoice that sinners have been given the holiness of God through the blood of Christ.

[33 : 16] But I don't want to stop there because the holiness of God has another implication for the life of the believer. Because when we turn to the New Testament over and over again, we see repeated a command for us to be holy.

Let's look at a couple of verses. 1 Peter 1, 14 through 16. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

For it is written, be holy because I am holy. Hebrews 12, verse 14. Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

And so we may be a little confused. We may ask ourselves, well, why, if we have already received the holiness of God through the blood of Christ, are we then instructed to make an effort to be holy? And so I think we need to recognize here these verses aren't talking about salvation. We are not saved by our works. Holiness is not a condition of our salvation, but it is a part of our salvation that we receive by faith.

[34 : 31] And so, though we receive our holiness through Christ, we are also called to pursue it. If we look at the very beginning of 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses his audience and he says this, to the church in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy people.

That word sanctified means to those who have been made holy. So he's saying the church, you have been made holy by Christ and you are now called to be holy in your lives.

I don't know if any of you are big sports fans, but I've enjoyed the last few weeks being able to watch Six Nations rugby and now that I've been in Scotland for a year and a half, I feel like I can rightly say that I'm a Scottish fan and can cheer for the home team.

And as I do, as I identify as a Scottish fan, it's natural then to want to watch the games. It's natural to want to cheer the team on, to celebrate when they win and to feel bad when they lose.

And so yesterday when Scotland played France, if I decided, well, you know, I may root for France today, and they got a better chance of winning. And I told you that, you'd probably very much doubt the sincerity of my fanhood for my being a fan or a fanatic of Scotland.

[35 : 48] And so it's similarly as believers. If we call ourselves Christians, if we don't yearn for this holy life that is pleasing to God, we certainly need to question whether our faith in Christ is actually genuine.

because true salvation brings a desire to be holy. We should naturally want to imitate the God in which we claim to follow. And so we need to ask ourselves, really, is this our desire?

I think a lot of times we can get caught up with talking about loving others and serving and being gracious and those things are wonderful and needed. But how often do we truly look and think about our need for holiness?

Because oftentimes we think it may just be too unattainable, right? God's holy, yes, I can't be holy in this life, so let's like just try to be good and love. No, we are called to holiness.

How does that apply in our everyday lives? We need to think how are we to pursue holiness in our parenting? How are we to pursue holiness in our marriage, in our work, in our study, in our finances, in our free time?

[36 : 59] These are important questions that we need to ask as the church because the fact is that this life of holiness, it requires effort. And the thing is we're not told to do this alone.

We don't receive the righteousness of Christ for salvation and he shoots out the door and say, good luck, do your best. No, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 says that the Holy Spirit lives in us and controls us.

And so I was thinking about that, I was kind of convicted because we say Holy Spirit a lot and we use it as a name and really don't always think of the significance of it, at least I don't, that he is called the Holy Spirit.

It's not only a name, it describes who he is. He's not the loving spirit, the encouraging spirit, he is those things. But he is, first of all, the Holy Spirit.

It says this in Philippians 2.13, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to the will, to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

[38 : 05] So the Holy Spirit is the same God that we see in the vision that Isaiah has, with the same majesty and the authority of God on his throne. That is who indwells us to give us the desire and the ability to be holy.

And so that brings us then back to our passage in Isaiah. because this pursuit of holiness, though it is a personal thing in relation to our relationship to God, it goes beyond that. Verse 8, And then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us?

And I said, Here am I, send me. Isaiah, whose lips had just been touched by the burning coal, whose sins had been atoned for, now readily volunteers to go.

It's this incredible transformation of emotion from fear and trembling to joy and eagerness. I think this may be best displayed in children, this quick change of emotion.

I saw this yesterday. If I can tell a story about Henry, he was playing football yesterday and he was on defense, the game was nearing the end and he took a ball straight to the face.

[39 : 19] And as the tears welled up in his eyes, you could tell the pain that he was experienced and he wanted to just crumble. He focused that energy. He kind of went to the next level and ran up the field, made a couple tackles and within 30 seconds had scored the game-tying goal.

We see this transformation from weeping to rejoicing and all because of the work of Christ. And so nothing in our lives should produce greater joy in us than to be able to share the message of God's grace.

How his holy justice is coupled with his holy mercy in order to provide salvation for his people who are deserving of death. And so to be honest, I don't know if we always share that eagerness that

Isaiah had to volunteer to go and to share this message.

Oftentimes we're good at showing up. We'll sit and we'll sing and we'll listen. oftentimes we can be more consumers than we are participants. But what would it look like if we the church truly were ambassadors of the holy God?

If we desired to live lives that were so distinct and separate from the world that it would naturally attract the attention of others? If we had the desire to show the glory of God that Isaiah saw in this vision of a God holy, holy, holy, sitting on his sovereign throne.

[40 : 51] And so may that be our challenge and our charge tonight. That we may marvel and meditate on the holiness of God.

That we may receive it through Christ and that we may pursue it through the Spirit and that we may share it with those around us. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty. We confess that so often we don't recognize how holy and set apart and distinct you are from us.

and so Lord we ask for the truth of this gospel message tonight to sink in deep to not only show us who you are but to show us who we are fallen, depraved, unworthy but yet you have extended your love and your grace toward us you have given us your holiness through the blood of Christ and so God may that be something that we're grateful for that we desire to worship you for and also to be able to pursue that holiness in our lives to know that we are empowered by your spirit may that be our desire this week and the days and months ahead especially thinking of the activities of this church how we desire to bring people in how we desire to reach our community may be done by the power of your Holy Spirit we pray this in Jesus name Amen and now we're going to sing our final hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy we stand together