

Separation

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: 06 November 2011

[0 : 00] 2 Corinthians 6 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 1 Corinthians 7 verse 14

1 Corinthians 7 verse 14 there. So here's holiness. So it must be something that's achievable, even though none of us can think, how on earth can that happen to such as me? Holy. Holy. It means a disconnection.

It means a being set apart. That's the sense of it. A disconnection, it means a setting apart from, a setting apart for God's use. Holiness, it's also, as well as being a disconnection of being set apart from, it's a connection. It's a being set apart unto, a set apart unto our God. Holiness is a connection with God. It means that spiritual purity. It means that devotion, that belonging to Him, that being set apart for His service. Holiness. It's an awesome truth. Holiness. It's something we can't grasp with our mind. A truth yet that we should preach with a holy unction, proclaim with a holy zeal, and practice with a holy commitment. It's something that we should aspire to, and search for, and long for. Holiness unto the Lord. It was the theme through the Old Testament. The priests used that slogan, that motto, if you like. Holiness unto the Lord. As they dedicated themselves, as they dedicated the instruments of the temple, the places of worship, and the things of worship. Holy. In the Old Testament, holy means to cut. To cut. You had some scissors. To cut. To cut something. To separate something. In the New Testament, the Greek word, it means to separate.

To separate. To come apart from. And separation is a very clear biblical command for God's people. Separation. It's commanded that we would separate. The salvation offer itself is something that's separate. It's separate from all the religions of the world. I am the way, He says to us.

[7 : 32] Our Lord Jesus, He is the way, the truth, the life. He says, come unto me. I am the way. He's the one. We've got to separate ourselves from everything but Christ. And hang on to Him as our hope. As our certain salvation. Separation. It divides us. It divides God's people from all others. In effect, because He has made you a holy people. Even though we don't feel very holy most of the time, there's a separation. There's a reality. A spiritual reality that you are His and He is yours.

Separation. It's based on God's holy nature. We read in Deuteronomy 4, verse 39. It says, know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath there is none else. Our God is holy. He is above and He's on the earth. And most of all, we can come to know Him personally. He's a personal God. He's not some far away, removed being that's astray from us, that's remote from us. He's very much personal and connected with us if we will connect with Him. Separation and holiness. Separation. It's a disconnection from the world. It's a separation. And yet it's also a connection. When you're separated, you're connected, you're separated unto God. So firstly, just looking firstly at the disconnection side of things. The disconnection. Separation is a disconnection from the world. We're no longer part of the world, of Babylon, of this fallen world. The world fell at Adam's sin.

The world fell. Adam and the human race fell into sin. When he disobeyed God, he took an name of the fruit. We're not part of the same world. As a believer, there's something happens on the inside of you that sets you apart from the world. So we're not to live like the world.

We're not to join that crowd, if you like. There's something different about God's people. We need to realise the danger of the love of the world. There's a danger in loving the world and the things of the world. Worldly things. Worldly systems. The world system itself.

What is the world system? It's that unregenerate people of this earth. It's those that are lost. And yet they're organised and dominated by Satan. The world system. The Bible says that it's under the control of the wicked one. It says in 1 John 5 verse 19, and we know that we are of God and the whole world lies in wickedness. The world lies in wickedness. It's under his domain.

The domain of the devil. And the world is in open rebellion to God. The Bible calls Satan the God of this world. That should make us want to not really mess with the world. Amen?

[10 : 41] If the devil is the God of this world, we don't want to mess with that which is of the devil. So it's a choice between the world and God. It's a really distinct choice. The world system.

Where did it begin? The world system began in the days of Cain. Back in Genesis 4 from verse 16. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. He willfully went astray from God's presence.

And he went out and he built the first city and civilisation. It was a glorious civilisation. You know, sometimes you can see pictures of the Tower of Babel and some painter. It's quite an amazing structure. It was a glorious civilisation. It was full. You can imagine, I guess I'm being creative here, but you can imagine it was full of everything that man's genius could create.

Of entertainment, of recreation, of enterprise. But it was a society that was built on a rejection of God's law and of living outside of God's will. Because the world system was developed as they all gathered together. It was the opposite of what God told them to do. The Lord told the people, the Lord told mankind to fill the earth. But instead they congregated, they assembled together. They gathered at Babel and they built a society that was based on rebellion, human pride and idol worship. And God condemned them. And he caused the confusion of tongues to see them dispersed. The world system is something that's against God, it's anti-God. And yet it's a sad fact that worldliness can sometimes be seen amongst ourselves. And even in some church activities, it's all got this worldly bent, this worldly focus, which really should make us question, where's it going? But 2 Corinthians 4 verse 4 tells us that Satan is the God of this world. The devil is at the heart and head of the world system. And it says in God's word, for you as Christians, as Bible-believing, God-fearing men and women, that the world will hate you.

It will hate you. Don't be surprised if that happens for you. If you are saved, the world will hate you. You know, we've experienced that. I know there's some going witnessing and they cursed and spat upon and derided and mocked and scoffed at because people don't want. It's not that they're against you personally. They don't want the message. They don't want to hear the message that they need Christ. Christ is the answer for man's sin. And when we seek to tell them, it's the devil making them oppose that message because he is the God of this world.

[13 : 48] And just as he hated Christ, he's going to hate those who follow Christ. And we're meant to be pilgrims in this world. The world marks things that belong to it. The world marks things as having that ownership, that right of control. To illustrate that, we could think, for example, about McDonald's. For example, McDonald's, the brand of McDonald's. Every word, picture, character has got that ownership to the corporation. It's owned, the very concepts that they use.

No one but McDonald's can use those special symbols and characters. The clown, the cartoon characters, the archers, that's sanctified. It's dedicated to McDonald's. It's consecrated to that corporation. It is the mark of that entity, of that business. And the staff at McDonald's.

How they make things. How they act. What they say. It's all got to be a certain way. It's a McDonald's way, if you like. It's such that it belongs to that company. And you can't have another product in a McDonald's. You can't just have any old thing served up. You can't ask for a Hungry Jack's Whopper down at your McDonald's. You know, they might get annoyed with you if you ask for one. You can try it. You can maybe try it tonight if you want.

But McDonald's is marked. It's separated. It's belonging to. For that exclusive purpose. All of those things are belonging to that company. And the question for we that are Bible-believing Christians, what is it that should mark us? There's something that should mark you as who you belong to. Do you belong to the world? Or do you belong to God? It should be such a foreign thing as a Hungry Jack's Whopper in a McDonald's. But you should be worldly as God's people. You should be separate. It should be that which comes supernaturally as God makes it happen. Amen? God will make that happen in your life. That separation, that holiness, such that worldliness and the chasing after, the befriending of the world, is something that should be foreign to us. It's something that shouldn't have that pull, that attraction to us to be like the world and the things of the world.

Because worldliness, being like the world, and what I mean by that is chasing after the rat race, that kind of mentality of the world, that kind of keeping up with the Joneses, what's the latest fashions and goss, you know, that's got no attraction to us as God's people. Really and truly, we count it really quite useless.

Worldliness will hinder our love for God. When you're caught up in all that stuff, it'll hinder your love for God. It'll hinder your searching after Him. It'll hinder your spiritual growth. And it might hinder your testimony when you chase after the world and worldliness. There's an old time preacher, Ryan said, the world is a source of great danger to the soul. It's a source of danger to the soul.

[17:11] James 4, 4, it says, know you not that friendship with the world is enmity, it's hatred with God. And whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. So friends, it behoves us to, as God's people, to think about and question day by day. Is that of the world?

Is that something that I should not be befriending and associated with and linked together with, connected with? Or is it something I should be disconnected from? We must discern, and that comes for all of us. We may set certain standards that might differ from our fellow Christians even, on many aspects of our lives. But the Bible says that whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

It's better to aim for the highest standard, as God helps you to discern what is good and wholesome and what is evil and harmful. In Romans 12, 9 it says, abhor, which means hate that which is evil, and cleave to or cling on to that which is good. We want to hate that which is evil. We want to hold that which is good.

Hold on to that. And that can be in all aspects of life, in questions of morals, of music, the so-called values of the world. I've heard some talk about some of the values of our new state government. And they're not values that would accord with the Bible. There's very questionable things going on that make you really question, where is it all going? And who's in control?

[18:49] We know who's in control. That's why the world's values very much differ, quite often, from God's values. So ask yourself, think of your connections and of your disconnections. Think of your life.

Who is it you're hooked up with, you're connected and linked with? Who are you associated with? Are you like the people here in 2 Corinthians 6, where you're connected with darkness, with the devil, with idols, with unrighteousness?

The Bible says cut it off. Cut it. Cut it off. Don't have fellowship with such things as that. You know, one example here is music, for example. What's the fruit of what we are doing? Does it honour the Lord?

Here's a quote. Does rock music produce godliness and purity? A hunger and a thirst for Christ? A broken and a contrite heart? Conviction for sin? Or a Christ-honouring atmosphere?

No, no, no. It does not. If rock doesn't do any of these things, but rather does the opposite, then why should, why would any Christian listen to this music?

[20:05] It's a question, isn't it? It's a question we've all got to come to our own stand on. What is our relation to the world? What is it meant to be? Certainly one thing that's for sure is our relation to the world is that we are to evangelise the world.

We're meant to be witnesses to our world, to reach out. So to recap thus far, what does it mean to be holy? To be holy. God's people are meant to be distinctively different from the world's crowd. It's not so much how we dress, so much as where we stand with the truth. What is it that drives us? What's the motive? What's your motivation?

What is it that you're obsessed with, that you love, that you're attracted to? Is it the things of God and truth? Or is it the things of the world, the same things that your neighbour chases after?

We're meant to be different. Marked by that disconnection, that separation, that cutting off from, that cutting away from.

[21:12] A biblical separation. Now we've looked at the disconnection. Now for the connection, the positive side. We're separated from and we're separated unto. We're separated unto some things.

Biblical separation is a separation that's a connection with the good stuff. A love for God and his truth. A love for the brethren, the church of God. A love for the truth.

Some of the connections we want to work on, for example, is a connection to the church. A connection to the holy church. And when we say a church, it doesn't particularly mean this particular group of people so much as the people of God.

You want to be connected with those who are godly people. You want to rub shoulders with them. You want to connect with them. You want to connect with brothers and sisters. You want to connect with people that you know, love the Lord Jesus Christ.

That are genuine, fair dinkum Christians. They're real, they're genuine article. And God's people are called to be holy. To be a holy church. A holy church.

[22:24] The very word church in the Greek means a called out people. We're called out. The sense of called out from the world. So as Christians, as the church, as the assembly, as the fellowship, the gathering together of God's saved, you are meant to be called out from the world.

And holiness should be a characteristic of you. It should distinguish you. It should be something about you. That you won't hear curse words coming casually out of your mouth. You won't see that kind of worldly obsession with the things of the world, the fads and fashions and the status of the world. It's something that's not got attraction to you. It's not something that you want to chase after.

And yet some folk will try to get as close to the world as they can. Just as close as possible as they can. And think that, well, you know, I can just, I can almost tempt God that I can get away with pretty much anything I like.

But rather it should be, let us get as close to the Lord as possible. Let's get as close to Him as we can. Not see how close to the world we can toy around with things.

[23 : 36] Because it's a fact that a good apple will always be corrupted when placed in a barrel of rotten ones. You know, evil communications, evil associations will corrupt that which is good.

Instead, let's aspire to aim to honour the Lord in what we do. To develop a love for the brethren.

You know, Spurgeon said, an unholy church is useless.

It's a reality, isn't it? If the church is unholy, it's useless. It's not salt and light anymore. It's lost its savour. And we want to be a useful church. A church that's useful.

That we can be a Bible training centre. And we want a connection with that kind of church. Have that connection with those kind of people. With those kind of people. It could be in other churches.

You know, a connection with people who love the Lord.

People who love the Word. People who are not obsessed with the world and the things of the world.

People who love the Saviour. You want to be around people like that. It's good for you. You want to foster that kind of connection.

[24 : 37] Another good kind of connection is a connection with the Holy Bible. A connection with the Holy Church. A connection with the Holy Bible. Everything needs to be measured by God's Word.

God's will is that we search out His instructions for life. And to see what's acceptable. To see what He's telling us. His Word sets the standard for our conduct.

Instead of following the beat of a different drummer. Let's follow the beat that God sets the marching orders. The standard operating procedures. The standing orders of God's Word.

And it says, touch not the unclean thing. That's quite clear. Don't even touch it. Don't even touch it. Don't even touch it. We need to obey God's instructions. Get the right connections.

So we've seen a connection to the Holy Church. A connection to the Holy Bible. And a connection most vital of all. Is a connection to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit.

[25 : 38] The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. He takes us to a higher level. He takes us and prompts us in that which God wants for our lives. How to live that holy life that's pleasing to God.

How to have that relationship with Him. And real holiness will grow as we foster that fellowship with our God. And we want to please Him.

Spurgeon said this. You are worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of Kings.

Therefore keep thyself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings. Let not these eyes become the windows of lust.

Which are soon to see the King in his beauty. Let not those feet be defiled in miry places. Which are soon to walk the golden streets.

[26 : 37] Let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness. Which are ere long to be filled with heaven. And to overflow with ecstatic joy.

We should want to be a holy people. We should want to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The spirit of holiness. The secular world talks about consecration.

We see, you know, as I illustrated through McDonald's. There are some things, the world has got certain standards. Certain things that are not going to shift.

No matter where you go around the world, you'll see that same standard. That same copyright. That same patent. That same trademark. And we are sealed by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit. Now there's different flavours of Christian worship. And different views on all manner of side issues. But we must have that Holy Spirit.

[27 : 36] The Holy Spirit. He is holy. And that should set Him apart. And we want to set Him apart in our lives.

In our hearts. To be a set apart people. In Ephesians 5.11 it says, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. But rather reprove them.

Speak against those things. Have no fellowship with those things of darkness. You know, someone said this, for example, and I know I'm touching on this one subject more than I'm meaning to.

But here's another quote. If I apply this to music, I will not associate it with any type of music that presents any form of darkness. This requires the rejection of the vast majority of pop and country music.

You know, touch not the unclean thing. Even if it's just a little, got a little bit of dirt in it. You don't want to touch it. Abstain from all appearance of evil.

[28 : 37] The 1 Thessalonians 5.22 If it's questionable, leave it alone. Leave it alone. Another challenging scripture is in James 1. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this.

To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted. Unspotted from the world. Not one spot should defile the Christian.

That's a small thing, isn't it? A spot. So, think of it. Friends tonight, I know we've been talking, it's quite an in your face kind of topic really, isn't it?

Because we've all got to come to a stand, a standpoint. Your standpoint might be different from my standpoint. But we all will have to give account unto him. It's to him we give account.

It's not to someone who might be looking at you funny. It's not having to give account to me.

[29 : 39] It's giving account unto him. It's not giving account for your standards against my standards. It's for the both of us to have our standards considered in the light of his standard.

His holy standard. The one who says touch not the unclean thing. The one who says keep yourself unspotted from the world. And it says, as he which have called you to be holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

In all manner. All manner of life and conduct. It's not saying be holy when you come to church or maybe one day a week.

It's 24 by 7 by 365. That should be the kind of life we live. So that even if you were to dig deep and question my colleagues at work to see what kind of a man I am.

That there should be no conflict between what I'm saying to you on a Sunday and what I'm like on a Monday morning down at the workplace. Now there shouldn't be any conflict.

[30 : 42] So you know you're not trying to put on a face when you're at church and kind of put on a performance or act a certain way to show a Christian kind of conduct.

But the rest of the time you don't. It was a bit like that as a younger man. As a younger man to some degree that I would live a double life so to speak.

You know where you're one thing at church and then another thing elsewhere. When I was at school sometimes I wouldn't live up to what I profess to be at church.

And God is still doing a work in me. And that's the same for all of us. He still is doing a work in me. He's still doing a work in you. We still, as I've heard the slogan, Christians under construction aren't we?

We're all still under construction. It's not a finished building project that God's doing in all of our lives. We still, we won't be pure and perfect till we see him face to face.

[31 : 40] But the main thing, the critical thing is, and I urge everyone here tonight, is do you know him? Do you know him? Do you know him? How to know his life eternal. You know, this talk is really, so those that are believers tonight, is to exhort you to live that kind of separated life.

Is to exhort you as God's people to aspire to that holiness that he can create in you by his Holy Spirit. That one of whom it says in Hebrews 7, 26, that Christ is holy and he's separated, undefiled. He's the one that we are treading in his footsteps. The Bible says that we are to walk in his steps. We are to follow him. And of him, it was said he was a friend of sinners.

He was a friend of sinners, but he was never a friend of sin. He does address sin. And he looks at our sin, he sees our sin.

And it's something that we should be ashamed of when we sin. The Bible says, thankfully, there is an answer. There's an antidote for our sin. If we confess our sins, it's not confessing to some priest or some man, but go straight to him.

[32 : 56] Go straight, get that direct line to God and talk direct to him. It says, if you confess your sins, he's faithful and he's just. So forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Think of that cleansing. That's holiness, isn't it? It's when he washes the slate clean. He takes it all away. Every foul thing we've done, even the things we thought. Things that people may not even know we've done or said or thought.

He takes it all away. And the Bible says that he throws it in the sea of forgetfulness. God wipes it from his database. So that, as it were, when the time comes and you stand before him, as someone who's trusted Christ on this earth, he'll look at you and he'll see the righteousness of Christ covering you.

He'll see you robed, clothed with Christ, so that he sees Christ's righteousness all over you. And all of your own sin has been gone forever from that moment of trusting him.

From that moment, every sin was cleansed and taken away and you're made pure and righteous. Not by any working of your own doing, but by virtue of the cross.

[34 : 11] And friends, you can be encouraged tonight that holiness is possible. We can know it because he can make it happen. Some would paint Jesus as this.

In the emerging church, they, here's a quote. The emerging church describes Jesus almost as a cool party guy. But he was not. He warned about judgment and preached about hell, even in private situations.

And that is a surefire way to end a party. When the woman was caught in adultery and brought to him, he forgave her. By his marvellous grace, he said, you're forgiven.

But he also said, go and sin no more. This is a very strict standard and would be a damper on any worldly party. You know, Jesus is not some cool party guy.

He's the holy God. The holy one. And he's the one with whom we have to do. He's the one that we have to give account to. That's awesome. Awesome. And we want to be sure that we're right.

[35 : 15] And who knows? Friends, we don't have any certainty of tomorrow. We've only got today to make a decision. And I just plead with you today, people tonight, if you're not a Christian, you're missing out now and forever.

And more than that, God's damnation and judgment faces us. And the only way to be safe is to be under the shelter of Jesus.

It's to let Jesus be your bold shelter, if you like. To come under that absolute 100% sure cover of the cover of his blood.

That refuge that he makes, that he puts over us a shelter, the cover of his wings. He covers us from God's anger. And that's what he did at the cross. He covers us because of the blood that was shed. It's a call tonight. A call to holiness. A call to refresh that love for him. To seek to be those ones who will tread in his steps.

[36 : 25] It's not some unachievable thing. And it's not meaning you've got to suddenly become just like me or anyone else that's here tonight. It's a gradual process.

You know, some take time to let things go. Things drop off. Eventually they drop off. But it may not happen straight away. Some of you still got things that are hanging on to you.

That are holding you back. And things in my life too. We're still growing. And so it's about praying through. Asking God to help you to come to that place.

It's his best for you. It's his holiness. And it is possible. And why? Through his grace. It's his grace entirely of his grace. And even all the best striving that we can do can't really make it happen.

It's only as we really surrender. As we decrease, he can increase. And he can help us take those steps of disconnection from the world. In this connected world that wants to connect you with all the distractions.

[37 : 31] So get disconnected from that. And to get connected. Maybe reconnected tonight with him. The Holy One. The Holy God. And I urge you tonight. If you'd like to respond.

If you'd like to respond. You know. We'd like to make that invitation. For those who want to respond. If you'd like to pray. For a Christian to pray with you tonight.

Maybe you've never trusted Christ as your Saviour. You're hearing all this and it sounds like. It sounds something that I want to. I want to know him. I want to know Jesus. I've lived my life long enough without having that peace in my heart.

Without having my sins washed away. Without having that which these people are talking about. I want that tonight. He says, come unto me. It's that simple. You don't have to go through some spooky kind of membership ceremony.

Or some kind of secret rites and rituals. Or say some kind of bizarre words. It's simply surrendering to him. It's simply saying, I've had enough of my own way.

[38 : 35] I want to go his way now. I want to surrender my life to him. I want him to have all of me. And you don't have to pray particular phrases or anything. It's just coming to that place where you realise.

You've come to the end of yourself. And you want him to take over. I just want to urge you tonight. And Christians too. Let's have that prayerful heart. That God working in us will show those things in our lives.

That we might have to disconnect from some things. Amen. And connect with some good things that will help us grow. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for every soul here today.

For our love for you. Lord, we know we're so inadequate. Unworthy. Naturally inclined to be unholy. Holy. Naturally speaking for myself.

Naturally inclined to do that which is not pleasing unto your name. Lord, help us. Help each one to find that peace with God. Help us, Lord, to find if there's any here tonight that have not trusted you.

[39 : 36] Lord, that they will see they need you, Lord. They need you desperately tonight to save their soul. Lord, that it might be a miracle tonight. A miracle of salvation in a human heart.

Lord, we'd love to see that tonight. As your Holy Spirit would just crumble every bit of resistance of the human heart that we might surrender.

And for all of us that we might surrender. And have your way in every life. Lord, help us to tread in your steps. Guide us, Holy Spirit, that we might see that which is right and that which is wrong.

So we can connect and disconnect as would be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.