

For He is Holy

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- [0 : 0 0] Psalm 99, one of the things that was just sung to us here was that the world I once enjoyed is now death to me. If you did not know the life that Jesus offered, that would sound very depressing.
- But in understanding, as the disciples said, that they gave up something and Jesus told them, you never have given up anything to follow me. Whatever would be given up would be given back so many times more.
- And so what would be death to us if now we've found life in this world. What a great song. The theme for the night, the passage, is concerning the holiness of God.
- And three times in the passage we've read and we'll look at each of the verses again as we go through it. But obviously we should all listen to God's word when we come to it. But I especially encourage the young people to listen to it.
- Because when I was a teenager, I thought the holiness of God would have been opposed to my happiness. And that most certainly is not the case. That is going away from the things of this world unto Jesus.
- [1 : 0 0] And that song spoke much about that. As brings joy to my life. And any time that I find misery in my life, I find it is a time that I pursue something that he didn't have for me.
- So we've read our passage tonight. And I'd like to read to you a quote of something written by Robert Murray McShane. And one of our students that's headed on an internship was asking, how do I make the most of my internship?
- And they've had some good training so that that will happen. But I had a quote saved that I read to him and I plan to read to others before they leave. And this is what Robert Murray McShane said to Dan Edwards at his ordination as a missionary to the Jews.
- I'll try to read slowly and you listen quickly. And hopefully you'll catch it all. Especially towards the end. It says, It says, I really love these last two sentences.
- It says, It is not great talents, God blesses, so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon, is a wonderful weapon, and the hand of God.
- [2 : 3 1] So God blesses not so much great talents, but great likeness to Jesus. And my encouragement to him was to pursue holiness. It's to watch his heart. To make sure that he is fully taking in all that he's learning.
- By first and foremost watching after the inner man. He could keep himself busy. He could make himself so busy that he ends up accomplishing nothing with this time, right? And so watching that, 1 Peter 2.9 calls us a children's generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.
- Where to show forth the praises of him who have called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. So that showing forth his praise is very much connected to the fact that we have been set apart as a holy people.
- So I'm going to say the word holy many times tonight. I want to make sure that we all understand the word. I'm not sure what it is or what you would think about when I say the word holy. It's many of us would think that holiness is a is this private way of life that would only be for special groups of people.

Maybe for monks or for missionaries or for martyrs. It doesn't seem like it has a place in our daily schedule. It seems like it's something just for a small group of people.

[3 : 40] They have to live on top of a mountain separated from everybody. But you'd still find if you did that you still took yourself to the top of the mountain. And so you'd still have the challenge to live a holy and separated life.

It means a sacred set apart from the profane, the unholy for God. Away from the sin of this world unto God. The two parts of it are seen.

In Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible it says, The primary Old Testament word for holiness means to cut or to separate. Fundamentally holiness is a cutting off or separation from what is unclean and a consecration to what is pure.

So over 400 times in the Old Testament, 181 times in the New Testament we learn about holiness. And it's more than just moral uprightness but it includes more than that.

It speaks of separation. When we say something is holy we're saying that it's marked off, that it's separate. We say this is the Holy Bible. There is no book like this one. There's no one in the same category.

[4 : 42] When we say marriage we say it's holy. We say it's set apart unto God. That it was more than just a religious ritual. But something that was being set aside before God.

And so his difference has cut all comparison. There is nothing like our God. That he is a holy God. Isaiah 45, 22 says, Look unto me and be saved in all the ends of the earth.

For I am God and there is none else. There is none else in my category. I am separate. I am distinct. I am unique. I am holy. And we are told to be a holy people.

And since God is holy, his reign will be much different than any other ruler. As we should expect that his rule and reign. Here in this psalm we're looking at, they're called enthronement psalms.

And we see that him sitting upon his throne. What will life be like when he rules and reigns? And so as we look here, verses 3, 5, and 9. We see there's an announcement about God's holy reign.

[5 : 41] Then we see the activities that will take place. And then the acknowledgement that God is holy. And it's certainly a worthy study, the holiness of God. In David Erdman's book, God in the Wasteland, he's talking about the modern culture and how it's affected the church.

And he says, We have turned to a God that we can use rather than a God we must obey. We have turned to a God who will fulfill all our needs rather than a God before whom we must surrender our rights to ourselves.

He is a God for us, for our satisfaction. Not because we have learned to think of him this way through Christ, but because we have learned to think of him this way through the marketplace.

In the marketplace, everything is for us, for our pleasure, for our satisfaction. And we have come to assume that it must be so in our church as well. And so we transform the God of mercy into a God who is at our mercy.

So we live in a culture that is very much opposed to us teaching about a holy God. We live in a culture that would tell us that everything is supposed to cater to us, that our kids are supposed to get everything that's the way that they would want it.

[6 : 49] Everything should adapt to them. But we have a God that we, he is not at our mercy. We are at his. And we ought to teach a holy reverence for God. We have this repeated refrain that the Lord is holy.

He alone should be worshipped. It demonstrates his holiness that the Lord reigns over all the people. And so don't you long for a day like that, that the Lord would rule and reign?

Sunday night, the men we heard Harley Snow teach about the incremental stress of our life. And so much of it happens because we live in a world where he does not rule and reign in the fact that people are fighting his reign upon our lives.

And I had a dinner with a couple of men from the church this week. And I didn't realize how much that I often determine the conversation. Everybody feels like because I'm there that they have to talk about whatever I'm doing or whatever the church is doing.

And that's nice. But I also want to know, you know, what your life is like and what your business is like and what middle management and insurance company is like, the guys that I was meeting with.

[7 : 55] And there's just so many stresses in life that you just have to wonder. Yeah, God sent a lot of insurance people here when I became pastor and protected me there, right?

Matt as well. And but just what all these stresses are like. And don't you, doesn't your heart just say, I am ready for King Jesus to come? Like every system, it's just broken and it's just faulty.

And it's just, they could put so many checks and balances, but it's just ran by people. And I'm grateful. I spend my days around in the Word and I get to spend my time with Christians and inside the church.

But many of you work inside of a structure that is very much opposed to God, that is very, that is not made for your, it's not a Christian culture. It's very much opposed. And you just have to long for the day that King Jesus will come and sit upon his throne.

So stressing that the Lord, the God of Israel is holy. The psalmist calls for all people to praise and worship him for his righteous reign in the world and his merciful dealings and answering prayers.

[8 : 55] Psalm 99 verse 1, the Lord reigneth, let the people tremble. He sitteth between the cherubims, let the earth be moved. Notice the good and proper response to God's holiness.

The people tremble, the earth is moved. I'm certain I'm not the first one to say this, but if the world has lost her blush, it may be because the church has lost her tremble.

If the world has no reverence for the things of God, it's only indicative that we as a people have lost that trembling from him of coming into his presence.

Let the earth be moved here. He is high above all people. We've said this many times, and when you think of worship merely as describing praise to God through music and song, it's short-sighted.

But worship is woven throughout the entire Bible. It's when we organize our lives in devotion to certain things that we find worthy of our affections. Worship is disciples of Jesus, you and I, deciding that we're going to surrender our lives to King Jesus in a humble and a resolute devotion.

[10 : 04] So following Jesus is to pursue holiness. If we are not pursuing holiness, then we're not really following, because that's the way in which he would go, which means that as we're maturing and growing, the world that we once enjoyed now seems like death to us.

And that ought to be happening in your life. Every week, every decade, every year, definitely every decade, you ought to be looking back and just say, the things of this world no longer have the same taste that it once did.

My mom always told me, your taste buds change like every four years or six months, whatever she wanted to get me to try the food that I hadn't tried in a while. And then now having a chance after college to get to travel to a lot of places around the world, I bring things back to my mom.

I'm like, you should try this, mom. Your taste buds change every four years, you know. Why don't you try this? The rules have changed, all right, for her. But that ought to be changing. We ought to have a hatred for sin.

Jonathan Edwards says, any sin is more or less heinous depending upon the honor and majesty of the one whom we had offended. Since God is of infinite honor, infinite majesty, and infinite holiness, the slightest sin is of infinite consequence.

[11 : 19] The slightest sin is nothing less than cosmic treason when we realize against whom we have sinned. We should have a hatred for sin. We should have a pursuit of being more like Jesus.

What are some ways in which God is distinct from man? In this psalm, we see that he reigns. He sits above the world ruling. He is not subject to this world. He created the world and he is transcended above the world.

He is holy. He is perfect. He is pure. He is completely and eternally good and righteous. We worship and revere him because he is fair. He deals with creation as people justly. He speaks supernaturally.

In the Old Testament, God revealed himself to prophets, speaking and guiding supernaturally through various means. God continues to speak supernaturally through the Holy Spirit's inspiration and illumination of his written word, the Bible.

He forgives and he avenges. God is love and God is just. God in his holiness reveals himself to humans as merciful and yet just. God is distinct from man.

[12 : 21] And so we should recognize this king that sits upon the throne. The Lord is great in Zion and he is high above the people. So the Lord reigns in holiness and we should worship him in this reference.

The reign of Christ, it's simple to understand, even though we find it difficult at times to apply it to our lives. Adam Clark says, Here is a simple proposition which is self-evident axiom and requires no proof.

Jehovah is infinite and eternal. He is possessed of unlimited power and unerring wisdom. As he is the maker, so he must be the governor of all things. His authority is absolute and his government therefore universal.

In all places, on all occasions, and at all times, Jehovah reigns. Because he is the maker, he is also the governor. All of us know and it bothers us that we live in a world that would say he is not the maker.

Why would they be so concerned with him not being the maker? It's because they don't want him to be the governor. Well, every one of you in here would very heartily say amen when I told you that he created the world.

[13 : 26] He did it in six days and he is the maker of the universe. But he's also the governor and he has full reign over every aspect of your life. There's not an area in which he does not deserve to be Lord.

And there's a day that's coming. The world will recognize Revelation 11, 15. And the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

And that's as you live in this fallen world, that's the thing that we should just long for more than ever is that he is coming back as king. He sits above his people.

Exalt you, verse 5, the Lord and worship at his footstool. For he is holy. It speaks of his position. Then it says that he's between the cherubim. He sitteth there and let the earth be moved.

God being enthroned or sitting on the cherubim is primarily one of an awesome holiness. And that's why the earth should shake. He sits above the cherubim. Remember there's a place in the Holy of Holies that a man, only one man of a certain tribe, a certain time could go there.

[14 : 28] And it's such a holy and reverent place. He sits there and he abides there. It also shows this picture of the mercy towards sinners, completely just and completely merciful.

And so its logical and necessary response to sovereign majesty of God is fear and trembling. And we can teach this to our kids because he is a consuming fire and because Jesus, we can know him in a personal and intimate way.

Verse 3, let them praise thy great and terrible name for it is holy. Great and terrible name. Isaiah 6.3, some of you may have already been thinking about it as we said three occasions of his holiness.

One crieth unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. So the Lord reigns in holiness and we should worship him in reverence.

So God delights and prays God for his justice and righteousness and holiness, not just his mercy and grace. And we should be rejoicing in both of those facts.

[15 : 33] I read a quote that it says, If I never spoke of hell, I should look on myself as an accomplice of the devil. If we never speak of the holiness of God, we should look at ourselves as an accomplice of false teaching and of a false prophet.

We rejoice in his goodness, but we also should revere him. And I'm grateful we have very truth-filled music that is reflecting the whole counsel of God, that we ought to sing holy, holy, holy.

And we ought to sing these songs that remind us of how powerful and wonderful and just and great that he is. The holiness of God refers also to his absolute moral purity.

Verse John 1.5, This then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light and him is no darkness at all. So we rejoice in that he is merciful and gracious.

But what are some ways in which you would worship and reverence him in his holiness? People that have experienced injustice in this world, they long for the day that there will be a verdict from the king of heaven.

[16 : 37] So many people around this world sit in injustice and they wait for that day because they know he is holy and he is the perfect judge. People that see misery in this world, and you should, when you see the misery of this world, it ought to cause a deeper hatred for sin.

And you long for a day when the king Jesus will come and provide protection by his perfect and swift judgment. If you live, we see that we live in a world of broken, it is. And so we long for him to come back because that's what it is.

Anything that you see. Brett Broderick and I were talking about something he told me many years ago. He says, outside of Jesus is only brokenness. When you see brokenness in this world, you should realize we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but you should realize this is a result of sin.

And I hate it. And I hate it in this situation. I hate it in my own life. And it should cause us to want to pursue holiness. And then those of us who understand the gospel, because at the very heart of the gospel was holiness and righteousness and justice.

So when we know that for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, we know it because we were sinners and that we needed him to come. So the Bible tells us that righteousness is revealed in the gospel.

[17 : 49] I'm not ashamed, Romans 1.16, of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believeth, the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

And so the gospel that we rejoice in and we celebrate, that tells us so much about the compassion and grace of God, it should also remind us of his holiness. It reminds us that he kept his promise and he was holy.

And unlike anybody who has ever lived, he is a promise keeper. And when he promised the very beginning of the Bible that he would send somebody to die in our place, all the way back in Genesis, he kept it.

The gospel also shows righteousness in that he did not sweep our sins underneath the carpet, but he paid for it through Jesus Christ, receiving the penalty.

The father requires a penalty for sin. The son pays the penalty of sin. He shows us grace and forgiveness freely, not by pretending that we didn't sin, but by dealing with our sin and Jesus.

[18 : 48] And so as we think about the gospel, we think about the holiness of God and how we have sinned against him. And of course, the holiness is manifest in the gospel that Jesus himself is perfectly holy.

He has everything that man was intended to be in holiness and in person, which no human being ever experienced since the fall of Adam, but which all of us in him will one day attain.

We will one day be morally perfected when we stand before his throne and exceeding great joy, having been totally transformed through the holiness and the grace of Christ. When we think about the gospel, we just think about how every one of us have fallen short and how much we were just in an impossible situation, but he sent his son to die for us.

And so his holiness needs to be read about and needs to be spoken about and needs to be taught to our kids and needs to be revered and needs to be worshiped. God's called holy more than any other description in the Bible.

His justice is a holy justice. His wisdom is a holy wisdom. His arm of power is called a holy arm. His truth or promise is a holy promise. A holy and true go hand in hand in the Bible.

[20 : 00] His name, which signifies all of his attributes about him. His name is terrible. It's holy. It's set apart. It is great. And so the Lord reigns in justice and righteousness, and we should worship him with a submissive heart.

Verse 4, The king's strength also loves judgment. Thou dost establish equity. Thou execute a judgment and righteousness. And Jacob, exalt you the Lord our God and worship at his footstool, for he is holy.

A strong king that lacks passion for justice would be a tyrant. All throughout history, you see what it's like when a person has complete power, but they don't have justice.

They're not holy. Jacob, who was known as a deceiver, but now there's a contrast. God has executed judgment, justice, and righteousness among them. And so if we're going to worship him in the beauty of his holiness, as it says in Psalm 96.9, we're going to see him as he is.

Romans 3.18 says, There is no fear of God before their eyes. People did not worship God because there is no fear of God before their eyes.

[21 : 07] I know as I look out here and I just see so many parents, it's impossible for me not to make every application when I come to the Bible, primarily as a dad and as a husband, before anything else.

And as I talk to you about the holiness of God, I just really desire for my kids to recognize that. And I just realize in the world that we live, unless they teach it, they're not learning the holiness in any other place.

They're not learning a reverence in anywhere. If you're saying they don't understand a respect for authority, that is only the smallest of facts that they're not learning a reverence for our God.

Psalm 99.6-8, Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them, that called upon his name, that called upon his name and answered them. He spake unto them in a cloudy pillar.

They kept his testimonies in the ordinance that he gave them. The Lord has always worked with imperfect men, but he is merciful. Aaron is notorious. He failed in the incident with the golden calf.

[22 : 10] He messed up worse than any youth pastor ever before, right? He comes off the, Moses comes off as a white kind of service are you guys putting on here? And so he fails. Moses strikes the rock when God told him to speak.

Samuel failed in the raising of his sons who did not follow after the Lord. All three gave examples of people who did not revere the holiness of the Lord and perfect men, but he was merciful.

And so this holy God is our God. Verse 5, Exalt you the Lord our God. Verse 8, Our Lord our God. Exalt the Lord our God. Because the Lord is holy, we worship him in a reverent closeness and in submissive hearts.

Jesus calls unto the Father in Mark 14.36, and he calls him Abba, which means Father. And then when the disciples ask him to pray, he says, You call him Father. And in Galatians, it says that our heart cries out, Abba, Father.

And so in this holiness of God, we're still able to draw close to him and call him Father. I think it's important that we teach our kids not to run in here, the auditorium, or in the sanctuary, or whatever that is.

[23 : 22] Let that story represent. We ought to teach them in the ways that we can our reverence for the things of God, that we don't let them live nonchalantly. When we were watching services online, it was difficult for us because we first said, We're going to get in place.

We're going to get dressed up a little bit. We're going to watch church. All right? And then a few weeks later, it's like, Can I eat cereal when I'm watching church? Can I lay down when I'm watching church? And very quickly, it was just drifting towards, you know, Can I just touch the TV sometime during the service?

All right? And it was very easy to move away from it because we didn't have all these things that would help us. But can I tell them, in all the teaching about the reverence of God, which is certainly lacking in the generation, we also tell them, Don't run in the sanctuary, but you can run to Jesus at any moment in your life.

And so even though He's reverent, but we can also, I mean, even though He's so holy and way beyond us, we can still go to Him. And that's what's just incredible, right? Is that He's completely distinct from us, but He allows us to come and know Him.

In Hebrews, it says that He is a consuming fire, but how do we approach a consuming fire? Hebrews 12, 24, And Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel, is that by Jesus Christ, we're able to approach a holy God.

[24 : 42] Colossians speaks about us trying to self-sanctify ourselves. Like, we try to talk in a religious way, let no man beguile you, and reward a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, and let others that impose regulations on themselves, touch not, taste not, handle not.

In the verse 23 of Colossians 2, others deal harshly with their bodies, and they indeed show wisdom in all worship, humility, neglecting of the body. But none of these things will do anything, because holiness is a relationship with Jesus.

The way that we get saint, that we are sanctified, is in a relationship with Him. As Christians, we have become experts in the Christian life without growing any closer to Christ.

Are you fascinated with the practices of the Christian life, or the person of the Christian life? As I was reading, I came upon a quote and says, how much have you read about the pursuit of holiness and the disciplines of it in contrast to the person of holiness, which is Jesus?

Holiness is not mechanical, but it becomes through a relationship. That's why at the end of Colossians 2, it gets to verse number 1, and it says, He then is risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand.

[25 : 58] So how did we get to call this holy God, why did we get to call Him Abba, when that is not true of all over the world? But we have become the sons of God, John 1, 12, and that we have believed on His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So the only people who can truly kill their sin are those that are preoccupied with Jesus. He is a holy God, and we have access to Him by the blood of Jesus for us.

And so it's in that relationship that we draw nigh to Him. 1 Peter 1, 16, in closing, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. So let me give you four ways real quickly how this chapter teaches us about holiness and reminds us, it reminds us about our pursuit of holiness, which I was saying, the pursuit of holiness can't be mechanical, it can't be through disciplines, there isn't anything that you can do outside of a relationship with God made possible through Jesus.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit in your life that is going to bring sanctification. It is the fruit of the Spirit, right in your life. It's not the fruit of hard works, it's not the fruit of self-discipline, it's not the fruit of self-sanctifying yourself, but it's the fruit of the Spirit, and so it cannot be done in any way outside of a relationship with the God of heaven, and we get to call this holy God that's a consuming fire, Abba, Father.

And so what do we do when we want to be reminded of it? We come to the Psalms. So first of all, giving us a bigger view of God in His majesty and holiness. The Lord reigneth, for He is holy.

[27 : 37] He reigns. He sits above all. Where do we come? We come down to His footstool. Giving a, also here, it gives us a more biblical, accurate view of ourselves.

The people tremble, for He is holy. The people tremble. When we come into the presence of God, we ought to come with a reverence and recognizing He is not like a slightly better version of man, which is how we treat Him.

It was said last Thursday night how we often think eternity, it's just we want the best version of life forever, right? But heaven is holy. There's not another one like it, right? And it's completely different.

Well, Jesus is not a better version of you. He is a completely holy, completely separate version, not a version of man, completely distinct. And so when we come to Him, we should recognize that.

It helps us by recognizing that we need to pursue holiness at a heart level. It says, praise thy great and terrible name for He is holy. That's not something that you can just do on the outward.

[28 : 39] We love to do that, right? That's the problem so much with the tradition that I grew up in is that we didn't make holy, we said holiness is slightly above the standard of this world and we made it something visible and so if you could just check the box on ten different things then you were pursuing holiness.

But the problem was once you check those ten boxes you still may not be pursuing Jesus on the inside. And so we didn't make the standard what it was which was being like Jesus, we just made it slightly better than the world which was really the diminish what holiness is.

It says praise. That talks about the affections of your heart. That's more than the something that you can do on the outward. That goes all the way to who you are. And then lastly reminding us to meet alone with God every day to exalt Him and to worship at His footstool.

worship at His footstool for He is holy. So this isn't the only psalm but throughout the Bible we should be reminded that we have a holy God and He is to be worshipped in reverence.

So I want to encourage you in that. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help make application in your life as He has in mind in so many ways in culture we have made less of Him than He deserves.

[29 : 54] We should give unto Him the glory that He deserves and we should worship Him in the beauty of His holiness. Not just His grace and mercy but in His holiness there should be a real reverence there.

So think about it. As a parent how do we help our kids recognize this? But in your own life how do you come to God with the reverence that He deserves? And I would encourage you to do that because He's most certainly worthy of it and anything that is not following anything that's not pursuing holiness is not following after Jesus and it only leaves the heartache and it only leaves the brokenness.

Let's take a look.