

Separating from the World

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Holiness Matters

Text: John 17:15-16

As Christians we are living **in** the world but we are no longer **of** the world. God desires us to be holy just as He is holy. **1 Peter 1:15-16** While we live in a fallen sinful world, we are called to be the spotless bride of Christ. When we are holy as God is holy it is possible to not allow the character of the world to draw us away from having the same character as our holy heavenly Father.

- ❖ **Holiness Principle # 1** – We can be holy and **separate** from this world as God is holy and separate from His creation.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God calls both the Israelites and, through Peter, Christians to be holy. **Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:14-16** Holiness begins with the **character** of God. God's holy actions stem from His holy character.

Holiness in the Bible conveys several concepts:

- To be separate or **unique** **1 Peter 2:9**
- The call to be **pure**
- To reject **worldliness**

God is separate and distinct from anything in His creation. Nothing and no one compares to Him because He is above all things. The Israelites had a phrase that was a part of their worship, **Who is like the Lord**? Of course, the answer is no one yet we are called to be like Him.

God is completely and wholly pure. He is morally **superior**. **Psalm 18:30, 2 Samuel 22:31** Evil and sin are not found in God at all. A holy God would cease to be God and cease to be good if there was found in Him any wicked or sinful way. As a holy God He is incapable of sinning.

Every member of the **Trinity** is holy. The Father is clothed in Glory and even the angels of heaven around the throne of God proclaim His holiness. **Isaiah 6:3, Exodus 15:11, Revelation 4:8**

Jesus, the Son is holy. From the very beginning, God made it known that as the holy **One**, He would be the Savior of the world. There was never anyone like Jesus and there never would be. He was unique and distinct from all of God's creation and all of humanity. **Luke 1:35, Luke 4:34, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26, Revelation 3:7**

By the very virtue of His name, the Holy Spirit demonstrates His chief quality as He guides through the process of **sanctification**.
Matthew 1:18, John 3:5-8, John 14:16, John 16:13, Isaiah 11:2

The Bible describes God as light without darkness. **1 John 1:5** Because God is truth it is impossible for Him to lie. **Numbers 23:19, John 14:6**

God calls us as Christians to be just like Him. We are to be pure, holy, salt and light. In the pursuit of holiness, many Christians have gotten off track. Many have become hypocrites and modern-day Pharisees designing elaborate lists of do's and don'ts that are not only impossible to do but also to keep track of. This is called legalism. While we will always battle with our sinful nature and God's expectations. God has declared that holiness is an attainable thing through Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament God refers to all Christians as saints. Saints is the plural for the word Holy. God sees us as "holy ones". It is important to understand that we are made holy through the blood of Christ.

We live holy in three ways:

- Through obedience to Christ and His word.
- Through dedication to Him and not ourselves or anyone or anything else.
- By consecrating our lives as uniquely set apart for service to God.

To be consecrated means that a person or an object was set apart for God's use and purposes. In the Old Testament, the Temple and its objects were all set apart for sacred use. The three offices of Israel, the prophets, priests and kings, all started with the anointing of their call service to God. This means that what was anointed would no longer be used as a common thing. What sets our church building apart from other buildings is its purpose to be uniquely used as a space dedicated to the service of God. When something or someone was anointed, they were literally smeared and covered in anointing oil. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit does to us.

As kings and priests of the Lord, we are set aside for Him and no longer common. God's call to holiness in every Christian's life is a call to realize that we are no longer just a common person. We are His. We are kings and priests set apart for God and God alone. While we are IN the world we are no longer of or like the world. We no longer operate by the world's system or principles.

As Christians, we are to be so much like Jesus that we stand out in our culture, wherever it is that we live. We no longer represent the world or even ourselves, we represent Christ as His ambassadors. **2 Corinthians 5:20** We stand for the principles, practices and purity that pleases and glorifies Jesus. While we are in the world, we are to come out from among them. **2 Corinthians 6:16-17:1** As God's children we are to show His character in our lives. Much like the early Israelites, Christians must reject much of our culture as we embrace His promises. This has been God's call on His people throughout history.

Anytime we place our culture over our relationship with Christ we are committing idolatry. One of Israel's constant battles was their struggle with idolatry. This was not only a matter of worship but was an issue of trying to fit in, to be like the nations around them. Holiness reminds us that we do not need to be like anyone else. Holiness desires to please God and to "fit" into His place and promises. **Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus calls us salt and light. Salt is a **preservative** and a seasoning. As salt we preserve life by bringing the good news of salvation. When people come to Christ, they are preserved from the decaying effects of sin, wickedness and death, both spiritually and naturally. As salt we change the flavor of every conversation and every interaction. As salt we bring the savor of God and His ways wherever we go.

As light we drive out darkness. We help people to see clearly what God desires them to see. As light we **reveal** what is hidden in the darkness. Darkness never reveals what is in darkness. As light we are not to be hidden or to **adjust**, or dim our brightness to suit their desires. Light reveals sin, helps people to find the path to Jesus and exposes the works of wickedness. If we lose our light if we cease to be salty then we are no different than those who need Jesus.

Many confuse the difference between morality and holiness. The truth is that the world is full of religions that champion good living, honesty, kindness to others and doing no harm. After all these things are choices and morality is defined by whatever arbitrary standard is being set or what we choose to believe. This is called **relativism**. Everyone lives by some kind of moral code. Even if that code is complete debauchery.

Morality deals with our **outer** life. It deals with our words and actions. Holiness deals with our **inner** life. Who we really are. Holiness goes to the heart of a person. "As a person thinks in their heart so are they." **Luke 6:45-46** Holiness understands that the heart affects our **character** and our **behavior**. The two are not exclusive. While we are not saved by our works, how we live will prove what the life of Christ has done in us. In other words, if we really and truly have a relationship with Jesus our life will reflect that.

Many times, people will identify someone who has done horrible things or bad things as a genuinely good person with some flaws. Some will say that a man who has cheated on his wife is actually a really good father because he loves and cares for his children. While this seems like a true statement it is not true in the least. By being unfaithful to his children's mother this man has not only proven no character he has harmed his children by not providing a good and righteous example. **Matthew 5:27-28**

As believers we are made holy the moment that we accept Christ as our Savior. Holiness is what our daily walk looks like as we live for Him. We must realize as ambassadors for Christ that we represent **heaven**. We live as citizens of Heaven and not as citizens of this earth. **Philippians 3:20, Ephesians 2:19**