

Sin and Holiness - Part 1

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the profound implications of sin on salvation and our understanding of God's holiness in 'Sin and Holiness - Part 1'.

Duration: 55:40

Scripture: Psalm 14:3, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing and honoring God. He acknowledges that without God's grace and the understanding of His word, our knowledge of Him will be superficial and ineffective. The preacher also highlights the need for believers to strive for holiness and purity in order to be credible witnesses for God in a world that is hostile towards Him. He warns of the consequences of sin and emphasizes that there must be a recompense for evil in order to maintain a moral universe. The sermon concludes with the idea that following God and making Him a priority will require sacrifice and suffering, just as Jesus did on the cross.

Transcript

We are not sufficiently acquainted with the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and we need to spend an entire morning just dwelling on it until it sinks into our deeps. I'm impressed by a statement in one of my sources here where the author says, sin is the measure of salvation. Sin is the measure of salvation.

What does salvation mean? Except the salvation from sin. And if we don't know what sin is, then what then is salvation? And what is the God who saves? Everything fails. Everything rises or falls, succeeds or collapses with the issue of sin itself as evil in which God's wrath is justified because it's a righteous wrath.

It's not human petulance. So, he says, all heresy has its source, we can say all error has its source in wrong or feeble conceptions of sin. Why do you think it is that we are prone even as the church to have feeble or inadequate conceptions of sin? Why that propensity? Why is that a marked characteristic, especially of contemporary church as a feeble or inadequate conception of sin? Sin itself blinds one to sin.

Sin itself is a power that blinds one to its very nature. That's what makes it so deceptive. That's why only judgment really reveals it.

We understand sin by the magnitude of the judgment required to meet it or the judgment that it occasions. But in itself, it's hardly ever recognized as sin. It's called love or self-justification or I got it coming or however you want to phrase it.

All heresy, all error has its source in wrong or feeble conceptions of sin. As with church, so with individuals, the estimate of sin determines everything. Not only it's sin itself, but it determines God.

Because how can you understand God as holiness or righteousness except from his own attitude and truth about sin? Everything is lost, rises or falls over this one capital word. And whoever makes it a subject has a thing in itself that deserves examination because our own flesh shrinks from being found out. So I've got two Bible dictionaries here and I want to just use them to see what they say about sin.

And we can stop at any point and elaborate and discuss. So sin is failure, error, iniquity, transgression, trespass, lawlessness, unrighteousness. It is an unmitigated evil.

And that word evil is like a neon light, something flashing on and off in my inner man, evil. We need to recognize evil because not to recognize evil is to be naive and ignorant and susceptible and make yourself a candidate and victim for its power. Think of recent, of German recent history, failing to recognize evil.

And we can think of our own, especially in an age where darkness is celebrated as light and evil is celebrated as good. So to recognize evil and to smart over it, to hate the bloody thing and to recognize it, not only in society and in others, but in ourselves and our own propensity is a remarkable requisite because our naivety is willful and stupid. There's no reason to be naive about evil in an age such as ours, because we can already read in history what has been the tragic result of societies and nations that will not recognize it.

An unmitigated evil. But the definition of sin is not to be derived simply from the terms used in scripture to denote it. The most characteristic feature of sin in all aspects is that it's directed against God.

What is the nexus, the defining point of sin? It is directed against God. We're supposed to, I would not have known sin if it had not been for the law. The law of God, which is the statement of God and his righteousness, instructed Paul about sin or else he would have been mindless and self-congratulating and completely unaware of the truth of his own condition or that of men.

The law reveals sin. God reveals sin. God's action and the redemptive work reveals sin or it would not have been known.

And what is it in its heart? Any act, thought, speech, conduct that is directed against God, anything contrary to God, anything offensive to God, anything that is a counteractive measure against God that wants to nullify, mitigate, reduce, his reality is evil and sin. So even to compliment him in a kind of a false way, reduces the truth of God and therefore is opposed to God to compliment the sin. So we have to see through the forms.

What is the end? What's the purpose of this compliment? What is really being said here? And what does he say? He condemns his wrath is against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness or oppose the truth or hinder the truth. And another place that talks about not only will they not themselves come into the kingdom, but they prevent others from coming. Isn't that remarkable? You want to know what sin is? It's not only that you withhold yourself from God and his kingdom, but you actively work to hinder others.

That's evil. That's sin. That's anti-God, anti-Christ.

That's why David said against thee and thee only have I sinned. The victim was the man who was murdered and the woman who was disadvantaged, but he sees it essentially against thee, especially being the king, king of Israel and psalmist. Why was Moses not permitted entry into the land? After 40 years of chauffeuring this people through the wilderness and all of the heartache and vexation that that responsibility bore, when it came to the threshold of entry, he was forbidden and all he could do was glimpse it from Mount Nebo, but he himself could not enter.

How come? What was the explicit act for which the penalty by God was to be denied entry into the land? And listen, hold on, hold on a second. Let's not rush here. Entry into the land isn't like, well, I can unpack my suitcase at last after 40 years.

Entry into the land is, is payola, is eureka. It's coming to Zion. It's the capstone, the conclusion, the finality, the consummation.

After 40 hard years, your soul craves for the, for the thing for which you have been in preparation all those years long. And to be denied that entry, particularly as the father and guide and prophet is a remarkable judgment. So what was the sin commensurate with the judgment? He was vexed in his spirit.

Remember that? And so what's so bad about that? The water did come, it gushed, God was faithful. So just a technicality that a momentary lapse, instead of speaking, he struck. God said, speak.

He did not say strike. So there's a clear thing. The essence of the Sinbo, God said, you did not sanctify me before the people.

Your act gave an impression that was erroneous about me because you are so identified with me, your conduct, how you deport yourself is the statement of me. And in that act and that disobedience and in the peak, the irritation against the people that provoked him, he was exhibiting something, not God. He did not honor God.

He was not sanctifying God by his conduct. And God thought it so serious an error that it deserved the judgment of being denied entry into the land. What about King David? Others can fornicate and perform adultery, but for David to perform it as King of Israel, who is a reflection of the monarch in heaven, that act is against God because it defames God in proportion to the role that David is given to occupy to perform.

Got that? So that's why David said against thee, and thee only have I sinned. I have disparaged you by my conduct. I should have been the more greatly responsible because people get an impression of you as father and as King, as they see me as the visible expression and representative on the earth.

Because if your King can take liberties, what then are you permitted? And the scriptures say, as the priest, so also the people. When the priest became degenerate, when they were not conscious of their office and took liberties and were not walking in the consciousness of God, the nation reflected that fall, as the priest, so also the people. So here's a little glimpse about the evil of sin, of how though it may emerge or be expressed through a single individual, the consequences are wide.

It's directed against God. The carnal mind is at enmity with God. So when the scripture says that sin is the transgression of the law, it's a statement about the law as the statement of God.

So against the law is against God. Transgression is violation of that which God's glory demands of us and is therefore in essence the contradiction of God. So who has ever transgressed? Do you pray every morning, Lord, forgive me my transgressions, even though you're not conscious of any? You pray, Lord, in my breathing in and breathing out, I know that there's iniquity.

I know that there's iniquity that is ever rising up within me. There's something that rises up out of my Adamic taint that is inadvertent, and though I may not be conscious of it, I'm asking your forgiveness for it, though I can't identify it. My transgression and my iniquity is ever before me.

You ever pray like that? I pray like that daily. It's not an extreme position. It's very realistic.

So we have to know how pervasive this thing is, how deadly and how without breathing in and breathing out, and especially if we're given to speaking in the Lord's behalf, because we read that in the volume of much speaking is sin, is transgression. Just the volume of words themselves almost make it certain that there's going to be some inadvertent insertion, something out of our humanity, some unwisely chosen illustration or expression that corrupts the statement that somehow comes out of the best of us, however well-meaning, just in the volume of words. It's a precarious existence to walk blamelessly before him.

How about making nice and trying to comfort someone when God wants them to feel the full brunt of their condition? How about interfering with the sanctifying work of God by being a meddler and making nice? How much do we play the role of God and displace God, not out of sinister intention but out of good intention, but it is still opposed to God. So this is the transgression. This is going beyond the limit.

What is transgression? Going beyond a limit that God himself has set. And we just need to be conscious of, is there a day in which we're not transgressing, exceeding God, by some initiative of our own thinking to do good and wanting to be seen and doing good and receiving the credit for it, and our ego craving to be recognized of men will always drive us to displace God, or by holding back when God is requiring something but we're afraid that we'll be misunderstood or someone will be offended. So either way, the prospects for transgression are ever and always before us.

So it's not unbecoming to ask God's forgiveness for transgressions even when you're not conscious of any particular one, because how can you live a day in your mortality, breathing in and breathing out, in the ingredients of that day, in the complexities of it, in which there's not opportunity, in which you have not expressed one way or another something opposed to God. And the most vile kind is when it's opposed to God in the name of God. Or when you're trafficking in God and enlisting God's name to sanctify and validate something out of your own flesh.

God said, God told me, God, God, God, God. That is a vile form of transgression that doesn't think too much to take the liberty to sanctify its carnality by invoking God's name. And where is this not done? At the highest echelons of Christendom, where the suckers gape at these men and nod and continue to pay the bill.

If you're conscious of a known sin, you need to confess it. And I believe that God subsumes and takes in with the confession of the known sin, the things that are not known. See what I mean? But if you'll hold back on what is known, you're still liable for that and all of the unknown.

But if you'll confess what you know, he's gracious not only to forgive you for that, but that which you don't know. So your soul is cleansed by the confession of that which you do know. But then pray as I pray, Lord,

I'm not conscious of a particular transgression, but I know I have breathed in and breathed out of my humanity today.

And somewhere in the course of that, in thought, speech, or deed, in something that I've performed or failed to perform, or some presumptuous act or illusion or reference, I have transgressed. My iniquity is ever before me. Yes, I'm saved.

But the Adamic thing is there until the day that we receive a glorified body. That flesh is still at enmity with God and always wanting to express its carnal thought, sometimes in the very vocabulary of God. So praise the Lord for the blood.

And when you invoke the blood, the blood seeks out and finds and nullifies those things of which you're not conscious so that you could be sanctified within and without. So frequent confession, frequent invoking of the blood, frequent coming to the Lord's table and taking that blood within and let it find its way into those hidden crevices and cracks where self and vanity, pride, and sin lurk and hide themselves. God has made provision if we will avail ourselves and if we are conscious both of our need and of the provision that God has made.

Or else we're clouded, we're unclear vessels, we make uncertain sounds when we blow the trumpet, our witness is defective, it lacks credibility and penetration, and we're just get-by-saints even with each other, let alone in the hostile world. So there needs to be a clarity, a purity, if we are to be effectually his witness. You shall be witnesses unto me.

Moses was not that witness in his presumption to do his own thing, although God made clearly how he was to address the rock. And he paid the penalty. If you have a trumpet, any brass instrument that has not been cleaned and polished and buffed, it will affect the tone and viber of what is emitted.

The same thing with ourselves as vessels, if we are clouded over and not buffed and kept clean, though we may say the right thing, the words, the sound of the words does not have its penetrating power, it's muted. So that's why many in the world have heard the word of God, but not the voice of God. The voice of God, that God rebukes Israel for not hearing his voice.

So that voice and the words need to be heard through the vessels for whom God has clear and full expression. Because he's holy, and if you are entertaining that which is contrary to that holiness, how shall he flow through? So we have to keep a purge and sanctified in a man so that both his voice as well as his words could have their perfect transmission. I don't know that I can prove this, just thoughts that I have in my 40th, 41st year as a believer and being a mouthpiece of the Lord, and knowing in myself whether the resonance of God and the tone is clear, or whether it's affected by some condescension on my part for things that I should not have allowed.

I can pick up the metallic clang, the artificial, the brittle note of human piety, it doesn't ring true even when it's quoting scripture. Then I can hear in other voices the broken quality of someone who has a history with God and it comes through with the voice. The voice is a distinctive statement, so watch your voices.

Your voices will either resonate God or resonate yourself. Okay, sin makes its mark. You can see it in faces, you can hear it in voices, the attitudes that we carry.

We talked this morning about blasé matter-of-factness, a certain air that sophisticated people in the world carry. You know, nothing can really impress them. They've seen it all, they've heard it all.

Who are you? It's a defensive pose. It's not the innocence of childhood that looks at you adoringly as if, boy, where did you come from? And wow, you're something special. And they're receiving something special because they see something special.

Their innocence allows them to see it and our sophistication keeps us from seeing the thing that a child sees, but it's concealed from us because we're blasé matter-of-fact, you can't impress me. It's an egoistic device. Okay, see how easy it is to sin? It's ever before us.

Look, man, no hands. I breathe and I'm a sinner. We know sin by the fact that we are sinners and it affects much.

We're stunting personalities, we're corrupting families, we're sending out into the world deranged men like Woody Allen, and then we watch their films and we're influenced by what they produce. And so the thing just has resonance throughout the whole of culture and life until there's a comeuppance and a judgment. So these sons grow up deprived and want to succeed in very ostentatious ways and become rich quick and greedy and powerful and domineering in industry and commerce and trade and finance.

And so we have the whole effect of their stunted personalities in the society that we inhabit together. And they will go into the pornography business and make billions, not millions, billions on punk rock culture, on rap artists. Who are the recording companies? Jewish.

Hitler blamed the Jews for the corruption of German civilization and he wasn't far wrong. And one day the anti-Semites in this country will remind us that the woman with whom Clinton had his affair was a Jew. And that many of the places that have affected what we read, what we understand, what we see in movies and film and TV and have shaped the national mentality away from God and away from nation.

Sin will have its consequence and God will judge it. For the wages of sin is death. There's got to be a recompense.

Why? Because we inhabit a moral universe. If there's no consequence, there's no morality. Then anything goes that you can get away with.

And so if you read Psalm 73, the psalmist is so vexed he's almost out of his skull that the wicked are prospering who don't give a rap about God and they speak indiscriminately and loudly in the most defiant and blasphemous ways and get away with it and prosper. But the righteous suffer and the psalmist himself is suffering and he's just about ready to throw the towel in. And so you know I'm just tempted to go along with the flow and get in on this and prosper myself.

Why am I maintaining my integrity at such cost? And then out of his deep vexation God brings him into the sanctuary and then he says now I see. I see their end. Though they don't get pay for it in this life, if they don't pay for it in this life they will pay for it eternally.

I've seen their end and they will slip into it an unspeakable agony eternally that makes this universe moral. If hell were emitted or removed from our universe it would not be a moral universe. Heaven is a moral compensation for the righteous who maintain their righteousness at sacrifice and as a recompense for evil.

If it's not judged in this world it'll be judged in the world to come. So do you have that sense? The word moral is even absent from our conversation. Okay Satan's attack is directed against the integrity and

veracity of God.

If sin is against God we can understand the attack in the garden. Has God said? Even if he has said it, so what? He can say anything but is he accountable? Does he really mean it? Or is he just talking? It's raising questions about the character of God that's Eve bought. That maybe God is trying to keep us from sharing coming into the kind of glory that is rightfully ours with him and he doesn't want us to eat of the tree by which we will obtain an equality with God and be as God.

That was the insinuation of the devil. Disparaging God in his motives for telling them why they should not. He didn't tell them why.

He told them they should not eat from that tree. The devil is explaining and raising questions about the character of God who speaks. Has God said? So it's opposed to God.

Sin is opposed to God as God and that she had accepted the most blasphemous assault upon the integrity of God and she coveted for herself divine prerogatives. Why would God's first creation be so susceptible to Satan's lie and the questions raised about God's veracity and character? Why should he not be implicitly believed and trusted? What is faith other than trusting God because of his character? That what he says is true and that he means it and that he's not a man that he should lie. Faith is trusting God.

My message in Africa was that just shall live by their faith and that God has promised in his word that righteousness exalts a nation and the answer to your poverty is not a program from the United Nations or some Christian charity. The answer to your poverty is getting right with God and living according to his word that says seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things else will be added unto you. But who in fact is doing it? It's a remarkably lavish promise that if you make him a first priority everything and anything else will be added unto you.

Put me first is in keeping with the first commandment. But who's doing it? And I'm saying to Africa this is the key to the elimination of poverty, ignorance and disease. Put God first and do it though your environment does not give any suggestion that it could provide the prosperity that God says will follow.

But prosperity exalts a nation is not the issue of your natural resources or skilled manpower it's the issue of God's word and his promise. Got that? Did God say? Can you trust what God has said? Is he trustworthy? And that's the devil's attack to question the character of God and the remarkable thing is how susceptible Eve was to those suggestions and how susceptible we are ourselves also now. Quick to disparage God and equally as quick to have more confidence in our own opinion and thought and flesh than in his word.

That's our sinful propensity. You can't begin to know how elaborate are the Judaistic defenses of David that in fact he was already married to Bathsheba and Uriah was that his name? Was some secondary thing who didn't rightfully have the possession of her so David was in fact not sinning. In other words Judaism breaks its neck to save David from any implication of being a sinner and justifying him even in his adultery and in his murder in ways that are so remarkably ingenious that you just gasp and don't know how to answer.

Why is that? Because if they can save David from his hideous and apparent sin then of what shall they be guilty? If you can find a defense for him you'll not have trouble to find defense for yourself. Man does not want to acknowledge himself as sinner but wants to be established in his own self-righteousness and if

anyone comes along and says your self-righteousness is itself the nexus of sin and needs to be brought to death and the only righteousness is the righteousness of God that can only obtain in union with him through death you'll be a candidate for death. That's why Jesus was crucified.

So when we talk about Judaism and Jews what we're really talking about is man because that's what Jews are. The epitome of man and all of these rationalizings and cunning explanations is man trying to get off the hook. Refusing to receive the indictment and statement of God about the human condition which Jews share being man that there's not any man good and if God were to mark iniquity who can stand? There's not a righteous man upon the face of the earth who doeth good and sinneth not and when you quote that to a Jew they'll say we're in the New Testament.

No this is Old Testament, this is in Psalms, this is in wherever. So there's an instinctive unwillingness to acknowledge the truth of our condition as God himself states it and the greatest statement of the truth of our condition is not only in the word that I've just quoted but in the act of God in the crucifixion of his son. That's God's ultimate statement of the truth of our condition for our condition warranted that answer to his wrath and his wrath required that kind of just recompense.

That means his wrath was rightly kindled against our sin but we have not rightly understood sin and therefore how should we rightly understand and appreciate the sacrifice made for it? Therefore this falls into the area of something ceremonial and only lightly regarded and therefore the gospel itself which of which Paul was not ashamed because it had a power does not for us have that power and we can't commend it to others as power because we have robbed it of its power enlightening the entire thing because our basic problem of failure is the right acknowledgement of sin as sin. That's why we're taking these pains, that's why we're devoting this time. If we don't get off this spot we'll remain on it because if we don't come through here we don't come through at all.

I've never seen that so clearly and we're making up not just for a lifetime of neglect we're making up for generations, we're making up for centuries, millennia of church neglect of the heart of its own faith. Satan has robbed the church by denying this exceeding sinfulness of sin and by which God himself is denied of the exceeding holiness of his holiness. So I'm going to just leap ahead right now at that point and share something that I read this morning that I thought was superb in which the author says the fact that men have derived salvation from the cross and the shedding of God's blood is only incidental to the greater purpose for that sacrifice which is not so much for man but for God himself.

Listen to this, that the redemption is from the wrath of God. God freely justifies men by means of the ransom power of Christ Jesus. He is such because God has set him forth his blood as sufficient propitiation.

Paul is satisfied because it is God's own provision. God's satisfied with the offering which he himself has provided. This is justification by faith to declare his righteousness and man's sin is not misfortune it is guilt.

God's wrath burns against it. Why should that wrath ever cease? His law bore witness to the gospel. The smoking altar where he offered his lamb or his bullock not only testified that God could remit the offer of sin but declared also that God was holy.

That the whole issue of sacrifice from the beginning and finally in its ultimate expression was not only to declare sin as sin and that man was guilty but to declare that God is holy. Sacrifice is for God. Sacrifice is something that pertains to his justice, to his sense of right or righteousness so that the issue of his

holiness demanded some answer to sin or else he would be thought to countenance sin or to think it light or to dismiss it or even almost to approve it.

The sacrifice of blood indicates God's recognition of his own holiness that requires so great an extent in order to justify him. So the issue of the cross is not just what it performs for man it is what it performs for God. Let me go on here.

The chief question in saving man is not how the man may be accounted just but how God may remain so in forgiving his sins. How can a just God forgive sin? If he does it lightly, is that an evidence that he's not really holy but more just an expedient deity that can look the other way and is not taking the issue of sin or righteousness seriously? So the way in which God's character is to be declared is by how far he himself goes over the issue of sin because the ultimate issue is himself. His own holiness will be determined or affected or lost by how far he himself goes in answering the issue of sin and that he has rightly weighed the guilt of it.

In earlier times there was a thick veil over his righteousness but the cross removed it and demonstrated his judgment of sin. The terrible tragedy of the cross which God set forth his son in his blood is his measure of man's demerit. The punishment that man so long escaped fell at last on the son of man.

Divine righteousness seemed at one time to be asleep. One might have asked if it even existed. Man sinned and yet they lived, they sinned on and yet reached in safety an old age.

Where were the wages of sin? It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary. God's character was in question. His honor was at stake because he seemed so long to wink.

Paul says in Acts something, he's winked at this in times past but now calls every man everywhere to repent. So there was a long season before the cross in which sins seemed not to be judged and men were getting away with murder. That's why the psalmist was almost driven to the point of insanity as he didn't see any recompense for sin.

The wicked were prospering and the righteous were suffering. So it kind of allowed for certain impunity with sin that required in time a solemn manifestation of righteousness. Jesus died for men but in a much more striking way he died for God.

Now we really see the son. The son is dying not only for the benefit of men, that's a secondary thing so to speak, but his first and primary concern for his death and his willingness to bear it is for his father. He's dying for God.

He's dying for the name of God. He's dying for the honor of God. He's dying for the holiness of God because if God will count him in sin or dismiss it as something light that does not require as serious a judgment as what fell upon his son, especially as his son, then that raises questions about God, his own veracity, his own character, his own truth, his own lightness over a question of which he's asking us to be serious and he himself is not serious.

How holy then is he? So Jesus died for the father, he died for the name and how does he teach the disciples to pray? Pray this, I'll father one of him, Hallowed be thy name. And not only did he teach his disciples to pray, Hallowed be thy name, he lived and died that his name would be hallowed. His death hallowed the name of the father because it justified God in how far God will go in the recognition and in the

meeting of the issue of sin.

Willing even to go so far as to give his only beloved son, not just to death, but to the cruelest death as we described yesterday. So the issue is God. And you know, and because we are a man-centered civilization, we only think in the terms of the benefit of man, save from sin, save from hell.

We don't think that that's only the secondary aspect. The primary and first is God himself. And until I read that this morning, I had not ever contemplated that.

Can you understand the better? Why from the very beginning, when Jesus enters the Jordan, which is a picture of going down into death, that's what Jordan actually means. The translation of Jordan is the descent into death. He was already prefiguring his own crucifixion and coming up out of the water and resurrection.

And the voice of the father rings out from heaven. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. This is a son who doesn't live for himself.

He's living for my name, for my honor. He hallows me. His conduct, his sacrifice, his willing death is in complete deference to me in love for me as a father.

He's so jealous and concerned for my name and for my honor that even in his last words to his disciples, he said, whatsoever you ask of the father in my name, which is his name, it will be given you. The name of the Lord for Jesus had much greater cogency than the way in which we use that phrase. Are we God honoring? Father honoring? Are we concerned for his name and his honor, his reputation? Why then are we so quick to divorce? Why are we so quick to call the marriage quits because it's become painful and demanding and vexing? Why aren't we toughing it out and believing for the grace of God in even seemingly impossible conditions in which there doesn't seem to be much prospect of hope or change? Why aren't we conscious that our willingness to divorce is going to bring a slight and a shadow over the name of the Lord and what he is as God when he's called us to be witnesses unto him? Why do we take the act with such impunity, levity, casualness? We don't have the regard of sons for the father, his name.

We're not concerned to hallow it. And if you feel that deeply, you'll never be able to preach out of yourself. The issue is not coming up with a good message or even a biblical message or wowing the audience or blessing your hearers.

The issue is always what is God saying? What is the father wanting in this moment? Not whether it pleases me or even pleases the hearers. How dare I presume to interject something out of my cleverness or even something that has previously been given by God and has proved successful if I want now to court the applause of men rather than to honor the father who is sovereign and his every moment is jealous and that he's established works to walk in before the foundations of the earth were laid. He knew the end from the beginning.

How dare I at any moment interject something of myself, however correct biblically it might be. What is needed is the now present truth. What is needed is the explicit sovereignly determined word.

If God is to be hallowed and honored, even if I don't see the result of it, even if it makes men angry or displeased or hostile is not the question. The question is, is it his word? Not my convenience or my ability. So where do we see an attitude like that prevailing in America from our pulpits? What a different church we would be to hear that word but also to see men whose first regard is his name and his honor.

How much is that itself a sermon? How much is that calculated to impress us and bring a higher level of seriousness about our own walk with God when we see it demonstrated Sunday by Sunday in the men who are called to minister to us and will and dare not interject their own opinion of and even will on some occasion say I have nothing to say. God has given me nothing and I dare not fill the silence with something of myself. That is a message.

So how shall we pray? Thy kingdom come, thy will be done as it is in heaven. Hallow his name on earth. Your name be hallowed.

What does that word mean? Whoever uses it, is that in the English language? Did Jesus make it up? What does that mean to hallow? Not hollow. Hallow. H-A not H-O.

Can you know? If you don't know what the word means how can you do it? To hallow. How does this hallow God? How does this glorify? How does this exalt his name or how on the contrary will it impugn God and rob him of his holiness and his reputation and those who behold my conduct and my speech. If we lived with that as the predominant rule of life, how much different would our life be and our witness? But that's a radical consideration.

We also ought to cherish, pursue, define, understand, take to heart these great words, hallow. To hallow the name of the father that he commended in the Lord's prayer cost him his life. Can you hallow God without expense? How can you hallow his name? Hallowed be his name, his honor, his reputation by our conduct and speech except at cost.

In a world that is at enmity with God, how can you hallow God in that world and not pay something for it? In opposition, in misunderstanding, in persecution, there's got to be a consequence. Hallowing costs something. It cost Jesus something.

The failure of Moses lost him something. So if Moses is capable of failing to hallow God and David failed to hallow God by his conduct and even needed to hear a word from the prophet before he himself was convicted, thou art the man. He wasn't even aware of his sin until that penetrating prophetic word came.

Of what are we capable? If Moses failed and David failed, of what are we capable? Got that? How ought we to be walking then? Always conscious that if these great men staggered and failed, who knew that they were called to hallow God, what about ourselves? This is the note of seriousness that is absent from the church that makes it so flaky and light. Interesting that the word, as everyone knows for glory in Hebrew, is also translated as weight. The issue of glory is the issue of weight and the issue of non-glory is the issue of lightness.

So when I run to see these other prophets that are being so celebrated, invariably the witness that I have is lightness. They are too light. The atmosphere is too light.

It's too frivolous. It's too glib. It lacks the weight that is appropriate to God, which is his glory.

So this note of seriousness together with the fear of the Lord, who is holy, is the foundational thing lacking in the church and we've missed it in its most acute revelation in the crucified Christ. His honor demanded the blood of the cross. How much more when he forgives it? In all times the cross honors God whether men believe it or not.

Isn't that a remarkable statement? It's nice when men believe it, but even if they don't believe it, it's a statement to the cosmos. It's a statement for eternity. It's a statement that honors God.

Good if men will believe it, but it had to be performed for his own sake or his holiness was in question. His holiness and his righteousness, Paul says this is the righteousness of God, that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. How so? That something had to be performed in justifying God as righteous and that something was the death of his own son.

Therefore, he hates iniquity and he doesn't take it lightly. His wrath is justified even if it has to fall upon his own son, as indeed it could not fall on any other. Calves and bulls could not suffice.

Human sacrifice could not suffice. It had to be upon God himself. That's how holy he is.

That's how far he will go and that has got to be computed, taken in to our consideration about the meaning of the cross. It's the issue of God as God. To profane is to make what is holy into commonplace.

Exactly what we are guilty of as the church. When God says the priests shall teach the people of the nations, the goyim, the difference between the sacred, the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane. To teach the nations not only by proclamation but by example or else the whole thing becomes blurred and it all becomes profane.

So the sacred has got to be preserved and held and made distinct from the commonplace and the unholy, which is a priestly function. But if the priests don't know the difference and the priests are not careful to maintain the difference, how then shall the nations know? This is Israel's sin and Israel's failure and now it's become also the church's failure. How do we know what is holy? How do we know God as holy? We sang it this morning but do we really understand it? What is holy? What is holiness? Which is the essential, not just the attribute of God but the summation of God.

It's his distinctive and all of his attributes are holy. He himself is holy. There's no other holiness independent or apart from God.

Any measure that we have is only the reflection or what is appropriated by faith from his nature. No one else has it. If it were not for God, it would be an absent faculty in life and reality.

But think of what that will mean if holiness and the sense of it is removed from the earth. Profanity, profaning, sin comes in like a flood and you have a Sodom and Gomorrah where men are willing, knocking over themselves to fornicate with angels. They're tired with the blase availability of ordinary men but here's a novelty with whom we've not fornicated before.

Give them to us, they pleaded with Lot. Talk about utter depravity, how far men will sink when there's no consciousness of God and his holiness. That they will profane even by those sent by God for their gratification and for their lust.

That he had to send out his daughters if that would pacify them that he had to protect the holy emissaries that had come down from God. We're moving in that direction right now, our world. Somebody brought me the New York Times.

I don't know if it's a gift or an anguish. It takes me two hours to read the Times and five minutes to read the Bemidji Pioneer but what I have to read also is the art section, the theater, the movie reviews. You cannot

believe, you cannot believe how ugly.

Naked ballets now, fornication depicted in art forms and all of the films invariably have to do with lesbians, with homosexuals, with drugs, with the vilest of the vile is the subject matter of our culture as if it's the only thing that can command our interest. We're going down saints. If ever the Lord prompts me, I brought with me from New York one day's clippings from the New York Times of that day and God giving me the grace I can read to you an indictment of our present world in every section of that newspaper whether it's the financial section, the drama section, the news section, the editorial section.

We're headed down and out for the want of the knowledge of God as God. Well, let's ponder that as we take a break. Lord, unless you give grace, unless you send the word into our deeps, it will just become another piece of information, head knowledge.

We'll be unaffected and therefore we will not be able to hallow your name. We'll not think it urgent, we will not know how, it will not be for us an issue. We'll always opt then for what is convenient, what panders to our enjoyment.

So Lord, you've called us to be holy as you are holy and we confess that we barely understand the meaning of that word but we will understand it better when we see how far you go through your son to defend your name, your honor, your character in the world. For if that is lost, we're without hope. To what shall we turn? What standard of a humankind can begin to offset the evil for which man is so disposed? So we bless you Lord.

Thank you Lord, help us to know you and to honor you. Sons who like Jesus are willing to suffer in order to hallow your name and that's what it will take. There has got to be lost, there has got to be cost in a world such as this who will take you seriously and make you a first priority over any other consideration.

It has got to cost and we want to say as so much as in this life we're willing in the grace that is given. Seal something with us this morning Lord that was not there before until we heard how the cross is more the provision for your own honor than it is for our benefit and that we had not seen it and not considered it because we are not as much sons as that son who died that your name should be hallowed. Bless this church Lord that's represented in this room and the nations that are represented and sons send something into the church in the world that has been too long absent my God and that is being fomented and generated and gestated in this room and these discussions and we thank and give you praise for the privilege my God of being so called in Yeshua's holy name.

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