

Be Ye Holy

by Darrell Stetler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness and the call to be holy, using Peter's life as an example of how God can deliver us from the nature of sin.

Duration: 53:38

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:3-10, 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 2:17, 1 Thessalonians 3:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14

Topics: "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of holiness and sanctification in the lives of believers. He emphasizes that God's command to be holy is clear and definite in the Bible. The speaker highlights the need for believers to guard their minds against the influence of the devil and to have the mind of Christ. He also reminds the audience of the imminent return of Jesus Christ and the need to live in holiness in anticipation of His coming. The sermon concludes with a call to obedience and a reminder that God's call to holiness is written and forever settled in heaven.

Transcript

Thank you, Brother and Sister Cassidy. I have so enjoyed their singing. They have just enriched my life and I caught myself feeling like we, as a family, have missed Brother Egan so very much.

And this, of course, is the first camp meeting that we've been here without him. And I thought as they were singing, he always liked to hear somebody that just reared back and let it rip. Brother Cassidy does that and Brother Egan would have enjoyed that, Brother Cassidy, so very much.

But I appreciate them singing with the anointing of God. Amen. They have enriched my heart.

Amen. Is this on okay? Alright. Alright.

If you have your Bibles, turn with me to 1 Peter 1. 1 Peter 1. Now, according to my little watch here, it's ten minutes till eight. I just wanted to document that. 1 Peter 1 and I'll begin reading with verse 13.

Peter says, Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober. You know, I want to preach on that one of these days. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober.

I believe the devil is making inroads, trying to make inroads into the minds of our people. And we must guard. We must guard.

Oh God, give us the mind of Christ. And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 14, Peter identifies to whom he is writing.

He's writing to obedient children. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lust in your ignorance, or don't live like you used to in your ignorance and sin, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, or all manner of living. Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

And I would choose for my text tonight, verse 16, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. I want to begin by asking you a question. And I have asked the Lord to take this question to every heart sitting here tonight.

And it's simply this. Do you know that you are sanctified holy? Are you living with the reality of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit? Since you were converted, since you were saved, has there been a time when the carnal nature was cleansed from your heart, and you were filled with the fullness of the Holy Ghost? Have you been delivered from the inward drawback of the soul? The inward tendency to stay in control? Well, I want to tell you this passage that I've read to you tonight is a holiness passage, preached by a holiness preacher. My text is a holiness text.

Peter had a deep appreciation for the experience of heart purity and what it could do in the heart and life of a single individual. I think the words of my text would mean more to us if we would look briefly at the man who wrote them. These, of course, are the words of the Apostle Peter.

If you were to try to put together a character sketch of this man Peter, what would you have to include? You would have to go through the Gospels, the four Gospels. You would need to glean through the book of Acts. You would need to go on to Peter's epistles.

And when you got it all put together, I think you would find the picture of a man who, when Jesus found him, was not very saintly in his character. Jesus found Peter, and he was a very ordinary man, sinking toward the lower levels of depraved living. He was a man who was infected with profanity.

You say, how do you know that picture? You remember the account of the trial of Jesus. When Peter denied the Lord and failed, he cursed and he swore. You know, often if a person backslides, they'll go back to some of the things that one day God delivered them from.

And when Peter failed God, he cursed and he swore. Peter was a profane talker before he was converted. He was sort of a sleepy-headed individual, very impulsive and profane and cowardly, rough and rugged and crude.

He was going deeper and deeper into sin every day. But one day, Jesus Christ intersected Peter's life. And friends, I want to tell you, no man is ever the same when he has crossed pathways with the Son of God.

You cannot be the same when Jesus Christ has intersected your pathway. Jesus saw Peter and loved him and called him and changed him. Jesus saw Peter for what he could become, for what God could make him by the power of God.

Aren't you glad that God sees us not for what we are, but for what we can become by his grace? Jesus took special care for this man, Peter. Jesus gave him a special warning. He said, Peter, Satan hath desired to have you, to sift you as wheat.

But Jesus also had special encouragement for this man, Peter. Jesus said, Peter, I want you to know, I have prayed for you, man. Of course, we know that there came that time during the trial, as I mentioned, when Peter failed.

It's kind of an ugly picture. But I'm glad that God tells us about Peter's failure. I'm not glad that he failed, but I'm glad God was there with us and tells us about Peter's failure.

Peter rubbed his nose in the dirt of failure. But I want to tell you the same Bible that tells me that Peter cursed and swore and denied Jesus, tells me that he went out and he wept bitterly. If we don't learn anything else from this man, Peter, we ought to get this lesson clearly in our minds, and that is failure doesn't have to be the last chapter in your book.

God can bring you back from failure. And I want to tell you, I'm probably talking to somebody right here on this Saturday night who has at one point failed God and had trouble rising above it and getting your feet under you again. I just want to tell you, if Peter can rise again, you can rise again.

God can deliver you and forgive you for failure. Thank God he can. There are a lot of us who would not be here tonight if God couldn't forgive failure.

After the resurrection, Jesus had special words for this man, Peter. Jesus sought him out. We don't know everything that Jesus said to Peter, but we do know that Jesus urged him to rise above his fall, and Jesus urged Peter to get on to Pentecost.

Peter went to Pentecost. It's recorded in Acts chapter 2. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there was a sound of a mighty rushing wind. There were cloven tongues like as of fire.

There were other languages used to preach the gospel. And there came on that little band of about 120, regenerated and unified and praying and expecting and obedient disciples the promise of the Father. Friend, I want to tell you, Peter, looking back on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 15, there was nothing said there in Peter's memory.

He was not thinking about the other languages or the cloven tongues. He was saying that our hearts were purified by faith. And I want to tell you, friend, that Peter's heart was purified by faith.

And a man who was sinking toward the lower levels of depraved living became the mighty spokesman on the day of Pentecost for the whole band of disciples. And a man who was cowardly and a miserable failure became the leader of the early church. Friend, I want to tell you, Peter had an appreciation for what Pentecost could do in the heart and life of a single individual.

He had great respect for heart purity and what it could do in the human heart. He became a holiness preacher. He wasn't ashamed of it.

You get to his epistles and in every chapter Peter gets on the subject of holiness. He talks about the life of holiness and the character of holiness and the command of holiness and the works of holiness. He believed it and preached it and lived it and wrote about it and we're looking at it tonight.

Friend, I want to tell you, it makes me feel like saying, if it can happen to Peter, it can happen to anybody. Oh, I look at Peter's life and I see after Pentecost that Peter still had some of his prejudiced thinking. He still had some mistaken ideas in his mind.

Isn't that interesting? In fact, it took God three times in Acts chapter 11 to get through to sanctify Peter that he was thinking wrong. But I want to tell you that was a mistake of the head and not a sin of the heart. Did you know that holiness, biblically preached, has never claimed to give a person a perfect mind? It does claim to give a person a pure heart.

It does claim to give a person a pure motive. Aren't you glad that God in heaven judges his children by the motive of their heart and he who sees perfectly can judge the motive of our heart. Hallelujah.

Well, if it can happen to Peter, it can happen to anybody. If it can happen to Peter, it can happen to you. If God can give Peter a pure heart, he can give you a pure heart.

If Pentecost can make the kind of change it made in Peter's life, it'll make that kind of change in your life. If God can do it for Peter, he can do it for you. The question I want to look at for a little while tonight is simply this.

Why must we be holy? Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says it like this. It is written. And I would suggest to you, first of all, it is written as a clear and understandable and definite command of God's word.

We need to hear this message from the Lord. God says, Be ye holy, for I am holy. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 3. God says, For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 4, 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

I want to tell you, friends, that God has written, and it is still written tonight. It is forever settled in heaven. And God's call to holiness is written as a clear and definite and understandable command of God's word.

When God says, Be ye holy. Here in Peter, in Peter, 1 Peter, the command is in that lightning tense. Suggesting an instantaneous action.

God is saying to his obedient child, Become holy. Not by a mighty, not by a working of your own achievement. But by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

Not by discipline. Friends, I want to tell you, we're living in a day when people are talking about and testifying to kind of a general spiritual formation sort of thing. God's working on me.

Well, he is working on me. And he wants to do an instantaneous work in your heart where the nature of sin is crucified. The body of sin is destroyed.

He doesn't take care of carnality by a process of discipline. Though I would quickly say that a lot of people could live a holy life a whole lot better if they had a better level of discipline in their life. But friend, you'll never discipline carnality out of your heart any more than you can discipline weeds out of your garden.

It is not by joining a support group that you become holy. It's not by submitting to an accountability group, as much value as those things may have. But by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing of

the blood of Jesus Christ, become holy.

You know, friends, if we're not careful, we treat this matter of inward holiness, sanctifying grace, we treat it like a spiritual option. We put it up there on a spiritual wish list of some kind. Something that we would watch for on Christmas morning or maybe during revival or camp meeting.

Some kind of spiritual luxury that we can purchase if we decide we can afford it. I remember a number of years ago a friend of mine bought a new Cadillac. I'll never forget.

He was showing me his car. And it was quite interesting. I'd never been too close to such a creature, you know, and so I was interested in looking at his new automobile.

He started showing me the options on his car. It had a plush leather interior. It had self-adjusting mirrors, so if somebody came up behind you at night and shone their lights in your rearview mirror, that mirror would automatically adjust itself so those lights didn't reflect in your eyes.

If you met somebody coming the other direction and your lights were on bright, those lights would automatically dim for you. You didn't have to flip the turn signal switch, you know, to get them to dim. It had a Delco Bose stereo system in it.

If you touched the door handle when it was locked, the inside lights would come on and you would say, oh, somebody's in there, you know. You opened that door without a key, the horn would blow and the lights would flash. It had the neatest little thing on the trunk, you know, if you got your groceries out of the trunk and you couldn't get your hand up there to slam the trunk lid, if you could just get one finger up there and pull it down gently, it had some neat little fingers that reached up there and got the trunk lid and latched it for you.

It had instant gas mileage readout. You know, when you push the gas hard at a gas stoplight trying to beat the fella next to you, you're getting two miles to the gallon, you know, it would read that out for you. And when you were coming down the hill, the other side of the hill, you were getting 48 miles to the gallon.

It made you want to go downhill both ways, you know. It had a fully digital dash. And when he got done showing me the car, he kind of looked at me with a cute little sheepish grin and he said, it's got a lot of things on it the fella really needs.

But you know when he got, you know what? The only thing that keeps anybody here tonight from buying a car like that is one of two things. You don't believe me, do you? But that's true. Either you don't have the money to buy a car like that or you don't want to spend the money on a car like that, one or the other.

Isn't that right? Most of us don't buy cars by options. We go to the car lot, you know, and we look at that price and it's about \$5,000 more than we saw advertised in the newspaper because they've added this and this and this and this and this. And we look at our companion and say, what can we live without? We're going to have to go see Jack Collin.

And we cut it here and cut it there and talk to him a little bit more and finally get the payments down until we can afford what we're trying. You know, friends, if we're not careful, we treat heart purity exactly like that. We kind of put it on a spiritual option list, put it on a spiritual wish list.

And we say, you know, if I come into some money, I might go for that. If I get an inheritance, I might pay that price. May I stop right here and be faithful to your soul and my responsibility and tell you there is never a time in the pages of God's word when heart purity is presented as a spiritual option or on a spiritual wish list.

God says it is written, be ye holy. As clear and understandable as any command of God could possibly be. It's written.

It's written secondly in the character of the truly born again. Now I mean this in two ways. First, I mean that it is written in the character of the born again as it pertains to the desire of the truly born again heart.

Brother Parker, I couldn't agree with you more. When you said I think it's as natural for a born again person to walk into holiness as it is for a baby to nurse. I want to tell you friends tonight, it is as natural in the new birth experience for you to want heart purity as anything could possibly be.

If you are born again, you want to be sanctified holy. You want sin dealt with in your heart. You do not want to tolerate sin of any degree or any variety in your heart.

A born again person, if a person is truly born again, there are certain things that mark or identify a born again person. For example, a born again person's life is marked by obedience to God. May I say that one more time? A born again person's life is marked by obedience to God.

Because a born again person has laid down their arms of rebellion against God and has ceased rebelling against a holy God. I would that God would take that little message that I just spoke and rivet it on the hearts of every young person in Bible Methodist churches and in the Alabama conference. And may I say it one more time, the bottom line of a new birth experience is an end of rebellion against God.

If I am born again, I am not raising my fist at almighty God. I am not resisting the will of God in any known way in my life. I have laid down my arms of rebellion and as far as my intention is concerned, my intention is to obey God.

Now I understand we sometimes talk about surrendering our will to be sanctified. And I do believe that there is a deeper surrender that takes place when we come to be sanctified. But it is an inward surrender that God begins to reveal to us as we seek to be sanctified.

But friend, as far as rebellion against God and lifting my fist against an almighty God, that stops when I am born again. If I am not living in obedience to God, I am not biblically speaking a child of God. And I have some clear and definite repenting to do.

A born again person has renounced rebellion against God. A born again person's life is marked by a desire for complete holiness. A born again person wants to be holy.

A born again person does not want to tolerate sin in any degree or any variety inwardly or outwardly in your life. And if you become aware as a born again child of God of something in your heart that clouds your experience and relationship with God and brings condemnation to your soul, it will cause you to fall on your face in contrition and humbling and confession to God asking him to please forgive me, I don't want to violate your will in my life. If you become aware of inward sin as a born again person, and you will eventually, it'll crush you.

You will cry out to God, Oh God, there's something in my heart that's not like you. There's something on the inside of an attitude of soul and spirit that is not Christ-like. And it'll humble you and cause you to, you will become a seeker after holiness.

Now let me say this at this point in this message. It could be that I'm talking to someone here tonight, that this doctrine of heart purity is new to you. Entire sanctification is strange to you.

You have been trained in a theology that says you can never be delivered from the nature of sin. Maybe you've been taught all of your life that after you're born again, the nature of sin is still in your heart, but you will have to wait till you get to heaven to find deliverance from that. Maybe there's even someone here tonight who has been taught that Jesus, when he forgives your sins, forgives your past, present, and future sins.

So that sin in the believer is really no big deal. Because God has forgiven all of my sins, past, present, and future. And if I sin, they're already forgiven anyway.

Friends, I just want to make it very clear, that to me is not a biblical doctrine. But friends, even if you have been raised in a theology that does not leave room to be entirely sanctified, I still maintain that one of the marks of a truly born-again person, and I do believe there are truly born-again people that aren't Bible Methodist people, that aren't holiness in persuasion, there are people who have been trained in a wrong theology all of their life, but I still believe that if they're truly born-again, there is in their heart a desire for complete holiness. They do not want to tolerate sin in any degree or any variety in their life.

Let me give you some scripture, and I gave this scripture the other morning in my message, but I felt so very clearly that I ought to give it again, and I don't know if I've ever done this in a meeting before, to use the same scripture in two messages. But turn with me for a moment to 1 John chapter 3. 1 John chapter 3, follow with me from verse 4. God is telling us what an act of sin is in 1 John chapter 3. And he says it like this, Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is a transgression of the law. Sin is lawlessness, choosing to break God's law.

Young people, I hope you're hearing me tonight. I hope you're listening to this message. Sin is choosing to break God's law.

We heard a powerful message on hell last night. And one of the reasons why I feel like we need to be so clear in what sin is, is because it's sin that condemns us to an eternal hell. Friends, we dare not be cloudy in this.

We dare not be just kind of stumbling along and hoping for the best when we get to the end of life's journey. It's too serious for that. Sin is choosing to break God's law.

That requires a knowledge, and that requires a choice. Sin is not a mistake. Sin is not an accident.

Sin is lawlessness against God. Choosing to break God's law. And so he tells us in verse 5, we know that he, that is Jesus, was manifested to take away our sins or take away our lawlessness.

Friends, I just want to stop and thank God that Jesus came to take away lawlessness. Hallelujah. We don't have to live in rebellion against God.

We don't have to go on violating the law of God. As far as our understanding of that law is, we can walk in all the light and know the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to take away lawlessness.

Verse 5, you know that he was manifested to take away our sins, take away lawlessness. So, in verse 6, Whosoever abideth in him, we heard the message this morning on abiding in Christ, and this is one of the marks of abiding in him, he whosoever abideth in him sinneth not, does not choose to break God's law, is not living in lawlessness. And he says, whosoever sinneth, whosoever chooses to break God's law, hath not seen him, neither known him.

Now friends, that's pretty clear preaching to me. And so John says in verse 7, little children, Let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness, keeps the law of God, is righteous. He that committeth sin, lawlessness against God, is of the devil.

Now friends, that's not Bible missionary preaching, or Bible Methodist preaching, or Free Methodist preaching, or Wesleyan Methodist preaching. That's God's Word. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of Man was manifested. Why? That he might destroy the works of the devil. That he might destroy lawlessness in our hearts.

Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, does not commit lawlessness. For his seed remaineth in him. What is that seed? The seed of righteousness.

And he cannot sin because he is born of God. And please understand, Brother Miles gave a wonderful illustration to illustrate that. He cannot sin does not mean he is not capable of sin.

It means he is able not to sin. Friends, if you're born again, you don't want to tolerate lawlessness in your life. You're not living a life of disobedience to God.

And if you become aware of sin, inwardly or outwardly, if you have been truly born again, you will fall on your face in repentance, begging God for forgiveness and restoration. It is written in the spiritual desire of the born again to be holy. But it is also written in the character of the born again as it pertains to the need to be sanctified.

You know, friends, if you walk in the light and walk with the Lord as a Christian for very long, you will become aware of the disposition of sin in your heart. The nature of sin in your heart. That thing that produced lawless acts in the first place.

That caused actions of sin that brought guilt before God. Richard Taylor calls it the leftover tendency to assume autonomy or control. H.A. Baldwin calls it that unrighteous inhabiting of every unsanctified heart that bitterly opposes the supremacy of the divine mind.

James calls it double-mindedness that brings instability in all your ways. And as you live a Christian life, you'll become aware that you will have a desire for God to control your life, but given the right stimulus, there will be something of an inward desire to control your own life left there. And it will trouble you.

You will feel a pull toward God as a Christian, but you will also feel a pull at times toward the world as an unsanctified Christian. And it will trouble you. You will want to live identified with God and holiness at times, and other times you'll feel something on the inside that wants to identify with this world.

And it will confuse you. That's why James called it unstable in all of his ways. You will want to live to please God, but at times you'll want to live to please yourself.

There are times when you'll have a Christlike attitude and other times with certain stimulus in your life, you will sense something on the inside that is not Christlike, and you know it. And it will trouble you, and you will agonize over it, and you will try to control it, and at times it may defeat you and send you to your knees begging God for forgiveness for that expression of a carnal heart. I need to stop right here and give you a couple of illustrations.

It has been my privilege to know several people who were not raised in the holiness way, but God led them to holiness. I was in the meal line with Bill Smith the other day, and some way the subject turned to his mother, and I think we were talking about the fact that this is 50 years ago, this camp was his first camp, and we got to talking about his background some, and he mentioned that his mother was sanctified, I think in the Methodist church, some brand of the Methodist church I think it was. And I said, Bill, I know the story you're going to tell me, because your mother told me that story.

In fact, I've used this story, Bill, all over the country. I want to tell it to you tonight. I was in a meeting at Covington.

They were meeting in that little small house, I think maybe they've gone to a bigger place now. But a little small place, they set it up for the services, a little portable altar, a little portable podium, my back was right to the wall, and the people on the back seat in that little church were as close as the front seat here tonight. And so I was preaching, and I could see the whites of their eyes, you know.

Made me just a little nervous, you know, being that close. But that night I preached on holiness. There was no center aisle, just folding chairs kind of fanned out like this.

There was no center aisle, but right straight in front of me on the back seat was Bill Smith's mother. And I want to tell you that dear lady pulled the preach out of me that night. May I take a little short detour here and tell you that you can make your pastor a better preacher if you respond to him and act like you know what he's preaching about, even if you don't.

I won't charge you for that. I'll just throw that in. And that night I could tell that dear lady knew exactly what I was preaching about.

And when I got done preaching, she should have come all the way around those chairs to get to me, but she didn't want to do that. She just pushed the chairs aside and came right up to me and grabbed my head and said, Sonny, you preached it. By the way, that didn't hurt my feelings a bit when she called me Sonny.

She said, Sonny, you preached it just like it happened to me tonight. Do you want to hear my story? And I said, I sure do. And I stood there and listened while she told me.

She said, when I was just a young girl, I got wonderfully converted. I knew Jesus had forgiven my sins. I had a right relationship with God.

My name was written in heaven. I was a child of God. And I rejoiced that my sins were washed away.

And I was right with God. And she said, I wonderfully enjoyed my new birth experience. But she said, one day, I became aware that there was something wrong in my heart.

And I didn't know what it was. Brother Smith, as I recall the story, she said, one night I went home and I got down beside my bed and I prayed. I looked up to heaven and I said, Lord, thank you for saving me, for forgiving my sins.

But Lord, there's something wrong in my heart and I'm here to find out what it is. You know, friends, I believe if we were that simply honest with God, we would go a whole lot further. Something's wrong and I don't know what it is, but I'm here to find out.

I want to tell you, God will move three worlds to meet your heart when your attitude is like that. She said, as I prayed for a moment, all of a sudden God stopped me like a flash of lightning right in the middle of my prayer and put His finger on something in my life and said, may I have that? She said, all of a sudden I was at a crossroads. She said, I thought about it a moment, prayed about it a moment, and then she said, all of a sudden there was something in my heart that said, oh, yes, Lord, you can have that.

She said, I rejoiced that I had given God, I had walked in the light, I had given Him what He asked for. She didn't even tell me what it was. That really doesn't matter because God in heaven knows exactly what you need to give Him and I need to give Him.

And many, many times when we seek to be sanctified, God will begin to pull the cover off and reveal things in my heart that need to be fully surrendered to Him that I wasn't aware of. Now, I'm not talking about rebellion against Him. I laid that down when I got saved.

I'm talking about a deeper surrender of my heart. And Sister Smith said, I rejoiced for a moment, but all of a sudden God stopped me again and said, what about this? You know, it's amazing to me how accurate God can be. And she said again, I was at a crossroads.

I wasn't sure. And all of a sudden as I prayed, I said, oh, God, I want You to have that. And she said, my heart rejoiced.

I had walked in the light. I had said yes to the will of God. And she said that went on several times.

May I have this? And she would say yes. And may I have that? And she would say yes again. The old timers used to call it dine out.

And I don't mind the terminology still. I believe there is a dine out that takes place to get sanctified wholly. And finally, dear Sister Smith said, Preacher, there came a moment in time when I suddenly became aware that I had reached the bottom of my heart.

And I had given God everything He asked for. And I had reached the bottom of my soul. And suddenly, she said, my heart was flooded.

And I knew in my heart that God had dealt me from the inside the deficiency I had become aware of that was the carnal man trying to gain control again. And she said, God did something in my heart. And I had a witness in my heart that He had taken care of my need.

Dear Sister Smith said, it was until sometime later. I don't remember how long. But it was until sometime later in the providence of God.

She happened into a hole in this church. And lo and behold, the preacher got up and began to talk about an experience called entire sanctification. And it would cleanse from your heart the nature of sin.

And Sister Smith said, I could hardly contain myself because God in heaven witnessed to my soul that that's what He had done for me beside my bed as I prayed and walked in the light. And friend, I want to tell you it is written in the character of the born again a desire and a need to be sanctified wholly. All of us know Brother Egan in this conference.

And one of the thrills of my heart and I have been going through the process of going through tapes. Sister Egan wanted all the tapes she could get of Brother Egan. And I'm sure glad she did that.

I've been going through and transferring those tapes to CDs. And I've probably got a hundred of them transferred now. But you've heard Brother Egan tell the story.

I just heard it this week. He said, I wasn't raised in the holiness way. Raised in a little Methodist church in central Georgia.

And already by that time, the holiness message in central Georgia had disappeared from the Methodist church. Brother Egan got saved as a young lad, teenage boy. Walked with the Lord.

Enjoyed his walk with the Lord. But he like Sister Smith said, there came a point in time when I knew I had not backslidden. I knew I had not sinned against God.

But I also knew something was not right in my heart. Brother Egan went to his pastor of the little Methodist church and said, Pastor, I know Jesus saves me. I know I haven't sinned against Him.

But there's something not right in my heart and I don't know what it is. That pastor gave him the best advice he could give him. Not knowing about holiness.

He said, Son, if there's something wrong, you keep your heart open and you pray about it and God will show you what it is. And in the process of time and the providence of God, God led Brother Egan to God's Bible school and he heard the message of holiness. And he tells of the time when he knelt in prayer seeking to be sanctified.

And God began to take him through some things that he knew that Brother Egan would need to settle in his heart. And he said, If I sanctify you wholly and your mother and dad don't take the holiness way, will you take the holiness way? And Brother Egan struggled with that for a little while because it means something to take away that's different than your family's taking. But finally he threw up his hands and said, If mom and dad don't take the way, I'll take the holiness way anyway.

And then God began to talk to him again and said, If your brothers don't take the holiness way, will you still take the holiness way? And again there was that struggle for supremacy in the soul. And finally Brother Egan said, Oh God, if my brothers don't take the way, I'll take the way of holiness. And then God took him to his sister.

And friends, you know the story. But from that day to this, his family did not take the holiness way. But God found a man in central Georgia and lifted him out of a little country rural area and sent him around the world to preach holiness because some one day he settled in his heart and found something he hadn't been taught even existed.

Hallelujah! It's written in the character of the truly born again. The desire and the need. I felt very clearly, I don't always do this in this message, but I felt very clearly God wanted me to take you in closing to 1 Thessalonians.

Because someone here tonight may be saying, Preacher, you've told us about an experience of grace. Show it to me in the Bible. I don't know if I can do this in 5 to 10 minutes or not.

I'm going to try. I'm going to preach you through 5 chapters of 1 Thessalonians quickly. I can see you don't believe I can do it.

1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Keep your Bible open there if you want to. Let's look at it. Paul, writing to the Thessalonian Christians, begins to give us a profile of these Christians in chapter 1. He says in verse 3, I remember without ceasing your work of faith, your labor of love, your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 4 he says, I know your election of God. Verse 5, our gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. Verse 6 he said, you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost.

Verse 7 he said, you became examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. Verse 8 he said, you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also every place your faith to God is spread abroad. Verse 9 he said, you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

And verse 10 he said, you wait for his son from heaven. Now friends, I'd like to have a whole church full of people like described in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Is there any doubt that these are born again believers? Wonderfully converted? I think there's no doubt. Let's move on to chapter 2. Chapter 2, Paul begins to express how he came to them and the message he preached.

Finally he gets down to verse 13. He thanks God without ceasing that they had received the word of God, the truth of the word. Verse 14 he reiterates again, you became followers of the churches of God.

You suffered things. Verse 17 he says, we were taken from you and endeavored to see your face with great desire and would have come to you, but we were hindered in verse 18. Satan hindered us.

Wherefore in chapter 3 and verse 1 he says, when I couldn't no longer forbear, I couldn't stand it any longer. He said, I sent Timothy to check on you, our fellow laborer in the gospel, in Christ, to establish you and comfort your hearts concerning your faith. He said, I don't want you to be moved by the afflictions you faced.

Verse 3. Verse 5 he says, for this cause when I could no longer stand it, I could no longer forbear, I sent to know of your faith, lest by some means the tempter having tempted you in our labor be in vain. He said, Timothy, verse 6 brought us good tidings, your faith, your charity. He said, we were comforted.

But in verse 10 he begins to show them his concern for them. He said, I've been praying night and day exceedingly that I might see your face and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. And then he tells us what it is, verse 12.

He's praying that the Lord would make you to increase and abound in love, one toward another and toward all men, even as we do toward you, to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in

holiness before God. Chapter 4. He says in verse 3, 4, and he's built quite a case, hasn't he? You're clearly born again, I wanted to see you, I couldn't come, I sent Timothy, I've been praying night and day exceedingly to perfect that which is lacking and lead you into holiness. And then he says in verse 3 of chapter 4, For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

Some people have struggled with that verse. Some people don't even think it's talking about entire sanctification. I believe in this context it is clearly talking about entire sanctification.

Some people have struggled because of this. They say, now wait a minute, preacher. It says, For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

And I had a man ask me this one time, is Paul saying that you have to get sanctified to stop fornication? Of course not. He doesn't even say that, read it again. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from.

He doesn't say you're committing fornication. He said you need sanctifying grace to keep away from fornication. To keep clean in an unclean world.

In fact, as I look at the construction of that verse, he says this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that, and if you look down through the chapter, there are several that's in the chapter. That you should abstain from fornication. That everyone should know how to possess his vessel and sanctification and honor.

Referring to fornication and unclean living in verse 4. You get down to verse 10, he says, that ye increase more and more. Verse 11, that ye study to be quiet and do your own business. Boy, that's a good one, isn't it? That you work with your own hands as we command you.

Verse 12, that you walk honestly toward them that are without. That you have lack of nothing. Verse 14, that is sorrow not even as others sorrow.

And then you get to chapter 5, and he's talking about the second coming. And in verse 4, he says, that, that day should not overtake you as a thief. What is Paul saying? He's saying, I want to lead you into holiness.

This is the will of God, even your sanctification. And as new believers, you're living in a sin-cursed world that is full of immorality and full of laziness and full of busybody. And all of it, and if you're going to live in that kind of world, you need the will of God, which is your sanctification.

And friends, the longer I live, the more I believe that in the 21st century, the longer Jesus tarries, the more we're going to have to have a clean, pure, sanctified heart to live godly in an ungodly, godless society. And I think that's exactly what Paul is telling the Thessalonians. And I'm talking to some people here tonight who have not lived godly and have failed to live godly because you have an unsanctified heart and it has tripped you up and you've fallen back.

This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Verse 7, For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth that call despiseth not man, but God.

Chapter 5. After giving the truth on the second coming, Paul begins to launch into a list of do's and don'ts. We don't like do's and don'ts in these days, but God gives us a lot of do's and don'ts. Isn't that interesting?

He gives quite a list there.

Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing in everything, give thanks, despise not, prophesy and prove all things. Don't render evil for evil to any man. Somebody said if you live up to the commands of chapter 5, you're either sanctified or you're walking the road that will lead you into the experience.

And I think that's pretty close. Let's look at Paul's conclusion. He says, and in verse 23, or in conclusion, or in addition to all that I've said, let me wrap it up for you.

And the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly. W-H-O-L-L-Y, entirely. Now let's look at this verse briefly.

I think Paul, under inspiration, drives to what I call golden stakes of truth. He goes over here and drives a stake in, the very God of peace, sanctify you. And that again is in that lightning tense.

Same tense that was used when Paul said, you turn from idols. Friend, I want to tell you, there can come a moment in time when the very God of peace sanctifies you wholly. A point in time that you know about that happened.

And then Paul goes over here and he drives another stake, a golden stake of truth. He talks about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And friends, just as sure as your name is what it is and you're sitting where you are, Jesus is coming back at a point in time somewhere out there.

And then Paul takes a golden strand of truth and he wraps it around this golden stake and he comes over here and he wraps it around this golden stake and he ties the two together. Did you see that? The very God of peace, sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, if you want to be kept and live holy and live godly in this present world, from the moment you get sanctified until Jesus comes, it will take that wonderful work of redeeming grace, entire sanctification. And Paul ends it with an exclamation, Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it. I close with the question I began with.

Since you were converted, since you were saved, has there been a moment in time when God the Holy Ghost filled you with himself in his fullness, cleansed from your heart the nature of sin, and sanctified you wholly? If not, that's his will. That's his command. That's his call.

And that's your privilege. I want us to stand together and the Cassidys are coming with a song.

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