

Holiness of God

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the paramount importance of God's holiness and the believer's call to pursue a life of holiness in worship and character.

Duration: 58:39

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:29, Ephesians 5:27, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5, 1 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Revelation 4:8

Topics: "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a revelation of God's holiness and majesty. He challenges the congregation to examine their priorities and idols, urging them to turn from worldly pursuits and serve the living God. The preacher highlights the need for sanctification and a missionary heart, as well as the expectation of the return of Jesus Christ. He also emphasizes the significance of worshiping God in the beauty of holiness, drawing inspiration from the example of the disciples and the elders in the book of Revelation.

Transcript

I want to deal with a theme this morning, a theme that's far too much for me, I'm sure, and too much for any man on earth. The theme is holiness. The text is in the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter 5 and verse 23.

The very God of peace, sanctify you holy, notice that's W-H-O-L-L-Y, sanctify you holy, and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's backtrack a little and go into the third chapter. In chapter 3, verse 10, Paul says, night and day, praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

To verse 13, to the end that ye may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even the Father, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Down into chapter 4, verse 3, this is the will of God. Now, in the previous verse there, I would call that, chapter 3, verse 10, his passion for this people, he is praying night and day, not for their healing, not for their success, not that they might be liberated from the enemy, not that they might be great personalities in the church of God, but he's praying night and day that he may see their face and supply that which is lacking in their faith.

He does not accuse them of faithlessness, he accuses them of immature faith, and his prayer is answered because in the second epistle and the first chapter there, he says in verse 3, we are bound to thank God always, brethren, as it is meet, because your faith groweth exceedingly. So faith is something which really grows. So his passion, I would call that, chapter 3, verse 10, his passion, he is praying night and day.

For what? That he may see their face and supply that which is lacking in their faith. In other words, he says, you have a very distinctive immaturity, and I want you to come to maturity, and I can't sleep for this, I'm so anxious about it. Do you ever get anxious about your own holiness, or about the holiness of other people? The philosophers said many years ago that theology is the queen of the sciences, and I'm sure that's right.

Theology is the queen of the sciences, and if it is true, and it is, then holiness is the crown on the head of the queen. There was an old preacher in this country years ago by the name of Joseph Smith, not the Mormon, that Joseph Smith, the man who established a holiness society. People used to say to him, well, Brother Smith, every time you open the Bible, every time you open this book, you open to holiness.

He said, I don't have to open it. What does it say there? Holy Bible. Who has it written by? The Holy Spirit.

Who put it down on, whatever they put it down on, they put it on some kind of stuff they had, palimpsests or something, but whatever they put it down on, it says in Peter that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So this is the holy word given by the Holy Spirit, communicated by holy men, that Peter again says that he who has called you is holy, and he who has, as he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy. In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul says, he talks there about true holiness because there is a false holiness.

Now, this is a word that kind of frightens us. You get millions of people saying, I've had the baptism. They don't even have the decency to say they're baptized with the Holy Ghost because they're nervous of the Holy Ghost.

In the Old Testament, we read there that Saul, the king of Israel, had an evil spirit. Because he had an evil spirit, he did evil things. Jesus says, if a man has an unclean spirit, he does unclean things.

Therefore, if a man with an evil spirit does evil things, and a man with an unclean spirit does unclean things, surely the man who has the Holy Spirit lives a holy life. If he doesn't, he's not got the Holy Spirit. He may have a spirit, but he's not the Holy Spirit.

We hear a lot today about gifts of the Spirit. We hear far less about the fruits of the Spirit. We hear far less about the fruit unto holiness, which is mentioned in the sixth chapter of the marvelous book of Romans.

And we hear less still about bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. Now, some people charge me with saying that I differentiate. I say that God's character is holy.

We're overboard on love these days. And love often in a meeting means you get hold of somebody you can hardly get your arms around who hasn't taken too much care of the temple of the Holy Ghost. It's too much overweight.

Maybe it would make two, but anyhow, you try and get your arms around them, give them a hug and a kiss. And this is called love. I call that sloppier, gappy.

Do you know why? Because John 3.16 talks about a gappy love. There's a city called Philadelphia. That comes from phylos, brotherly love.

There's an erotic love. There's a sensual love. There's an emotional love.

But the love of God, which Romans 5 says, is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the same love which is quoted there in John 3.16. God so loved the world. And love, true love, is capable of many things. One thing, true love suffers.

True love sacrifices. God gave his only begotten Son. Not an archangel.

Not Gabriel. Not some other super being in eternity. But as Wesley put it, God was contracted to a span.

Incomprehensibly made man. But you know, God has talked to me quite a bit the last two weeks, and I'm sure I can't convey all he said in this time. But I've been seeing again that the essence of God is not love.

The essence of God is holiness. How many times in the scripture is God called love? God is love, John says. Maybe twice at the very most.

But over and over and over again we read of the holiness of God. In the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 6. You know, we have that amazing story that's quoted so often. Isaiah had a vision in the first chapter.

He'd seen a vision of a nation stupid. The ox knoweth its owner, and they ask his master's crib, that you're a stupid people. You look at the glory of God in the heavens, and you've forgotten that even the stars testify of him.

Their voice soundeth throughout the earth. There is no place or language where their voice is not heard. He has spoken in creation.

He has spoken in conscience. And Isaiah sees a corrupt nation full of evil, blind evildoers rebelling against God. He has a vision of their sin and a vision of their corruption.

And if you read the fifth chapter, he spots all the cancers in the body of Israel, and he says, woe unto you, and woe unto you, and woe unto you, and woe unto you. His eyes are on the corruption in the nation. In the sixth chapter, his eyes are upon the holiness of God, and then on the corruption that's in him.

And he doesn't say, God is love, love, love. He says they float around God, and they say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord. And in Revelation it doesn't say that those holy beings in heaven cease not by day and night to say, love, love, love.

They cease not by day and night to say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord. He calls his house holy. While I was reading there this morning, some of these chapters I nearly take off when I read them.

In 1 Chronicles 16 and verse 29, it says, give thanks unto God, give glory that is due to his name, bring an offering and come before him, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. I'm glad Tim had that song, that gave me a bit of a lift this morning when he said, let's sing holy, holy, holy. Worship the Lord in the beauty, and then the verse goes on to say, all that is within me.

Psalms says that. Doesn't the Psalmist say that in Psalm 103? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Now if there's anger and pride and jealousy and malice and corruption and bitterness, and an

old man sleeping in your nature, you can't say, let all that is within me praise his holy name, because that corruption cannot praise him.

Heaven is a holy place. Okay, let's just look at this again. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

And then in the 20th chapter and verse 21, in 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and verse 21, verse 18 says, Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judea and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before him, worshiping the Lord. How do you worship him? You worship him in the beauty of holiness. How do you worship him? Well, they worshipped him prostrate.

When he came into the upper room after his resurrection, what did they do? They fell at his feet and they humbled themselves and they worshipped. What did the 4 and 20 elders do in the book of the Revelation? Even the 4 and 20 elders, in the indescribable, ineffable glory of eternity, they fall down and worship him. This is far removed from the frivolous stuff of the day in which we live.

Many of you know I'm a, quite a disciple of Dr. Tozer, and many, many hours we spent, just the two of us. And he said some things that used to awe me and leave me almost speechless for days, in a phrase he would say it. And one day as I went, and some of you have heard this before, I went into his room and he said, Len, lock the door.

Let your hair down, otherwise words relax. You see that rug there? I said, yes, doctor, I see it. He said, Len, I often come in this room in the morning at 8 o'clock and I call my secretary in the other room and say, no dictation today, and put a notice on the door, no interviews today.

I've got to worship. Then he said this that made me realize I was in the presence of a man who not just only sang, he walks with me and he talks with me, he lived with him. And he said, I get down on my rug.

No, he said, I get down on my belly on that rug at 8 o'clock in the morning. I'm still there at 11 or 12 or maybe 1 o'clock, and I haven't said one word of prayer, and I haven't said one word of praise. I've just worshipped him.

Worship him how? In the beauty of holiness. And since I don't have enough expression, he says, I borrow the words of favor. How beautiful, how beautiful the sight of thee must be.

Thine endless wisdom, awesome power, and glorious beauty. Oh, Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord, forgive me if I say for very love thy sacred name a thousand times a day. Burn, burn within me, love of God.

Burn fiercely night and day till all the dross of earthly love is burned and burned away. I said, Doctor, that, that staggers me. You can stay in God's presence 3, 4, even 5 hours without saying a word of prayer, because as a blanket statement prayer is preoccupation with our needs.

Praise is preoccupation with our blessings. Worship is preoccupation with God himself. My goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing, not even a thrilling ministry, not even doing the miraculous.

You can do all those and still be corrupt. There are men in this nation doing miracles who are filthy. They're living with other men's wives.

The greatest need of the Church of Jesus Christ in this critical hour in history is a baptism of holiness. Purity. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

And Jehoshaphat says, they fell down at his feet. And in verse 21 of that same chapter, 2 Chronicles 20, it says, And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went before him, and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever. And when the people began to sing unto praise, praised him for the beauty of his holiness, the Lord set ambushments against the enemy.

There's not much emphasis on holiness today. The emphasis is happiness. The emphasis is not character, it's charisma.

It's not what God can do in you, it's what God can do for you. He's a great utility God. Short of cash? Tell him.

Need healing? Tell him. Got a problem? Let him solve it. Now he'll do all those things very often, but that's not the main thing about God.

People run themselves weary. Even preachers have breakdowns and others. Do you know why? Because they don't know how to stop and worship.

Some of us were listening yesterday, for a couple of times, I could have listened 200 times, I think, to Arthur Katz, Art Katz. Well, I don't know what he does, but I'll tell you what. He puts the cats amongst the chickens.

He says some very disturbing things. And I asked him about the fellowship that he lives with, and he said, Well, Brother Raven, we're not much. We're just about 45 people and we live mostly in a trailer court.

And we have no buildings, and we have a Bible school, but we don't have any desks. I said, What about your income? Do you sell anything? My, he looked as though I'd stabbed him. He says, How do you live? He said, We live just above the poverty line, and we've lived there for five years.

That's where we live. But we have a superb fellowship of people that God has selected. And their sole idea is to know God.

Everything these days has to be big to be successful. Success is our great God, isn't it, apart from sport? There's a great preacher in England. Most preachers are great preachers in England, but anyhow, there was a great preacher in England by the name of Dr. Moffat Gawtry.

Moffat Gawtry filled the historic pulpit of John Wesley with distinction for a number of years. I have a couple of his books which are just tremendous reading. But Moffat Gawtry made this statement once, and it's never left me in 50 years.

I've got a birthday coming up this week. I won't tell you what the date is. It's not the 17th or the 19th, but anyhow.

I got a birthday coming up, but you know, and when I pass my milestone this week, I'll have been preaching 60 years, and that's a good long while, and I don't know anything about it. I've been asked many times to write a book on preaching. I don't know enough about it.

Moffat Gawtry had an elastic vocabulary. He could lift the congregation out of their seats, as it were, into heavenly places. And after all, when you've been to a meeting, it's not how exciting it is, how many miracles there were.

The thing is this. Have you had a revelation of God's holiness? Have you seen God's majesty? Do you leave it with awe? Do you say love's so amazing, so divine, that God who was contracted to a span, the heaven of heavens kind of contained him, and yet deity and eternity was crammed into the matrix of the Virgin Mary. There's not a scientist on earth that can explain that, because there was no human father.

There's an old saying that says, I believe in the virgin birth, because it's incredible. And he said, I believe in the resurrection, because it's impossible. Thank you, I got one amen, that's great.

Everything's rationed these days. But anyhow, God contracted to a span. The one who bowed, the cherubim bowed down and they couldn't look on his holiness.

Say, tell me this, did you come here this morning to meet God or hear a sermon about him? I like the quietness before we preach. I wish it was as quiet after. I don't think you should talk and do it outside.

Somebody may be having a life and death struggle in this sanctuary, and it ought to be holy, because he calls his house the habitation of his holiness. God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man. The cherubim couldn't look upon him.

They veiled their faces, because they couldn't bear him to look on them. And they veiled their eyes, because they couldn't bear to look on his spotless purity. And yet one day he laid his glory by and wrapped him in our clay.

And he came into the world, not in a chariot that Elijah went up to heaven in. He could have conquered the world the first day. He could have come at midnight, at Passover, when Jerusalem was packed with a million or more Jews.

He came in through the back door of suspicion. Men still say he was a bastard. And he started with shame, and you say you want to be like Jesus.

You mean you want to be kicked about and despised and rejected? That's what he was. You expect to be patted on the back as a good preacher. And people say, what a marvelous singer you are.

And something else that feeds your pride. All Jesus got was hostility from the world. He got hostility from his disciples.

Peter says don't go to the cross. He had been in the blazing light of God's holiness. And he comes to earth.

Sure, he was the holiest man that ever lived. But you know what? In my reckoning he was the loneliest man that ever lived. And if you decide to live a holy life, brother, you better be prepared for loneliness.

Because a lot of people want to be good, and a few more people want to be spiritual, but very few people want to be holy. Do you know why? Because you won't get opposition from the world from being holy and say you want to be holy. You'll get opposition from the theologians and the preachers.

They say the heart can't be cleansed from sin. You need a little bit of sin to keep you humble. Oh, well why not have a lot of sin and be real humble? If you need a little bit of sin to be humble, the humblest men must all be in jail this morning.

Well, you can't live without sin. Well, Jesus said to a woman taken in adultery, go and sin less. Isn't that what the Amplified says? Or is it in the living Bible? Well, what did he say? Go and sin no what? To a woman who hadn't been knew a thing about the blood of Christ or the cross or the death or the rest, go and sin no more.

People say we sin because we have to. No, no, no, we don't. We sin because we want to.

We choose our sins. This man is lustful. He chooses a woman.

That man is a thief. That man has a lot of malice. That man has something else.

You see, immediately you talk about living a holy life, somebody will say, ho, ho, sinless perfection. Well, I think I'd rather be accused of that than be accused of being a Christian practicing sin anyhow. You say, well, if you get really sanctified, doesn't it mean it's impossible to sin? No, it means it's possible not to sin.

I've come across the Atlantic about twenty times in the Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, United States and other little canoes that go over that way, you know, and I've been in some terrible storms, but they didn't worry me too much. Man, I'd been tossed out of bed, you couldn't eat some days and you're paying a big sum of money to get over and boy, however good the cooking is, something down here won't take it and they said there was one man at night leaning over the deck and he was throwing up badly and it was dark and somebody had told another man, you know, crossing the Atlantic, two great things you've got to see, a sunrise and see the moon come up. And the man rushed up behind him, patted on the back and he says, has the moon come up? He says, does that have to come up as well? Sure, I've been in some very, very bad storms.

But, you know, you've no trouble, fear not I am with thee, the storm shall not harm thee, the fire shall not harm thee. While the boat's in the water, you've got no problem but when the water's in the boat, watch out. Can you go to a world of sin like this and be not contaminated? Sure you can.

Read Peter, first epistle. I've told a story many times of catching fish and I don't often go fishing. As I've said often enough, you know, preachers say to me, well can't we go fishing? I say, sure, Peter did when he was backslidden, but anyhow, sure I've gone fishing occasionally and I caught a nice kingfish, a huge one, and it's about this, well, this size evangelically, this size, really, you know.

Preacher's size is this size, the real size is this size. But I remember it weighed 34 pounds and I think it weighed, it was about 32 inches long. And we had it for dinner.

And they said, give the preacher the first cut because he caught it. And I didn't quite like it. Have you eaten this kind of fish before? No.

Did you put any salt in it? Salt? Why, it's been floating around in the saltiest water in the world down there in the Bahamas and it needs salt on it. The skin on the thing is no thicker than this paper and yet the salt can't get through that little bit of skin and do anything in the body of that fish. Now you get in, you'll have some trouble if you stay in it too long, that salt will affect your skin.

But the salt doesn't get through the skin of that fish. It can sail years and years and years. This was an old one, to me it tasted about 900 years old, but it was a pretty old tough fish and it had been living in that atmosphere and yet it had not gone contaminated.

And yet the blood of Jesus Christ, look here, look, let's face it, the greatest problem in the world today is the problem of what? Well, you say sin, that's right. That's true. The greatest problem in the world is sin.

You could say the greatest manifestation of sin is, well, the inability of people to live with each other. And it's a world full of temptation and trial. There is no religion under heaven except the Christian religion which offers a pure heart.

And if you say that men cannot live pure in this world, you relegate the gospel to Mohammedism and some other ism and Romanism. We've Romanized our Protestantism. We sin and then apologize to God at the end of the day, as though it's not a very serious thing.

I was at a conference in a certain university with one of the great broadcasters of this country speaking. And he talked about sin, you know, we sin every day, thought, word and deed. And I said, look, there's a congregation of, I don't know, a couple of thousand people.

Look, there's over a thousand young people under 20 years of age and they're puzzled in this generation of promiscuous living and all the liberality and so forth. And you say we have to sin. Would you do me a favor, he said, if I could.

Well, I said, you can't, but try. Would you tell these young people what sins they can commit and what sins they can't commit? If you say they have to sin every day, give them a list of sins that are permissible. Now, I know many of you don't know much about the Bible.

That's why you came here. But how many times did Adam sin before he got kicked out of the garden? How many times? Oh, so he gets punished and we don't, eh? We just live on a cycle of victory, defeat, victory, defeat, cleansing, impurity and so forth. Again, this blessed holy word of God, the whole thing about the word of God is about sin, isn't it? What's it about? It's about something that came into the world through one man's disobedience, sin entered into the world.

That's an awesome thing. We're used to sinning. It doesn't worry us too much.

You know, I find some scriptures in this book that are just about shattering. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 13 says this, follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Oh, that's shattering.

Go back into verse 10. This takes my breath away. He's talking about the chastisement of our fathers.

They chastise us for a little while and after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we, listen, come on now, you're a farmer, okay, you're a druggist, okay, a housewife, a doctor, theologian, whatever. This almost takes my breath away. It says that you and I, little mortals that come over this earth just for a little span, may be made partakers of his holiness.

He's already said in another place, we can be made partakers of the divine nature. He says we can be made partakers of the saints in light. But isn't this something that this little heart of mine, who says this? The Holy Ghost says it.

So who? The Apostle. Does he know what he's talking about? Listen, no man ever gazed into the abyss of human nature like the Apostle Paul read Romans. He sees the human heart as a cesspool of corruption, full of every unclean thing, adulteries and every impurity, along with malice and pride and envy.

He sees men as seducers. He sees them manufacturing a religion that will counter or try to counter Christianity. How firm a foundation.

As we sang that, I said, well, hallelujah. What a foundation I'm on. The foundation is Jesus Christ and the gates of hell are not going to disturb the foundation of the church of Jesus Christ.

He's been opposed by the critics. He's been ridiculed by the satirists. People have tried to get a false religion to counteract it.

The theologians are not very sure about it these days. In a very famous Bible school not long ago, a theological seminary, somebody asked the professor, what about the sanctified life? Well, he says it's a perpetual approximation to an unrealizable ideal. Isn't that gorgeous and soothing? See, we kind of figured you can go to heaven, well, first class, second class or third class.

You see, God is a God of love and He's not too worried because actually He never sees you. He sees you through Jesus Christ. That's pure bunkum.

If He only sees me through Jesus Christ, who's, and I commit sin continually, who's going to answer for the sin? Jesus Christ? Well, He imputes righteousness. He does more than that. He imparts righteousness.

God is holy. Because He's holy, He hates sin. Because He's righteous, He must punish sin.

Because He's merciful, He forgives sin. But He doesn't ask me to sin every day in thought and word and deed. Again, Paul here is writing to a marvelous, marvelous group of people as far as I'm concerned.

What does he say? The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. 1 Thessalonians 5, 23. And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord.

I said His passion is revealed in the first, in chapter 3. His passion is revealed where He prays night and day for them. His proclamation is chapter 4, verse 7. He that hath called you has called us not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. His prayer is in the 23rd verse.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. His promise is in the 24th verse. Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it.

I think Paul had a colossal intellect. He had acres of culture. He had as much pedigree as any man that ever lived in the New Testament.

And he had a righteousness of his own. And he was going down that Damascus Road, you remember. And he was going to liquidate the church.

He had a death sentence. He had a, inside of his toga, he had authority from the chief priest to put anybody who was a Christian to death. Isn't it amazing? Or is it amazing? You under the Psalmist hits the highest spots of praise.

Nobody prays God. Nobody in the New Testament prays God like David did. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that He hath redeemed.

What? Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies. He lifted me out of a horrible pit. Not a pit, a horrible pit.

He not only saved me from that pit, He saved me from the eternal pit. Because the alternative to holiness is hellishness. Now, Paul here again is praying for this church.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. I said the first chapter is a portrait. Would you look at it for a minute? What kind of people are these people for whom he prays? The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.

Were they a backslidden bunch? Were they heretics? Look at the first chapter of this epistle. Chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians. We give thanks, verse 2, to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, verse 4. Let's make this number 1. Knowing, number 2, rather. Because in verse 1 he says, knowing of your labor of love, your faith, your labor of love and patience. Verse 4, knowing your election of God.

Verse 5, our gospel came unto you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. They could have sung blessed assurance with joy because they had assurance. They had faith.

They were the elect of God. They had assurance. Verse 6, ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word with much affliction and joy in the Holy Ghost.

You see, we sing about joy because we want our little spirits to be lifted a bit. We talk about the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost. Can you tell me one miracle that the disciples did after Pentecost they didn't do before Pentecost? They cast out devils before Pentecost? They healed the sick before Pentecost? They rejoiced and said, listen Lord, devils are subject to us in that.

That was before Pentecost. And people say, you need the power of the Holy Ghost, Action 8, to be witnesses. That's a very bad translation.

Do you know what that word there is, that Greek word there is? Ye shall be martyrs unto me? Witness by martyrdom. There are people, oh, it wouldn't be too bad to be put up against the wall and somebody shoots you like that. But you get saved in South America in some cities and the priest goes round and says, don't sell her groceries, don't sell her meat, don't do this.

And they shrink everything you have and you die, die, die gradually. Be martyrs. You can be martyred in an office, can't you be the but, I was the button joke in a factory where I worked.

Men kick me sometimes, they abuse me sometimes. When I told them I'd been baptized, they call me John the Baptist and they'd all kinds of skits. The miracle of Pentecost to me, though the stress today is power.

And God knows we need it, but the emphasis of the New Testament is not power, it's purity. They had power before Pentecost. They raised the dead, they healed the sick, they cast out demons.

But Peter could do that and then backslide and say, I don't know the Lord. He could get terribly ugly, but you don't find after Pentecost he got that way, because in Acts 15, 8 and 9 he's reporting what happened

to the house of Cornelius. He's reporting that to the big shots in Jerusalem.

And he says of these people in the house of Cornelius, that God who knows the heart. I could stop there and preach a long while. He knows your heart.

He knows that little area that you've buttoned up, that little closet where you've got some uncleanness, some grudge, some unforgiving spirit, that malignancy. You see, we want everything doing instantly. Come out, we're here, we'll pray for you, receive the Holy Ghost.

They didn't do that in my early days. Do you know what you did? You told the pastor you were longing for a holy life and they had a class every Friday night. Yes, all right, I'll use the phrase for people to get the baptism.

And you were instructed on what it meant. You were taken by your fingers, as it were, down the labyrinth of your own heart and your own mind and your corrupt nature. And you saw what you'd inherited through Adam and how you'd exercised that corruption.

And you become a vile spectacle in the eyes of the Holy God. And you need more than salvation. Salvation justifies me.

I used to preach sometimes, a few times, anyhow, in that marvelous Baptist church in New York, Calvary Baptist. Stephen Alford was the pastor. When he was away, I liked to fill in for him.

And you know, he used to use that phrase so often, justified, just as if I'd never sinned. That's what it means when God justifies me. But what about the corruption that made me do the sins? Man needs more than forgiveness, he needs cleansing.

And we say to people, come and you can be filled. Listen, I've been in hundreds, thousands of meetings where a preacher said, you want to be filled with the Holy Ghost, come forward. I've never been in a meeting yet where somebody said, you want to be emptied.

Do you think the Holy Ghost is going to come in your heart with uncleanness, with secret lust, with pride, with envy, with an unforgiving spirit? I've told the story often of going to, passing a home in England, where a woman invited me in the house. She was a horrible woman. She was the filthiest woman I'd ever seen.

You went in the house, you held your nose like this. And I sat down in that stinking house, and the sink was piled up with dishes this height. There was some bacon there, had been there months, I'm sure.

It was all fuzzy and green, it had more penicillin on it than most doctors have ever seen. Will you have a cup of tea? No, thank you. Oh yes, yes, you must.

She reached for the teapot, with one hand she reached in the sink, with the other hand and took a dirty cup. I could see the dirt in it, I could see when she'd drunk it, it slithered down the side, and she didn't even wash it. She took the cup, and she took some tea as black as my boot, and I don't like, well I've black tea, and I don't like cold tea either.

She got that black liquid that looked like axle oil, and she poured it in that cup, and she said, do you take sugar? And I said, yes please. She said, don't have any. Do you take cream? I said, yes, I don't have any.

Drink it. And a lot of things started turning over inside of me right there, drink it. And you know as I put my hand out for that cup, I didn't get my hand to the cup before, my mind was 2,000 miles away from England, and it was 2,000 years back to a man in a garden.

And he was looking into the filthiest cup that anybody's ever seen. The holiest man that ever lived was looking into the corrupt of, the cup of human depravity. And it revolted his holy soul, and he says, if it be possible, if there's a way out, let this cup pass, but if not.

Did you ever see your heart filthy like that, and you just say, Lord, come and live in here? It's like you saying to me, well, come down the road and see my home, a brother Dale's home, and saying, listen, I want you to come, I live in a pigsty, and I hope you won't mind. We've got a pregnant pig there, and she's pretty filthy, but you'll enjoy it for a week. I deplore, I deplore with all my being, the shallowness of Christianity in our day.

It is not apostolic Christianity. Somebody asked Dr. Tozer one day, did he like a certain man? He said, oh, I like him tremendously. Well, why do you like him so much? He said, because he agrees with all my prejudices.

I think that's why I like Arthur Katz, he agrees with all my prejudices. He's the cat, and I'm the dog, but anyhow. You know that big convention they had in Jerusalem in 1974, when all the big shots were there? And they said to Arthur Katz, give the closing word, and he stood up and he said, the whole thing's been false.

Your prophecies were false, your tongues were false, there's no sign of holiness, there's no dignity, it's been a laughing, giggling show. And he said, a man went after him down the road and said, listen, I'm a converted Jew too, and I'm a prophet, and you get back to that microphone and apologize to these people, who are you to judge? Everybody comes up with that, don't they? Saints are sinners, say, you're not to judge. Well, read the seventh chapter of John, it says, judge righteous judgment, you've got to judge.

He told me it was at Jesus 79, where people were talking about the Holy Ghost and catching poppers, they said it. They had a big charismatic conference in Kansas City two years ago, and one of the most godly men maybe in this country, a Pentecostal man, said, it amazed me that the priests and others were sitting there smoking, and there was a thick pall of smoke. They'd never smoked like that, where there are stained glass windows and something the Pope has blessed.

But you're free to do it in the open air, are you? Well, you don't know a thing about the Holy Ghost then. Somebody said to an old holiness preacher in England, well, somebody said didn't they? I believe we'll smoke in heaven. He said, well, you'll have to go to hell to spit.

Somebody said to this old holiness man, you know what? Nothing in the Bible against smoking, he said, no. As a matter of fact, he agrees with it. It does where? Well, it says in Revelation, he that is holy, let him be holy still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.

What does Paul say here? He says, the very God of peace sanctify you, W-H-O-L-L-Y, in the German version. I looked last night, it's the same actually in the Amplified, but in the German version, it's the very God of peace sanctify you through and through. What does he say? Your whole spirit, right in the inner man, and your soul, your emotional life, and so forth, your will, and your body.

The whole totality of man. Why? Because the whole totality of man was ruined by the fall. And isn't it amazing that while everybody is contaminated by sin, by one man's sin, disobedience, sin entered in the world by one man's righteousness.

I like that phrase when they sing, and I love to play that song when they sing that lovely, lovely, maybe greatest hymn, because it's practically all scripture, the Messiah. And you remember, there's a real ponderous note there, since by man came death. By man came also the resurrection from the dead.

We want things so instantaneous. Katz reminded us yesterday of that last verse in the 8th of Leviticus there, where after the priest was sanctified, and oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, what a ceremony it was. We want to hold it in five minutes, get down and just say, Lord, fill me with the Holy Ghost.

Amen. Let's go, Lord, save me. Oh, come on, come on.

Sanctification is a crisis and a process. Being born of God is a birth. Sanctification is a death.

Regeneration may deal with conscience. Sanctification deals with character. Katz reminded us that after the process the priest had gone through, blood on his ear, blood on his ear, blood on his thumb, blood on his toe, the whole extremities touched, because they all had to be pure.

His garments had to be pure, linen, from his neck right down to the soles of his feet, no wool. What does wool do? It makes you warm. What happens if you get too warm? You sweat, and sweat is a sign of the curse.

He couldn't sweat when he was holy things. His garments must be pure. The oil in the lamps was olive oil, but it must be pure olive oil.

The articles on the altar or in the building there, they were made of gold. No, they were made of pure gold. You see, some priests were allowed to go into the holy place, but there was one who was allowed to go into the holy of holies.

Do you hear an echo in this prayer of Paul? He's praying for people that he loves. He's worked for them. He sees the redemptive work of Jesus Christ being aborted.

They're not holy yet. They're still in their infancy. They still have their handicaps.

There are still some things that they've not reached out to, and he's praying the very God of peace, sanctify you holy. Do you remember that supreme prayer of Jesus in John 17, where he's prayed for their unification, and he's prayed for their jubilation, that they may have joy, and he's prayed for their liberation, and he's prayed for their preservation, and then he gets to verse 17, and he says, father, and he calls him father, and he calls him righteous father, and he calls him holy father, and that holy father demands holy children, and Jesus climaxes his prayer there, where he says, sanctify them through thy truth. Paul knew that dramatic experience on the Emmaus road.

You know, I was looking at Dr. Toth. I want to quote him correctly here. He says this, and this, to me, it should be required reading for every Bible student in America, and as a matter of fact, every Christian.

Twenty-one studies on the Holy Spirit. It's one of the most precious books. Maybe his first book, I see Ray nodding.

He said, you read this, Ray? Super book. And in this chapter here, in we must think rightly about God, he says, it is my opinion that the Christian conception of God, current in these middle years of the 20th century, is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God, and to actually constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity. It's one thing if you think God's in the cleansing business to clean you every day.

It's another thing to say, Lord, I want to go into a corrupt, evil, twisted, sinful world like this, and have a pure eye, and a pure heart. After all, that's why God invented men, if I could use that phrase, because he wanted men to be holy. That, oh, I deplore the present condition.

You won't get into trouble if you're an adulterer in some meetings, as long as there are miracles. But I want to tell you there are some men in this country that I believe stand ten feet tall in the ministry of holiness, and they never get invited to a charismatic meeting or a Pentecostal meeting. And vice versa, there are some very godly Pentecostals that don't get into, they're not all in at one camp.

No group has all the saints, don't worry about that. But again, our emphasis is happiness, not holiness. It's charisma, not character.

It's power, not purity. Listen again to these people as we hurry through this now. Verse 6, we said, He says, He became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word of the Lord with much affliction and with joy in the Holy Ghost.

That's exactly what they got after Pentecost, but nobody stresses that. They rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer. Listen, I want to tell you something.

I'll put the man for the profit on, if you like, daringly. I'm going to tell you, we're going to move into some days of suffering. I wouldn't be surprised if people have burned to the stake in America before too long.

You see, the ecumenical church didn't get going. And so the Catholic church has said recently, I've got this in black and white, we have got to dominate the charismatic system. And in one of their great meetings, a friend of mine sneaked into it with all the dignitaries of Rome there.

And they stressed, we must keep our hands on the charismatic movement and watch out for another Martin Luther coming. They're scared to death that one man will really get filled with the Holy Ghost and get the power of the Spirit and denounce all the corruption of Rome. And so they've got men on the watchtowers.

Because as one godly, saintly man who died at 29 years of age, Robert Mary McShane, said in Scotland, a holy man is a fearful weapon in the hands of a holy god. A holy man has no will but God's will. He has no desires but God's desires.

He has no interests but God's interests. Verse 7 of this chapter, he says, you are in samples. Isn't that gorgeous? He could hold them up as samples of regeneration.

These are marvelous examples of redemption. And then he goes on again into verse 8, from you sounded out the word of the Lord, so they were a missionary-hearted church. And then he says in verse 9, ye turned from idols to serve the living and the true God.

Isn't that something? Did you turn from your idols? As soon as the football season comes, will the Cowboys get more of your time than Jesus got? You say you love him, he doesn't believe you, because you can spend two hours watching Cowboys and only 10 minutes with your Bible. We don't fool anybody. What's your idol this morning? Personality? Success? Sport? Money? Fame? What is it? It's not on a shelf, it's inside, that's worse.

And they turned from all their idols to serve the living and the true God. And not only that, verse 10 says that they were waiting for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead. Now that's the kind of person he's praying will be sanctified.

Man alive, if we had a church full like that, we'd think they were already sanctified. They've turned from idols to serve the living God, they're missionary hearted, they're expecting the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, they're elect of God, they have much assurance, they've received affliction, they've been buffeted for their testimony, and yet he says there's something better. This is how a Baptist fellow put it, and they know everything.

But anyhow, facetiously, but this is how the greatest, maybe best known Baptist preacher put it, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, he said, look, there is a level where the world lives. There is a level so high above the world where a regenerate man lives. There is an element as high above regeneration as regeneration is above the world, and that is a sanctified, spirit-filled life.

That's Wesley. The old Puritans were marvelous people. Nobody read the depths of sin like the Puritans, they never got out on the victory side too much.

But John Owen said over 400 years ago, the sin of men in the Old Testament was against the Father. The sin of men in the New Testament was against the Son. 400 years ago, he said, the sin of my day is against the Holy Ghost.

Oh, it is. Do you know what? You don't have one single argument. When you stand before God, before his eternal throne, with a thousand, billion, trillion, quadrillion people looking on, you say, I could never stand by myself in front of people like you do, Mr. Raven.

Listen, dear friend, you're going to stand one day with thousands of billions of people right from Adam, right down to the last person before the trumpet sounds, all by yourself to give an account for your spiritual health or your spiritual corruption, for your failure or success, for your obedience or your disobedience. You see, people are afraid of that word holy. Do you know what it really means? It comes from the same Greek word as healthy.

So you could translate one Peter 1, as he which hath called you is healthy. He is morally and spiritually healthy. He is beautiful in his majesty and in his glory.

So be he healthy. Now, the argument of those old folk was this, the more holy a man becomes, the more he realizes his sinfulness. Oh, so the logic is, if you see Muhammad Ali, and I remember seeing him once at an airport, didn't talk with him, I was a bit nervous, that I'd like to have gone up and said, hey, are you really a beautiful, he looks a good looking guy, are you really a strong man? And he says, do you want to feel? No, no, I was just asking you a question.

I don't want to demonstrate it, but you're really a superman, huh? And he says, yeah, I'm a superman, I'm this, that and the other, and I go on, I say, okay. But I suppose you say each day when you look in the

mirror, I'm the healthiest man in the world, but of course I have more disease than anybody else. You say to a millionaire, you're a millionaire, he says, yes, but you know, I'm very poor.

You say, that's, that's, that's stupid. Or people say, you know, I'm a Christian, but I'm only a sinner saved by grace. Oh, well, there's Tim, he's a nice, charming fellow, and he's got a beautiful wife.

There's one thing that's strange about him to me, I've never told him this, but I'm going to tell him publicly. Now he's trembling. He's a married bachelor.

You're not? You're not a married bachelor. Well, what are you? Praise God. How can you be a sinning saint? You can't be a married bachelor.

If I tell you I saw a woman down in Tyler there, beautiful woman, she's a pure harlot. I know a man who's a truthful liar too. Oh, and I forgot to tell you about the man who's an honest thief.

I know there was another one. You say those are contradictions. You can't be an honest thief, you can't be a truthful liar.

Well, you can't be a sinning saint either. You say, is it impossible to sin? No, it's possible not to sin. And if you sin, if, if, not when we sin, but if we sin, the normal Christian life is victory, not defeat.

We've turned it round. It says when you fast, not if you fast. Oh, we've changed the when and we've switched it over to when we sin.

And we've taken the if off, if we sin, and put it on if we fast. Now some of you, well, anyhow, I was going to say how much you need to fast, but that's okay. You talk to the Lord about it.

Oh, goodness, goodness, goodness. In a world that's so bewildered and confused, isn't it time the Church of Jesus stood up and said, listen, God is able to redeem you because that's what Titus says, doesn't he? He came to redeem us from what? All iniquity. Not some of it, all of it.

Well, don't you get very proud? No, sorry, I've no chance of getting proud. I had some fellas along at the house came last night and stayed till early this morning. We enjoyed some fellowship.

I want to look at your books. I said, you see that top shelf? That's full of biographies, full of biographies. I read the first volume on the life of Hudson Taylor.

It's called The Growth of a Soul. It shows you Hudson Taylor coming into spirituality. It shows the man coming into maturity.

You see his battles, you see everything that hell put upon him and he triumphs. Read the life of one of the greatest women. English, of course, but anyhow.

Over in the bookstore there, they've got that original volume now in paperback of Mrs. Catherine Booth, one of the greatest women that ever lived. Read it. Do you think I ever get proud when I read a story like C.T. Studd? Do you think I ever get, oh, brother, I don't need sin to keep me humble.

I just have to look around and say, dear God, didn't that man have two brains? Didn't he have two lives? Didn't he have two bodies? Didn't he have the two hearts? Didn't he have more than two eyes to read and more than one heart to love you with? Why is he consumed like that? I say again, it's breathtaking that

here on this earth, we can be partakers of his holiness. We can be partakers of his wisdom. We can't be partakers of his infallibility.

Sure, God is love, but I'm convinced still that the character of God, because love is a fruit of the spirit is love and the of God is character. His character is holy.

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