

God's Holiness - Part 2

by Richard Owen Roberts

God's holiness is a fundamental aspect of his character, and it is only through a contrite and humble spirit that we can draw near to him and experience revival.

Duration: 22:58

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 6:16-19, Isaiah 6:3, Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 5:3, Romans 7:24

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the sins that keep us from God, specifically the sins of pride and arrogance. He explains that even though one may commit great sins like murder or cheating, if they come to a broken heart and a contrite spirit, they can be forgiven and drawn into the heavenly. However, if one remains proud and stiff-necked, they are without hope. The preacher urges the audience to remember that God is a God of holiness and revival, and that true wickedness lies in having an arrogant spirit. He concludes by highlighting the importance of having a humble and contrite heart, as God dwells with those who are brought low.

Transcript

All flesh in Isaiah 40 is described as grass, and all the goodness of it, Isaiah says, is like the flower of the field. You may be here with somewhat of a haughty spirit, and you may think yourself somebody, but remember that the Spirit of God can blow upon the grass, and it withers and dies. We are here by divine permission.

We draw our next breath, because God enables us to do so, and when God says, you've had your last breath, we've had our last breath, and all the doctors in the universe, and all the pooling together of modern scientific medicine can do nothing whatsoever to alter the degree of God when he blows upon the grass, and it withers. Can you imagine this statement, God measures all the waters of the earth in his hand? Can you imagine God comprehending all the dust of the earth? Well, if you have a tiny lot here in Wheaton, you don't have the slightest idea how many grains of dirt are on that lot, and if you were to devote yourself starting tomorrow morning to 18 hours of counting, six days a week from now until death, you would not begin to count those grains of sand on your own property, and yet God has weighed all the sands of earth and knows their number, and all the stars of heaven he has counted, and after all these hundreds of years with our telescopes and our efforts to find out what lies beyond, we still haven't the slightest idea how many planets are out there, or how far it is to the farthest one, and yet God has all of

this in his mind and in his heart. He has measured all the heavens with a span, and all the nations we are told are before him as a drop in the bucket, and when all the nations of earth are bounded together, they are still as nothing, says Isaiah.

In the eyes of God, God picks up the islands of the sea as if they were very tiny little things. He sits upon the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the earth, says Isaiah, are like grasshoppers in the eyes of the high and the lofty ones who inhabit eternity. He brings all the princes of the earth to nothing, and he makes all the judges of the earth look like and sound like vanity or emptiness.

The eyes of the Lord are over all the earth beholding the evil and the good. This is the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the High and the Lofty One. His position in the universe is so far removed from our comprehension that it is almost impossible with all these flowery words drawn out of Isaiah still to comprehend the significance of the fact that he is the High and the Lofty One.

I say to you again, the term holy as applied to God means that he is separate from and distinct from and unlike everything else. Now not only does Isaiah in verse 15 of 57 say something about the place or position of God in the universe, but notice also in this text what it says concerning the name of God, whose name is holy. Now names obviously indicate something.

Unfortunately, in modern America, children aren't named with as much forethought and significance as names used to be given. Nonetheless, names do indicate something. Many people have said to me, are you well? It's a perfectly reasonable question.

They've heard my name. Now, some of you don't know anything about Wales, so that doesn't ring any bell. But in Wales, about every fifth person is named Robert.

If you were to go to Cardiff and look in the phone book, you'd be simply flabbergasted by the page after page after page of Roberts that appear. Then when you put Richard, Owen, Roberts together, anyone who knows anything about the principality is certain there must be a connection. One of the most famous of all the Welsh revivalists was Richard Owens.

And the name Owen Owens and Robert Roberts and Richard Richards and Evan Evans and William Williams, these are all Welsh names. Now names say something about us. They indicate something of where we're coming from.

And certainly when God is described as the one whose name is holy, there is something very remarkable conveyed to us concerning his background, concerning his origins, concerning where he has been all this time. There has never been a time when he has been anything other than holy. If there was a time when he was impure, he could not now be called in this full and wonderful sense holy.

But his name is holy because he has always been high and lofty, always unlike man, always separate from that which is mundane and foolish and erroneous. Names also suggest something about habitation. And we're told here that this holy one dwells in high and holy places.

The name holy conveys something about the character of God. Certainly it speaks eloquently about the reputation of God. Could anyone from any period of history stand and say, wait a minute, that's a lousy name for you? No one could ever charge God with ever being anything other than separate, distinct, high, lofty, pure.

It is an appropriate name. It speaks of his immunity to contamination. It is the name that God gave himself and the name by which he expects all his children to recognize him, whose name is holy.

Now there is also a word in this text about the duration of God's existence. Notice these beautiful words, the high and the lofty one that inhabited eternity. Now we're not going to deal with that this morning because a couple of weeks ago, our text was thou art from everlasting to everlasting.

And so we'll pass by that beautiful statement of the God who inhabits eternity. And come now to another matter of prime consequence. And that is what this passage teaches about God's habitation.

Now we've noticed what it teaches about God himself, that he is high, that he is lofty, that he inhabits eternity, and that his name is holy. But now observe what it teaches about his habitation. Well there are two distinct things taught here about the habitation of God.

Number one, it is a high and a holy place where God dwells. Now from that statement we can draw a number of inferences of consequence as far as our thinking is concerned. God doesn't live on the main concourse.

I think you should lay hold of that. There are a lot of people that say, I don't know how to find God. Well and good, that's what God intended.

God didn't plunk himself right down in the middle where every dumb, ignorant, careless individual tripped over him. It was never God's intention to be found by those who didn't care. God has placed himself in a position where he is found by those who seek.

Over and over in scripture we are commended to search, to seek, and we are promised all of those who seek will find. But his habitation is described as being in a high and in a holy place. It is far removed from the ordinary affairs of life.

It is so far removed from where most men are walking that they don't even know about it. The average person on the earth right now has only the vaguest sense of God, no distinct, no clear realization of the high and lofty one who inhabited eternity, whose name is holy, and who dwells in a high and holy place. And I say again, that's not an accident.

It was not God's design that the careless should run into him perpetually. It was his intention that he should be found by those who search. People do not stumble on God accidentally, nor is anyone forced to dwell where God dwells.

God's habitation is as far removed from man as is his moral character. I have told you that the term holiness is used in two primary ways. It is used in terms of separation, and it is used in terms of moral purity.

They are one and the same in this respect. They are both vastly removed from mankind. Man, by human nature, knows nothing of the habitation of God and nothing of the purity of God.

Most men don't care where God lives or what God is like. They are content because they have some sense of a need of God to manufacture a God in their own imagination, and bow down and worship that which they've conceived of, rather than to worship the one who reveals himself. So God, we are told, dwells in a high and in a holy place.

And by the use of the term high, and by the use of the term holy here, we are clearly led to understand that there is no sin in that place. God's habitation has escaped the presence of sin, and no sin is allowed in his presence. And I find this so very remarkable when you consider the millions of American evangelicals who have been saved from hell, but never saved from sin.

And they think they can go with all their sins straight to heaven, never having been saved from it, and not even willing to be delivered from it. God dwells in a high and in a holy place. But there's something else of great consequence that we must observe here concerning the habitation of God.

Now look again at this text, will you? I dwell in the high and holy place where? Did you observe that? I dwell where? God says, I am not alone in this high and lofty, in this high and holy place. I dwell there with. Notice who he dwells there with.

I dwell there with those that are of a contrite and a humble spirit. That, my friends, is as sweeping and significant and powerful and practical as any word that ever could be addressed to us. I dwell there with those who are of a contrite and a humble spirit.

Now here's the picture. God describes himself as being set apart. I'm high, he says.

I'm lofty. I dwell in the high and in a holy place. That's what I'm like.

That's where I am. But I'm not there alone. I have there with me all those who have contrite spirits and broken hearts.

We need to meditate upon this. Those with contrite hearts. What does that mean? Well, if you have a contrite heart, you have a heart that is crushed and ground to powder.

That's what the word means. Crushed and ground to powder. The broken-hearted are those who have seen the awful nature of their sins, who have felt the terrible horror of being separate from God and like him, who have been crushed under the weight of the mass of all their grievous sins.

And they're struggling with this contrite heart. Oh, God. Oh, God, the heart cries out, woe is me.

Woe, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death. Everyone, everyone, says God, is the contrite heart. And the broken spirit dwells where I dwell.

The humble spirits are the spirits that are brought low. There are people here this morning whose spirits have been brought low. You've been depressed.

You've sunk under the calamities and the tragedies of life around you. The circumstances that surround you, the things that have happened to you, have brought you low. And if humbled your spirit, you face life as it is.

And you've seen God as he really is. All these things waiting upon us, bow us down and be looked up and be thanked. Holy, holy, holy.

But get this assurance, I dwell there in this high and holy place for those who have contrite hearts and humble spirits. Now some of you are acquainted with the book of Ephesians, and you know how Paul uses the term, in the heavenly? We have here the same identical truth. Will you get hold of this right now, right now? There are men and women with broken contrite hearts and spirits that are dwelling with the high and

lofty ones in the high and holy place.

This isn't some future thing that's being discussed here. This is right here in the here and now. The holy God, unlike man, separate from man, distinct and in a far removed place, right now has in his presence men and women while still in the body on earth who are dwelling in the heavenly.

And will you observe the reason, this is our third point this morning, the reason why this text teaches that God dwells in the high and holy place? He says, I dwell there with the purpose of reviving the spirits of the humble and reviving the heart of the contrite ones. What a blessed truth. It was not God's design that he should dwell there alone.

It was his intention from the beginning that he should dwell there with us. But if we're going to dwell there with him, we've got to be like he is. He, I repeat, is separate and distinct, far removed.

And if we're to dwell there with him, we also must be separate and distinct. God dwells in the high and holy place now with the peculiar people, with those who have counted their lives here as nothing and have counted living in the presence of God as everything. He dwells there with those, he says, who are humble and broken.

And he dwells there, he declares, for the purpose of reviving. Will you lay hold of that too? God's purpose is to revive here and now. The Holy God, yours, deeply desires to draw to himself all who are broken in contrite, that he may put life within them.

You see the brokenness and the contrite spirit. These things are intended to wean us. The world isn't broken.

The world doesn't feel contrite. The world feels one with itself. But when the Spirit of God begins to work upon the life of an individual, they are led point by point to the experience of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

And God uses this to wean them from the world, to remove the attraction of the here and now, and to fashion the interest on eternity. And then, tenderly, graciously, lovingly, he revives, takes the broken heart and the contrite spirit, and unites it with himself. And he enables us to live in his presence now, in the high and the lofty place.

Now, from all this, we should see clearly what constitutes great wickedness. The greatest sins that men commit are not sins of murder, and adultery, and lying, and such like. The great sins, the truly awful sins, the overwhelming sins, are the sins of the arched back, the proud look, the haughty spirit.

These are the sins that keep us from God. One can sin the gravest kind of sins in the estimate of man. One can murder.

One can cheat. One can lie. One can live 70 years in blasphemy.

And if at 71 they come to a broken heart and a contrite spirit, they can be drawn into the heavenly to be revived. But if one arches their back and stiffens their neck, they're without hope. Please, dear friends, please, never forget that God of holiness is the God of revival.

Father in heaven, give us a fresh glimpse of this glorious truth. In the strong name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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