

God's Holiness - Part 4

by Richard Owen Roberts

God's holiness demands his hatred of sin, requiring the eternal condemnation of the unholy, and his love of holiness led to the sacrifice of his holy son.

Duration: 24:01

Scripture: Psalm 10:3, Proverbs 6:16-19, Lamentations 2:6, Ezekiel 5:11, Ezekiel 16:43, Amos 9:3, Luke 16:15

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of holiness and the hatred of sin in the eyes of God. He quotes various Bible verses to support his message, including Luke 16:15, Lamentations 2:6, Ezekiel 5:11, and Ezekiel 16:43. The preacher explains that God cannot look upon evil and that the death of Jesus Christ was necessary to pay the penalty for sin. He urges the listeners to strive for perfection and to be holy as God is holy. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the things that God hates, as mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-19 and Amos 8:17.

Transcript

Well, I'm sure you've weighed those temptations already. Jesus was tempted to have stones turned to bread. He was tempted to cast himself down, that the angels of God might bear him up.

He was tempted to lust after the kingdoms of the world. And what would those temptations mean to God? I mean, what would God want with bread? What would God want with the kingdoms of the world? What would God want with the angels bearing him up? Those temptations were leveled not against the Godhead, but against the humanity. There Christ was in the wilderness, forty days and forty nights without bread, and the temptations were leveled against him as a man.

God is not tempted. And the way Jesus met the temptation was with contentment. Do you realize that? Jesus was content to be without bread in those days.

Jesus was content not to test God by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus was content to live then without the kingdoms of the world. And because he was in the grip of contentment, those temptations, even as a man, were resisted.

I say again, that's how we resist temptation, by contentment. God cannot be tempted with evil, because he has all that he wants, and he has no unfulfilled craving. Now, may I add as a third statement, that not only

is it true that God is holy, but it must also be said that God only is truly holy.

God alone, in other words, is holy. In that lovely prayer, which I referred to last week of Hannah, in the temple, 1 Samuel chapter 2, she made the statement, there is none holy as the Lord. And in perfectly plain words, in the 15th chapter of the Revelation, at verse 4, Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy.

Now, let's mark that down in our thinking. God alone is holy. Changelessness, as I pointed out a few moments ago, is essential to holiness.

And God alone is immutable. God is not only holy, but he is holiness. God not only manifests a holy life, but God is the single source of holiness.

And there is no holiness anywhere apart from God. Now, in the Scriptures, angels are described as holy. For instance, in referring to the second coming of Christ, in Matthew 25, it says, When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.

But not only are angels described in Scripture as holy, but man is also described as holy. In many instances, in actual fact, but let me just cite one reference. In 2 Peter 1, verse 21, Holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

So we have both angels and men being described as holy. But, in Scripture, we also have both angels and men described as unholy. Many of you are acquainted with the details about the unholy angels in the book of Jude, verse 6. And we know so much about the unholiness of man as recorded in Scripture, there's no reason to refer to it now.

God only is holy. And I think a way to come to grips with it is to think in terms of our sun and our moon. Now we know that the sun has light and that the moon reflects the sun's light.

God is holy and angels can reflect the holiness of God and men can reflect the holiness of God. But the holiness of God does not exist in the angels in and of themselves any more than it exists in us in and of ourselves. In and of ourselves we are unholy, but we can reflect and we should reflect the holiness of God.

And we are commanded, in fact, to be holy like he is. But when we are holy, and I trust that many of you are holy and increasingly holy, when we are holy, we are only finitely holy. I mean, how long has it been? At the longest period in your life when you were perfectly holy.

I mean, did you ever run 30 days 100% holy? How about 7 days of absolute holiness? How about 7 hours of absolute perfection? Well, I, by the grace of God, have seen some days when I sinned a whole lot less than I used to. But I don't know that I have ever lived one 24-hour period in perfection. I doubt it seriously.

And if I thought so, and Margaret were here, she's away today, but if she were here, she could quickly stand and say, Oh, I remember that day. And I remember something you forgot. We are holy by the grace of Christ, but our holiness is very, very finite.

God's holiness is infinite. Now, with those three thoughts in mind, let us move to a point. God is so holy that he cannot do anything other than hate unholiness.

Now, this, I think, is a very sobering issue. I want to repeat that God is so holy that he cannot do anything other than hate unholiness. Now, some of us don't like strong language.

We never would have liked Jesus when he was here in actual fact. I mean, there are people of our acquaintance, and probably some right in this room, that wouldn't have associated with Jesus because he was too direct, very plain spoken. He used very, very specific terms.

Now, in actual fact, the whole tone of Scripture is much plainer than we are. We tend to mince words, but the Bible does not. God is so holy that he cannot do anything other than hate holiness.

Now, for the next few minutes, I want to ask you simply to listen to this sampling of Scripture on the subject of God's hatred of sin, Proverbs 6, 16 to 19. There are six things that the Lord doth hate, yea, seven, an abomination unto him, a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises evil imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and, oh, listen now, friends of the Bible church, and he that soweth discord among the brethren. Well, observe these words in Amos 8, 17.

Let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his neighbor, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, saith the Lord. But Psalm 10 at verse 3, For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and he blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth. Deuteronomy 32, 16 and following, They provoked him to jealousy with their strange gods.

With abominations provoked they him to anger. And when the Lord sought, he abhorred them. I want to pause and ask you to observe this now.

I constantly hear professing Christians saying, God loves the sinner. It's their sin that he hates. Now listen to the Scripture.

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods. With abominations they provoked him to anger. And when the Lord sought, he abhorred them.

Luke 16, 15, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Lamentations 2, 6 The Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and Sabbath to be forgotten in Zion, and he hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.

Ezekiel 5, 11 Wherefore as I live, saith the Lord God, surely because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all these detestable things and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee, neither shall mine eyes spare, neither will I have any pity. Ezekiel 16, 43 Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me. And all these things, behold therefore, I also will recompense thy ways upon thine head, saith the Lord God.

Isaiah 63, 10 They rebelled, and they vexed his Holy Spirit. Therefore he, God, was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. Psalm 5, 5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight.

Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. Isaiah 1, 14 Your new moons and your appointed feast, my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me, and I am weary to bear them.

Amos 5, 21-24 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of thy song, for I will not hear the melody of thy vials, but let judgment run as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

My friends, we must see that the holiness of God demands his hatred of sin, and in no unclear or uncertain language, but in explicit, plain terms, God declares in abundance of time his hatred both of sin and sinners, and no unholiness can be hid from him. I know that that is something you're aware of, that we need again to meditate upon it. God cannot tolerate unholiness in his presence, and no unholiness can be hid from him.

And thou art of pure eyes, and behold evil, and thou canst not look on iniquity, thus says Habakkuk the prophet in 113. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.

The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. God can't help himself.

He cannot look upon evil. He cannot tolerate evil in his presence. I find that it's truly remarkable that there are people still who think they are saved from hell and who know they aren't saved from sin, and they are deluded enough to believe that that is possible.

I want to emphasize again today that the holiness of God is such that you cannot tolerate sin, and his eyes will not look upon it, and there is no way anyone can enjoy divine favor or divine blessing and still adhere to their sin. If God became coward of sinners, and if God allowed unchecked sin to reign in the life of his own people, God would be a phony and a hypocrite. His holiness would go down the tomb.

He would cease to be God in the toleration of that which his soul abhors, which he hates, which he despises, which vex him, which hurts him, and which he has outlawed for time and for eternity. We ought to be in the grip of the knowledge that God is not tolerant of sin, and if there is sin in our lives that remains, that is unrepented of and unforsaken, then we've got to come to grips with the fact that we are not walking with God, and when we say we are, we are liars. Sin and God are incompatible.

He is holiness, and his holiness demands separation from sin. In the light of that, we want also to think of this sixth statement. So awful is God's holiness.

This is sobering. So awful is God's holiness that it requires the eternal condemnation of the unholy. Now men did not conceive of hell.

Man wouldn't conceive of hell. Too awful. He couldn't conceive of hell.

This awful place was devised by a holy God. God's holiness demands that he extract from sinners the penalty of the broken law. To fail to do so would mean that God ceased to be holy.

If God made a law stating the soul that sins, it shall die, and he added to that statement the clear biblical concept of an eternal hell, and then God saw someone that he favored and he said, in your case I'll make an exception and I'll waver my law, then God would cease to be holy. Or if God said hell is eternal and then later on he was confused and worried by the cries of the doomed in hell and changed his mind, he would cease to be holy. The holiness of God demands an eternal hell.

If God did not consign the unholy to a ceaseless hell, they would disrupt eternity as they have disrupted time. While God has been willing to allow sin in this world now, he has arranged it so that sin will go in due time to that place from whence it cannot escape. And all sinners will go there.

Now will you observe that God's wrath is against sin, not against hell. Hell itself was devised as a place of punishment for the subjects of God's wrath, namely sinners. So I say again if a person thinks they've been saved from hell, but they're not saved from their sins, they're not saved from life either.

To say so is absurd. Hell is for sinners and all who are not saved from being sinners will be in hell. And the holiness of God makes that mandatory.

And dear friends, that means that some of those whom we love and some of those for whom we are directly responsible are going to that awful place. And God cannot become messy on this subject because they are our loved ones. God cannot cease to be holy.

He must maintain his holiness by allowing even sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers of those people whom he loves allowing them to perish in an eternal hell. His holiness demands it. But may I add a seventh truth, perfectly wonderful in the light of all this, so great is God's love of holiness that he sacrificed his holy son to make us holy men and women.

It isn't enough to say that God hates sin, that his soul abhors sinners, that he must burn sinners in the everlasting fire. Oh no, that's only part of the truth and a sobering part indeed. But the other truth is that God loves us so much, so much.

And he loves holiness so much that he gave his son that we might become righteous in him. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. He took his sin in his own body on the tree.

For such a high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. And is it not a wondrous truth that by entering into faith in believing that Jesus, the Holy One, took our unholiness upon himself, we can be delivered forever from the wrath of God. But I hope you see, my friends, clearly the connection between hell and the cross and holiness.

Holiness demands that God cannot merely forgive. Holiness demands that the penalty had to be paid in full. The death of Jesus Christ was mandatory.

It was either God himself provide an acceptable substitute or each of us die for our own sins. And all of this, that we might become like the Holy God, be we therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. And when one comes to the death of self, in responding in faith to the glorious atonement of Jesus Christ, they receive that grace of God which enables them to die to sin and to rise to newness of life in Christ Jesus.

Be ye holy, says the Lord, for I am holy. And let's not think that means to be just a little better than we were. That means to be like him.

Father in heaven, dearest, very deeply, give us hearts to meditate increasingly upon the truth revealed in Scripture concerning thy holiness and help us to reach that point in our experience where we begin to reflect your purity, your holiness to this desperately wicked and needy world in which we place it. In the glorious name of Jesus, we lift our prayer. Amen.

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