

The Message Hasn't Changed

by Steve Mays

The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a close relationship with God and living in obedience and holiness amidst worldly distractions.

Duration: 26:43

Scripture: Romans 12:1, Leviticus 18:1-5, Matthew 22:37, Hebrews 11:24-27

Topics: "Spiritual Purity", "Faithfulness To God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God, focusing on the need to maintain purity and not be influenced by the ways of the world. It highlights the call to remember God's deliverance, to avoid imitating sinful behaviors, and to stay faithful to God's ways. The message stresses the need for a deep relationship with God, rejecting worldly temptations, and choosing to live according to God's standards rather than seeking temporary pleasures.

Transcript

Shall we open our Bible to a Leviticus chapter 18 and want to draw your attention to verses 1 through 5. We're going to take a look at obedience. Obedience, and I think it's a good word because what he's saying in a very profound way is no matter where you are or where you've been or where I'm going to take you, I want you to be pure before me. I'll give you the strength to do that and because of where you've been I don't want you to muddy the water.

God can heal you. If you've been a victim, God can purify your life. If I'm using you now, great.

But I have great things for you. I have great desire in my heart to do something big in your life, and if I give that to you I don't want it going to your head. I don't want you to become and start acting like the Egyptians, and I do not want you to imitate the Canaanites.

I want you to remember who I am. I am your God, and so God is going to deal today on our relationship with him, and I believe with all my heart the greatest curse we have in our nation is technology. Because technology is a great thing, but once again, you don't communicate.

You don't talk. You don't share. We communicate through email and we offend a lot of people because they can't see your eyes or how you say it or how you do it.

They can't understand the reflection of how you want to communicate, and yet we do it. We don't talk to our wives. We talk through the TV to our wives, but we don't turn things off.

We're too busy. We don't know what to do. In other words, we're almost afraid to give somebody some divided time.

In fact, one of the great things I see today is people will not communicate because they know the other person is going to say no. So why do it? Listen, if the other person says no, God will deal with them if God wants you to do it, but give God a chance. You don't become that way, and so we are people that have no feelings, no emotions, and so we have men and women who are in pornography that are on that, not in a human body, right in the very next room, and they'd rather go to pornography than that human body.

It's a tragic thing, and what God is saying, stop. Everyone stop. I don't want that.

I'm not going to deal with you on texting. I'm not going to deal with you on anything else, but I'm going to write my word in your heart, and I'm going to be a God that loves you. I'm going to be a God that talks to you, and I'm going to be a God that we can sit down and reason together.

That's who I am, and if that's not what you want, then we have to talk about that, but as long as you are here, I made you. I bought you. I produced things in your life.

I have saved you. I am God. I need a relationship with you.

My relationship is established, but I need that back, and so it's very profound, I think, when it comes to that point. God, am I building my relationship? Do I love you more, or if God begins to bless my life, do I love him even more than that? In other words, do things take me away from God, or am I beginning to realize God's given me honor, and God's given me privilege? Does that bring me to a greater awakening of God? Or a greater deception of God? It should bring me closer to God. In other words, the goodness of God leads a man to repentance.

I, God, I'm so thankful for what you're doing, but if all of a sudden I begin to rise up, and fame begins to take over and destroy my life, that's not what God wants. He desires me to have this, so here in Leviticus chapter 18, verse 1, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. Now, would you underline that, I am the Lord your God, in verse 2? After the doing of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, so better translation, after you've been in Egypt, and I've taken you out of all that bondage, I want you to remember that you belong to me.

So, after the doing of the land of Egypt wherein you dwelt, shall ye not do, don't be like the Egyptians, do not bring slavery, do not bring lordship, do not treat people that way. You've been under that, don't do it. And after the doing of the land of Canaan, whether I bring you, now this is profound, I'm going to bring you into a new place.

Now, you've heard me say, God takes you out, that he might bring you in. Well, he took you out of bondage, but now he's going to take you into a land that is full of perversion. That's kind of incredible, when you think about that, but you have to understand, that's what happens.

He takes you from being a worker, he makes you a CEO. More pressure, more temptations, more things going on, but he believes that you can handle it, if you keep your eyes on God, that's the key. So, if I don't keep my eyes on God, then I'm going to yield to the pressure, to the temptation, I'm going to fall apart.

So, no matter what God does in my life, what I used to be, God has dedicated again, he took me out. What I'm going to be, God still wants me to be close to him. There's never going to be a time in your life or mine, that I'm going to be able to say, God, the pressure killed me, things destroyed me.

No, I took my eyes off of God, I didn't accept what God laid before me, I chose to go this way and not honor God, and I did not understand in my own heart, that God gave me this honor to bring forth Jesus Christ and not myself. That's the key. And that's why whenever we begin to be uplifted, a lot of times people are taken down, because God wants to raise you up, but he cannot make his eyes stay upon you.

He's looking at you, we take our eyes off of him. And so, he says here, don't be like the Canaanites. Verse 4, you shall do my judgment, keep my ordinance, walk therein and underline in my, I am the Lord your God.

Verse 5, ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them and underline, I am the Lord. Then verse 6, none of you shall approach to any that is near kin, to uncover their nakedness, and the reason why, underline, I am the Lord. Then jump down to verse 21, thou shall not let any of thy seed pass through the fire of Molech.

In other words, do not sacrifice your children to the fire. Neither shall thou profane the name of thy God, and the reason why, underline, I am the Lord. And lastly, in verse 30, therefore, and that word means wherefore or pointing back, shall ye keep my ordinances, that ye commit not any of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourself therein, and underline, I am the Lord your God.

Hey, six times and 30 verses, God is saying, I am the Lord your God. I kind of think that what God is saying today is, Stephen, I have built a relationship with you that should be so great and so special, that no matter where you've been, what's going on in your life, or where I take you, you are never going to take your eyes off of me. You are flat in love with me, and that's what the Bible says.

To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. In other words, to give God the preeminence of my life. To realize I was over here, and he took me out of that miley clay, and put my feet upon the rock.

To realize I was going to hell, and now the marvelous grace has saved me. To realize I was once in darkness, but now the light has shined, and now I see the goodness of God in my life. In other words, there's never a time I'm going to come in my heart to say, oh, this pressure has destroyed me.

No, I destroyed myself, because I chose to look at the Canaanites. I decided to look at the perversion, and they were perverted. Let me tell you, it was incredible.

But here, if I was God, I'd never take the people there. And God is saying, you are in this world, but you're not of it. I'm going to have to take you through this world.

I'm going to have to take you through places you've never been. And you're going to see things I wish you would never see, but in your heart, you've made that covenant before God. That's the key, and that's what we don't do very well.

We look at things, and we think, now wait a second. I can do this, I can do that. And God is saying six times, listen, there is a relationship.

When I go out, and I travel, I don't want to commit adultery. Why? Because number one, it's contrary to God. Number two, it will destroy my family.

But number three, it will destroy you. In other words, what is going to hold me faithful to the call of God? A relationship with Jesus Christ. So if I'm mad at Gail, there might be a possibility.

But if I'm right with God, he's going to put the fear of God in my heart. So what is the problem today? Why all the sin going on in the body of Christ? There's no relationship. There's no relationship of talking to God and fellowship with God.

We're too busy. We're trying to build something for our own kingdom, trying to be something, when instead of God makes us something. And so friends and family and so on.

And so the message hasn't changed. God loves you, and he loves me. And the message is still the same.

I want to bring you up, and I want to take you in deeper. I want to take you where you've never been. I'm going to take you among people that don't love me, don't know me, and curse and everything else, but that should not alter who you are.

You are a Christian. You are a born-again, spirit-filled Christian, and my life lives in you. And I want my life to shine in them.

But if you look at them and become like them, you're not going to shine anymore for me. And so he's encouraging a life of holiness. He's encouraging a life of commitment.

He doesn't want me to drift, where all of a sudden, I'm kind of drifting, not knowing where I stand anymore. No, I know exactly where I stand. As for me and my family, we're going to serve God.

This is right. This is wrong. This is sin.

This is ungodly. Holiness is something from God. Illusion and perversion is something from Satan.

I can figure that out. I'm no dummy. So what am I going to do? I'm not going to drift.

I'm drifting. What happens? I need to get back. Why do I drift? My devotions are bad.

My relationship with God, I got to get this done, and get this done, and get this done. And I'm doing all these things, and yet I'm dying inside. There's no life.

There's no joy. And I'm stumbling. I'm talking like they do.

And God says, I do not want you imitating this world, and I'm afraid we do. I'm afraid it's hard for people to see the difference between a Christian and the world when they look at us. They need to see a profound difference in our life that we're not governed by them.

We can walk away gracefully, but we don't have to be like them. And like the slaves, Pharaoh, he brought people under judgment. We don't do that.

And he made people slaves. We don't do that. He manipulated people.

We don't do that. Why? Because we're born again, spirit-filled, and we don't play that game. That's God's responsibility.

What are we supposed to do? We are to take God, we are to love, and we are to do what God wants, and we are to humble ourself because God has great things in our life. That's all he wants. If you could do that and get in the midst of whatever you are, you have to realize, I am the Lord God.

I gave you that book order, but you better be careful. Because as I begin to broaden your horizon, I don't want you being like them, and I don't want you being like this. I want you being who I am.

So that brings me back, always, back to the truth. And so three things I want to look at this morning. Number one, in verse one and two, do not ever forget me, is what God is saying.

Do not ever forget me. Number two, do not ever act like them. Don't ever be like the Canaanites and the Egyptians because you belong to me.

You act like I am. And number three, in verse five, do not ever reject my ways. So in verse one and two, God is saying, I am the Lord thy God.

Do not ever forget me. It says, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say to them, I am the Lord your God. I made you.

I bought you. I redeemed you. I brought you out of Egypt.

I heard your cry. I saw what you were going through. I came to deliver you, according to Ezekiel chapter three, Exodus chapter three.

And I've come to deliver you. And it's such a profound thing to realize. But there's one verse that stands out to me.

It's in Galatians. And it reminds me of a story I've told you before, but it fits here so well. That when I first came to Christ, you know, I had hair then, don't have it now.

But I had hair down on my waist and I had a goatee with rubber bands and my earrings. And I was quite a sight with a bandana. And so they got rid of my guns and got rid of this.

But here I was going on this gardening adventure. There were 60 people in a house, Mansion Messiah. I was in there.

I was way back in 1970. There was like 35 guys and 25 women, something like that. And they were separate, no sex, nothing else.

It was all about Bible study three times a day, going to church every single night, you know, praying and working together as a family. So I would be out going out gardening. I was in the back of a pickup truck.

It was a 1951 Chevy five glass. It was a really cool little truck. But, you know, it bounces really good.

So here I am bouncing on the way home. And it was like about 5 o'clock. Really cool.

I mean, it was just a breeze was coming through. I'm bouncing. And I thought, man, this feels like a Harley, you know.

And I remember taking my thing out, my rubber band out, my hair began to blow in the wind, and I put my bandana on and my sunglasses. And I started saying, it's into the run. And I looked up and there were handlebars.

I was like, oh, the heart of Davidson. And I picked up their lawnmower, the lawnmower handlebars. And I reached up and pulled them down.

And I'm just saying, it's for the run. And I heard this voice, Stephen, what? What? This is God. What? What are you doing? What? And this is the verse he gave me.

It says here in Galatians 4.9. But now after that ye have known God, I know you, or rather are known of God. Well, you know me. How turn ye again to the wicked things of the Harley Davidsons and the drugs and everything else and beguile Elmas, where you desire to be back in bondage again and get shot again.

What's wrong with you? I don't know. Well, I tell you what, the next day I got my hair cut, shaved my goatee, and took the earrings out. That was it.

I said, no, man, I got the fear of God. Just, I mean, I heard his voice. What are you doing? What? I'm just singing, itching to the run, and bouncing, and pretend like I'm in a Harley Davidson.

But you just got shot. They shot you. And you were sick, and I took you out.

Why do you want to go back there? I don't. Then what are you doing? I don't know. Don't get mad.

Don't do that. OK. Stephen, this is off limits, OK? And it was like, bam.

Stephen, I am your God now, not that. And I think that that could happen a little bit more often. That all of a sudden, the things that we love, the things that we have to have, that they are not pleasing to God.

This relationship that God says is, listen, why do you want to go backwards when I set you free? Why don't you go forward to see what I have? Well, I did that. I'm real good at that. But Stephen, I can make you really good at this.

But you got to let go. And here, very profoundly, it says in Galatians 4.8, and a different translation, now that you have found God, Stephen, or should say that God has found you, how can it be that you want to go back again and become a slave once more to another poor, weak, useless religion of trying to get to heaven by obeying God's law? In other words, why did you go back? And I said, that's it. I'm out.

I'm gone. That was so profound. I remember that.

Don't ever forget me. But number two, he says here, I am the Lord your God. Do not act like them.

Notice in verse three and four. And verse three, don't be a slave like in Egypt. After the doing of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do? So what happened? You were slaves.

You were in bondage. You were treated very badly. You had to be whipped and everything else.

You ate onions. You had no food. They tore your life apart.

What are you doing now? Well, I'm just doing that to everybody else. I don't treat my employees very nice. I beat them.

My words are nasty. I say things I mean. I'm going to be even with everybody else.

No, you're not. You're a Christian. You are a born-again, spirit-filled Christian, and you're different.

What happened then does not give you the right to wear a chip on your shoulder today. That is then. I made the difference.

I pulled you out. I destroyed the enemy. I brought the enemy to the shores.

I delivered you. Now, you're not a victim. You are victorious in me.

I want you not to treat people that way, and yet we do. And we can't do that. You can't treat your husbands that way, your wives that way, the kids that way.

You're different, and you don't want that slavery in your life because God is the Lord of your life. So he doesn't want you doing that. Secondly, he says, I don't want you to be perverted by Canaanites.

He says in verse 3 again, after the doing of the land of Canaan, and underline whether I bring you. This is so powerful. I don't care where I take you.

If I take you to Washington, DC, or I take you over here, or I take you to Nigeria, or I take you over there, it does not alter who you are as a Christian. You are a loving Christian who loves me. You gave your life back to me.

You asked me to come into your heart. I did. I want to be your friend.

I want to be your God. I want to be your lover. But there's some things you have to understand.

You cannot go backwards. You've got to go forwards. And you cannot be afraid of going forwards.

I don't want you drifting backwards like you used to be. And I don't want to compromise you when you go ahead. I am going to be in your life.

I'll give you victory. So when you see what they do, yes, it's going to kind of stumble you. But you're going to know in your heart, that's not for me.

Walk away from it. I gave you my judgments, my statutes. You're going to be tempted.

And I think this is great. I think what God is saying is I do trust you. That's why I want to bless you.

I do believe in what you do. I want to make you a CEO. I want to raise you up on the docks.

I want to give you more people to be over because you treat them right. But I don't want you to compromise or be like them or be like anybody else. Be like me.

Be like the Lord Jesus Christ, that you're a servant. You came to minister, not to be ministered to. And here, no matter where I take you.

So all of a sudden, you're in Hawaii and you're stuck and you're listening. You don't have to be stuck. Just walk out gracefully.

You do not need to abuse your life or abuse your spirit at all. And then in verse three and four, faithful to God. Notice verse three.

He says, neither shall you walk in their ordinance. You don't have to do what they do. And verse four, you shall do my judgment, keep my ordinance, walk therein.

I am the Lord, your God. So, yes, we have a set of rules. The world has a set of rules.

But I'm to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I'm not to conform to this world. I'm not part of this world.

And Romans 12, verse one. He says, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. So, God, take my body.

Now, here it is. Be not conformed to this world. I want to be like the world.

No, you don't. He says, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Let me read it one other way, a different translation.

So, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your body to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy, the kind he can accept. When you think of what he's done for you, is it too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and the customs of Egypt or the Canaanites of this world.

But he be a new and different person with a fresh newness in your life. In other words, that's what God wants. So here you are.

Why did God make me a CEO? Because you're different. It's like Caleb. He had an excellent spirit.

He could climb a mountain at 80 years old or like Joshua. He could see God or like a Moses. He could see the invisible.

There's something different about you. Yes, you're firm. No, people don't walk over you.

Yes, you're fair. But there's something different that beats in your heart. It's not to have authority.

It's to be under authority. It's to be like God. But I tell you what, Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life.

It doesn't change. That's the decision you have to make. And what happens is, well, you know, Egypt so messed me up.

You know, the world messed me up. I can't really walk with you, God. Oh, really? And now this new position, I don't have time to go to church and hang out with you, God, because I'm too busy doing what you want me to do.

And I didn't give you that. I gave you this because you are to represent me here and you're not doing that. So I have no option but to take this away from you because I love you that much.

Well, God, what do you want me to do? The same thing I told you your whole life. Whatever I do here or there or here, you are to love God. So you are to love your wife.

And what happens? We get married. We love each other. But then something happens.

I don't know what it is. We begin to drift. We used to call each other.

Now we don't. We used to hold hands. Now we, I don't want to hold her hand.

Sweat, you know. You know, we used to go out and have dates. Now it's too much money, you know.

It's, we used to kiss before we go to bed, but we don't do that. And now when we wake up in the morning, oh, our breath is so bad. We definitely don't want to kiss now.

And we used to, the kids used to see us sexing together, but now our family time is watching TV. And all we ever do is do things, but we never really even talk. And our kids have never even saw us pray ever together.

So a wife one day says, you know something, I just want a friend. I don't want sex. I just want a friend.

I don't know if I'm your friend. So 80% of women are on Facebook. Why? They want a friend.

What happened to the love of their life? Oh, he hit a pole. My knight in shining armor is worthless. Well, wait a second.

What happened to his friend? You see, that's what happens with Jesus Christ. I'm on fire for God. I love God.

I'm serving God. And all of a sudden this guy comes in that's not a Christian. I start dating him.

I go to bed with him. What happened? How did it happen? You forgot God. God has told you.

You knew it was wrong. God warned you. God showed you.

You wouldn't listen to God. You have to make a commitment. That's what it's all about.

You have to be obedient. You have to be obedient when you look at the past that's so ugly and it breaks your heart. So when you turn it around, it doesn't mess up your present.

And you have to be so obedient in the present. When God begins to bless you, you know where those blessings came from. They came from God.

That's so cool. And then lastly, he says, I'm the Lord, your God. Do not ever reject my ways.

Notice in verse five, and I'll let you go. You, therefore, keep my statute. That's all.

Keep my judgments. If a man do, he shall live in them. And this is Hebrews 11.

This is a great verse. By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer the affliction with the people of God than to enjoy pleasure for sin for a season. Esteem in the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasure in Egypt, for he had recompense, respect of the recompense of the reward.

By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as one seeing the invisible. Let me put it in very simple terms. He took everything that Jesus had to offer him, the cross, the crucifixion,

the suffering, the pain, the rejection, the loneliness.

He put it in this scale over here. And then over here, he put everything that the world could give me. My fame, my fortune, my my charisma, everything over here.

And he waited. And for some reason, this went up and the cross went down and there was substance here. And Moses said, I choose rather to suffer the affliction of the cross than to enjoy pleasure of sin for a season.

And the reason why is because at the end of the sin, there's no God. At the end of this CEO, there's no God. At the end of all the things I want to do, there's no God.

But at the end of his cross, there is a God. And the righteous man, a good man, a righteous woman, a great woman, will realize that no matter how good she is and all the things she does and all the entrepreneurship she does at the end of her life, she has to say, OK, where is God living and how am I living it? Am I acting like a Philistine? Am I acting like a Canaanite? Am I acting like an Egyptian? Or am I acting like Jesus Christ? When I yell at my kids, is that Christ like when I put my husband down? Is that Christ like when I put my wife down? Is that Christ like when I cuss and curse on the freeway? Is that Christ like, no, don't do that. I'm there in that car with you.

I'm there. I'm in your heart. Everywhere you go, I go.

I will never leave you. No, forsake me. I am your God.

You have to build that relationship. You have to build that relationship and God doesn't want to text with you and God doesn't want to communicate with you on the computer, because I've written my law in your heart. I'll look at you face to face and I'll say, let's reason together, let's talk.

I'm a God that builds a relationship forever. So don't give me that thing about, you know, the pressure broke me. No, you broke yourself because you wouldn't have the wisdom to say, God, thank you for this gift.

Now I give it back to you. Thank you, Lord, for this trial. I give it back to you.

Thank you for this moment. I give it back to you. You are the Lord in my life.

Let go of the handlebars. Let go of the hair, the earrings, whatever is holding on to you and say, God. I don't want to get caught up again.

I want to be the Lord and just I want you to be my Lord.

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