

# Be Ye Holy - Part 2

by Winkie Pratney

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*Winkie Pratney's sermon emphasizes the dual aspects of holiness--understanding and obedience--and challenges the notion of partial obedience in the Christian faith.*

**Duration:** 56:34

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:36

**Topics:** "Heart Holiness", "Obedience To God"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of holiness and obedience, emphasizing the need to align our hearts with God's commandments. It contrasts external legalistic traditions with the internal transformation of the heart, highlighting the significance of making God the supreme preference in our lives. The sermon explores the levels of choice in life, from supreme preferences to immediate decisions, urging listeners to prioritize obedience to God above all else.

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## Transcript

I want to give you now a brief Bible study on obedience, and then we're going to come back in and we're going to look at the difference between a legal and a gospel walk, and then I'll try and deal a little bit with motives. First, let's turn, please, to two different passages in Scripture, Matthew 22 and Mark 12. Matthew 22, and the passage in Matthew 22 is verses 36 to 40, and the one in Mark 12 is verses 28 to 34.

The question we want to look at is, we've said holiness is two things in Scripture. It's a lot more than this. When I say it's two things, it's not just two things.

I'll say it's like saying Jesus was a man. That's true, but He's a lot more than that. Holiness in Scripture does involve those two component sides.

We'll say this. There is a component of understanding in holiness, a component of understanding. Something understood or revealed or something shown to you, there's a wisdom component in it, a light component in holiness.

Can you give me a Scripture? Can you think of a Scripture offhand that links this word light with holy living? Jerry? Walking in the light as He is in the light. Walking in the light. If we walk in the light, in 1 John, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us continually from all sin.

So there is a component of a holy life, walking in the light. Now what does that light mean? Said again, light in the Bible is a symbol of that which is most wise. It is characteristic of God.

It's one of the three statements in the Scripture, unqualified statements, about God. God is love. God is light.

There's two of them. Wise or wisdom, that means that when we live a holy life, there is an understanding component to it, and that means that holiness involves a process. There's something you have to learn, all right? Does understanding grow? Yes, it ought to, if we're saved.

God says be like me, well He's infinite and we're finite, so that means that holiness will always be a process, there'll be a process involved of understanding something and conforming our lives to it. God being infinite and us being finite, when He says you be holy for I am holy, there'll be no end to this process. What it means is that one million years from now you'll be coming more and more like God.

Will they ever be an end to it? No. Talked to a young man in Eastern thought, he said, listen, I've been in this for 13 years and now I know more than my teacher, what shall I do? He said, why don't you get saved and give your life to Jesus, you'll never have that problem again, because He's infinite God, no end to His understanding. And the Bible says that we're to grow in knowledge, it's part of Christian life.

Okay, the other side of, the other dimension of holiness, what is it? Look at light, God is light, God is love. So love involves obedience, and that's the one I want to look at in some detail. Now, here's where we make a mistake.

Understanding is progressive, okay, which means there is a growing revelation of God and a growing dimension of Him sharing His life with us. But love or obedience is only progressive in the sense as you're showing something it becomes a responsibility. It is not progressive in the sense that you do a little bit more and more with what you're supposed to be doing.

Here's what we have thought today. Somebody is asked, for instance, by their mother to mow the lawn. So as they go past the lawn, they pick a blade of grass, okay.

Mother says, have you mowed the lawn? They say yes. Mother says, it doesn't look mowed to me. Well, look.

Mother says, I told you to mow the lawn. So they go, all right. They go back and they pick three.

Now, what does mow the lawn mean? It means mow the lawn, that's what it means. It means the lawn, meaning all of the lawn, and it means mow it. It doesn't mean partially mow it.

It doesn't mean mow a quarter of it and then leave. It doesn't mean mow most of it and then knock off because after all you've tried. It means do the lawn.

That's exactly what it means. Now, when God says love me, what does He mean? He doesn't mean partly love me, love me if you feel like it, love me a little bit at a time. He means love me with all that you know, with all that you have, with all that you can be.

But that love is not progressive. Only in the sense of that as God shows us new things about ourselves and about Him are we to conform. So we'll say this.

Obedience is to be entire. It is not to be partial. Do you know what our big problem? We confuse these two things, and so we say here is a person who's partly obedient to God.

That's like Jonah. God says go, arise and go to Nineveh. So Jonah arises and goes to Tarshish.

Well, he was half right. He even found a ship going there. You need a ship to get to Nineveh.

He was half right. God didn't say he was half right. He said, Jonah, your heart's in the right place.

His heart was in the wrong place. He was heading in the opposite direction. The only vague resemblances were that it was a ship and that he arose.

That's like King Nebuchadnezzar. God gives him a vision, which he's in this vision is this great statue, gold, and then finally the chest is silver and goes down to the brass thighs and then the iron legs and the iron mixed with clay. He sees this whole thing and this little rocket and the whole statue falls over.

The whole purpose of this, though, his kingdom was the greatest. Eventually all kingdoms of men would be felled by the rock that would fill the earth. So Nebuchadnezzar gets half the vision.

He starts with the top half, his half. He builds a gold statue and requires everybody to worship. We always like doing that, getting something of what God says and doing something like it.

What is the end of this? Being partially a Christian. You're a Christian? Well, sort of. What is that sort of? Are you pregnant? Sort of.

Are you married? Sort of. What is that? Are you a man? Sort of. This is not progressive.

It is an on-off. Now I'm going to give you an electronics illustration. Those of you girls who are not electronics technicians, you'll have to bear with me.

There are two kinds of circuitry in electronics. One is called analog and one is called digital. You don't have to know those two to get to heaven, which is great value.

Analog is like a volume control on a radio or a... Have you ever seen the dimmers on the lights? What happens is as you turn the knob, step by step, there's an increase. There's a dim or an increase of light or volume. Now you turn it.

Like that. It's called analog. Graphed, it looks like this.

It could be broken up into a series of tiny little infinitesimally small steps. That's analog. Or looked at on a scope, it would look like this.

It's a sine wave. That's a sine. Look at it on a scope.

That's analog. That's how you spell it in case you're taking notes and freak out. That's again the... You could just cut that off if you want to be American about it.

There's another kind of circuit. It's called digital. Say, oh, I know what that is.

My watch is digital. Yep. You watch if it's digital.

This is an analog watch. It moves in tiny increments around you. Watch very carefully.

You can see that minute hand moving. You're going to watch it a lot. See the tiny little increments at a time.

You can check the second hand. It's a lot easier, right? Analog watch, digital. Digital is on and off.

It is like a switch. Looked at on a scope, it looks like this. Bam.

Bam. It's either full on or full off. It is nothing in between.

Let me say this. Holiness has an analog component, and that is its learning, the wisdom. It has a digital component, and that is obedience.

Obedience is on or off. You are disobedient or obedient. You are not partially obedient.

We have made obedience analog. And we've thought that information was digital. God's given us, boom, that's it.

We're never going to learn anything more. Proud Christians wandering around thinking they're never going to be learners. But, of course, we are growing in obedience.

I'm partially doing what God says. One day I'll have to do all of it. I know what it is, but I'm not doing it yet because I'm only partly.

Do you see that? Switch. On. Off.

On. Off. If a person is not doing what God says for them to do, and they know what to do, and they know how to do it, they're not partially obedient.

They're disobedient. They're not partly holy. They are ungodly.

They are living an unholy life. Now, if we understand these two components to holy living, then it will help us understand some of the various theories on how people can be holy. Because there will always be this progressive, and there will be the instantaneous.

Some people who have taught historically on holiness have said it is an experience which you can have, an instantaneous experience, or let's say it's a crisis experience, would be the word they'd use, where one time you're not, bam, then you are. And that would sum up about half of the teaching on holiness historically. And they've differed as to what they've called that.

Some have said perfect love. Some have said perfect sanctification. Some have said it's rooting the old sin nature out of your heart.

Others have said you come into a baptism of love. Some have said it's the sanctifying experience. Some have called it the second blessing.

Some have said it's the baptism in the Holy Spirit. All kinds of different things around there. But it has a crisis, obedience, instantaneous, once I was, now I'm not thing.

And I believe that's half the story. There are other people who say, look, it is dangerous to teach on instant or crisis, sanctified life, living holy life, boom, boom, like that, because it's obvious that life continues to grow. So we must walk in holiness.

We must grow in grace and in knowledge. If you keep those two together, I think, a great deal of reconciliation of most historical views. Some have stressed, then, having an experience.

There will be people that God has dealt with and dealt with and dealt with again until finally He's revealed to them the way of blessing. They've stepped out and said, God, I'm going to die unless I have it. Boom, boom.

God came through. They obeyed Him. Power came in their lives.

Any one of a dozen names they put on the thing. And from that time on, they started living the kind of life they're supposed to live. All right? Then there are others that said, look, no lights and no bells.

I got into the Word of God. I started doing what He said. Okay? I'm not going to go into different theories of how you get holiness.

What I'm going to show you is what it isn't and what it is. Okay, let's look now at Matthew 22. And you'll find that these are the same passages in two different things.

What I'm going to do is whip backwards and forwards between both of them and show you this, we call it an inner weave analysis, where you take two different accounts and you drop out all the doubled phrases where the same phrase is used. You drop one of them and where the other phrase is added, something you put it in. So here is an account.

A young man comes to Jesus in this. He is quite a special young man. He is not only a scribe, he is a lawyer.

Now scribes had the task of copying by hand, being no printing presses in those days, all of the Old Testament Scriptures by hand from the manuscripts. Now Hebrew you wrote this way, see? So that's for the right handers. Greek you wrote this way.

That's the left handers and together we get the whole Bible. The scribe, can you imagine if you're writing down these Hebrew things, copying, see? You'd really get to know what you're writing. That's why, by the way, I encourage you to take notes.

Not because, you know, you have to have a bunch of sheets to prove you've learned something, but by writing it, your hand helps your mind remember it. We could just give you cyclist-style notes and say, you read them in your own time, that's the message. When you write, you remember, well this young man was a professional writer.

He had copied down Scripture time and time again. He knew what the Old Testament taught. He knew it intimately.

He knew all kinds of little trippy details about it. And then the Bible also tells us, Mark tells us he was a scribe, Matthew tells us he was a lawyer. So he was both, a scribe and a lawyer.

A lawyer was not only somebody who said he knew the Scriptures well. Often a lawyer would ask a scribe, you know, what's that? But a lawyer prided himself on knowing all the correct interpretations of what the Scriptures actually said. They were, if you like, historical theologians.

A lawyer was a guy who would quote to you such and such a case in which such and such... You know they do today. They look at precedent. They go back and they say, well what have we historically decided on cases like this? Have we ever done this before? No, we haven't.

It's a historical precedent. Here's a young man who is both a scribe and a lawyer and he comes to Jesus and he has heard Jesus talking with these others and perceiving that he had answered well, Mark says, he asked him a question, Matthew says, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Which is the first commandment of all? That's putting Matthew and Mark together. Which is the great commandment in the law? Which is the first commandment of all? Now if I gave you this book, and you had never read this, if I gave you this whole thing, all the prophets, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Kings, Chronicles, all of the commandments that are in here and I gave you them all and you knew all of the historical details and how different ones have been interpreted, what an incredible question that is.

The young man said, which is the greatest? Here it is. Of course they had it in libraries, you know, all rolled up like this. No hesitation.

Jesus comes right back and he gives him, what is strange, he actually gives him two verses, one taken from Deuteronomy, the other one taken from Leviticus, none of them taken from the Ten Commandments. Strangely enough, neither of these two are taken from the Ten Commandments. Neither of them.

Which would have shocked everybody. Said, what? But you haven't even quoted the Ten Commandments. No.

He picked a verse in Deuteronomy and then a very obscure verse in Leviticus stuck in with care of birds and other things. And hauled these two out, cemented them together and said, this is, everything hangs on these. The Ten Commandments hang on these, all of the first five books of Moses hang on these, all the prophets, they all hang on these too.

And that blew this guy's mind. Jesus answered and said to him, Here O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Now they all knew that because that's the way the Ten Commandments open.

And thou shalt love him. Here is the commandment. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

And then Mark adds, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. That's the first one.

Okay? God first. Heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus added the word mind.

The word mind does not appear in the Old Testament in that commandment. He added it because he summed up change of mind and repentance and all these other things in it. And with all thy strength.

This is the first and great commandment. And Matthew goes on. And the second is like unto it, namely this, Mark adds, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Mark says there is none other commandment greater than these. Matthew says on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Alright? Here are the two greatest commandments in the Scripture.

I'm going to ask you this question. Is it possible for people to do what Jesus said? Is it possible to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength? Now obviously there's going to be growth in this. Somebody who loves God, who's a brand new Christian, doesn't know as much of God to love as somebody who's worked with Him 50 years.

But you understand that. A little kid can love his parents or her parents as much as they know them and understand them with everything they have. And a boy who's grown up, or a girl who's grown up 25 years loving his parents can love them more, not in obedience but in understanding.

Can you see that a 25 year old who loves his parents with all his heart has got a lot more growth and maybe a lot more grace and a lot more wisdom and a lot more a lot of things but has no more love than when they were only a year and a half old. Now I want to give you some Scriptures first that tell us man can obey because what usually happens when people say man can't do it, they're thinking of this. They always quote you verses like well you know God is infinite, how can we ever be infinite? So you can't do it, right? That's patent confusion.

Or they'll say well, this is actually written in a Bible as footnotes. By the way, your footnotes are not inspired. I hope you know that.

Some of you bought Bibles saying glory to God and only got the Scriptures. I've got inspired footnotes. You do not.

They can be just as wrong as I can be wrong. I think the Bible throws a lot of light on some of the commentaries I've read. And in one Bible, a very popular Bible, if you've got one of these, I apologize, but if that footnote disappears, the magic marker, I won't cry at all.

One particular Bible says, speaking of the Sermon on the Mount, this has no application in its primary sense at all to Christians. No application. Why is he saying that? Because his verse is like, be perfect in it.

Had a man get up, God says, be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect. Now that is patently impossible and God told us to do that because He knew we couldn't do it. And then the rest of this exposition.

Let me say this. God said of the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Now that does not mean that He loved us.

It doesn't mean that He really gave His Son. It actually means He kept His Son and that He hates us. Now if I say it long enough with the right emphasis, somebody's even going to believe me.

If God says do it, you can do it. And who are you going to come up to God and say you can't do it? I don't believe you. You better have a good excuse, baby, because you're talking to God.

You say, but my common priest said you couldn't. He should know. He was saved for 50 years.

God, you've only been around forever. What would you know? Here are some scriptures. In the Old Testament even.

We're not even talking about the New Covenant. We're not talking about the gospel yet. In the Old Testament, they thought you could obey God.

And there were five books full of commandments. In Deuteronomy 5, verse 4. A fly walked over my notes. I have no idea what that last verse is.

Deuteronomy 5. Moses said this. He called all of Israel together and he said, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the judgments which I speak in your ears this day that you may learn them and keep them and do them. Now where have you seen that before? Right here.

Learn and keep them and do them. And then he goes on and he says this. Deuteronomy 6, verse 24.

The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes to fear the Lord our God for our good always that he might preserve us alive as it is at this day. Deuteronomy 6, 24. Here's another verse.

Which is well known. Deuteronomy 10, 12 to 13. First one is Deuteronomy 5, let's say 4, who knows.

Deuteronomy 6, 24. And then Deuteronomy 10, 12 to 13. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, to love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes which I command thee this day.

I'd like you to look at this verse. Find it and I want you to read for me the way that verse ends. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee? What is the difference between that and this? What doth the Lord thy God suggest of thee? What is a requirement? Came to DTI or CSI, you had certain requirements.

They're not options. They are requirements. Without that, you don't come.

All right? What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God? And that doesn't mean be afraid of him, not spooky, but awesome, that fear. And to walk in all his ways. What does that mean? Walk in some of them, all the ways of God, whatever he shows you, that you understand, you do it.

It doesn't mean what you can explain. You do whatever he shows you. Whether you can explain it or not, you do it.

Then it says, To love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul to keep the commandments of the Lord and the statutes which I command thee this day. For what? For thy good. You cannot be happy unless you are holy.

Joshua thought so. That's just Moses. Now Joshua is Jesus of the Old Testament.

That's his name, Jesus, in Hebrew. He's going to take the children into the promised land. So he stands up and he says to the people in Joshua 22, verse 5, But take diligent heed to do the commandments.

Joshua 22, verse 5. Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses, the servant of the Lord, charged you. To love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and serve him with all your heart and soul. Joshua 22, verse 5. Ezra.

Do you remember that? Zorro. Ezra. That incredible thing where they discovered the tables of the law and they called all the people and they all repented and had a public thing and then they read out these things.

It was tremendous rejoicing. We have found what God told us to do again. Years we haven't known.

All we had is just general revelation around us and hoping we were conforming to what the Spirit of God spoke into our conscience. Now we've got it in writing. We know what God wants us to do.

What a tremendously exciting time. It was a festival. And here's what it says.

7, 23 to 26. Ezra 7, 23 to 26. This is Ataxerxes, the king.

Ataxerxes. What a name. Ataxerxes.

Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment. That's how they thought in the old days concerning the law of God.

7, 23 to 26. All right. David thought so.

Psalm 103, verses 17 to 18. Psalm 103, verses 17 to 18. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him and His righteousness unto children's children to such as keep His covenant and to those that remember His commandments to do them.

Psalm 103, 17 to 18. Is this a drag? Did they think it was a drag in the Old Testament to do what God said? Not David. Psalm 40, verse 8. I delight to do thy will, O God.

Thy law is within my heart. Now that is a really neat little scripture, that one, because it shows you how you can love to do what God says. He said, thy law is not hanging on a book in my table.

It is in my heart. And I love it. Daniel said we could.

Daniel 9, verses 9 through to 10. One of the last of the prophets. Daniel 9, 9 to 10.

To the Lord God belongs mercy and forgiveness though we have rebelled against Him. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in His laws which He set before us by His servants the prophets. We have rebelled against God and we have not obeyed the voice of our Lord.

We haven't walked in His laws which He set before us. That's why we've got so much trouble. Daniel said.

All right, question. Have these, or has this law, especially the one we're looking at, this one here, has this been superseded by some new thought in New Testament times? Not what Jesus said in Matthew 5, 17 to 18, the verses we've read earlier. He said, till heaven and earth pass.

But one jot or tittle shall pass from this old, from this law, and that's summing up all of the five books of law in the Old Testament, till all be fulfilled. And he said, I came to fulfill it. Come to me and I'll show you how to not only do that, but to do better than that.

Romans 7, 12. Here is Paul speaking about the law of God. This is his statement.

Even on this old covenant, outside one. The law is holy, the commandment is holy, just, and good. I've heard people say, God's laws are not good.

God... All they might have said, He gave us good laws, but they weren't good for us. Strange thinking. 1 Timothy 1, 8. We know the law is good if a man use it lawfully.

1 Timothy 1, 8. All right. Would you turn now to the book of Acts, and I'm going to take a brief look at Stephen. He's the first martyr in the Christian church.

This will get you into practice reading this verse. Maybe you'll understand the historical background of preaching, living a holy life, and what happens to preachers. They have short lives, but glorious ones.

Stephen, Acts 7, verses 52. Here is a young man, godly young man. The apostle Paul got his first taste of genuine Christianity watching this young man, and especially watching him die.

Stephen's probably greatest contribution to the Christian church was a dying witness to Paul. And that young man, Saul of Tarsus, who held onto the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death, saw something in his eyes he couldn't get out of his mind. And shortly after this, God spoke to Saul, and he became a Christian, and became, of course, the greatest of all of the teachers and preachers of the time shortly following Jesus' death and resurrection.

So here's how Stephen preached. This is how to be rocked to sleep, this is called. You stiff-necked and uncircumcised, in heart and ears you do always resist the Holy Ghost.

As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And they have slain them, which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers. Verse 53, look at the one that really bothered them.

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it. What made him so mad? He said, you are just a bunch of ungodly people because the angels have arranged the situation and God set it up and He gave you the law and that's not your problem. Your problem is you don't obey.

When they heard that, they were peeved. Can you imagine preaching a sermon and people come up and bite you? They are so mad they gnaw at you. That's what it says.

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on them with their teeth. These are religious people he's speaking to. These are deacons and preachers and pastors and elders and bishops and stewards and ushers.

And they rushed up and bit him. This is some altar call. Come have a bite.

Why were they cut to the heart? Because Stephen's final statement in his sermon was you're not doing it. And I'll tell you this, any time you preach that holiness is necessary, you'll have a fine time. But if you tell people you're not holy, they'll bite you.

They don't do it like that today. Not often. I've had a couple of close calls, I must admit.

Remember one guy, he was so mad. If looks could kill, I would have been dead 40 times. He was so mad.

He came rushing up. He was so mad. He did everything but swear because if he'd sworn, it would have proved what I said.

He said, you see, we cannot live like that. I said, your quarrel's not with me. I didn't make it up.

I'm just a messenger boy. Telegram from the Lord. Here it is.

I said, your quarrel's not with me. I've just given you the Scripture. Well, you can't live like that.

Here is the associate pastor. He's a mess. He's not saved, but he's doing all of these things and evangelism and stuff.

He's so mad, he argued with me for two and a half hours. He said, you can't do that. Nobody can do it.

That's heresy. Angry as anything. Well, before the week was out, God got him.

He was there on the floor with about 80 other of us, all weeping our hearts out. God came down, boom, and busted him. Didn't see him again for about two years.

He's opened 15 churches in the last seven years on university campuses since the time. And you know what? It's worth it. It's worth almost getting bitten.

If you can see a soul come out of it, it becomes a Paul. It's very interesting, but preaching this is where the revivals come. Preaching holy living is where the revivals come.

Tell people to be saved, they won't mind. As long as you don't have to be holy, so. Mark 7, let's turn away from that and go back to the religious people of Jesus' day.

See why they got so mad at Jesus. Mark 7. Pharisees were very concerned about clean hands. Really bothered because one of the traditions is that when you ate bread, you washed your hands.

And it was just a decent thing to do. And these disciples had the gall to come along and eat bread without washing. And they just ate it.

Just boom. Just like that. And they did not hold the tradition of the elders.

The elders always would elaborately wash their hands before they ate bread. It was just a thing you did. If you're going to be in theological circles, you wash your hands.

And these clumsy disciples just clotted along with their hairy, sweaty hands and just ate ordinary bread. I mean, they couldn't believe it. And they came to Jesus very, very concerned.

Scripture tells us in Mark 7, when they came from the markets, except they washed, they would not eat. Like raccoons. And many other things there be which they have received to hold.

The washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables. These are very heavy things. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus, why don't your disciples walk according to evangelical traditions? They just eat this bread without washing.

And He said, well, as Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, as people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Check verse 7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and cups and many other such like things you do.

And He said to them, full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own traditions. Now that is a scary verse because it says this to us. It is possible to have a popular religious tradition that is strictly enforced by custom that nevertheless not only is not the law of God, but violates the law of God.

And Jesus said, you are so concerned about your washing and pots and stuff, God never commanded that, but you violate what God says and keep your own traditions. And every time I hear a man stand up

and say, you can't do what God says, I think to myself, full well, you reject the commandment of God to keep your own traditions. Remember Len Ravenhill, one time, this happened, he probably, he'll remember it, I never heard him say it.

He was sitting in a church once and a guy was preaching about you couldn't live a holy life and he was getting madder and madder. And finally the guy came down to the front shaking hands. People were leaving, you know, God bless you, wonderful sermon, pastor.

And Len waited. Guy was simpering there shaking hands and Len got his hands, grabbed him with both hands and said, the Lord deal with you. The Lord bring you to your knees for what you said.

And he tried to pull his hand back. And then Jesus goes into this little thing about taking care of parents and how the Pharisees said, I'm sorry, my mother and father have come and they're hungry, you know, but I've given this food to God, service, so I can't give it to you. He says, you make the word of God of none effect through your tradition, verse 13, which you have delivered.

And many like such things do you. And when he called to them, he said, listen to me, everyone in view and understand, there's nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him. For the things which come out of him, those are they that defile a man.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And then he mentions the heart, verse 21, for from within, out of the heart of man, proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, blasphemy, pride and evil eye, foolishness, all these things come from within and defile the man. All right? Now, I want you to draw a little diagram for me.

And we're going to look at the word heart. Jesus here shifts all holy living to the heart. He says, it's not your external things.

Now, let's put it in modern language. You are not made unholy by your circumstances, by your environment, or by your programming. Your sociology, your economy, your ecology, your environment do not make you bad.

Your genetics do not make you bad. So much Mickey Mouse teaching today that goes around and says, well, he couldn't help it. He grew up in a home where his mother was scared by a pool table and that's why he's got green eyes.

You know, men like Skinner say it's your environment. You know, Freud said it was your poor family or sociological conditioning. Your grandmother beat you when you were small.

That gave you an ugly life. You can have ugly influences. You can come from the slums.

You can come from rotten parents. You can have no money or too much money. You can have all these economic... You can be born with only half an ear and no legs and still be a man or woman of God because it's not these things that determine.

They're all influences but they don't make you wrong or right. And Jesus said it's not things coming from outside of you that are going to give you the problems. Nothing entering in you from outside is going to defile your spiritual life.

So external attempts at the most will only be legal attempts. Attempts to legislate by external things will not stop sin. The heart must be dealt with.

Now let's look at this word heart. In the Bible this word heart is used many times. Can you give me a scripture that talks about the heart apart from this one? Think of any verses on the heart? The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? Another one on the heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Be diligent to watch over your heart.

Old Testament one to apply directly to this one here. There are many, many scriptures. My son give me your heart.

Now what is the heart? What does it mean heart? When we're looking at the Bible word heart we find a very interesting thing. The word heart is used today in exactly the same way as it's used in the Bible. We say this guy has a heart problem then we think two different things.

We'll think well he's, you know, he could have cardiac arrest. That's physical heart problem. But if we say a guy's got a new heart and we put his heart into it we know that it doesn't mean that some doctor cut it off or cut it out and then they stuck it in a bag and put it in there.

Guy says his heart is really into his work. It doesn't mean that, you know, with the few exception of heart surgeons that work on themselves that means this organ that pumps blood. What does the physical heart do for the body? What actually is it? It's a muscle.

It's a machine. It's the music machine actually. It's a machine that that pumps blood which is the life of the body.

So the physical heart is the center and source of all physical life in the human system. And of course you know the value of the blood. It fights disease.

It oxygenates. It carries oxygen. It feeds the brain.

It carries its electrochemical circuitry of the soul. All the nerve connections are energized by blood. So blood is really very important.

I'll just say this. Without any blood you're not going to make it. Not in this life.

Maybe in a new body but not with this one. What then is the moral heart? The moral heart is the center and source of all the spiritual life. It energizes.

It has its defenses. It repels invaders. It is the center and source of your whole spiritual existence.

And just as you cannot live if your physical heart stops for any decent length of time, so if your moral heart departs from the living God, then you can't live spiritually. When a guy says to a girl, I love you with all my heart, what does she hope he means? What does she hope he means? What does that mean? With everything he has, what does it mean in terms of preference? That she is number one. All right? So we'll say this.

When a guy says to a girl, I love you with all my heart, it means basically, she hopes, that he, that she is, his supreme preference. Now that's exactly the way we use it today. I got my heart set on getting a pair of roller skates so I can be in like everybody else.

Supreme preference. That's the thing I want more than anything else. What do you most want for Christmas? That it make your heart glad.

Supreme preference. The moral heart in the Scriptures is both a choice and it involves an object of choice. It's not just a choice.

It is an end chosen. So the moral heart in the Bible, though it involves your feelings and your emotions and all kinds of other things, is really, I believe, in a final essence, the ultimate choice and end of your life. Where you have that end, what you choose ultimately in life, the Bible breaks down into two final camps.

Either a choice to put God first or to put yourself first. There's an essential difference between Christianity and everything else. The question comes back, what is our supreme preference in life? Alright? Underneath this, let's put another word.

Let's put subordinate choice. Subordinate choices are choices that are important decisions but that are based on a supreme choice. For instance, shall I marry? If the answer is yes, whom shall I marry? What kind of career or job will I do? And other important things.

Hopefully you will not have to make this choice every day. There are some people who seem to make it every week or month, get washed and wear wedding dresses, but you hopefully don't change careers every week. These are major decisions in life.

Based on the sub-choice, we have what's called routine choices. And then we go all the way down to immediate choices. And what I want to do after lunch is to analyze for you these levels of choice.

You can see not every choice in life is not as important as other choices. The choice to write down a word may not be as important as the choice to even take your paper out. Or the choice to cut your fingernail is not as important as the choice of who you will marry, hopefully.

Let's close in prayer. Our Father in Jesus' name, we ask you to help us to understand what it means to live a holy life. We want to know the heart faith, the faith of the heart, the faith that works by love, the faith that makes us glad to be a child of God, that makes us glad to know you, that makes it a pleasure to serve you.

We want to be like David, who was thrilled about your law, who saw the inner dimensions of it and lived in happiness. We don't want to be like people who chafe at restraint and discipline because they don't understand its purpose and have no idea of the future they forge for themselves outside of obedience to your goodness. We bless you, Lord, for giving us clear instructions.

Save us from the traditions of men. Give us, O God, a heart after Scripture. Help us, Lord, to be people who not only love your word, but love the one who gave it and looks through the words to the living word himself.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Okay.

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