

Holy, Holy, Holy
Revelation 4:1-8; Hebrews 12:14

Introduction:

A. Worship, Holiness, and Sanctification

1. Years ago we often sang a hymn, "Take Time to Be Holy."
 - a) I wish we sang it more in these days.
 - b) It takes time to be holy; one cannot be holy in a hurry, and much of the time that it takes to be holy must go into secret prayer.
 - c) Some people express surprise that professing Christians today are so little like their Lord, but when I stop to think how little time the average Christian today puts into secret prayer the thing that astonishes me is, not that we are so little like the Lord, but that we are as much like the Lord as we are.
2. The words holiness and sanctification are not in our conversation much in the church today.
 - a) We tend to talk of justification, but without much emphasis on sanctification.
 - b) Holiness means that you belong wholly to God.
 - c) This is also the meaning of sanctification, being set apart as God's own possession.
 - d) When this begins internally, with the heart, the transformation becomes something that affects the total person.
 - e) This takes place in your life when you worship God in that closed place we talked about last week.
3. In that closet or closed place (Matthew 6:6) you get to know God better.
 - a) That is what comes out of worship for us, you get to know God better
 - (1) That is the one thing that David desired.
 - (2) That is what Paul sought after.
 - (3) It is the one thing that Jesus said we need and that will not be taken away from us!

B. Knowing God

1. Knowing that God is immutable, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient is significant, but those attributes give limited insight into what God expects of us.
 - a) What beyond His unchanging, all-powerful, infinitely knowing presence compels us to worship?
 - b) It is basically this: God is holy.
2. Of all the attributes of God, holiness is the one that overshadows all His other attributes.
 - a) The word *holiness* refers to His separateness, His otherness, the fact that He is unlike any other being.
 - b) It indicates His complete and infinite perfection.
 - c) Holiness is the attribute of God that binds all the others together.
 - d) It is interesting that God asks us to be holy, not omniscient!
 - e) When we really understand this attribute of God, it will revolutionize the quality of our worship.
3. When the angels exalted God,
 - a) They didn't say, "Eternal, Eternal, Eternal,"
 - b) They didn't say, "Faithful, Faithful, Faithful,"
 - c) They didn't say, "Wise, Wise, Wise"
 - d) They didn't say, "Mighty, Mighty, Mighty."
 - e) They said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty" (Revelation 4:8).
 - f) God's holiness is the crown of all that He is.
4. Exodus 15:11 asks, "Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?"
 - a) The answer, of course, is that no being is equal to God in holiness.
 - b) In fact, holiness is so uniquely and exclusively an attribute of God that Psalm 111:9 says, "Holy and awesome is His name."

I. The Standard

A. Absolute Holiness

1. God doesn't conform to a holy standard; He is the standard.
 - a) He never does anything wrong,
 - b) He never makes mistakes,

- c) He never makes a misjudgment,
 - d) He never causes something to happen that isn't right.
 - e) There are no degrees to His holiness.
 - f) He is holy, flawless, without error, without sin, fully righteous, utterly, absolutely, infinitely holy.
2. To be in God's presence, one must be holy.
 - a) That was demonstrated when the angels sinned.
 - b) God immediately cast them out and prepared a place for them separated from His presence.
 - c) When men choose not to come to God, when they choose to reject Jesus Christ, their ultimate end is to be sent to the place prepared for the devil and his angels out of the presence of God.
 3. Miraculously, salvation imputes God's own holiness to the believer in Jesus Christ
 - a) ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (Philippians 3:8-9).
 - b) Peter articulated that truth when he wrote: "It is written, 'You shall be holy, For I am holy' " (1 Peter 1:16).
 4. You can see God's holiness best seen in His hatred of sin.
 - a) God cannot tolerate sin; He is totally removed from it.
 - b) Amos 5:21-23 records God's strong words to those attempting to worship Him while polluted with sin:
 - ²¹ "I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.
 - ²² Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,
I will not accept *them*,
Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.
 - ²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.
 5. That does not mean that God hates sacrifices and offerings and festivals and music.
 - a) God desires all those things, because He taught us to do them in His Word.
 - b) But when worship is tainted with sin, God hates it!
 6. God doesn't want you to sin, even if it would make your testimony more exciting, or display His grace.
 - a) He never wills sin.
 - b) He will not keep you from sinning if you choose to, but God never tempts anyone to sin, and He cannot be tempted to sin (James 1:13).
 - c) Sin is the object of His displeasure.
 - d) What God loves is holiness and righteousness.
 - e) Psalm 11:7 says, "For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness."

II. The Proof of God's Holiness

A. The Creation of Man (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

1. God's holiness is visible in many ways.
2. First, it is seen *in the creation of man*.
 - a) In Ecclesiastes 7:29, we read, "Behold. I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."
 - b) In other words, when God made man, He made him to reflect His holiness.
 - c) Sin was man's rebellion against that purpose.
3. Residual marks of God's holiness are still evident in man despite man's sin.
 - a) Man has an innate sense of right and wrong.
 - b) Although it is imperfect, that inborn understanding, of good and evil manifests itself through man's conscience, his code of ethics, and his sense of justice.
 - c) Romans 1:15 describes the accountability of the Gentiles to God: "They show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing them or else defending them."
 - d) Even the vilest, most rebellious man has at least a crude framework of righteousness inherent in his consciousness.