

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 10/11/09
"Attributes of God 7 - Holiness"

As we continue to speak about the Moral Attributes of God, we can now talk about the Holiness of God. Why? Because we are beginning to understand the Goodness of God. As we read through the Word of God, the one attribute that stands out the most clearly, the one attribute that we remember more than any other, is God's holiness. In visions of Himself, which God allowed men to see (as recorded in the Scriptures), that which is most prominent is His divine holiness.

When we speak of the holiness of God, we are talking about the absolute perfection, purity and sanctity of His nature. There is nothing impure, imperfect or unclean in Him. The apostle John said in 1 John 1:5, *"God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all."*

To understand this concept of God's holiness we have to turn to another of those things that I call a biblical paradox. As believer's, if we want to live we have to die; if we want to gain, we have to give, if we want to win, we have to lose, and the list goes on. To better understand holiness, we need to know the Absolutely Holy God, to know Him we have to see Him, and God told Moses in Exodus 33:20, *"You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."*

Holiness is the message of the whole Bible. In reading the prophetic books of the Old Testament, we read that God is the absolute Holy One; His eyes are too pure to see evil, and He is quick to punish sin in His people. Yet, even in our sin we are to seek this One we cannot see, but can know, so that we may find Him and be forgiven. We read in Deuteronomy 4:29, *"But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him if you look for Him with all your heart and with all your soul."*

This is not a contradiction; rather it is a test of, and even a stretch of our faith in the Holy God, who wants to give us life. The writer to the Hebrews said it this way: *"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6)

Holiness is something that we can attain, now, in this life; it is a life lived for our Savior, Jesus Christ. Holiness means "to cut" or "to separate" from what

is unclean, and a turning to that which is pure. What is pure? The character of God is the standard for purity and absolute moral perfection. The prophet Isaiah said in **Isaiah 5:16**, "The Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will show himself holy by His righteousness."

Throughout the Bible we see what we can call a two-fold holiness that can be ours; first there is the **external or ceremonial holiness**, we see this in the first five books of the Old Testament. The priests and Levites were sanctified by a very complex ritual of dedication to God, Exodus 29 and the Nazirite vows described in Numbers 6.

Then we see the **internal or spiritual holiness** that we can also attain as we live out the sanctified life God wants us to live. We see this happening in the inner, moral spiritual lives of men and women dedicated to serving the Lord. They don't have a series of do's and don'ts, but rather a real personal relationship with the God who loves us, sent His Son into the world to die for us, and then sent the Holy Spirit so that we can accomplish all He has called us to do in living for Him.

Let me define what we mean by the term sanctification:

Sanctification is the process of being made holy, resulting in a changed life-style for the believer. It removes the pollution of sin and renews the sinner, increasingly, in conformity with the image of God. Sanctification takes place in the inner life of a person that gradually affects their whole being. It is a continuous process that we go through in this life. In plain and simple terms, it means that we think less of ourselves and more of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, we see the inner areas of our lives needing to be sanctified as well; we are created in the image of God and we are to conform to His holiness. This is also stressed in the New Testament, where the internal, ethical, areas of our lives, rather than the external laws are the norm—not the exception!

Mark 7:6-8 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship in vain; their teachings are but rules

taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

When the church received the Holy Spirit, which we read about in Acts 2, it changed forever the attitude and relationship of the believer to objects, and people in the world. The Holy Spirit directs everyone to God, through the Risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit confirms what God spoke to the prophets throughout the Bible; the Holy Spirit confirms all that Jesus taught and lived in order to call us each to Himself. Holiness is the absolute perfection, purity and sanctity of His nature being lived out in our lives as we yield our lives to Him.