

# The Holiness That Comes From God

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[ 0 : 00 ] We finished up last time talking about active obedience and passive obedience.

! Active obedience refers to the sinless life of Christ during His incarnation while on earth.! He lived a life of course of perfect obedience and perfect holiness. I always find it interesting that we live in a time when people claim that absolutes do not exist in the universe. And I can assure you absolutes do exist. One such is the absolute perfection and absolute holiness of Christ. Christ of course never committed a sin. He never considered committing a sin. It is His perfect life that is credited to those who are joined to Him through faith in His finished work.

And by that I am primarily referring to His work of salvation on the cross at Calvary, the atoning sacrifice that He offered to the Father. His passive obedience refers to the accomplished work on the cross.

By His death on the cross, He fully paid for the sins of all who would ever be saved. Such payment rendered is good for eternity. That payment never fades. It will never tarnish.

Trillions of millennia from now as we currently measure time, and we must remember there will be no time in eternity as we know it. The work of the cross will still keep us saved and sanctified in His presence.

[ 1 : 55 ] The Father will forever be completely satisfied with the work of propitiation, which is a big word, also translated appeasement or satisfaction. He satisfied the Father.

And that was the accomplishment of the Son. I find it interesting sometimes I'll have people say, you know, if I could just get to heaven and close the door, I'll be safe. There's no safety in a place. Millions and maybe billions of angels fell from heaven. Lucifer was cast out. I mean, there's no, your security is not in a place, it's in a person. And that person is the Lord Jesus.

Christ came to this earth to do the will of God the Father. And what was God's will? Hebrews 10.10. That we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

He's not still on a cross. I tell my good Catholic friends, why do you have Him? Well, even worse, when I was in St. John's, I had my gallbladder removed and I was looped.

[ 3 : 10 ] I don't remember this. Diane said, I was so embarrassed. I came back to the room. They wheeled me in and they've got the crucifix in every room. It's a Catholic hospital.

And I'm telling these nurses, why do you put Jesus on a cross? He's not on a cross anymore. And Diane said, I felt so bad. And that one little nurse said, I'm a Baptist. I don't even remember that. Being sanctified is a way of saying being made holy. And without holiness, the scriptures say we will not see the Lord.

That's pretty powerful. Now is the time to be careful as we consider the holiness that we've been talking about. We know that God is holy.

I mean, no one in their right mind would dispute that. No true believer would ever doubt that. I may get on a little shaky ground here, but I've been there before.

[ 4 : 14 ] We're talking about a dual holiness, if I'm permitted to speak in terms like that. Scripture speaks of a holiness which we have in Christ.

This is a holiness we can present to the Father. It is a holiness that makes us acceptable to Him. This acceptance is based upon the fact that the holiness of Christ, once credited to our account, satisfies completely the wrath that God has stored up for us because of our personal sins.

But this other holiness we're talking about is intertwined with the holiness of Christ. It is the holiness we are to pursue in an unholy world, which is actually close to the title of what we're studying.

So there are really two parts of the same holiness. They completely complement each other. This holiness is actually our calling as brothers walking in this unholy world.

1 Thessalonians 4.7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Such holiness was a major theme of Paul in his 13 books.

[ 5 : 38 ] He also used the word sanctification or being sanctified to mean basically the same thing. I think the New International Version, which I don't use a lot, but I think it got it right as far as 1 Corinthians 1 and the first part of verse 2, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be His holy people.

So we are called to be God's holy people. And here's a prime example of what I mean by this duality.

We are, through Christ, made holy in our standing before God and called to be holy in our daily lives.

So we are positionally standing before God in holiness, but we're called to strive for holiness every day. Every day.

Part of that is when we fail, we go and confess. So there will be failures. Personal holiness and practical holiness are serious aspects of the Christian life.

[ 6 : 57 ] And let's not leave out the third person of the Trinity. Never leave the Holy Spirit out of the sanctification process.

When God saves us, He places within us the Holy Spirit. He is placed there to make us holy. If such a desire for holiness, though falling far short, is absent, if we don't have any desire at all, then we must question whether our faith in Christ was genuine leading to eternal life.

Because that seed is planted in every true believer. So God is in the business of saving us from the penalty of sin, saving us to eternal life.

The penalty of sin is eternal separation from God. We would have eternal life separated from God.

But He is equally in the business of saving us from the dominion of sin.

It is at this point that some of us of a certain age can feel a little let down by some of our teachers a few decades ago. When I first came here, you know, gosh, it's been over 40 years ago.

[ 8 : 19 ] There was a very popular teaching that arose, as far as I can tell, in the 1970s culture, that said salvation is like a crossroads.

You're traveling and you come to crossroads. Now, what did Yogi Berra say when you come to crossroads? Take it. You've got to take it. You come to crossroads.

And one road says, I'll abbreviate, living the sanctified life. The other crossroads says, living in carnality, living in sin.

There was a theology back a long time ago, before some of you were even born, and some of you are only in your 50s. Sorry, Oscar. But there were these two roads.

And there was an argument that arose, a conviction by some people, that at salvation, the penitent, the new believer, had a choice to make.

[ 9 : 37 ] He got saved right here, and now he's got a choice to make. They said that he could make a choice.

He could live a sanctified life, or he could return back to carnality. But the key to that group that came up with that was, but he's saved.

Regardless, he's saved. And there's something quite interesting. And here was kind of the hook.

This is what they taught. These two roads, this one in carnality, you know, it's bad.

People are doing stuff bad. But then the sanctified life, they both end in the same place, which is heaven. That was what they held.

They held to that. I taught that until I read some guys that said, don't teach that. That's not scriptural. Those who hold to this model claim both roads terminate at the same destination.

[ 10 : 53 ] That is, they end up in eternal life in heaven with the Lord. If the new convert wanted to strive for holy living, he could do so.

It was even argued that he would, that would be the preferred path. But suppose he chose instead to continue in his previous life of carnality. He could do that as well because once he prayed the sinner's prayer, he was saved for eternity and since you can't lose your salvation, he's in no danger of eternal judgment or hell.

One guy, who's dead now, but he argued that you could pray to receive Christ and two minutes later, that's the dumbest thing I ever did and just live a, go out and murder people and rob banks and you're going to go to heaven.

You're going to go to heaven. I don't read that in Scripture. There are a number of perils with this teaching. Foremost is the fact that such a model of salvation is not taught in Scripture.

Quite honestly, I can't even find the sinner's prayer in the Bible. The closest I came was the tax collector that said, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. If you were here the last three years, we studied all that in Salvation God's Way.

[12:13] And there's copies up here if you need them. One major problem in this teaching is that it was endorsed by a major and very respected seminary.

And that gave it a certain level of credibility. And really and truly you can trace this belief and those who oppose this belief to that period of time a few years ago where this huge argument arose in the church called the lordship versus the no lordship salvation.

And that all seems ridiculous now to me but one can barely find anyone supportive anymore of the no lordship position. Back a few years ago they had very strong support but it started to fade.

The no lordship position argued that one could accept Jesus as Savior but they did not have to accept Him or even believe in Him as Lord.

Lord. They could choose at some later date if they wanted to to make Him Lord. They could do that now they could do it later or they could do it never but they were still saved because they accepted Him as Savior.

[13:42] All was well in the no lordship world until a very strong believer who was unafraid to call error came along and He called out the no lordship crowd by name and then exposed their erroneous teachings in a series of books that He wrote and that I read.

I've got them if you want to borrow them. The Gospel According to Jesus The Gospel According to the Apostles The Gospel According to Paul and The Gospel According to God Four books in that series and that was nonetheless than Dr. John MacArthur.

He wrote those books and he was vilified he was ostracized he was castigated and even worse he was also right in my humble but very accurate opinion.

Basically John's position was this look we don't make Jesus Lord He is Lord how do we make Lord the Lord Lord how do we do that He is Lord when we receive Him I want to use a big word we don't have a bifurcated Christ I'm going to take this piece and this piece but we'll leave all this other stuff out no we take the whole person the whole person of Christ we receive the whole Christ we don't receive parts of Him this includes His command to be holy as He is holy so now we're back on track with our current study I also want to point out what the Word of God does say about traveling down the road in the gospel of Matthew 7 verse 13 and 14 so this is actually getting close to the end of the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 7 verse 13 and 14 enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many for the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few for many years I taught in this church even in this room that the people who were on the wide gate the broad way were made up of Muslims and Hindus and new age people and atheists and agnostics and so forth well I was wrong I was wrong the broad way and the broad gate are church members they're in churches who want to come who want to come in some way apart from the atoning work of Christ it's sort of like the Laodicean church in Revelation the last church in chapter 3 of the book

[16:52] Revelation where Christ is on the outside knocking on the door he's not inside we use that as an evangelistic tool that's not the purpose that's a church that didn't have Christ if one believer had been in that church he would have been on the inside and living in that believer they didn't have any believers so he's on the outside I remember a church in Norman I had a friend of mine that was visiting there just happened to be in town and they had invited her to spend a month or two there because she was a pianist and organist and theirs had gone on vacation so she gave them titles of songs that she liked and most of it were the ones we sang and they said these are all unacceptable here we don't practice a bloody religion we never mention blood we never mention blood sacrifice we don't mention the cross and we don't mention the father or son because that's sexist language this was 30 years ago

I asked her what did you do she said I played a catholic funeral mass and they loved it they said this is the best music we've ever had in our church she just played some she memorized some catholic mass the bible commands us to be holy but we know that we're not holy how do we reconcile those two truths well I'll tell you one person we can go to that will really help is Martin Luther the great reformer and I have taught this before and if you've got it memorized I apologize but the best

explanation I've seen for what Martin Luther was talking about came from Dr. Sproul this is Dr. Sproul's words about Martin Luther perhaps the formula that Luther used that is most famous and most telling at this point is his formula simul justice at peccator now that's Latin and I pronounced every one of those wrong but I know what it says how you're supposed to pronounce it I don't like the way they sound so that's what I used simul justus et peccator and if any formula summarizes and captures the essence of the reformation view it is that little formula simul is the word from which we get the English word simultaneously you can kind of see that right or it can also mean at the same time justus is the Latin word for just or righteous and we all know what et is et is the past tense of the verb to eat not really have you et this is Dr.

Sproul have you et your dinner yet that's not what it means you remember the death scene of Caesar when he had been stabbed by Brutus and he says et tu Brute meaning and you too Brutus et simply means and peccator means sinner and so with this formula Luther was saying in our justification we are at one and the same time righteous or just and sinners at one and the same time we're just and we're sinners now if he would say that we are that at the same time in the same relationship just and sinners that would be a contradiction in term that's not what he's saying what he's saying from one perspective in one sense is we are just in another but from a different perspective we are sinners and how he defines that is simple in and of ourselves under the analysis of

God's scrutiny you ever want to be there we're there every day but when God is looking through the magnifying glass or the microscope we still have sin we're still sinners but by imputation and by faith in Jesus Christ whose righteousness is now transferred to our account we are considered just or righteous that is the very heart of the gospel message that's what the gospel is all about will I be judged in order to get into heaven by my righteousness or by the righteousness of Christ if I had to trust in my righteousness to get into heaven I would completely and utterly despair of any possibility of being redeemed but when we see that the righteousness that is ours by faith is the perfect righteousness of

[ 22 : 10 ] Christ then we see how glorious is the good news of the gospel the good news is simply this I can be reconciled to God I can be justified by God not on the basis of what I did but on the basis of what's been accomplished for me by Christ but at the heart of the gospel is a double imputation not amputation imputation my sins are imputed to Christ his righteousness is imputed to me and in this two fold transaction we see that God who does not negotiate sin who doesn't compromise with his own integrity with our salvation but rather punishes sin fully and really after it has been imputed to his son Jesus retains his own righteousness and so both he is just and the justifier as the apostle tells us so my sin goes to

Jesus his righteousness comes to me in the sight of God now if that sounded really good coming from me I just now finished Dr. Sproul's quote so now we'll come back to me so we are simul justice et peccator or at the same time a just and a sinner we can also say that we are at the same time holy and unholy true believers have the imputed holiness of Christ credited to their account but we live in unredeemed unholy flesh I mean read Romans 7 that's Paul that's the Christian Paul saying I don't do what I want to do I do those things I don't want to do what a wretched man am I who will rescue me from this body of death I mean he just pours out his heart there that's a Christian man the guy we would say the greatest human

Christian never walked on the earth scripture speaks about a holiness we have in Christ before God and a holiness that we are to strive for after these two aspects of the Christian life complement each other we are declared holy and in our striving we are being made holy that's what I meant early on when I said we may not arrive we're not going to arrive in this life but we're going to strive we're being made holy what about the person that claims to be a follower of Christ but I'm not interested in any add-ons I don't want to be sanctified I'm not interested in working for holiness I'm leaving that out I'm happy I'm going to heaven!

I had a relative my fire insurance policy that's what he was saying then he died my counsel in that case if that's how a person really feels is to take seriously the Holy Spirit inspired command contained in Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church 2nd Corinthians 13 5 examine yourselves to see whether you're in the faith test yourselves undergo a test do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you unless of course you fail the test and anyone who says I'm not striving for anything they fail they get an F I think a cautionary note here is in order when we are truly saved we are justified before

God we are both made holy and begin a life of striving for holiness but we must admit at this point there are and there will be many setbacks many setbacks but the spirit of God gives us a desire to walk as Jesus walked a desire for holiness we can refer to that if we will as a spark since it's salvation it is not that discernible we don't sit there and say well I've been saved so now I'm living the sanctified life we didn't do that we were clueless but as we grow spiritually in our Christian walk our desire for holiness increases and hopefully someday that spark becomes a flame and you're on fire that would be a life being lived that is pleasing to God the Father he would be pleased with that as

[ 27 : 14 ] I implied earlier true salvation brings with it a desire to be made holy that was Dr. MacArthur's argument with the no lordship crown who said no that's an add-on that's a work that's a human work no no it's what follows the true believer the old reformers though they were vilified by the church at Rome and we're going back to the 16th century nevertheless saw genuine salvation as delivering people not only from the penalty of sin but from its dominion from its dominion there was a formula taught in this and other churches that went like this we have been saved from the penalty of sin that's good news we are being saved from the power of sin and we are going to one day be saved from the very presence of sin and

I've told you that's what I'm attracted about heaven a place that's absent of any sin over the years you've heard me many times quote Bishop J.C.

Ryle probably most of us in here know little about him John Charles Ryle was born May 10th 1816 he died June 10th 1900 he was an evangelical reform Anglican clergyman you couldn't find one of those now and he was the first bishop of Liverpool he was renowned for his powerful preaching and he wrote extensive tracts hundreds of them over the years many of those tracts have been combined and turned into books in his day Bishop Ryle led the charge in describing the Christian life not just in terms of a conversion although it is but as also a consecration and he was keen on that what does that mean to consecrate means to be set apart for sacred use the church which by the way is people and not buildings okay is properly referred to as the set apart ones ecclesia that's what it means the separated ones or the set apart ones we have been set apart by God to God and for God that's the whole meaning of the church in the 21st century Bishop Ryle said this I doubt whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be converted without being consecrated to God more consecrated he doubtless can be and will be as his grace increases but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again I do not know what conversion means and that's the great Bishop Ryle this statement is consistent with the inspired words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1 4 for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight I mean you think about he chose us before the creation of the world wouldn't even come along and he chose us if once saved we continue to live in unabated sin we are doing that which is totally contrary to the reason God saved us he saved us in order to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness and I don't like the way I started that out if once saved if we presume we were saved is how I should have worded it I wonder how many of us in here are familiar with Dr.

[ 31 : 19 ] Walter Marshall I came across his name a few weeks ago actually in our study last year he lived from 1628 to 1680 to say that he was smart may be an understatement he started college at age 11 I think that's when I got out of second grade he was an independent Puritan preacher and a reformed theologian Dr.

Marshall had this to say and this is a quote by A.W. Pink in his book The Doctrine of Sanctification here's Dr.

Marshall what a strange kind of salvation do they desire that care not for holiness they would be saved and yet be altogether dead in sin aliens from the life of God bereft of the image of God deformed by the image of Satan his slaves and vassals to their own filthy lusts utterly unmeet I had to look that up it's an old Puritan old English word meaning not fit not worthy and not suitable for the enjoyment of God in glory such a salvation as that was never purchased by the blood of Christ and those that seek it abuse the grace of God in Christ and turn it into lasciviousness they would be saved by Christ and yet be out of Christ in a fleshly state that's what they want to be yeah go ahead and save me but let me continue on on that other road whereas

God doth free none from the condemnation but those that are in Christ that walk not after the flesh but after the spirit or else they would divide Christ and take a part of his salvation and leave out the rest but Christ is not divided important point you can read about that in 1st Corinthians 1 13 they

would have their sins forgiven not that they may walk with God in love in time to come but that they may practice their enmity against him without any fear punishment but let them not be deceived God is not mocked they understand not what true salvation is neither were they ever yet thoroughly sensible of their lost estate and of the great evil of sin and that which they trust on Christ for us is but an imagination of their own brains and therefore their trusting is gross presumption! gospel faith maketh us come to Christ with a thirsty appetite that we may drink of living water even of his sanctifying spirit and you can study that in John 7 37 and 38 and cry out earnestly to him to save us not only from hell but from sin saying teach me to do thy will for thou art my God thy spirit is good Psalm 143 10 Turn thou me and I shall be turned Jeremiah 31 18 Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me Psalm 51 10 By the way that was David repenting of his association with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband this is the way whereby the doctrine of salvation by grace doth necessitate us to holiness of life by constraining us to seek for it by faith in [ 35 : 20 ] Christ as a substantial part of that salvation which is freely given to us through Christ well that's very powerful that is very powerful that is the kind of gospel preaching churches need today that's the kind of gospel preaching our nation desperately needs in this day it is also a fit time to end our lesson tonight we've been here almost 40 minutes teaching and I really look forward to gathering with you guys again next week so let's close with a word of prayer father we do thank you for your grace your mercy we thank you lord that you're in complete control that you guide and direct every believer you walk with us as we walk and lord we look forward to that day when like Enoch we will be walking with you and we will be no more because you took us what a day that will be and

I look forward to it lord thank you lord for the men in this class for what they mean to me personally what they mean to this church to the kingdom of god be with us now lord keep us safe bring us back wednesday and we will give you all the honor and the glory because you deserve it in jesus name amen