

Sermon Notes for October 23, 2016

**Sermon Series On The Holiness Of God**  
**“How Can An Unholy Person Be Secure In**  
**His Salvation Before A Holy God”**  
**Colossians 1:21-22**

**Introduction**

**A. We Continue Our Sermon Series On The Holiness Of God**

1. One of the most frequent issues that I deal with in ministry is this:
  - a. if God is truly holy. . .
  - b. then, how I can get to heaven, because I AM DEFINITELY NOT HOLY!
2. When we consider “how holy” God is, WHO COULD EVER BE CONFIDENT OF THEIR ETERNAL SECURITY?

**B. The Apostle Paul Dealt With Believers Who Doubted Their Holiness**

1. in the book of Colossians, Paul was dealing with two issues that actually caused the believers in Colossae to doubt their salvation:
  - a. the **Greeks** were telling believers in Colossae that their bodies were evil and the only thing that was good was their minds
  - b. while, the **Jews** were telling believers that they had to obey Jewish laws if they wanted to go to heaven.
2. as a result of these “attacks” on the eternal security of the believers in the church at Colossae, Paul taught the believers how they could be sure about their salvation
  - a. to make his point, Paul stated in this text who they were “**before**” they were saved
  - b. and then, he stated who these believers were “**after**” they were saved
    1. Paul wanted the believers in Colossae to realize the tremendous change that had taken place since their salvation
    2. but, Paul also wanted to teach the believers in Colossae what they should believe Biblically and theologically about their salvation

**I. THE CONDITION OF THE UNBELIEVER BEFORE HIS SALVATION**

**A. The UNBELIEVER’S ALIENATION FROM GOD**

**Colossians 1:21 – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”**

1. Paul quickly reminded the believers at Colossae **WHAT THEY WERE BEFORE THEY WERE SAVED.**
2. in a sense, Paul wanted to “force” the believers in Colossae to think back to the time that they did **NOT** know Jesus as their Savior
3. it was as if he was saying: “Don’t you **remember** how far you **were** from God”
  - a. “You did not know God.”
  - b. “You did not even know that you did not know God.”
  - c. Don’t you “**REMEMBER HOW FAR YOU WERE FROM GOD?**”
4. Paul’s goal was to make it crystal clear to the Christians at Colossae just how “**LOST**” THEY TRULY WERE BEFORE THEY WERE SAVED

- a. if we think about it, before each of us were saved, God seemed to be a million miles away
- b. it was almost like there was a barrier between you and God
- 5. I remember what I thought of God before I was saved
  - a. I really didn't think much about this
  - b. hoping that, somehow, God would, one day, accept me into heaven  
DESPITE ALL THAT I HAD DONE TO KEEP ME OUT OF HEAVEN!

## B. The UNBELIEVER'S ATTITUDE OF GOD

**Colossians 1:21** – “Once you were alienated from God and were **enemies in your minds** because of your evil behavior.”

- 1. in addition to being alienated from God, before they were saved, the Christians in Colossae were also **hostile** to God
  - a. they wanted to have no part of God
  - b. they often opposed those who spoke of God,
- 2. We see this same hostility in unbelievers today:
  - a. check out these tee-shirts for those who are hostile to Christianity:
    - 1. “I'd join, but I have a nut allergy.”
    - 2. “I love Roman lions.”
    - 3. “Thank God I'm An Atheist.”
  - b. Liberal TV personality, **Bill Maher**, in his movie, **Religulous**; said: “Those who preach faith, and elevate it are intellectual slaveholders, keeping mankind in a bondage to fantasy and nonsense that has spawned and justified much lunacy and destruction. Religion is dangerous because it allows human beings who don't have all the answers to think that they do. Some people think it's wonderful when someone says, “I'm willing, Lord, I'll do whatever you want me to do!” **Since there are no gods actually talking to us, that void is filled in by people with their own corruptions and limitations and agendas.** And anyone who tells you that they know what happens when you die; I promise you, **you don't How can I be so sure? Because I don't know, and you do not possess mental powers that I do not.”**
  - c. **Friedrich Nietzsche** (German philosopher) – “Is man one of God's blunders? **Or, is God one of man's blunders?”**
  - d. **Clarence Darrow** (American lawyer) – “I don't believe in God **because I don't believe in Mother Goose.”**
  - e. **Bill Gates** – “Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient. **There is a lot more I could do on a Sunday morning.”**
  - f. it is my belief that we are living in the most hostile time toward Christianity that we have ever seen in America
- 3. it is as if Paul was saying to the believers at Colossae:
  - a. **DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT?**
    - 1. Before you were saved, you didn't think about the things of God
    - 2. in fact, you thought that they were stupid

**b. BUT LOOK AT YOU NOW!**

1. you not only believe in God
2. instead of living in sin, as you did before you were saved, you are upset that you can't live **EXACTLY** how God wants you to live.
3. since your salvation, you have gone from one extreme to another
4. **DOES THAT SOUND LIKE THE LIFE OF A NON-BELIEVER TO YOU?**
5. **ONLY SAVED PEOPLE THINK LIKE THAT!**

**C. The UNBELIEVER'S ACTION BEFORE GOD**

**Colossians 1:21** – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”

1. finally, as a non-believer, in addition to being far away from the Lord in your attitude, **YOU LIVED LIKE AN UNBELIEVER**
  - a. you sinned without much remorse
  - b. you looked for ways to cheat others
  - c. you lied, you misled
  - d. you lived for yourself
  - e. **Lee Strobel** (living the life of a journalist before he became a believer) – “I had a lot of self-motivation for living an atheistic lifestyle. **I was living an immoral, drunken life.** Without a moral framework, **my personal life was out of control.** I had no moral framework of how to be a journalist, so I would do whatever it took to get the story. I even committed a federal crime by stealing a federal document from the courthouse. I figured that it was worth it because I never got caught. Behind the scenes, I actually destroyed the career of one of my colleagues because he was “in my way.” By the time I was done with him, he was fired. **I had no moral sense of right or wrong.** If something was in my way I got rid of it. I arranged for the destruction of my girlfriend's unborn child. **It didn't bother me at all.**”
  - f. before I was saved, I was a “clandestine sinner”
    1. I was a faithful Sunday School kid
    2. who lived a separate, sinful life
    3. I was a real “spiritual Jekyll and Hyde.”
2. **BUT, LOOK AT YOU NOW!**
  - a. yes, you are not “**TRULY, TOTALLY GODLY,**” **BUT YOU WANT TO BE!**
  - b. before you were saved, you had no desire to live for God
  - c. but now, being holy consumes your every waking moment!
3. **SO, PAUL WOULD SAY: DO NOT LET ANYONE MAKE YOU THINK YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN!**
  - a. **LOOK AT HOW MUCH YOU HAVE CHANGED!**
    1. instead of being far away from God, you sense a closeness to Him
    2. instead of a hostility toward God, He gives you peace
    3. instead of being ruled by sin, you want to rule over sin.

- b. **THE NON-CHRISTIAN DOES NOT LIVE LIKE THAT!**
  - 1. instead of thinking that you are a non-believer, **EMBRACE THE FACT THAT JESUS HAS SAVED YOU, TRANSFORMED YOU AND MADE YOU LIKE HIMSELF.**
  - 2. **YOU ARE NOT THE SAME PERSON YOU WERE BEFORE YOU WERE SAVED!**

## II. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE BELIEVER AFTER HIS SALVATION

### A. Our RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

- 1. after telling the believers in Colossae what their life was before they were saved, Paul then told the believers in Colossae **WHO THEY ARE NOW AS BELIEVERS**
  - a. please notice the word in **Vs 21a**: “**Once** you were alienated”
    - 1. the meaning of the greek is: “at one time”
    - 2. in other words, “**At one time** you were **not reconciled to God**”
  - b. however, **NOTICE THE WORDS IN Vs. 22**; “**But now, He has reconciled you.**”
    - 1. yes, you **were** once unreconciled to God, but **GOD HAS RECONCILED YOU!**
    - 2. **PLEASE, PLEASE DON’T MISS THE MEANING OF THIS WORD: RECONCILIATION**
      - a. the greek word for reconcile means:
        - 1. **to restore to a former state of harmony**
        - 2. to liberate; to exchange
      - b. put these concepts together:
        - 1. to make a payment by exchange so, that all can be restored to what it was before
        - 2. is Paul suggesting that God is restoring sinners to the way that it was in the Garden of Eden before man’s fall into sin?
          - a. where God and man were at peace with one another?
          - b. where man worked with God intimately and personally?
    - 3. whatever Paul meant by this word reconciliation, saved sinners have been restored in their relationship to a holy God! ! !
- 2. now, relative to our reconciliation, **DO NOT MISS THIS!**
  - a. “**WHO**” DID THE RECONCILING?
    - 1. did “**you**” do the reconciling?
      - a. if so, then **you “need to worry”**
      - b. because, if **you** are the one who controls your position with Christ, **you should worry.**
      - c. because, if you “created” this reconciliation, then you can “lose” this reconciliation
    - 2. however, the text clearly teaches that “**He** reconciled you.”
      - a. **GOD DID THE RECONCILING!**
      - b. **HE BROUGHT** you close to Himself
      - c. **SO, WE CAN REST ASSURED THAT WHAT GOD STARTS, HE FINISHES!**

- b. now, **HOW** did He **DO** the reconciling?
  - 1. listen to **verse 22** – “But now He has reconciled you by **Christ’s physical body through death**”
    - a. **THE REASON** that most believers fear that they can lose their salvation is that they think they can “sin their way out of salvation”
    - b. **PLEASE, PLEASE REALIZE THIS: YOUR SALVATION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!**
      - 1. **Jesus** died on the cross to pay for your sins
      - 2. **THE REASON THAT JESUS** died to pay for your sins is **BECAUSE YOU COULD NOT PAY FOR YOUR OWN SINS!**
      - 3. so, let me say something **VERY, VERY CLEARLY** to those of you who have trusted in Jesus to save you – **YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT**
      - 4. if Jesus “paid the bill” for you, then the bill has been paid
        - a. Jesus did not pay for your sins on a “credit card” that has to be paid for “over time”
        - b. No, He paid for your sins “in cash;” it has been **TOTALLY PAID**
        - c. do you even pay for something in cash; it is so **FINAL!**
  - 2. **IT IS THROUGH JESUS’ DEATH ALONE THAT BELIEVERS ARE RECONCILED!**
    - a. there is nothing you can do to reconcile yourself to God
    - b. except accept God’s gift of His Son.

## B. Our **RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST**

**Vs. 22** – “But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you **holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation**—“

- 1. and, now, **BECAUSE** of Jesus’ reconciliation for sinners, **BELIEVERS ARE SEEN AS HOLY**
  - a. **NOT ONLY HAS GOD RECONCILED US, THERE ARE “RESULTS” OF THIS RECONCILIATION.**
  - b. Notice what **verse 22** says: “But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to **present you holy in His sight,**”
    - 1. not only did Jesus fully pay for our sins by dying on the cross, **HE WILL ONE DAY PRESENT US AS HOLY!**
    - 2. but you may say, “I am **not** holy.”
      - a. so, if I don’t act holy, **HOW CAN HE PRESENT ME “AS HOLY?”**
      - b. **John MacArthur** – “As a result of a faith union with Jesus Christ, God sees Christians **as holy as His Son.**”
  - 3. let me tell you about **the beautiful story of Mephibosheth in II Samuel 9:**

- a. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, King Saul’s son and David’s best friend
  - b. when King Saul’s kingdom was being overthrown by the Philistines;
    1. fearing that the next King, David, would immediately kill the current royal family, the maid quickly picked up Jonathan’s baby by the name of, Mephibosheth and began to run out of the house
    2. in her haste, the maid accidentally dropped Mephibosheth and his legs were broken
  - c. as David eventually ascended to the throne of Israel, instead of killing Saul’s family, he wanted to honor any of King Saul’s family members who were still alive:
    1. **II Samuel 9:3-4** – “The King asked, “**Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?**” Ziba answered the King, “**There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.**” “Where is he?” the King asked. Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir. son of Ammiel in **Lo Debar.**”
    2. **II Samuel 9:7-8** – “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness **for the sake of your father Jonathan.** I will **restore** to you all the land that belonged to your **grandfather Saul,** and **you will always eat at my table.**” Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “**What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?**”
    3. **II Samuel 9:13** – “**And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the King’s table, and he was crippled in both feet.**”
  - d. **JUST LIKE MEPHIBOSHETH, WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT AT THE KING’S TABLE, BUT HE HAS INVITED US TO DO SO BECAUSE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS SON, JESUS.**
2. because of Jesus’ reconciliation, believers are seen as “**without blemish**”
 

**Vs. 22** – “But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, **without blemish** and free from accusation—“

    - a. **NOT ONLY** are we seen as holy by God, Paul also says that we are seen to be “**without blemish**”
    - b. when animals were brought to the Temple to be sacrificed, the animals **had to be “without blemish”**
      1. there could be nothing wrong or unusual about the animal to be Sacrificed

2. also, each time a lamb was to be eaten at the Passover meal, the lamb had to be “without blemish”
- c. here is what this means to us as believers:
  1. DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE ALL HAVE “SPIRITUAL WARTS,” GOD DOES NOT “SEE” THOSE WARTS
  2. how is that possible?
    - a. because, when God sees believers, He first sees Jesus “over us”-- just like a **“prism”**
    - b. “A Preacher asked his audience to visualize a man taking a sheep to the Temple to sacrifice for his sins. However, as the Priest cut the animal open, he found that the sheep had a diseased liver. Such a sacrifice was unacceptable, so the farmer returned home to find another sheep. When another sheep was offered, its liver was also diseased. Still another sheep was brought with the same results. The man then realized that all of his sheep must have all eaten something that had damaged their livers, so he needed to find a sheep that had not been eating in his pasture. He realized that he only had one animal that had not eaten in his pasture: his son’s lamb. **His son’s lamb had eaten from their table since its birth and had become his son’s pet. Ultimately, that lamb was the only sacrifice that would be acceptable.**”
  3. because of Jesus’ reconciliation, believers are seen as **“free from accusation”**
    - a. finally, Paul says, besides being seen as **holy** and **without blemish**, the final, encouraging word that Paul gives to the believer at Colossae are these words: **“free from accusation”**
    - b. these words “go beyond” being “blameless”
      1. for, not only would Jesus defend us in a court of law
      2. the words “free from accusation” actually mean, because we are believers, **NO ONE CAN BRING A CHARGE AGAINST US!**
        - a. Satan can’t accuse us
        - b. friends can’t accuse us
        - c. we can’t accuse ourselves
        - d. so, if Jesus will not accuse us, **WHY DO WE ACCUSE OURSELVES?**

### III. THE COMMITMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN

#### A. WHAT WONDERFUL NEWS THIS IS FOR THE BELIEVER!

##### 1. ARE YOU HEARING THIS?

- a. **ONCE**, we were alienated from God—**BUT** because of Christ’s death, we have been reconciled “back” to God

b. and, **BECAUSE OF** “THAT RECONCILIATION,” God sees believers as:

1. holy
2. blameless
3. free from accusation

2. **WHAT AMAZING NEWS THIS IS!**

**B. WHAT WONDERFUL NEWS THIS IS “IF” WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW CHRIST**

**Vs 21-23** – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **if you continue in your faith**, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.”

1. now, before you get all excited about all of this great news, there is a statement that Paul must make to us: Everything that God says He will do for the believer **is true. . .”IF”** we continue in the faith
2. what the word “if” does **NOT** mean:
  - a. THIS WORD “IF” DOES NOT MEAN “IF”, as in “conditionally”
  - b. in other words;
    1. God will continue to protect you. . .**if**, you continue to follow Him
    2. God will continue to save you **if** you continue to be holy.
3. what the word “if” **DOES MEAN**:
  - a. this word “if” means:
    1. if indeed
    2. **since**
  - b. so, the verse **should** read:
    1. “You will be holy, blameless and free from accusation **since** you will continue in your faith”
    2. **FOR, ONLY THE TRUE, BORN AGAIN BELIEVER WILL CONTINUE TO WALK WITH JESUS AFTER HIS CONVERSION.**
    3. your continuance to walk with Jesus after your conversion, **ACTUALLY CERTIFIES AND PROVES** that you are truly a Christian
  - c. **so, let me speak to “two groups” of people that are here today:**
    1. for those of you who know Jesus, if you are continuing to walk with Him, it “**proves**” that you really know Jesus
    2. however, for those who at one time had a “camp experience,” or walked down an aisle in an evangelistic meeting, or “prayed a prayer,” **BUT ARE NOT FOLLOWING JESUS**, you have no assurance at all
      - a. you are gambling with the most important issue in your life. – your eternity
      - b. **ARE YOU WILLING TO GAMBLE WITH SUCH A DECISION AS THAT?**

## Conclusion

1. For those of you who are truly saved, today's message should be great news.
  - a. God has **reconciled you to Himself**
  - b. and, as a result of that reconciliation, God sees you, **“from heaven,” as “holy, without blemish and free from accusation”**
    1. HOWEVER, because, as believers, we are **still** on this earth, and not yet in heaven, we will continue to struggle with our sinful nature
    2. the question is: Are you “continuing” in the faith?
2. Here is a beautiful picture of today's text: (as told by one who was in training to become a Youth Pastor):

“I left work early so I could have some uninterrupted study time right before the final in my Youth Ministry class. . .

When I got to class, everybody was doing their last minute studying. The teacher came in and said he would review with us for just a few minutes before the test. We went through the review, however, there were some things he was reviewing that I had never studied. When questioned about it, the teacher said that they were in the book and thus, we were responsible for everything in the book. We couldn't really argue with that. Finally, it was time to take the test. The Professor then passed out the exam with these instructions: **“Leave the exams face down on the desk until everyone has a test and I will tell you when to start.”**

When the Professor finally gave the order to turn the test over, we were amazed to realize that **every answer on the test was already filled in!** At the bottom of the last page, we read the following words:

“This is the Final Exam.  
 All the answers on your test are correct.  
 You will receive an “A” on the final exam.  
**The reason you passed the test is because  
 the creator of this test took it for you.**  
 All the work you did in preparation for this  
 test did not help you get the A. **You have  
 just experienced. . .grace.”**

1. Think back about your attitudes and actions before you were saved. How “different” are your thoughts and actions, now that you are a Christian.  
     See **Colossians 1:21** – “**Once you were alienated from God** and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”
  
2. How are you encouraged in your spiritual life due to your change in lifestyle after your conversion? Shouldn’t your spiritual change give you confidence in your salvation?
  
3. Do you see non-believers being negative about believers? Were you ever critical of believers before you were saved? What do you learn about your “former” attitude as a non-Christian toward Christians?
  
4. What does it mean that Jesus’ death on the cross provided the Christian “reconciliation” with God? How secure can you be in that reconciliation?  
     See **Colossians 1:21-22** – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now **He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death** to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation—“
  
5. Discuss the spiritual and theological meaning of **verse 22**. –  
     **Colossians 1:22** - “But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you **holy in His sight, without blemish** and **free from accusation**—“  
     What do these three areas in **bold print** do to encourage you in your Christian life?
  
6. What is the “evidence” that we are truly saved as seen in **verse 21-23**?  
     **Colossians 1:21-23** – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **if you continue in your faith**, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.”