

Sermon Notes for November 20, 2016

Sermon Series On The Holiness Of God
“The Believers’ Motivation To Be Holy”
I Peter 1:13-21

Well, here are actual answers given by High School students to real test questions. I want you to notice how creative they got with their answers:

Q: What ended in 1896?

A: 1895

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What is the fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What is a seizure?

A: A Roman Emperor.

Q: What does the word “benign” mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you are eight.

Q: How are the main parts of the body categorized?

A: The body consist of 3 parts – the brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity.
 The brainium contains the brain.

The borax contains the heart and lungs.

And the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels, A, E, I, O, and U.

Now my point here is that sometimes people don’t know the answers-so they get creative. Just like my comparison between the holiness of God and t he sinfulness of man.

Introduction

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

1. We have preached this sermon series on the holiness of God to help you realize two things:

a. **God is holy**

1. He is perfect
2. He is righteous
3. He is mighty
4. He is omnipotent
5. He is sovereign
6. and, He is Holy

b. **and we are not**

1. we are not born holy
2. and, without the miraculous work of God in our lives, we would never “want” to be holy
3. ultimately, our desire as believers should be that we desire to be holy because God is holy

2. During this sermon series, we have looked at such topics as:
 - a. why believers should worship a holy God
 - b. Jesus' passion for holiness
 - c. how an unholy person can be secure in his salvation before a holy God

B. Today, We Are Going To Look At The Motivation Of The Believer To Be Holy

1. Is it enough to “shame” the believer to be holy?
2. Is it enough to “demand” that the believer be holy?
3. Today, we will look at Biblical methods as well as the motivation of the believer to be holy as found in **I Peter 1:13-21**

I. The STEPS TO BEING HOLY

A. The Believer Is To DISCIPLINE HIS MIND

Vs. 13a – “Therefore, prepare your minds for action;”

1. one of the critical steps of the Christian in moving toward holiness is to “harness your mind.”
 - a. Peter uses a term that was well known to a soldier in Israel; “to gird up your loins”
 1. a Jewish soldier usually wore a long tunic each day
 2. however, during a time of battle or simply running away from danger, the soldier had to gather up his tunic and tuck it into his belt so that he would not trip on his tunic
 - b. what does this mean to the Christian?
 1. we cannot merely “walk through life” as if there is no danger around us
 - a. “Jesus will take care of me”
 - b. “All is well in Zion”
 2. believers **must** understand that there is a constant battle going on for our minds
 - a. the **world is** constantly attempting to “enter our minds”
 1. most of us see some 5000 ads a day, telling us that we **must** buy their product if we want to be happy
 2. and, then there are the technological distractions
 - a. iphone
 - b. television
 - c. you tube
 - d. ipad
 - e. computers
 3. most of our minds are “so full” of other things that there is little space for anything else.
 - b. the **devil is** constantly attempting to accuse and shame us as believers
 1. “You are not righteous”
 2. “You are a hypocrite”
 3. “If people really knew you, they would never want to be around you.”

- c. the **flesh is** constantly luring us
 - 1, “You need to eat that”
 - 2. “You need to feel that”
 - 3. “You need to buy that”
- 2. because of all of these struggles, Peter is teaching the believer in Jesus to “gird up your mind”
 - a. **THIS IS CLEARLY SAYING THAT THE BELIEVER IS TO BE ACTIVELY ENGAGING HIS MIND SPIRITUALLY!**
 - 1. this clearly assumes that the believer is **NOT** to be passive in the Christian life
 - a. Are animals passive in the jungle? If so, they are dead.
 - b. Please realize what Peter also says about our enemy; Satan
 - I Peter 5:8 – “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”**
 - 2. so, how can the believer deal with this constant struggle of the mind?
 - a. **BY CONSTANTLY BEING IN GOD’S WORD**
 - b. **AND, BY CONSTANTLY BEING AROUND GOD’S PEOPLE**
 - c. when the believer neglects God’s Word and God’s people—**THEY ARE A SITTING DUCK!**
 - d. what saddens me is that most believers don’t know that they are in a battle for their mind at all!
 - b. Peter’s call for believers to prepare their minds is an aggressive, daily, constant effort by to determine **WHO** is going to control our minds
 - Proverbs 23:7 – “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”**
 - 1. if the believer thinks that there is not a spiritual war, but that all is well, he will never be ready for battle
 - a. **“My logisticians** are a humorless lot. They know that if my campaign fails, they are the first one I will slay”
Alexander the Great
 - b. **“Logistics** is as vital to military success as daily food is to daily work” **Captain A. T. Mahan**
 - c. “You will not find it difficult to prove that battles, campaigns and even wars have been won or lost primarily **because of logistics.**” **General Dwight D. Eisenhower**
 - 2. The **Boy Scouts motto:** “Be prepared.”
 - 3. **Abraham Lincoln –** “If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I would spend the first hour sharpening the ax.”
- c. in a sense, when the believer disciplines his mind, there is great freedom to be what God calls them to be
 - 1. the believer who **is not** totally mentally committed to Jesus is “conflicted”

2. “the way” to live the Christian life is in “freedom” and it all starts with a committed mind to the things of God.
3. therefore, a committed mind is the most direct way to personal holiness

B. The Believer Is To Deny HIS FLESH

Vs. 13b – “be self-controlled”

1. the **first meaning** of the word is **to be temperate**
 - a. not to be taken away by one’s emotions
 - b. not prone to be a person who lives according to the “lust of the flesh”
 - c. **THE PERSON WHO IS NOT TEMPERATE LIVES ACCORDING TO HIS FEELINGS AND NOT BY THE WORD OF GOD**
 1. he is more concerned about his happiness than God’s holiness
 2. he makes decisions about his life by his own quest for happiness rather than seeking God’s revealed will in His Word
2. the **second meaning** of the word is **to be sober**
 - a. to be sober is to be serious and not be frivolous about life
 1. our life on this earth is **not** all that there is
 2. our life is **more** than things, success, children and money
 3. for there is “another life” before us that will be determined by how we have lived our life on this earth
 - b. the other lesson about being sober is that the believer is **NOT** to be “intoxicated” with the things of this life
 1. to find more joy in my “stuff” than I do in Jesus
 - a. my house
 - b. my car
 - c. my money
 - d. my vacation
 - e. my achievements
 2. what Peter is calling the believer to do is to be sober, to keep your wits about you; to see “life” for what it truly is
 - a. how many Christians do I see who are intoxicated about the things of this world?
 - b. as I keep saying to the church, **CONSUMERISM IS TAKING OVER THE CHURCH!**
 1. instead of church being about knowing and serving Jesus
 2. church is becoming more about me and what I am looking for!
 - c. it is becoming harder and harder to tell the Christian from the non-Christian in today’s world

C. The Believer IS TO SET HIS SIGHTS ON HEAVEN

Vs. 13 – “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

1. the **BEST** way for a believer to live on this earth is to realize, **EVERY DAY**, that this earth is our “temporary home”
 - a. for, as human beings, we will live on this earth for only a short time
 - b. now, if there is no heaven, then I urge you to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die”
 - c. **BUT, THAT IS NOT WHAT THE SCRIPTURE TEACHES!**
 1. the Word of God teaches us that there **IS** a heaven
 2. a place where we will spend the rest of eternity
 3. so, how can you compare. . .mathematically, the “proportion” of our life on this earth to the time we will spend in eternity?
 - a. each of us will live on this earth for about 80-90 years
 - b. while we will be in heaven **FOREVER!**
 - c. **Chuck Swindoll** – “The dash between the numbers on a tombstone
 - d. **James “A Vapor”**
 4. what Peter is essentially saying to the believer: **BE SMART, BE SOBER.** Look at life and eternity “as it is”
 - a. **THIS EARTH IS NOT ALL THAT THERE IS**
 - b. there is yet “another place,” a more important place than this
2. but, also look at what else Peter is saying: “**Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.**”
 - a. not only will believers be in heaven
 - b. **BELIEVERS WILL BE IN HEAVEN BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD!**
 1. believers will be in heaven in spite of our sins, in spite of our failures
 2. **BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE!!!**
 - c. Now, let me ask you a question: Is there any greater motivation to be holy than to realize that you will be in heaven **BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD?**
 1. you did not earn it
 2. **IN FACT, YOU HAVE SINNED ENOUGH, EVEN AS A CHRISTIAN, FOR GOD TO KEEP YOU OUT OF HEAVEN!**
 3. **THAT KNOWLEDGE IS A MOTIVATOR!**

D. The Believer Is To DECIDE BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

1. God calls for us not to give in to our sinful flesh

Vs. 14 – “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.”

 - a. do you remember what you were, what you did, and how you lived before you were saved?
 1. you lived for self
 2. you lived for pleasure
 3. you lived to satisfy your own desire
 4. **IT WAS ALL ABOUT YOU!**

- b. let me ask you a question; when we live a life of our own pleasure and our own lust, WHO ARE WE WORSHIPPING?
 - 1. you are not worshipping God
 - 2. you are worshipping yourself
 - 3. you may as well build a physical statue of yourself and bow down before it every day
 - 4. Being holy is a constant struggle for the Christian – Sin is a constant struggle. It seems to slowly but surely enter our lives. “An author once told of ancient China and the need of the people there to provide security against the barbaric hordes to the north. So, the Chinese built a great wall. The wall was so high that the Chinese believed that no one could climb over it and so thick that nothing could break it down. During the first hundred years of the wall’s existence, China was invaded three different times. Not once did the barbaric hordes break down the wall or climb over it. **Each time they bribed a gatekeeper and they marched right through the gate.** One commentator made this observation: “The Chinese were so busy relying on walls of stone that they forgot to teach integrity to their children.”
- 2. Instead of living for self, God calls us to live a life of holiness

Vs. 15 – “But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;”

 - a. we must understand what this word holy means
 - 1. it DOES mean to be pure, Godly and righteous in our life
 - 2. but, we MUST understand “another” essential meaning of the word
 - a. The Fourth Commandment – “Remember the Sabbath day to **keep it holy.**”
 - 1. the way that the word holy is used in the fourth commandment is that one day in seven of our week is to be “different” than the rest of the days in the week
 - 2. one day in seven is to be set apart
 - 3. “The Sabbath Day” is unique and is to be experienced in a different way than the other days
 - b. when God told Moses at the burning bush that he was standing “on holy ground”
 - 1. let me ask you a question: was that ground “holy” **before** the bush burst into flames?
 - 2. that ground was holy **BECAUSE** it burst into flames and God was now speaking through that bush
 - b. when God saves a person, He wants them to be holy
 - 1. God wants believers to be different than other people who do not know Jesus
 - 2. God wants believers to be set apart to serve Him rather than to serve themselves

3. and, God wants believers to be holy, **BECAUSE HE IS HOLY!**
 - a. how can believers live a selfish, self-absorbed, life and truly represent God?
 - b. how can believers abuse others and resent serving others and represent a holy God?
 - c. **IS IT ANY WONDER THE WORLD IS CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE IN SELFISH, SELF-ABSORBED BELIEVERS?**
 1. Are believers as big into consumerism as non-believers?
 2. Do believers go to court to sue other believers?
 3. **George Barna**, a Christian statistician, did a survey and wrote a book about the status of today's church. It was shocking. He found that the divorce rate for non-Christians was **23%**, and the divorce rate for born-again Christians was **27%**. That's right, the Christians had a higher divorce rate than the non-Christians! A question was asked, "Have you given money to a homeless or a poor person in the past year" The results; born-again Christians **24%**, non-Christians **34%**. **What's wrong with this picture?**

II. The Seriousness Of Not Being Holy

A. A Holy God Will Judge Us

Vs. 17 – “Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”

1. For those who are not concerned about living a holy life, they need to hear this Verse:
 - a. each and every person will be judged whether they have lived a holy life
 1. whether they think they will or not
 2. we can only imagine what those people who ridicule and laugh at judgement day will say on judgement day
 - b. **AND . . .**each and every Christian will be judged whether they have lived a holy life
 1. for those Christians who believe that they will **not** be judged because they are Christians; they need to listen to these verses:
 - a. **Romans 14:10-12 – “You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God.”** So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

- b. **II Corinthians 5:9-10** – “So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.**”
- c. **PLEASE NOTICE the phrase:** “Since you call on a Father who judges **EACH MAN’S WORK**.
 - 1. every man, every one
 - 2. “each of **US**”
 - a. **WHO IS PAUL WRITING TO IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS**
 - b. **IS HE WRITING TO CHRISTIANS?**
- 2. **PLEASE** realize, however, that the judgment of the Christian will not be a judgement of salvation, but a judgement of works
 - a. for the believer who has lived a selfish life
 - b. for the believer who has not served others
 - c. for the believer who has shown no discipline in controlling the flesh
 - d. for the Christian, who has made no effort to be holy to represent the holiness of God during his time on this earth
- 2. and, we must also know that a holy God will judge us **impartially**
 - a. our excuses will not matter on judgement day
 - Vs. 17** – “Since you call on a Father **who judges each man's work impartially**, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”
 - 1. “Oh, Lord, if you had known my circumstances.”
 - 2. “Oh, Lord, if you had known my stresses.”
 - b. our efforts to defend ourselves will not matter on judgement day
 - 1. our **“stuff”** won’t matter
 - a. “But, Lord, I was a successful businessman.”
 - b. “But, Lord, I raised some great, successful kids.”
 - c. “But, Lord, people in the community respected me.”
 - 2. our **traditions** will not matter
 - Vs. 18** – “**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,**”
 - a. our idols of silver and gold will not matter
 - 1. a statue of Buddah
 - 2. a statue of all of the Hindu gods
 - 3. a statue of our houses and cars and bank Accounts

- b. our traditions of church
 - 1. the great Cathedrals in Europe
 - 2. our tradition in our own church
 - 3. picture of me joining the church
 - 4. God will not judge our traditions, HE WILL JUDGE OUR HEARTS AND OUR HOLINESS!
- 3. so, the “proper” attitude of Christians is to live a life of “reverent fear”
 - a. respectful fear
 - b. the “fear” of holding a handgrenade

B. A Holy God WILL SAVE US

Vs. 18-19 – “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, **but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.**”

1. **HOWEVER**, in spite of our lack of holiness and our failures as Christians, LISTEN TO “**WHAT**” SAVES US!
 - a. “**The precious blood of Jesus**”
 1. “precious”
 - a. superlative
 - b. held in honor
 - c. especially dear
 2. “blood of Christ”
 - a. it was His blood; not the blood of animals sacrificed
 - b. it was His death
 - c. it was His sacrifice
 - d. NOT OURS!
 - b. “**without blemish or defeat**”
 1. a blood that was:
 - a. perfect’
 - b. with no sin
 - c. with no possibility of sin
 - d. totally satisfactory
 2. thus, the blood that was spilled for our sins was totally sufficient to pay for our sins
2. LISTEN TO “**WHO**” SAVES US

Vs. 20-21 – “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. **Through Him** you believe in God, **who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him**, and so your faith and hope are in God.”

 - a. **Jesus**, our Savior, “was revealed in these last times **for your sake.**”
 - b. it was **JESUS** who paid for our sins
 1. our sins
 2. our failures
 3. even our lack of holiness

- c. and, our salvation is based on His resurrection
Vs. 21b – “Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him,”

1. NOT only did Jesus come back from the dead after dying on the cross for our sins
2. the resurrected Jesus went to the right hand of God and is glorified
 - a. the fact that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father GLORIFIED says it all
 1. the Father is not only pleased with the work of His Son on the cross on our behalf
 2. Jesus sits as glorified, finished, perfect AS OUR RISEN SAVIOR!
 - b. Jesus’ position at the right hand of God screams at us that God has totally accepted His Son’s death on our behalf—**DESPITE OUR LACK OF HOLINESS!**

3. LISTEN TO **“HOW”** WE ARE SAVED

Vs. 21 – “Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”

- a. **ALL THAT WE HAVE TO DO TO BE SAVED FOREVER IS HAVE FAITH IN WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR US ON THE CROSS!**
- b. so, our faith is **not** in our holiness or lack of holiness: “Our faith and hope are in God.”

Conclusion

1. Yes, God calls believers to be holy
 - a. and, yes, we fully realize that God is holy and we are not
 - b. **BUT**, we are **still** called to be holy
 1. in fact, we are called to:
 - a. work at discipline and cause our minds to focus on His Word
 - b. and, we are called to deal with our constant desire to worship and please self
 2. but, trust me, we will fail
2. So, **DESPITE** our failure to be holy
 - a. **HE WILL STILL SAVE US**
 1. not because of our work or the lack of our works
 2. and, in spite of our constant failure to be holy
 - b. **NO, HE WILL SAVE US:**
 1. **BECAUSE OF JESUS’ PRECIOUS BLOOD**
 2. **BECAUSE JESUS CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD**
 3. **AND, BECAUSE JESUS SITS GLORIFIED ON HIS THRONE!**

3. So, what “**should**” motivate the believer to live a holy life other than the greatest gift the world has ever seen?
 - a. that Jesus has saved us
 - b. and despite our holiness or lack of it, WE WILL BE SAVED FOREVER!
 - c. how is that for motivation?

4. **Max Lucado** tells this wonderful story of being thankful for our Salvation:

“Before World War II, missionaries carried the gospel to Ethiopia’s Satan-worshipping Wallamo tribe. The decision of Tigyne, a slave, to follow Jesus, displeased his master. He forbid Tigyne to attend Bible studies or worship and often beat him for his faith. It was a price that the young Christian was willing to pay.

But another price he could not afford; the price of his freedom. Just before the missionaries were expelled from Ethiopia, missionary Ray Davis, with the help of other missionaries, bought Tigyne’s freedom.

Twenty-four years passed before Ray Davis returned to Ethiopia. When the new freed slave, Tigyne, heard that his friend was coming back to his village, he waited at the mission station for several days. As he saw his missing friend, Davis round the corner in a car driven by a fellow missionary, Tigyne ran to the window. The driver slowed and Tigyne ran up beside the car, took Davis’ hand and kissed it again and again. As he ran, Tigyne yelled to his friends; “**Look! Look! The one who redeemed me has returned!**” As the car stopped and Davis got out, Tigyne dropped to his knees, put his arms around his friend’s legs, and began to kiss his dusty shoes.”

Questions:

1. Do you struggle with the vast difference between God's holiness and your lack of holiness?
2. What motivates you, as a believer, to be holy?
3. How "aggressive" should the believer be regarding being holy? Look at the active verbs in **I Peter 1:13** – "Therefore, **prepare your minds for action**; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."
4. If being holy means to be set apart and unique, what does it really mean to be holy in this life? Refer to The Fourth Commandment; "Remember the Sabbath day **to be holy.**"
5. Will God judge every person who ever lived, including Christians? Look closely at **Romans 14:10-12** and **II Corinthians 5:9-10.**
6. What hope does the believer have despite not being truly holy in this life? Look at **I Peter 1:18-21.**