

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Divine Holiness in Human Flesh

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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I had intended to get us into the Gospel of Luke, but the Lord had other plans, and that's all right. When I went down to the conference in Florida this week, I was asked to speak on the subject of the holiness of God. A great subject, a vast subject. In fact, that subject about God, which I think is the most all encompassing of subjects. And, certainly, the treatment of it needs much more than one message. But that was my assignment, and so it is my privilege this morning to share with you...on the subject of the holiness of God.

This is the defining characteristic of God. This is, in fact, the summation of God's uniqueness. It was theologian A. A. Hodge who said, "The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others. It is rather a general term representing the conception of God's consummate perfection and total glory." When you say that God is holy, you are really defining God in all His fullness. Holiness is God's infinite perfection at every point. It is not just his moral perfection. It is His perfect intelligence, His perfect power, and His perfect everything else that makes Him God.

It was Thomas Watson who said, "Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of God's crown. It is the name by which he is known." To say that which is most distinct about God is to say He is holy. In society today, people like to think that God is love. And that is true. But a more comprehensive, all-encompassing description of God is to say that He is holy.

R. L. Dabney said, "Holiness is to be regarded, not as a distinct attribute, but as the sum of all God's moral perfection." And Isaiah 57 in verse 15 says, "For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever...listen...Whose name is Holy." When...when God gets around to naming Himself, that is giving Himself a name which most clearly identifies who He is, the name He chooses is Holy. In other words, to say that God is holy is verbal shorthand for summing up who He is. Holiness encompasses all that is true about God. The Hebrew is kaddash. The Greek, Hagias, hosias. In any case, the meaning is separate or distinct.

To say that God is holy is to say that He is separate from us. That He is distinct from us. That He is other than we are. That He is a Being of a completely different nature than we are. He is incomparable. He is not to be compared with anything created...or anyone created. He is the infinite, perfect God...and He alone is the infinite perfect God, and no one else is. That's why He said, "My glory will I not give to another." Everyone else in the universe is created and of a different nature than God. That's why Exodus 15:11 says, "Who is like You, majestic in holiness?" The answer is, of course, no one. That's why you should worship no other gods. No one is like the true and living God.

First Samuel 2:2 says, "There is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides You." Psalm 111 says, "Holy is His name." Another way to say that would be separate is His name, distinct is His name. He is utterly other than we are. One way to illustrate that is with the use of the verb to be. God is pure, eternal, unchanging being. That is to say, He has life in Himself. Life is intrinsic to God. He is eternal being, unchanging being. In contrast to that, we are becoming. We once were not, now we are, and we are in process of becoming something different than we are. In fact, I'm different now than I was when the service started, and I'm going in the wrong direction, and we all are.

We are becoming. God is being. We change. He does not. We are affected by our fallenness and sin. He is not. His eyes are too pure to approve evil, and He cannot look on wickedness, Habakkuk 1:13 says. Job 34:10 says, "Far be it from God to do wickedness or to do wrong." Leviticus 11 and many other places in Leviticus says, "I, the Lord your God am Holy." First Peter 1:15, "I am Holy." And Revelation 15:4 says, "You alone are Holy." To say that God is holy is to say more than that He is morally perfect. It is to say that He is utterly distinct from us. Now that speaks of His moral perfection, because everything in the created order is stained by sin and, therefore, imperfect...To say that God is holy is to say that He is a being of an utterly different nature than ours. Not just morally perfect, but the perfection of all His attributes.

There are many more statements regarding God's holiness in Scripture, and there are many, many revelations of God's holiness. In fact, every time God reveals Himself, it is a declaration of His holiness...every time. Everything that ever comes from God reflects His perfection. He is the...the Father of Light, in Whom there is no variableness, no shadow of turning, nothing ever changes. And from Him comes down every good and perfect gift. Everything that comes out of God is perfect. Everything that is a revelation of God, a disclosure of God, a manifestation of God, a reflection of God is perfect.

Now, God then is completely different than we are, because everything that is a reflection of us is imperfect. He is utterly other than we are. He is a being of an entirely different nature. Both from men and angels. When you study the Bible, you are seeing in every disclosure of God, in every revelation of God, His absolute, utter, consummate perfection. You could see it, for example, in Creation before the Fall. Genesis 1:31 says, "God saw all that He had made at the sixth day, and, behold, it was very...what?...good." Every day during the Creation on the previous days, God said it was good, and He applied it to the specific details of that day's Creation. But when he came to all it, and it was all done, and He saw the whole complex of His Creation of the universe, it was not just good, it was very good.

Even man, Ecclesiastes 7:29, it says, "God made man upright." Because God couldn't make anything that wasn't upright. God couldn't make anything that wasn't perfect. God couldn't make

anything that wasn't without sin. It is impossible for God to do anything that isn't perfect morally. We even were made in His image, free from evil, free from sin. So we could study God's holiness by looking at the Creation before the corruption of that Creation in the Fall. Or we could look at God's law. That's another way to see God's holiness. Another way to see God's perfection. Not in the physical universe, which He created in perfection, but in the...moral law which He gave.

When you look at God's holy law, God's moral law, you see the reflection of His perfect purity. In Psalm 19, it says, "The law of the Lord is perfect." James 1:25 talks about the perfect law. And Romans 7:12, the Apostle Paul said, "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good." Of course, because it came from God. It is the law of the Lord. It is the commandment of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the fear of the Lord...the Word of the Lord has to be perfect, because the Lord from Whom it comes is perfect.

We can, then, study the holiness of God from Creation. We can study the holiness of God from the vantage point of His perfect law. We could also study the holiness of God from the vantage point of His judgment on sin. Therein, you will see the perfection of God. He always has the exactly correct and perfectly moral and righteous response to evil. All His verdicts, all His decisions, all His adjudications, everything that comes out of God in terms of a judgment is a reflection of His perfection.

Genesis 18:25 puts it this way: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Every decision, every verdict...is right. Second Timothy 4:8 says, "The Lord, the righteous Judge." We could then go to Scripture and find every place where God made a judgment on sin. And, in each case, we would be seeing the revelation of His absolute and utter holiness. He is so holy, and His reaction against sin is so right and so consummate, that there is no sin ever committed by any person who has ever lived or will ever live in this world that will not be punished by God. It'll either be punished in Christ at the cross, for those who believed; or it'll be punished in hell for those who reject the cross and spend forever there. Every sin will be punished. The holiness of God, the righteous judgment of God demands it.

So you could look at God's perfect holiness through the original Creation and its perfection and the moral glory of Adam and Eve created in God's image. You could look at the holiness of God through the perfection of His revealed law, which is a reflection of that divine moral standard. You could look at the holiness of God through the judgment that He renders on sin, which is a pure reaction to that which violates His holy law. Fourthly, you could look at the holiness of God from the vantage point of heavenly glory. And we get a little bit of glimpse into that.

Turn in your Bible to Revelation chapter 4 for a moment. If we wanna see how holy God is, how utterly distinct from us He is, here is a vision that John receives in Revelation 4 verse 2. He was in the Spirit. This is to say the Holy Spirit is now providing for him a heavenly vision, and he sees the

throne of God standing in Heaven, One sitting on the throne. And he begins to describe this majesty, this glory. "He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance." He...he sees God and...and there is shining, blazing glory coming out of God. And there's "a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. And around the throne are 24 thrones, on those thrones, 24 elders sitting, clothed in white garments, golden crowns on their head," who represent the redeemed. "Then out of the throne, flashes of lightning, sounds, and peals of thunder. Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne represent the sevenfold holy Spirits," seven elements of the Spirit of ministry listed in Isaiah 11. "And in front of the throne is a sea of glasslike crystal." There's a crystal sea in the front in order to reflect, like multiple prisms, all this blazing glorious light and all its colors, and splatter it all over the endless universe.

"In the center and around the throne, the four living creatures"...who are described here represent some very special angels. And down in verse 8, it says, "Day and night...at the end of the verse...all these beings in Heaven do not cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty.'" And they are affirming in this trihagion, this repetition of the word holy, the consummate character of God. He's never said to be loved, loved, loved, goodness, goodness, goodness, mercy, mercy, mercy, grace, grace, grace. When speaking of the consummate nature of God, He is holy, holy, holy. There in Heaven is a glimpse of the holiness of God. Admittedly, it is somewhat hard for us to grasp. It is somewhat transcendent. It is beyond our comprehension, as it was even beyond John's.

But there are other such vision of God in His glory in Heaven. This one very similar to the one in Ezekiel chapter 1. So we could learn of God's holiness at the point of His Creation, at the point of His law, at the point of His judgment on sin, or even ascend into the glory of His holy Heaven and see there the wonder of His distinctiveness, His unlike us character. And there are many other aspects of Scripture which demonstrate to us the holiness of God...but I wanna take you to one other one. None of those is as powerful, in my mind, or as extensive in Scripture as this next one.

I have chosen a feature of God's revelation. The most magnificent manifestation of the holiness of God that we have. And one of the reasons that it is so profoundly clear and so able to be understood is because it happens in our world. It happened visibly, and it happened extensively over a lengthy period of time. And it is nothing other than the incarnation...the incarnation. The revelation of God's holiness is most clear and most powerful in the incarnation. God the Son came into the world of sin and sinners. And in Him was manifest the holiness of God in the most graphic, the most dramatic way, the most visible way, the most understandable way. Not a vision, but the unveiled Christ. Not glory hidden, but glory disclosed.

In John chapter 1, John says in verse 18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." Jesus is the best explanation of God. He's the best explanation of God. Hebrews chapter 1 and verses 1 to 3, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken

to us in His Son...and listen to this...And He...the Son, verse 3...is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature." Jesus is the precise representation of the nature of God. And, if that which defines God most totally is His holiness, then that will be mostly visible in Jesus Christ. So we look at Christ and we see God in His holiness. And where, at what point? At all points. When you see Jesus, you experience the holiness of God in its clearest manner, in its most discernable manifestation. You could go to His birth. You could study His birth.

As you know, I am immersed in the Gospel of Luke and loving it. And so much of what goes on in the book of Luke speaks to this issue. Let me show you some illustrations. Go back to Luke 1. When the angel from God, Gabriel, was sent to Nazareth to speak to Mary, he announced to her that she would bear the Son of God. And in verse 35, "The angel says to Mary...Luke 1...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Offspring shall be called the Son of God." You're gonna have a baby like none other. Very different than what David said in Psalm 51:5 in referring to his own birth. He said...and even to his own conception, "In sin did my mother conceive me."

"You're going to be touched, as it were, by the Holy Spirit, and out from you is coming a holy Offspring, a separate Offspring, a being of a completely distinct nature. One who is different, another kind of being altogether. You're going to have a...a Son who will be the Eternal God in flesh." This is a being of a completely different nature.

You could also see the holy uniqueness of Jesus, not only in His birth, but if you went to Luke chapter 3 and looked at His baptism. And you remember, after the 30 years of basically silence, finally there is a divine comment made on Jesus after He is 30 years of age, and He goes down to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. And in Luke 3, "Heaven is opened...in verse 21...and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of Heaven, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.'" Now God has a high standard. Would you agree? God says, "Be Ye...what?...holy, for I am holy. Be Ye holy as Your Father in Heaven is holy." God's standard is never lowered. His standard is absolute holy perfection. After 30 years of life, the Father says of the Son He is absolute holy perfection.

This is another kind of being. This is a completely different kind of being than we are. This is Someone who is essential being. This is Someone who has life in Himself. We are simply those who possess life because it was given to us extrinsically, and we have also the problem of sin, and we are becoming, and what we are becoming is worse and worse and worse and worse, unless rescued by redemptive grace and somehow transformed. We'll continue to get worse and worse forever in hell. We are becoming. God is pure being, and so is Christ. And so, after 30 years, the commentary of the Father on His life is perfection. Perfection.

We can't get baptized, Acts 238 says, unless we confess our sins, right? Unless we repent. Not so for Him. So we could look at divine commentary on His birth and know that He is holy. We could look at divine commentary on His life and know that he is holy. We could also look at divine commentary on His death. What does 1 Peter 1 tell us? "You are not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Hum. You were redeemed by a sinless Savior.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin, sin for us." First Peter 3:18 says, "It was the just One dying for the unjust." And in the marvelous statement in the 9th chapter of Hebrews in verse 14, it says, "He was offered or offered Himself without blemish to God." So at His birth, He is declared to be holy. At His baptism, with a commentary on the 30 years of His life, He is declared to be holy. Three years later, as He comes to the cross, He is again declared to be holy. There is no other commentary on His life, other than the fact that he is absolutely holy. He is absolutely sinless. He is morally perfect, and that is, of course, true because of His nature. He is a completely different being than we are. He was what medieval theologians called "non posse peccare," not able to sin. Not posse non peccare, that's able not to sin. It wasn't that He was just able not to sin. He was not able to sin. Couldn't sin. He's a being of a different nature. Utterly different nature.

All this exposure to the worst...the worst...tried to kill Him when He's a Child. He lives in...the wretchedness of...of this world and Nazareth for 30 years. Then He begins His ministry, and He's constantly exposed to the worst of man. And, finally, exposed to the death of those who hated Him. In the end...He was in all points tempted like as we are yet what? Without sin. Couldn't sin. Couldn't sin.

It was Augustine who once commented that he liked the sign of the fish as an emblem of Christianity and as a description of Christ. The word for fish in Greek is ichthos. And if you take those words and stand 'em on end like in an acrostic, each of those letters becoming the first letter of another word, it's Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. And so that little acrostic took the word ichthos and they made a sign of the fish, and that's how they identified each other. Augustine said this about the sign of the fish, "It is a suitable sign for Christ, because He was able to live without sin in the abyss of this mortality, as in the depths of waters." He saw Christ as like a fish immersed into a foreign environment. That environment being this fallen world.

Turn in your Bible for a minute to John chapter 8...John chapter 8, and there are a couple of statements made here that lead us to a further understanding of the moral perfection and absolute distinctiveness of Christ. There is no one like Him. There is no possibility of anyone being truly like Him. Though we will be somewhat like Him in eternity future. We will never possess the divine nature. That belongs to God and God alone. But in the 8th chapter of John in verse 23, Jesus says something that's so clear. He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." He's talking about being here. He's talking about nature here. I

am a different kind of being. Down in verse 46, He asks this question, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" Name one. Boy, did they want to. They'd been looking, indefatigably looking, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? You can't find one, because there never can be one."

In the 14th chapter of John and the 30th verse, He says, "I will not speak much more with you...for the ruler of the world is coming...Satan's coming. Listen to this...But...where it says and, it's better to say but...but he has nothing in Me." There's nothing in Me that he can indict Me for. What is Satan? He's the accuser of the brethren. He's the one who wants to go before the throne of God and accuse, like he did with Job. "He has nothing on me. There is nothing in Me that he can point to. Let him come. Let him come with all the full fury of the forces of hell. Let him make his maximum effort on Me. He has no ability to cause Me to distrust My Father. No ability for Me to waiver, to think an evil thought, to do an evil deed, to disobey in any regard. I do not have the capacity to do that. He has nothing in Me. I am of a different nature."

What was the difference? Turn to Mark 7, and here is another passage, Mark 7:18. Well, we'll go back to verse 15 so we can catch the beginning principle. Jesus is saying you need to listen to Me and understand this principle. In verse 15, here's the principle. "There's nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man." See, the problem with people is inside. Right? We understand that, don't we? There's something inside of us that has arms. And it just reaches out and grabs sin and pulls it in.

Verse 18, now He's gonna explain that. "Are you so lacking in understanding also? You don't get it? Don't you understand that whatever goes into the man from outside can't defile him. It just...just goes through like food and is eliminated? It never gets into his heart." I mean, you know, they were into all these different dietary laws and all this, and holiness was related to what you eat. He says, "You don't get it. It's not about that. It's not about keeping a kosher diet. The problem is not what you eat. The problem is what you are." It is, in verse 20, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. It's from within, out of the heart of men...universally, by the way...that proceed evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murders, adulteries, deed of coveting, wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The problem is there's something inside of us that reaches out and just draws in all the evil that's around us. Those are called lusts. Those are called appetites. That's the difference between us and God. He doesn't have those. He doesn't have those. That's why Satan has nothing in him to make Him sin. There's no attraction Satan could come up with. There's no accusation that Satan can bring against Him. No one can accuse Him of any sin. There's isn't any capacity there for that. He is a being of an utterly different nature...And the greatest proof of this, beloved, I really believe is not how holiness holds up in Heaven. It's not how holiness holds up in a perfect Creation. It's not how holiness holds up when it's writing a perfect law or from Heaven rendering a perfect judgment or in

Heaven reflecting its glory. The greatest test of holiness is how it does in a wretched, filthy, vile, corrupt, and sinful world. Right?

I mean, let's face it, that's...that's...that's true in our case. You know, the test of your holiness is not here today...It's when you leave here and go somewhere else where people are openly sinning. And the deeper and more frequently you sink into those environments, the more you will see your corruption revealed. And that's why Scripture warns us to stay out of those places. I mean it's...it's everywhere, but a few suggestions might be Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers." Don't walk with people who are sinful. Don't stand around with people who are sinful. And don't sit down with them. Why? Because they're gonna influence you.

You can go to the book of Proverbs and over and over and over, "Stay away from immoral people. Stay away from angry people. Stay away from greedy people. Stay away from lazy people." Why? Because they influence you...in sinful way. "And if you have a man...1 Corinthians chapter 5 says...in your congregation who is sinful, you better get that man out of your congregation, because a little bit of leaven...does what?...leavens the whole lump." You better get that guy out of the church or he'll permeate your church. Church discipline protects the church. You gotta put those sinful people out, because they'll drag the whole church down into sin. Why? Because we have faculties inside of us that, when we find those kinds of sins, those evil things around us, there's something in us that wants to reach out and pull them in.

Well, the simple principle is 1 Corinthians 15:33. You can't forget this. "Bad company corrupts good...what?...morals." So what do we do? We spend our whole life worried about the kind of company we keep. Is that not true? We say to our kid, "I don't want you playing with that kid. It's a bad kid." Don't we say that? "Stay away from that part of town. I don't want you going down...you have your own car now. Don't you dare be down there. Don't go to this movie. Don't watch this. Don't read this. Don't do." Why? Because we understand that we have inside of us a problem of corruption that reaches out when it finds that kinda stuff and just pulls it in. We live our whole life in a very difficult dilemma. I mean we're responsible to go and rescue people out of the world, and we can't get too close, or we're gonna have problems ourselves.

Jude 23, very clear is a warning. Listen to what it says. "Have mercy on some with fear. Hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." Wow. You know, when you go to rescue somebody, when you go to evangelize somebody, when you go to pull somebody out of sin, do it with fear, because you could get your own clothes dirty getting that close to their iniquity. It's really true.

And so we have all these warnings. And then we look at Jesus, and what did He do? He didn't come into the world and become a monk and go in a cave and contemplate His navel so He could survive. He didn't avoid crowds. He didn't avoid people. He didn't hang around with all the religious people,

the godly of the age, in order that He might protect Himself, lest some horrible, horrible corruption come upon Him from the outside. He didn't isolate Himself from sinners to protect His purity. He did the very opposite. Absolutely the opposite. He spent His time with the worst people, and He didn't hand 'em tracts or give 'em a quick Gospel message. He went to their parties.

Turn in your Bible to Luke 5, and let's go back to a couple of illustrations of this in Luke. This is striking. Luke 5:27 is the calling of Levi or Matthew. He's known by both names. And Jesus is going out and notices a tax gatherer. They were all over the place. Now, they...they sat at crossroads, and they levied taxes on everybody. And they levied exorbitant taxes, basically, there was corruption, to put it mildly, and it was an extortion process. If you were a tax collector like Levi, he was what was called a little Moccus. He was a smalltime guy sitting at a crossroads. He was the hated, loathed, despised guy that the people saw every day who extorted money out of them. They were surrounded, of course, by thugs and thieves and strong-arm guys who, if you didn't pay, would come and beat you up, break your legs or whatever. It was the mafia operation. And they all worked their little crossroads under some big Gabai, they were called. Some big guy who had a Roman tax franchise. So they'd sold their soul to Rome, who was a idolatrous invader and a occupier of the land of Israel. They would all be kicked out of the synagogue for that. They were considered the lowest of the low on the totem pole. They were hated and despised and loathed, and not only because of what they did with regard to Rome, but because they were thieves and extortioners, and because they were surrounded by thugs and all the wretched of society to get what they wanted out of people.

This would be the last guy on the planet you think Jesus would want to take as an apostle. And what benefit would there be in hanging around this guy? But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me. He left everything behind, rose, and began to follow Him." And then this. And Levi gave a big party, a big party celebrating he was now a follower of Jesus. And, of course, if he's gonna have a party, he's gonna call his...his friends. So it says there was a great crowd of tax collectors and others. Who are they? Kind of people that hang around the scum, the riffraff, the lowlifes. At the end of verse 30, they're called sinners, immoral people. Now that's the kind of party you probably wouldn't wanna go to. Probably the kind of party you wouldn't wanna go to. And it's not a short party. It says they were reclining at the table. It's really a banquet. It's hours and hours, and you recline. You sit there, you know, and you eat a little bit and drop the grapes and drink a little bit and you eat and it's an evening.

Can you imagine what the conversation was like for the holy Son of God? Can you imagine what they're talking about? What would they be talking about? Talking about life as a prostitute. Life as a thug, a thief, an extortioner. And He's reclining with them. "And the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax gatherers and the sinners?'" I mean they knew they couldn't do that and survive. They knew what kind of mechanism they had inside if they got into that kind of environment. "And Jesus answered them and said...essentially...'It's not about what they do to Me. It's about what I can do for them. It's not those who are well who need a physician, those who are sick. I haven't come to call the righteous like you, the self-righteous...he

says that sarcastically...but sinners to repentance. They're just the kind of people I'm trying to reach. I'm not concerned about what they might do to Me. I'm there because of what I know I can do for them." He was absolutely impenetrable, because He's a being of a different kind.

By the way, that wasn't the only time he did it. He did it all the time. He hung around with these people most of the time. Matthew 11:19, this was the commentary on Jesus. "Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard." Why would they say that? Did they ever see Him gluttonous? Did they ever see Him drunk? Of course not. They said that because He was always hanging around those kinds of people. He was, that same verse says, "A friend of tax collectors and sinners." Now what did tax collectors and sinners do when they got together? They got drunk, and they were gluttonous. He goes to their gluttonous, drunken parties. They knew they couldn't go there and survive in any kind of a superficial spirituality. They tried to keep their distance from those kind of people, and I think that's wise. I don't know if I was invited to a party of prostitutes, thugs, criminals, and other assorted sinners, whether I'd wanna go spend the whole evening listening to them talk. I don't care what I had to say.

Turn to Luke 7, and here's another amazing story in verse 36. He's now meeting with different kinds of sinners. These are the hypocrites. Goes into a Pharisee's house and again reclines for a whole prolonged meal and conversation. And verse 37 says, "And, behold, there was a woman in the city who was immoral." This is a woman in the city. The...the language here indicates well-known. This is a prostitute...an immoral woman in the city...and, by the way, very successful, because she carried around alabaster bottles of perfume. This was a part of the tools of her trade, like back in Proverbs where it talks about perfuming the dead, part of the seduction the prostitute does. This is a prostitute. "But she had learned that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house." Now people could come and kinda look in the porticoes and look through the openings to see and hear the conversation. But it wouldn't have been appropriate at all for a prostitute to go into a Pharisee's house. It would have defiled it. But she did. Verse 38, she stands behind Jesus, at His feet. He's reclining here. The table's here. He's here. His feet are over here. Head's at this end, and all of a sudden, this prostitute comes right up to His feet. "She begins to wet His feet with her tears." Luther called that heart water, Martin Luther.

She doesn't have any water, so she starts weeping on His feet. "Then she starts wiping His feet with the hair of her head. And then she starts kissing His feet. And then she breaks the neck of the alabaster bottle and starts pouring it on His feet." I mean the Pharisee is absolutely incredulous. She says if this man was a prophet he would...he'd know who she was. Everybody knows who she was. He's a prophet, and he doesn't know who she is? And he says, "She's touching Him. She's too touchy."

Oooh, well, the Pharisee knows he...he knows what kind of reaction he'd have prostitute started doing that to him. She's a sinner. And what was Jesus' reaction? He was utterly unaffected by her sin

and, in fact, down in verse 48, He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." It wasn't about what she could do to Him. It was only about what He could do for her. And verse 50, He said, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

See, there was nothing in Him to sin. There's no capacity there. And how better to see that, not in Heaven, but on earth. How better to see that with Jesus among the...the worst, the scum, the lowlifes, the wretched, the sinners, the base. He was calm, absolutely untroubled, and, rather than be led to sin by sinners, He led sinners into holiness. And the verdict on His life comes in Hebrews 7. Hebrews 7 gives the verdict, when all is said and done, verse 26, "Jesus, our high priest...Hebrews 7:26...is holy...innocent...undefiled." All that contact with sinners, all that contact with Satan in His temptation, all that contact with demons which He confronted all the time, and He is holy, innocent, undefiled. Why? Because He is separate from sinners and exalted above the heavens. He is a being of a different nature.

Now, I wanna give you one more glimpse of how different He is. Turn to Isaiah 6. Isaiah 6. Isaiah has a vision here in chapter 6 and verse 1, and I wanna...I want you to see the vision. "I saw the Lord, in the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty, exalted, with the train of His robe, the kindglory coming off of Him filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two covering his face in reverence, with two covering his feet in humility, with two hovering, ready to go and serve. And they cry antiphonally back and forth, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts.'" Hum, this is an incredible vision. God appearing in shape like a man, sitting with a robe, blazing glory, and declared holy, holy, holy. And then Isaiah responds, you remember, and in the vision of God, he sees himself as sinful, and he says he...in verse 5...that he has unclean lips and his people have unclean lips. And then in verse 6, seraphim flies and with a burning coal from off the altar. Touches his mouth and it symbolizes the fact that his iniquity is taken away and his sin is forgiven. He appears here penitent, broken over his sin, and in response to his penitence and his faith, he's cleansed.

And then the Lord says, "Okay, I'm gonna send you, and you should go, and you should warn the people of judgment, and tell them to turn and repent." But He says this, verse 9, "Go tell this people: 'Keep on listening; do not perceive. Keep on looking; do not understand. Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, their eyes dim, lest they see with their eyes here, with their ears understand, with their hearts and return and be healed.'" From the throne comes the voice that says, "Okay, you're cleansed. You wanna go. I send you. Go preach. Go tell this people. But know this: they will listen but not perceive. They will look but not understand. Their hearts will be insensitive. Their ears will be dull. Their eyes will be dim. They won't see. They won't hear. They won't understand. They won't return. They won't be healed."

Of course, Isaiah says, "How long should I do that?...and He says..."Do it till there's nobody left to do it to." Why would I do that? Well, verse 13 tells you why. Because there's a tenth. There's a stump.

There's a holy seed. That's the remnant. That's the doctrine of the aremneth, the elect. "There are some who are Mine, that I've chosen. They will believe. They will believe." There you have that amazing scene, the Lord on the throne, Isaiah cleansed, commissioned, and warned that they're gonna hear and not believe. See and not understand.

Now, turn to John 12, and I'll show you an amazing text, and we'll close with this. John 12 verse 36. "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, in order that you may become sons of Light." Jesus is saying, "While I'm here, believe." And then verse 36 says, "These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them." They had their opportunity. They didn't accept it, and He hid Himself.

Verse 37, "Though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. In order that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, 'Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?'" From the Messianic 53rd chapter, "For this cause, because they would not believe, then they could not believe, for Isaiah said...and here he goes right back to Isaiah 6...He has blinded their eyes, hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them."

Then look at verse 41. "These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him." Who's that? Jesus Christ. Who was sitting on the throne in Isaiah 6? Jesus was. And Jonathan Edwards was right when he said, "God only appears in human shape in the Son." You see, then, the glory of Christ revealed in this world in the Gospels. And there's an Old Testament glimpse behind the flesh of Jesus, of the blazing, shining, majestic, exalted, holy character of the One on the throne who is none other than the Jesus they rejected. When Isaiah saw the One on the throne, he saw a Cristophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son. It is that same glorious, holy, holy, holy One who took on human flesh and lived in holy perfection here. And that holy One became the substitute who took our sins and died in our place.

Father, we thank You for the revelation of Your great holiness in Your glorious Son. It is just marvelous to think that, though He was holy, He took Your wrath for us, that we who are not holy might receive eternal life. There is only one person who has ever lived who did not deserve Your wrath, and He took it for us. What an amazing gift of grace. We know You are holy, and we are not. We thank You that You have provided for our sin to be removed by punishing Your holy Son in our place. We can only stumble to express our gratitude. For this gift, Amen.

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