

A Life of Holiness
Leviticus 19
Leviticus series #15
September 18, 2022

PreSermon Comments

- **Pitch** - serving in the life of the church
 - New folks: not quite 20/80 rule, but closer than it should be
 - Meet people, but also build the body
 - Three key areas: kids, hospitality, production, 1-2 ladies for students
- Holiness Code. Set apart and distinct in all aspects of life

Introduction

We do things differently in this family. Growing up and spending the night with friends.

- Powdered milk family. No meals at home family. Loud family.
- God's family is defined by one all-encompassing term: holiness.

God's Holy Family

Leviticus 19¹ The LORD spoke to Moses:² "Speak to the entire Israelite community and tell them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

(big idea) God's family is defined by holiness

- Talk about 1) the "what" of holiness, the "how" of holiness, and 3) the "why" of holiness

I. The "What" of Holiness

1. Holiness is not: better-than-you superiority
2. Holiness is: set-apart, special, unique Common dishes vs. special use
3. Holiness is: defined by God himself
4. Holiness is: shared by God himself Common creatures of the dust sharing his holiness
5. Holiness is: expanding everywhere

Expanding Holiness

Isaiah 11 [When Messiah comes...]⁹ They will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is filled with water.

- How full is the sea with water? Completely
- The whole earth will be God's "holy mountain" | This is the aim
- Here in Leviticus, God's holiness radiates out to the entire camp

II. The “How” of Holiness

Whole Life Holiness | **Too Much to Address in Detail!!**

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|------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Parents | 9. Unfair labor practices | 17. Eating blood |
| 2. Sabbath | 10. Respect for disabled | 18. False spirituality |
| 3. Worship | 11. Legal justice | 19. Personal appearance |
| 4. Charity | 12. Slander | 20. Prostitution |
| 5. Work | 13. Grudges/revenge | 21. Care for tabernacle |
| 6. Theft | 14. Agriculture | 22. Immigrant care |
| 7. Lying | 15. Sexual sin | 23. Honest business |
| 8. Oaths | 16. Patience | |

The Obvious

³Each of you is to respect his mother and father... ¹¹Do not steal. Do not act deceptively or lie to one another... ¹⁷Do not harbor hatred against your brother... ³¹Do not turn to mediums or consult spiritists... ³²You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old... ³⁵Do not be unfair in measurements of length, weight, or volume. ³⁶You are to have honest balances, honest weights...

- Lots could be said and fleshed out on each, but none of them are super weird
- Most of these reflect the 10 commandments, many/most people would agree in principle

The Obscure

Leviticus 19 ²³When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, you are to consider the fruit forbidden. It will be forbidden to you for three years; it is not to be eaten. ²⁴In the fourth year all its fruit is to be consecrated as a praise offering to the Lord. ²⁵But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way its yield will increase for you; I am the Lord your God.

- Them: *I just assumed I could plant a tree then eat the fruit when it showed up*
- God: *Let it get established first, then honor me, then feed yourself.*
 - What character attribute(s) is being encouraged here? Patience
- How might this principle need to play out in your life?
 - Real estate: “I just made my first sale, let’s go buy a Tesla!”
 - God: Wait, save up, tithe, then buy the car

The Odd

Leviticus 19 ¹⁹“You are to keep my statutes. Do not crossbreed two different kinds of your livestock, sow your fields with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment made of two kinds of material.

- Starting point: God’s order of creation

Jay Sklar This verse teaches that the Lord’s holy people acknowledge his kingship by respecting the categories he has established. It gives three commands. The first two are alike in prohibiting cross-breeding or cross-fertilization of living things (different kinds of animals, two kinds of seeds).

This is similar to prohibitions in the realm of sexuality, where the Lord forbids mixing together what he has created to be distinct. To do so is to rebel against his creational design and therefore his position as Creator. As applied here, the Lord has created the animals and plants distinctly ('according to their kinds', Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24), and to ignore these distinctions—to try, in fact, to obliterate them—is to rebel against the Creator himself.

- Important to note: “kinds” are like sheep + sheep vs. ~~sheep + goats~~ or ~~dogs + cats~~
- But the third one is a bit different: priesthood!

Priestly Mixed Fabric

Exodus 28 ³You are to instruct all the skilled artisans, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, to make Aaron’s garments for consecrating him to serve me as priest... ⁵They should use gold; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; and fine linen.

- Wait, the priests *are* to wear mixed fabrics?
- Objection from skeptics: “you just pick and choose what to obey”
 1. Not every instruction is for everybody
 2. Some instructions are situation-specific
 3. Some things are different for Jewish vs. Gentile
 4. Some things are outright changed by Jesus

* The third instruction is something like “don’t act like a priest when you’re not”

** same could be said about the tattoo verse

- Leviticus 19:28 “do not put tattoo marks on yourselves”
 - Context: mediums and spiritists, shaving hair and beard, gashing/cutting
 - This is about pagan worship practices, not generic skin art!
 - **LONG-ISH BLOG POST UP ON THE CHURCH WEBSITE**

(big idea) Understanding holiness is a lifetime endeavor

- No quick fixes or instant solutions, this is not an easy “check the boxes”
- Part of the lifetime of following Jesus and understanding the bible!

III. The “Heart” of Holiness

Get to the Heart

Leviticus 19 ¹⁷Do not harbor hatred against your brother... ¹⁸Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

- This is *heart* language: harbor hate, bear a grudge...love your neighbor
 - If Rabbi Matt was here, he would say “Jesus didn’t say new things”
 - But also Paul in Gal 5 and James in Jam 2 and John in 1 John 3
- Summary of the whole law right here in Leviticus 19!

(big idea) Holiness is less about rules and more about a heart of love

- The Bible is not an NFL rulebook or a preflight checklist. The Bible is stories, proverbs, poems, songs. And even the rules are often context-specific or culturally embedded.
- It takes wisdom, community, the Holy Spirit to sort out “how does this principle apply in my context?” But you can *never, ever* go wrong by pursuing a heart of love.
- Because it is God’s own *love* that fuels his pursuit of our holiness

Love and Holiness

Ephesians 1 (NLT) ⁴ Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

- Jesus kept the rules perfectly but from a heart of perfect love
- **GOSPEL** - died a death of love, resurrection power of love, ascension to heaven where he loves us and intercedes for us, and his return will be a wedding day of perfect love

Dane Ortlund Our sins darken our feelings of his gracious heart, but his heart cannot be diminished for his own people due to their sins any more than the sun’s existence can be threatened due to the passing of a few wispy clouds or even an extended thunderstorm. The sun is shining. It cannot stop. Clouds, no clouds—sin, no sin—the tender heart of the Son of God is shining on me...The gospel is the invitation to let the heart of Christ calm us into joy, for we’ve already been discovered, included, brought in. We can bring our up-and-down moral performance into subjection to the settled fixedness of what Jesus feels about us.

Conclusion

1. Gospel humility *There is so much I don’t know about the scriptures, about God, and about myself. I’m learning and growing, right along with all the people of God for thousands of years before me. This is going to take a while.*
2. Gospel honesty *But you’re right, even the things that I do know I fail to live up to. I mess up all the time, I trick myself, my heart and mind are a messy place. I will most certainly continue to stumble for the rest of my life.*
3. Gospel hunger *However, I have known a grace and love so potent, so merciful, so patient, that I have given control of my entire life to this savior Jesus. I’m hypocritical, he’s completely genuine. I’m a fool, he is completely wise. I judge and hate and resent, he pours out grace upon grace. I am hungry to know him, to follow him, and to have him change me to be more like him.*

Scripture Reading

Leviticus 19 ¹The LORD spoke to Moses: ²“Speak to the entire Israelite community and tell them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy. ³Each of you is to respect his mother and father. You are to keep my Sabbaths; I am the LORD your God. ⁴Do not turn to worthless idols or make cast images of gods for yourselves; I am the LORD your God. ⁵When you offer a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD, sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. ⁶It is to be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day, but what remains on the third day must be burned. ⁷If any is eaten on the third day, it is a repulsive thing; it will not be accepted. ⁸Anyone who eats it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned what is holy to the LORD. That person is to be cut off from his people. ⁹When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰Do not strip your vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the resident alien; I am the LORD your God. ¹¹Do not steal. Do not act deceptively or lie to one another. ¹²Do not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God; I am the LORD.”