

“Without Holiness No Man Shall See the Lord”

By Chris Ulrich

Sunday, July 12th, 2015

It's good to see everybody this morning, and I like the question you asked: “Is God a wimp?” or, “Would you serve God if He was a wimp?” It almost sounded like a trick question at first, but, no, no. That's definitely something that we look at it like He is a Mighty God, He is Almighty, He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. This month, as we've dedicated a couple of months out of the last couple of years, we're teaching and preaching on Sound Doctrine. And, the theme verse is from Titus. It's a very simple verse, very easy to remember:

Titus 2:1 *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:*

There are certainly many topics that could fall under the category of sound doctrine, but the Bible's not a one-trick pony either, and there are many subjects worth elaboration. Last week Parrish started off, and it had a little bit of a patriotic ring. He preached God's Word and our Heritage, and he talked about some of the history of this great country. One verse he used that highlighted the day was Psalms 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” One statement he made that really rang loudly with me, was that, “There's a lot of books out there, and there's a lot of different reading, there's a lot of different philosophy, there's a lot of different literature, but the Bible doesn't compare. The Bible outranks them all.” No matter how great those other books are, and I've read a lot—I mean, I'm a reader, I enjoy it; it's something that, over the years—I mean, I don't think I read as much as Norma; I think she reads about a book a week, but I like to—now and again a good novel, some history, some fiction, some non-fiction. I think I prefer non-fiction-based history, but, be that as it may, there's nothing that compares with the Bible.

So, I'd like to ask, at this time, if you could bow your heads with me as we have a prayer for the message this morning. God, I thank You, this morning, God, to know Your Word. I thank You, God, that we can teach and preach on Sound Doctrine, and that we have an understanding that only You give, God. It's something that we continue to build on, a foundation of Your teachings, God, about being born again, God, and understanding what that means, God, and not being confused, and not being just filled with philosophy or wives tales, God. We ask that You would anoint us this morning, God, that we would receive Your Word, God, that we'd take it seriously, that we know that it's what stands with us in judgment, God. We just thank You, God, for Your truth, we thank You for the music, we thank You for the testimonies, we thank You for the praise reports. And I just want to ask these things in Your name, Jesus. Amen.

I'm really going to just jump in head first today, and what you'll probably hear a little more today is going to be a little bit more of a teaching style. That being said, there are going to be a few points that I'm going to use, and I know that Jesse Rairdon, he uses this style where he actually presents the points first, so I'm just going to borrow that. I'm just going to mention that these three are going to be the main points that we're going to have today:

- Holiness Without Charity Is Just Religiousness
- Man's Laws and God's Laws Are Two Different Things
- Without Holiness No Man Shall See the Lord

Before I get started I just want to say that, in a topic like this, which is going to be holiness, that I don't think anybody could feel completely justified with this topic because we've all sinned and fallen

short of the glory of God, the Bible says in Romans 3:23. But it still needs to be taught and God's not looking for excuses, just people that are serious about living a godly life. We're not here to condemn anybody but we're not looking to let ourselves off the hook and that starts from a personal standpoint. Ultimately we need to understand that holiness is very much a part of having sound doctrine. It's not a foreign language, and it's not something that we don't have a familiarity with. It's something that God gives us an understanding of that, and we learn more as time goes on.

1st point - Holiness Without Charity Is Just Religiousness

Isaiah 65:1-6 *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,*

I am holier than thou. So, if that statement alone doesn't get our attention, I'm not sure what will. Isn't the goal here to win people to Christ, and that includes winning the people that are already here? Looking to strengthen those that remain. The goal isn't to get to a point where it's like, okay—I'm going to get into there are standards that God expects of us. Again, I mentioned, we're not here to condemn, but we're not here to let anybody off the hook, including ourselves. I'm not trying to justify anything or anyone, but we all need to put ourselves under the mercy and judgment of God and not worry about what he did, what she did, what they did, what's going on elsewhere, you know, what everyone else's business is, because, again, we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This is not a matter of—again, this is not a justification; this is not, "Here's a green light, go do whatever. Go do that which is right in your own eyes, which it seems we've gotten to as a nation." And I'm going to get into that a little more. I'm going to just share something that I believe God had dealt with me about that the original message was going to be, "The Nation That Forgets God Shall Surely Perish." And I prayed about that, thought about it, prayed about it, thought about it, and that's something that I believe God wanted components of that in this, but God said, "Holiness." And I believe that we need to hear the voice of God, and I stand here, and God is a small, still voice. It's not like, "Bam!" I mean, there are times when it is, "Bam!" Don't get me wrong... And I'm not talking about bringing in heresy or condoning evil or watering down the message of holiness or watering down the standards that God has for us. If anything, the message of Jesus Christ is going to get stronger and stronger, but that doesn't mean we're supposed to get more and more judgmental of each other.

I'm going to ask if you could turn to Luke chapter eighteen with me. This is a pretty well-known passage; it just talks about two men that went up to pray. This is something that I pray you would hear me out, but, ultimately, we need to hear God out. So, it's not of private interpretation, it's not something where it's like, "Oh, you're just throwing out opinions." That's why we preach from the Bible. That's why on Sound Doctrine I don't come up here and, like Parrish shared last week, "Here's James Michener's 'Centennial,' this is what it says when they had something," or, "This is what 'War and Peace' says," or "This is what Uncle Tom's Cabin' says," or just pick a book.

Luke 18:10-14 *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,*

extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. [Good things to do!] And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

So, this is a parable that is all in red; so for those of us that have a Bible where the words of Christ are all in red, it's all in red. One take away from here is that we need to avoid thinking the same way as this Pharisee did, because it's no different than thinking we are holier, or, as many of us have heard through the years, holy rollers. How many of us have heard that? How many has not heard that expression? Well, you're hearing it for the first time. The other take away is our perspective needs to be the same as the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Now, we're not talking about going and confessing things that are not actually something you've done. Satan has a way sometimes trying to get us to be self-abasive. That's not it, either. We're not, "Oh, ell we're going to take on the sins of the whole world." I appreciate, Mike, your Tom Brady confessional from a couple of weeks ago; I appreciate that. Mike was just sharing a testimony, for those who weren't here. He and I, we're football fans, as are many of us here, but he talked about not talking about people, and then he just talked about, "Well I've got to stop taking about Tom Brady. Some of us here are Patriots fans, so we appreciate that. Again, that's not a judgment matter, obviously, but there are things that, when we do fall short, then we are to repent; ask God for forgiveness; make a change; make improvements. It's not complicated. It's not difficult, either, if we have the mind of Christ. Again, these are the words of Christ.

There's another parable in Matthew twenty-five about the five wise and five foolish virgins. It's a rather lengthy one, so I'm just going to paraphrase it. The five wise took the oil of the Holy Ghost and the five foolish did not. They were all virgins meaning they all had a level of holiness and purity which is an absolute requirement of God. So what does the oil represent? It represents prayer, fasting, studying, faith, hope, charity, does this sound familiar? In other words, we could have a semblance of holiness but have lost the oil.

I'm going to read a quick verse at the end of First Corinthians chapter thirteen:

1 Corinthians 13:13 *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

I'm not going to read the whole chapter of First Corinthians thirteen either for the sake of time, but I will say that we could do some pretty great things as far as holiness is concerned, and I'm talking about, you know, fast for a certain duration, or get all sanctified, or holified, or whatever—and I'm not discounting, and I'm not trying to make fun of that, either, because these things are important—but it's not a matter of like a brag-fest, either, "How many days did you fast?" "How many days did you fast?" "Oh, I did this many." "How many times were you on your hands and knees at 3 AM?" It's not like that; none of it's like that. I mean, it's not a competition here. It's a matter of, do it in private, and God will reward us openly (Matthew 6:4, Matthew 6:18), that is the fact. And, if you do all these things and never commit the deeds of the flesh, without charity it's going to profit us nothing. Can I say that again? Without charity, that profits us nothing. That doesn't mean don't have a holiness in our life, it just means there's a balance. It's not a matter of like we just focus one just one verse out of the bible. I'm going to just say it: there are doctrines out there, like Romans ten, the Romans Road; "If you confess with your mouth and believe, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9) Okay, that's it; that's all you've got to do. There's like, I don't know, eight million other verses in the Bible, if you add it all up. Maybe not that many, but you can't base an entire doctrine, and churches, and foundation on just stopping there. People have to keep reading down, in that same chapter, and, you know, one thing I will say is that getting an understanding doesn't

happen instantly, but understanding salvation... I know, Rob, you and I were talking a couple of days ago about, "Do you understand absolutely everything when you first get baptized?" No. But, you do it in faith, people show you the verse and say, "Hey, connect the dots," and put everything together, and then you do it, and it's not like you're an instant genius like Ed H. That's his favorite expression; you do something, and he's like, "You're a genius," and I'm like, "I do what I can." But, you know, without charity, it isn't going to amount to a hill of beans. But we need holiness to go hand in hand with charity and that is a fact.

We're going to get into our second point today. And, there's going to be some stuff, and there might be a little heartburn, but I'm going to touch on some relevant points which are very recent. I'm talking about, in this country, decisions that have been made, and we're going to go into, a little bit, what's okay as far as society is concerned.

2nd Point – God's Laws vs. Man's Laws

Galatians 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

So, I mentioned that God's laws and man's laws are two different things; not, I'm not saying that there aren't some laws that have been built on the foundation of the Ten Commandments, but, when we look at this list of works of the flesh, most of these traits aren't against man's laws. In other words, Adultery? Sure. Fornication? Okay. Uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft—yeah, let me just go down to this palm-reader... Emulations, wrath—get, you know, violently angry... Seditions, heresies—undercutting the authority of whatever organization... Envyings, now, murder, that's kind of another one; obviously that's kind of a stand-alone thing. Drunkenness? Oh, yeah, get as drunk as you possibly can, it's okay with society, as long as you're not driving, right? These things are, you look at this, and this isn't just a one-stop shop, either, like, "That's it; if I do something else then I'm okay." That's where we, you know, have to go into other sections of the Bible, to understand, to get back to holiness. It is something that's a full circle. And this is not a full list of sins against God. But a lot of things are not only accepted by man's laws, but are applauded and encouraged. I mean, think about it. Not all of them; obviously murder's against the law. But, I think about the 10 Commandments and how that breaking only a few of them would be considered against the law in society, which is, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," but you go into like, worshipping idols? Go ahead! You know, commit adultery? Go ahead! Don't keep the Sabbath? Go ahead! Honor your parents? Ah, so what? Don't bother. These are things that are like, I hope it's hitting; it's hitting me, because, again, getting back to a topic like this, it's not like, "I'm so absolutely holy and puritanical, and just got everything right..." That's not it at all, but it has to be taught. This is something that we build a foundation on. The thing is, we're not trying to adhere to any degree of holiness that the world is going to establish. But if we pattern our behavior after what is considered legal or illegal then we're not even going to come close to pleasing God.

We're going to read a little bit from the Book of Matthew, and this is talking about marriage, and we're going to get into that a little. We're not going to go deep, deep—this is not a Bible study on marriage, but...

Matthew 19:4-6 *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

Now, I'm going to read a verse in Deuteronomy, which will tie into this, as far as the topic goes. So, this is one that—I'm talking about what's going on in society today. We're not hating anybody, and I'm not trying to like pick on anybody, or mock anybody; we're going to get into that a little bit.

Deuteronomy 22:5 *The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*

Here are a couple of passages with topics that are relevant to recent developments. One relates to marriage and the other relates to cross-dressing and sex change practices. Got it? Our Supreme Court recently decided—now, all these other states had already started it; it all started in 2002—to declare same sex marriage to be the law of the land. Bruce Jenner, a guy that won the decathlon in the 1976 Summer Olympics, he decided that he'd rather be a woman, after fathering six kids over the course of thirty-five years? whatever it is. This isn't about criticizing or mocking Bruce Jenner, but it has to do with understanding the difference between acknowledging it and celebrating it. I acknowledge it—okay, he did it—but do I celebrate it? No, absolutely not. I'm just telling the God's honest truth; they've got this picture of him. Looking like a thirty-five year-old woman on the cover of Vanity Fair, and every other website. You know, just go to Yahoo, there she is, and I'm thinking, "Are you kidding me?" I don't hate the guy; I'm not sitting here trying to rail on him, but I'm looking at it like—I'm going to ask, right now, because we're talking about this, I'm going to ask Andy and Sonia, they're a married couple, I'm going to have them just come up—I mean, we know who we're dealing with, here—but this is a man and a woman here, a married couple, and they're dressed according to, you know, church attire, but, even, you go outside of here, and they're dressed respectfully, I guess professionally, formally, and that's just the way it is. I mean, we're not talking about something where it's like, okay, this person, they might have this fetish, or whatever the case might be, that's not holiness in God; just repent! I appreciate you two coming up here. And I want to add one verse along with that, in Philippians 4:11 it says in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. If God made us a man, be content. If God made you a woman, be content. Because God makes us different and it's not a matter of—I'm not trying to be a smart-aleck, or try and sit there and, again, belittle or undermine the Supreme Court, but, you know what? Those of us who adhere to the biblical teaching of marriage between a man and a woman will continue to only conduct weddings between men and women. I'm quite sure that at some point—it hasn't happened yet—but, our law makers are going to want to force churches to officiate same sex unions. I've heard comments—I'm not going to quote the person, because some of you really like him—but he said, "Oh, the conservative religious groups really need to change their thinking about same-sex unions and the biblical teaching of marriage." And I thought, "I don't care what you think." I honestly don't care what they think, because—he thinks, she thinks, they think... Call me paranoid or call me whatever you want but I wouldn't put it past them, because I've seen more than enough anti-Christian legislation shoved down our throats for the last I don't know how many years. Which started with, even before my time, when they took prayer out of schools, which, by the way, was voluntary. It was voluntary; if someone was in a public school, and they had a time when they were going to pray, and that person opted out, okay. You don't have to bow your head; you can go stand outside, whatever the case might be. They found a loophole, like they always find these loopholes, and, reading the Bible in public schools, abortion... You know, there's a lot of topics, anti-Christian legislation. I'm not trying to talk big or stir up trouble but we can't back down. And taking this kind of position, it's not any different than what happened in the Book of Daniel chapter 3. I'm not going to read that whole thing. The decision basically decreed that everyone had to bow down and worship a golden image which Nebuchadnezzar, who was the king of Babylon, had set up. That was the law of the land. And there are plenty of talking heads out there in the media and in society who are going to accuse us of hate-speech, "You're being intolerant, you're discriminating, you're unlawful," or whatever

else they want to label us. They do it on their websites, they do it to our face, they do it in their writing, they do it in law-making. Okay. I'm not trying to adhere to just man's laws; we're trying to adhere to God's laws, and there is a difference. And, I'm not trying to start fights with people. We need to use wisdom; the Bible says to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove (Matthew 10:16). But we're not going to cave to the demands of an ungodly culture, which is what it's become, it really has. The Bible says that iniquity shall abound; the love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12), because evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Timothy 3:13). I don't want to be deceived. I feel like I've come too far—we've come too far; there's no way. Like we had our Founder's week-end, which, by the way, I had a great time! I mean, I've got to say, even that Saturday, after we had a worship time, and some testimonies, I was like, "Man! This is fantastic!" I mean, I'm not saying it was like—well, let me just say it like this: It was spiritual meat for the soul; it was something that was sustaining. I guess, if there were a theme, we would call it, "All in." We could call it, "Long-Distance Runner." I'll just share this real quick: Pastor Paine was talking with the men that afternoon, he said, "When you're tired, when you're weary, when you're feeling down and out, go serve somebody else," and I thought, "Oooph!" If he would have said, "Just go take a nap," I would have been like, "Yeah, that makes sense." But, when he said that, it was like, "Wow," because you've really kind of get over yourself, and God will give us a little strength to be able to deal with that.

Many of man's laws, not all of them, have nothing to do with holiness, and man's laws do not override God's laws, can I say that more plainly? Man's laws are not going to override God's laws. I'm not saying, like to go out and break the law, like, traffic violations, I guess, is a popular one, like, to go 130 mph down whatever road you're going down, unless you're in Montana. Montana, you can pretty much go any speed you want, provided you're sober.

3rd Point - Without Holiness No Man Shall See the Lord

James 1:12-16 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

It's been said that bad thoughts lead to bad actions and its basis is from scripture. I'm not talking about never having bad thoughts, but are we bringing them into captivity when they manifest themselves? (2 Corinthians 10:5) Are we praying to get over whatever ungodliness is trying to rear its ugly head or creep into our lives? And while we're on that point, bad thoughts aren't just sexual. They can be murderous, conniving, vengeful, hateful, and just about anything else we can imagine. And this isn't about being thought police either or trying to regulate every move everybody makes; we're human beings. I've had bad thoughts aplenty, but I've had to bring them into captivity like we all the rest of us do. It's not always easy; it depends on how deeply rooted that thought has entrenched itself in our life. But, again, we overcome; we can bring those things into captivity.

This is actually the main passage today; it happens to be the title.

Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

Yes, holiness is that important to God and, having said that, it also must be that important to us. And it does have to do with what we say, what we do, where we go, who we associate with, what we listen to, what we watch, what we read and I'm sure the list could go on. I mean, we're not off the hook.

We're not like, "Okay, well, I'll get over it, or whatever." I mean, you can't always control, like, say it's a work setting, and they're playing, I don't know, maybe it is ungodly music, or you're around people who are using extreme vulgarity. I mean, I'm not talking about correcting them every time somebody swears; I'm not talking about that. But, there can be times when people can be very abusive, like you look at, I guess a good example would be at a ball game, or a football game, or a sporting event where you get some people out there that get to be some drunken fools, and really getting out of order, and a lot of times there will be people going, "Can you keep it down? Hey, I've got kids here," or they don't want to hear it themselves. A lot of times people will be respectful; they'll understand, "Okay, this is a public setting," but that's not always the case. We're going to be in circumstances where it's just, you've just got to deal with it, get over it, pray to God for strength to deal with it, or whatever the case might be.

God is holding us to a high standard and holiness is one of the main ingredients that is going to separate us from the world, and that's a good thing. We're not supposed to love the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. We're not free to just live however we choose, or think that if man's laws allow it then it must be OK with God. Again, that's not even close. We read from Galatians 5; look how many of those things, really, start reading deeply into those, and the world is, "Oh, yeah, sure, go right ahead, it's no big deal." You know, even if people see it or don't see it, it just, it's celebrated, to use that term once more. Holiness is a way of life that starts from the inside and manifests itself outwardly, in how we live. Is it an easy life? It's like Malcolm's question, "Is God a wimp? Would you serve God if He was a wimp?" It's going to take effort, but it's not impossible either, and Jesus even said Himself, in the verse you shared earlier, Parrish, that His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30). So it's the best life and it's the most rewarding life; that I can assure you.

1 Peter 1:13-16 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Be ye holy for I am holy. If there wasn't any other reason than God telling us that's what we need to do, then that's still reason enough. There are no short-cuts, there's no cutting corners, and we can't cheat God. That's good enough for me.

Thank you for your time.