Take Time To Be Holy

 Scripture.

➤ Leviticus 11:45
  • I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

➤ Leviticus 19:2
  • Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

➤ Leviticus 20:7-8
  • Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God.
  • Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

➤ Romans 12:1
  • Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

➤ Hebrews 12:14
  • Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

 Opening remarks.

➤ The focus of this sermon series during Lent is on “the least favorite book in the Bible – Leviticus.”

➤ This book, though difficult to read, really is the one book that sets the stage for us to understand what Christ does for us through His death and resurrection.

➤ Our hope is to “redeem” this book and help you find a greater depth in it as you read it.

 Making Connections.

➤ Last week we were discussing the sin offering.
  • We heard that a holy, holy, holy God cannot be in the presence of sin.
  • Therefore, anything that comes before God must be holy.
    • Otherwise, either that which is unholy or something else must die.

 The Call To Holiness.

➤ God called His people to be a holy people.

➤ We read:
  • Leviticus 11:45
    • I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.
  • Leviticus 19:2
    • Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.
Take Time To Be Holy

❖ Holiness Defined.
  ➢ In the Old Testament, holiness is a positive moral condition that is either inherent (God) or achieved through ritual (people, places, things).
    ▪ Holiness is consistent with God’s character.
    ▪ Holiness is always threatened and assaulted by impurity.
  ➢ In reality, as set forth through Scripture, we find that holiness is exclusive to God alone and anything else would derive holiness from God’s presence or its consecration.
    ▪ This tells us that nothing in creation is inherently holy.

❖ The Process.
  ➢ Since holiness is inherent to God’s character, the call to holiness was a call to cultivate God’s character in oneself.
    ▪ God’s people are to live in a covenant relationship with Him.
    ▪ They are to recognize God’s presence in their midst.
    ▪ God’s people are to promote justice by keeping divine instructions.
      • Ahhh! The Law.
    ▪ God’s people are to observe the rules of ritual purity.
      • Ahhh! More Law.
    ▪ The observance of ceremonial regulations and moral law both needed to be holy.
      • That is…in alignment with God’s character.

❖ The Law and Holiness
  ➢ We hate reading Leviticus because of all of those rules about day-to-day living that seem to have no relevance to us.
  ➢ Why was it necessary to have all of these laws?
    ▪ We are not by nature a holy people.
    ▪ We do not naturally conform to the character of God.
    ▪ What the law does is give us a glimpse of what it means to strive for that character.
  ➢ The intended outcome of the Law.
    ▪ God’s people would display holy character by showing love to their neighbors.
    ▪ Holy character is promoted with a right relationship with the land (creation).
    ▪ Rules of worship and their observance builds a holy character.
    ▪ Obedience opens the way for God’s sanctifying presence to settle on His people.

❖ Continued Call to Holiness.
  ➢ The call to be holy has not gone away.
    ▪ God still calls His people to be holy because He is holy.
  ➢ As we learned last week, there is no call for a sacrificial lamb to be slain to remove the stain of sin because THE sacrificial Lamb has been slain.
Take Time To Be Holy

- This removes the need for continuous spilling of blood but does not take away the call to holiness.

➤ Look again at the passage from Romans.
  - Romans 12:1
    - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.
    - Luther says to be holy and pleasing to God is to be separated out to God.
    - We have been called out of the world to live separate lives unto the Lord – called to His services for His holy purposes.
    - Luther also makes the point that while there is no longer a call to blood sacrifice, giving up ourselves as separated out to God, holy and pleasing, is what we owe God.
    - A reasonable sacrifice given what has been done for us.

❖ Conclusion
  - What, then, are we to do?
    - Hebrews 12:14
      - Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.
  - This is a result of our thankfulness and our living sacrifice.
    - However, peace is not simply living in harmony with one another.
    - It is the objective basis of the solidarity of the community and the welfare of one another.
    - We are actually living in pursuit of God, welcoming His sanctifying presence in our lives.
    - Holiness is reserved for those whom Christ sanctifies.
  - Christ came and died because holiness could never come through the Law.
    - We could never succeed at keeping the Law in its entirety.
    - Holiness can only be achieved through a holy God.
    - That is a subject for another day.

❖ Closing Prayer.
  - Father, You have called us to be holy. We find it hard sometimes to take time to be holy. We are far from perfect and cannot achieve it on our own. However, we do want to live in pursuit of You. Help us live into the image of Your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.