Scripture.
- Leviticus 20:22-26
  - Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out.
  - You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them.
  - But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations.”
  - You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground – those which I have set apart as unclean for you.
  - You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.
- Colossians 1:21-23
  - Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.
  - But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation –
  - If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel.

Opening.
- We return to our series on the “Least Favorite Book of the Bible” – Leviticus.
- In this series, we have been looking at the laws and sacrifices and seeing how it is a preview of Christ.
- The sacrifices all point to Christ and the laws show us the path to holiness.

The path to holiness.
- We struggle reading through Leviticus because there are so many laws and regulations.
- While they are very boring to read, what they show us the path to holiness.
- As people born into sin through the fall of Adam, we cannot enter the presence of the holy God.
- These laws are set in place to cleanse the sin and present us before God as holy.
- In Leviticus we read God’s warning to keep all His decrees in order to keep His blessings and be holy.

The struggle for holiness.
- The problem that we struggle every day with some of the very basic of laws.
ONWARD TOWARD HOLINESS

➢ I know this to be true, because I drive a long distance to get here and have concluded that just about no one even knows what a speed limit is.

➢ If we cannot even handle obeying simple man-made laws, how can we obey anything God has required of us.

❖ The problem with the law.

➢ The problem with the law is that it teaches us what sin is, and by extension, produces a desire in us to sin.
   ▪ Consider what the Apostle Paul says in Romans (7:7-12):
     • “What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed, I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was is the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’
     • But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.
     • Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.
     • I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.
     • For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.
     • So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.
   ▪ The law is not the problem, but it is the sin within us that is at war with God.
   ▪ Paul states it this way (Romans 3:20):
     • Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

➢ There is way out.
   ▪ “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6 & 8)
   ▪ This is exactly what the law and the sacrifices were foreshadowing.
   ▪ In God’s perfect timing, He came Himself, holy and blameless as He is, to be the sacrifice that would actually save us from sin and make us holy.
   ▪ However, while the sacrifices made the sinner ceremonially clean on the outside, it still did not deal with the greater issue of what is going on inside.
   ▪ This is what the author of the book of Hebrews is driving at when he says: (9:11-15)
     • “But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.
     • He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.
     • The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.
ONWARD TOWARD HOLINESS

- How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!
- For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”

❖ Conclusion

❖ So then, what do we know?
   - We know that God gave the law and then expected His people to keep it in order to retain His promises and to be holy and righteous before Him.
   - We know that the law tells us what sin is and that our sinful nature desires to do exactly the opposite of the law.
   - We know that we cannot ever attain holiness on our own.
   - We know that God came to us in Jesus in order to be the sacrifice for our sins and impute His holiness upon us.

❖ How, then, can we press onward toward holiness if we have nothing to do with it?
   - Ah! That is the beauty of the passage we read earlier from the book of Colossians!
   - No longer are we alienated from God because of the work done through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.
   - We are now presented holy before the Father, without blemish or accusation.
   - Here is the key to it all.
   - If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel.
   - It does not matter how bleak things may look, and boy they do right now.
   - It does not matter how the world, or the prince of this world tries to break you.
   - You can press onward toward holiness simply by holding onto the faith and hope that you received from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from the work He has done for you on the cross, and continue to live out your life growing into the image of Christ.
   - The Holy Spirit will do the work if you hold on firmly to the faith you received when you first heard the Gospel.
   - Hallelujah! Keep pressing on!

❖ Closing Prayer.

❖ Lord, God Almighty, we thank You for what You have done for us when You sent Your Son, Jesus to this world to be the perfect sacrifice. Thank you for making us righteous in Your sight, taking away our blemishes and imputing Your holiness on us. Help us to keep pressing on, even in those times when our faith seems weak and the challenges overwhelming. We proclaim You: Holy, Holy, Holy! In Jesus’ name, Amen.