The Holy God

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[0:00] Well, my name's Dylan, one of the pastors at Sojourn Church in Enid. Thanks for entrusting this time to me. You guys know the game catchphrase. Is this a game you guys are aware of? Do you know this game?

No, don't know this game? Sometimes you guys don't know the name of the game because you change the name. Like, when I was growing up, there was this game with free throws, and we called it Gotcha. And you guys changed the name to Knockout, but it was Gotcha a long time ago. Is it Gotcha again now?
It's back to Gotcha. Catchphrase, okay, oh man, we got some pushback. I think it's Gotcha. Catchphrase is kind of a word association game. You try to get people on your team, or people you're trying, they try to get the word that you're trying to get them to guess the word without saying the word.
So you make descriptions around the word, and you're trying to associate the word so they will get it without saying it. Does that make sense? So let's practice some catchphrase, all right? This is the place you go to learn about the sovereign, immutable God.
Church camp. That's right. All right, let's go a little deeper. We're going to do a theological word. All right, this is another way to say the independence of God.
[1:14] You guys are awesome. All right, now here's the one that I'll be talking about this evening, and I think the fastest way to get you to it is to say, we say this before cow sometimes. Holy.

If that wasn't the one that I was going to go with, it was going to be something like, we normally would say someone is this than thou, right? Add a little bit of a degree to that, er, and we're that than thou.
Holier than thou. Now, or someone that you would think of is like, they're really good at keeping the rules. They're a really good rule keeper. Maybe they're a picky perfectionist. They are someone who maybe we would consider on the outside pretty self-righteous.
I think that's the quickest way I could get you to say the word holy. Now, if we went back 200 years, 400 years, several hundred years, and I tried to do that same thing, I don't think anyone would know what we were talking about.
Almost all of our thoughts, at least culturally speaking, on that word holy are negative, are taken in the negative direction.
[2:25] To speak of something as holy is, in general, to speak of something that people would consider as really kind of stuffy. Not fun, for sure. Very fun killing.

Debbie Downer, kind of. And for us in this room, we may say, well, that's even right. Because we take things seriously, and we take God and the things of God seriously. So when we talk about being holy and holiness, we have to take it seriously.
So there's no fun here. We just say it very seriously. Exactly. 200 years ago, 400 years ago, here's the words that they would have used. If they were playing catchphrase, this word association game, if they were playing that, here's what they would have said.
They would have said things like, excellency, jewel, light, health, immaculate, warm, attractive, delightful.
I pulled those out of all kinds of different sources all over the place. You almost can't throw a rock in the past without seeing that as some sort of the description for the word holy by all kinds of Christians and theologians of the past, and yet how different it is today.
[3:27] Now, this is a product of our kind of negative connotations around this word holy of our nature, right? We have a sinful nature. So there's just something in us that pushes back against anything that would be holy because it starts to shine a light on us, and we see that there's some

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stuff there that's unholy, but it's also the product of nurture that we have this nurtured in our culture that makes all, almost all the associations we have with that word holy and holiness are all negative, and this is a massive problem.

And here's why it's such a big problem. It's because God is holy. God is holy. The word holy and thinking about the term holy is a word that comes from him and is filled up with the content of him. Like it's all about God and from God. And so if all the connotations and all the associations with the word holy are negative, then we have a really big misunderstanding and misjudgment of God himself.
And the solution is for us not to back away and try to redefine and figure out what holy means. The solution is for us to behold God and what it means for him to be holy.
And hopefully when we do that, we'll start to move in the direction of theologians and Christians of the past that would say things like the holiness of God is to speak of his beauty and excellency and glory and attractiveness and delightfulness.
[4:55] That's what God invites us to look at. If you have a Bible, go to 1 Peter 1. God invites us to behold him, to behold him as a holy God, and he invites us, mercifully, to be like him.

To behold him and to be like him. Here are the invitations. This is 1 Peter 1, one verse, verse 15. Peter writes, As he who called you is holy, that is God is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. God is holy, so you be holy. Behold God and be like God. Peter gives the simple assertion in verse 15.
He is holy. But now we have to think, what does it mean for him to say he is holy? First thing you might think of when you think about holiness, when you're trying to define it, you're probably going to go towards the direction of some sort of moral purity.
Someone who always acts the right way, who always does the right thing. This sinless perfection. One who does everything right. This spotless righteousness. You think of white as white as white can be.
[6:15] And light as light as light can be. That's normally where we go to first. And all of that does, in some sense, describe what it means for God to be holy. That is part of his holiness.

That he does all that he does without sin, without error in any capacity. He is holy and everything he does is holy. So his love is love that is holy love. His justice is justice that is holy justice.
It does fill everything in the is. He is morally perfect. He is spotlessly righteous. This is part of what it means for him to be holy. And not only is he that way, but he himself, because he is holy, is the moral standard of righteousness.
The standard of holiness. It's all from him. Holiness then is everything. Something is called holy if it conforms to him and his standard. And all that opposes him and his standard, because he is morally righteous and holy, is sinful.
So to be set apart for the Lord is to conform to his standard and be holy. And to not be, to go against that, to break against his standard, is sin.
[7:21] So we call all things that are set apart for the Lord in conformity to him. We call them holy. So you think of, in the Old Testament, you have the temple. And in the temple you have a couple different segments.

One is the holy place. A place set apart specifically for certain things. And then you have the most holy place. Again, these are places that are set apart for the Lord and are conforming to his moral standard.
Or you have a holy day or a holy people, holy garments, holy oil. These things are set apart for the one who is the standard of holiness. So they are called holy. And they are holy in the sense that it's not because they are conforming to his moral standard.
His spotless righteousness, his sinless perfection. But to say God is holy is not just to speak of his moral purity and spotless righteousness. That is not just to speak of what God does.
To say that God is holy is speaking more than what just God does. It is to speak of who God is. He is holy. And so to say that God is holy, here's a really helpful way to say it, is to speak of the godness of God.
[8:28] Like the lightness of light. Like that's what we're trying to describe here. When we're talking about the holiness of God, we're trying to describe not just what he does, but who he is. The godness of God. To say that God is holy is to describe God's one of a kindness.

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His set apartness. To describe him as unique. As the one who is distinct and elevated above all things. As holy. It's to speak of God's divine transcendence.
It's to speak of his absolute excellency. His comprehensive perfection. His complete and total devotion as God to being God. That is who he is.
So it's not just about his moral perfection, but his perfection in himself, in his being, that also entails all of his other perfections.
So being holy is not just something that God does. It is something that God is in his being. In Exodus chapter 3. This is Moses. He's out in the wilderness.
[9:25] He sees a bush that is burning. And he's drawn to it and he comes to it. And you remember what happens when he arrives there. He's told you take off your shoes.

The place where you're standing is holy ground. Now the ground wasn't holy because of something inherent in the ground. Because of the, you know, particular elements and components that make up the dirt that he was standing on.
That place is holy. Not because of something in it. But because the Lord, who is holy. Not just doing something holy. Himself is holy. Is present there. So that ground, therefore, is holy. It wasn't that the ground was morally perfect.
Although I'm sure it wasn't morally sinful either. But that God was there. The one who is holy. Not who just does holy things. Who is holy.
Was present with his comprehensive perfection. His divine transcendence. His utter distinctness and one of a kindness was present there. So the ground is holy. Holy. And God's holiness.
[10:25] In his being. Who he is. Speaks of such comprehensive perfection. That we see a pretty overwhelming vision of it. In Isaiah chapter 6. That gives us a taste. For the holiness of God.

Not just in his doing. But in his being. So in Isaiah chapter 6. Isaiah sees this vision of the Lord. And here's what it says. There's this throne. And high and lifted up upon the throne is the Lord.
And the train of his robe filled the temple. And above him stood the seraphim. These are angelic beings. Each had six wings.
These are the kind of angelic beings that you would be frightened by if you saw. And they have six wings. Which is crazy. And with two they cover their face.
And with two they cover their feet. And with two they fly. And here's what they are doing around this throne. That the Lord is sitting upon. They are calling out to each other.
[11:26] One another. Saying holy. Holy. Holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth. Is full of his glory.

Holy. These holy beings. Created to be in the very presence of God. Are covering their face.
And covering their feet. And proclaiming and declaring loudly. Because it shakes this place. Their description of how it's. How what's going on. Isaiah's description. Speaks of them crying this out.
And it's shaking the place. So I'm being loud. But they were louder. Right. Shaking this place. Holy beings. Created in the presence of God. They cover their faces and their feet.
And they call out. Holy. Holy. Holy. They are not responding. To something that the Lord has done. They are not responding.
[12:21] To something that the Lord. Is going to do. Or is presently. Doing. They are responding. To who the Lord is. They are responding to God.

They are responding to. The Godness of God. They are responding to the divine transcendence of God. The utter uniqueness of God. The. One of a kindness of God. They are responding to God's being.
And his presence. By covering themselves partially. And calling out. Holy. Holy. Holy. Three times they say it. Now in Isaiah chapter 26.
Isaiah has this great verse. That says. You know how. To keep him in perfect peace. And the way to. Translate that. Is perfect peace.
That's a good translation. But the original says. You know how to get him. How to keep him in peace peace. So if you were to. You know go. We have er and est. Added on to the end of words.
[13:20] To go up in degree. They just would repeat some words. So you know how to keep him in peace peace. Is to say. You know how to keep him in perfect peace. And here we have. Three times repeated.

One word. The same word. Holy. Holy. Holy. In other words. What they're saying. Is God's holiness. Is higher than.

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Perfect holiness. Holiness. Holiness. It's holiness. Holiness. Holiness. Holiness. That's what they're saying. It's holy. Holy. Holy. Perfectly. Holy. Holy. It's God's being. Holy. He is holy.
In his being. To the infinite degree. So much so. These beings. That are holy beings. They're not morally sinful. Are created. And they're created to be in his presence. And even those beings. Are crying out.
Holy. Holy. Holy. To the Lord. And again. They're not doing it. At this moment. Because of his moral purity. At least not alone. Because of his moral purity. They're not doing it. Because of his sinless perfection.
[14:16] His spotless righteousness. They are doing it. Because of his transcendent being. His comprehensive perfection. That exists. Like in himself.

They are saying. Holy. Holy. Holy. Because of the godness of God. That's right in front of them. Because of his perfect. And comprehensively perfect essence. His moral purity. His sinless perfection. His spotless righteousness.
All that they do. Is it flows from what they're seeing. And crying out. In Isaiah chapter 6. It all comes from his being. He starts these. Morally perfect acts. And doing. And they're crying out.
Because of who he is. And Isaiah. Who gets this amazing vision. Of the lord upon the throne. He never gets over it. So he writes.
In the book of Isaiah. If you read through it. Just mark these. He calls God. The holy one of Israel. 26 times. And I think of the rest of the scripture.
[15:10] The rest of the old times. The testament. It's. Much much less than that. Isaiah. Was captivated. 26 times. He calls the lord. The holy one of Israel. Because he was the one. Who saw this vision. Of the seraphim.

Crying out. Holy. Holy. Holy. And it colored. And helped. Paint a vision. For all else. That he saw God doing.
And saying to him. Throughout the rest of the book. So he couldn't get away from it. And so he's saying. Everything. Now is from the holy one. Of Israel. And I think that is the way. To see and understand.
And know God's holiness. To know the godness of God. To know at first. As something of his being. That this is his divine transcendence. This is one of a kindness. This is his uniqueness.
And then from that. Flowing from that. You start to see the holy one of Israel. Worked out in this one. In his doing. His moral purity. And spotless righteousness. In everything that he says. And does. We start to see holiness there.
[16:03] Because it flows from his being. So what does it mean then. To say that God is holy. It is absolutely to describe. His moral purity. His spotless righteousness. But it is to describe.

Also the godness of God. The divine transcendence of God. The one of a kindness of God. That God is unique. And distinct. And elevated. Above all things.
It's speaking of divine transcendence. His absolute excellency. His comprehensive perfection. Not just his moral perfection. His absolute comprehensive perfection. In being God.
The perfection in himself. That entails all other perfections. God's holiness. Is his essence. And his doing. His being. And his doing. Here's how one theologian puts it.
In short. Holiness points to God. In his distinction from. And elevation above all creatures. He is the holy one. Because he is God.
[16:59] He did in a sentence. What I try to do. In however long we've been here. Right? In short. Holiness points to God. In his distinction from. And elevation above all creatures.

He is the holy one. Because he is God. And this holiness. Elevates God. Above all else. He is the one. Who is utterly. Set apart. And distinct.
And transcendent. And because this is true. Because he is distinct. And set apart. And above. God's holiness. God's holiness. Can seem.
Forbidding. Can seem. Like the cold side of God. Like have you ever heard. I know that God is loving. But he's also.
Holy. Probably say it like that too. He's really loving. And also. Don't forget he's holy. Can seem like the dark side of God. The kind of thing.
[17:56] That from God. If you know this about God. It seems to have like. Alright. You need to have some distance here. Back away. Because God is holy. And there's some truth in this. You see this in the.

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Garden of Eden. Don't you? There's sin. Enters the garden. And all of a sudden. Here comes the. You need to back away. This is a place. Where God made. To walk with man. And man sinned. And rebelled against God. So they had to. Be kicked out of the garden. You see it at Sinai. You know. Where they're getting ready to receive. The ten commandments. It's the. God descends. In a sense. Upon that mountain. And God says. Don't come near.
Back away. Tell those people. Tell the donkeys even. Don't come to the mountain. Because I'm here. And I'm holy. The law. Gives us all these kinds of. You know.
Things that say like. Back away. Don't go too close to certain things. Like. Make sure you're keeping things rightly. The temple. There's the holy place. There's the most holy place. There are all these things. They're like. You don't cross certain lines.
[18:50] Because God is holy. In Isaiah chapter 6. Isaiah sees this vision. And he sees this seraphim. He hears them calling out. Holy. Holy. Holy. And you know what he doesn't do? He doesn't say.

God is holy. Holy. Holy. And he doesn't run up to the throne. And give God a hug. Do you know what he does say? The word that comes out of his mouth. Is woe.
And not like. Woe. Like woe. As in. I am undone. That kind of woe. I'm toast. In front of this holy God.
He says. Woe is me. Now my guess is. That when most of us think of God as holy. We probably. If I were to ask you. Like. Picture what it means for God to be holy. You'd probably picture. Some sort of frowning face from God.
That the holiness of God. Makes us think of his harshness. His anger. God is like this Thor like God. Because he's holy. He always has his hammer ready. Because he's holy. And so whenever we mess up.
[19:47] He's ready to smash us. Right? Peter. In 1 Peter. Chapter 1. Verse 15. Says. God. Is holy.

And he doesn't say. God is holy. So give him a hug. But he also doesn't say. God is holy. So. Be careful.
Now we. We do this with Santa Claus. Right? He's. You know. You better watch out. Better not cry. You know. Be careful. He's watching you when you're sleeping. You might not get presents. Right? That's a message of. Be really careful. Because Santa is watching all the time. Peter says. God is holy. And he doesn't say. Give him a hug.
And he doesn't say. Be careful. He says. God is holy. So what? You. Be holy. The holiness of God. Is for.
[20:43] Imitation. As God is holy. So you be holy. As he who called you is holy. You also be holy. In all. Of. Your. Conduct. There's.

Imitation. That's supposed to be there. This. There's a word here. That indicates more. Than that though. There's an invitation. In this passage. An invitation. That would say. Not just back away from God. Not just be careful.
But. Draw near. See who God is. And what he is like. Behold him. And so when it's. Inviting into that. It is speaking of. Not just imitation. But also.
Motivation. Look who God is. So that you might. Reflect that. So that he might motivate you. To do the same thing. Now. When Peter writes. He is writing to those.
Who are. In chapter 1. Verse 1. Elect. Exiles. Sojourners. Strangers on the earth. That now. They are people who are chosen by God. Belong to God. They don't fully belong in the world anymore.
[21:38] They fully belong to God. So they're. Chosen exiles. They are those who. In chapter 1. Verse 3. Are born again. By the mercies of God. To a living hope. They are those. Who now belong fully to God.

Who in chapter 1. Verse 18. A few verses down. Are ransomed. From their former way of life. Their futile ways. Their sinful desires. And purchased with precious blood of Christ.
So that they belong now. Holy to him. That's who Peter writes to. And to those people. That is. We would call those Christians. To these Christians that Peter writes to. He says. God is holy.
And that doesn't. He doesn't follow that with. Be careful. Or give God a hug. God is holy. So. You. Be holy. He invites us. To not only imitate. But he's using the holiness of God.
As the motivation for us to do likewise. So something else. Has to be going on. With the holiness of God. For it not just to say to us. Back away. Stay clear.

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[22:34] God is holy. If it's for both imitation. And it's supposed to be our motivation. There must be more. Going on. Because if God's holiness. Is this holiness that only says. Back away.

Stay way back. That's only going to motivate holiness so far. And it's not far. We see this in the scripture. All kinds of places. That kind of back away holiness. Only.
Motivates. Pharisaical. Holiness. That is the Pharisees. Who were described as whitewashed tombs. They looked fine on the outside. But inwardly. They were dead. They were the kinds of. People that would. Would tithe. But would then. Lack. Mercy. Toward other people. Would just be jerks. Like I'll give my tithe. Of mint. And herbs.
But. Don't care about. That person. It'll motivate. Holiness. To a place where you could. Live into the. Idea of being holier than thou. This idea of being self-righteous.
[23:31] If it's just back away. If it's God's holiness. Just says back away. Then you. You might think. Like. I gotta. Draw some right lines. And you'd be like the man. In Luke chapter 18. This parable. Of this Pharisee.

That says. Man. I thank God. That I'm not like. That sinner over there. If we only think of holiness. Like that. If it only is this. Back away. Kind of idea. Then it will not motivate holiness.
The way. Peter. Intends to motivate. Holiness. In the Christian readers. That he's writing to. And here's what we know. Is that God's holiness. Doesn't just say. Back away.
Peter. Says. He is holy. So you be holy. It is calling us. To behold his holiness. And what is beheld. When we behold his holiness. Is something that is captivating. It captures us.
So that it not only is worthy. And it seems worthy. Of our imitation. But it motivates. This imitation. And so a word. That theologians used. Repeatedly. Across time.
[24:28] Repeatedly. When describing God's holiness. Is not that it's harsh. And angry. And says. Back away. Get back. God is holy. It's a word. That's over and over again used.

It's a word. We say. Beautiful. God's holiness. Is. His beauty. It's beautiful. It's great.
It's captivating. It says. Behold. And it draws us near. One theologian says it this way. Holiness. Is a most beautiful.
Lovely. Thing. Men. And students. Are apt to drink in strange notions. Of holiness from their childhood. Hopefully you haven't.
Drink strange notions. But he says. We are apt to it. As if. The holiness of God. Were a. Melancholy. Morose. Sour. Unpleasant.
[25:23] Thing. Is that how some of you. Have thought about holiness? May he. Change that. Because here's what he goes on to say. Some of you from childhood. Has thought about it as a. Melancholy. Morose. Sour.

And unpleasant thing. But there is nothing in it. But what is sweet. And ravishingly. Lovely. Tis the highest beauty. Inamiableness.
Vastly. Above. All other beauties. Tis a divine beauty. You get to like this. This theologian is just gushing. On the holiness of God. It's beautiful. It's great. It's lovely. There's nothing in it.
But something that's sweet. Ravishingly. Lovely. It's like he's talking to. To something that he cannot describe. In words. And so he just keeps piling up. With these descriptions. Because it's so beautiful to him. And that.
Is the holiness. Of God. And think about how Moses. He was drawn to a burning bush. All right. A bush burning is. That's interesting. So that's compelling.
[26:19] But he's drawn in. And yeah. There's some elements of that. To like. Take off your shandles. There's some back away elements. In the holiness of God. But it captivated him. It captured him. And so he came near.

Here's the man. Moses. Who also. When the Lord descends. On the mountain. And then there's thunder. And fire. On the mountain. The holiness of God. And God says. Everyone else needs to stay away. But you come up. Moses goes up.
And you know what he does. When he receives the holy law. And he gets all this. You know. Like hearing from God. Receiving this word. Seeing all the sights. That he would have seen on the mountain. And you know what he wants to do after that.
He says. Show me your glory. He wants more of it. He's drawn by. He's captured by. There's something beautiful. And great. And glorious going on. That he wants more of it. Isaiah.
He sees this vision. And he says. Woe is me. I am undone. But that's not all he says. In that vision. After he says.

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[27:13] Woe is me. One of the seraphim goes. And gets a coal from this fire. The altar. And purifies. Isaiah. So then God says. Well who will go for me. And Isaiah is not like.

I better get out of here. Because God is holy. He's come through this purification. And now he says. I'm right here. Here am I. Send me. I'll go wherever.
You want me to go. Why? Because something beautiful. Is being beheld. Because God's holiness. Doesn't just say. Back away. And get out of here. God's holiness.
Draws. Us in. You see it in the law. In Leviticus. You have the same. Verse. In Leviticus. Be holy. For God is holy. It's repeated. And we know.
The law is a holy. Law. Everywhere the law. Especially in Leviticus. Says be holy. And the law. Is this thing that expresses. Here's what God is for. Here's what God cares about.
[28:08] Here's what God is about. Here's his holy standard. This is his instruction. On righteousness. And holiness. Here's something. That reflects the character of God. And he wants you to live within it. Because it reflects him.

And what is most important to him. And how is the law summed up? The holy one. Takes on flesh. And he sums up. All the law for us. And how does he do it? He says. The law and the prophet. Hangs on two things. Two commands. The greatest commands. And what are they? Love. The Lord your God. With all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love. Your neighbor as yourself. The holy law. Says. Love. God's holiness then. Is something that says also.
And consists of this beautiful. Love. Which is. Again. Captivating. Capturing. Something to behold. Something you want to move toward. Not away from. Love.
[29:03] So love. Is this thing that is in the midst of holiness. Love within God himself. As father, son, and spirit.

Love that overflows into creation. Love that flows down. And doesn't just say. Because I'm holy. Back away. Love that flows down. And invites us in. It doesn't say back away only.
It invites us in. And says. Behold. This. Holiness. And it does it especially. In the person. And work of Jesus Christ. This is the holy one.
He is the. One. Who. The fullness of God. Dwells bodily. He is the radiance. Of the glory of God. The exact imprint. Of his nature. Jesus Christ. Is the one. Who God is shining forth.
Most brightly. And most clearly in. If you want to know God. You look to Jesus. He is the one who is making him known. Right. So this is God. And what does he look like? He does live a perfectly holy life.
[30:00] A lawful life. Summed up in love for God. And love for neighbors. He's loving God. And loving others. He lives a perfectly morally righteous life. Absolute moral perfection.

But it's further than that. He loves so much. And it displays this holiness of love. So much. That he moves in love. Towards sinners. That were moving away from him. In their sin. That's more than just stay away.
If he wanted people to just stay away. Then that wouldn't have happened. But he keeps moving toward them. Like Zacchaeus kind of people. The scum of the earth tax collector guy. He moves toward him. Like the prostitute. Like he moves toward these people.
Like the self-righteous Pharisee. He moves toward these people. Because the holy one. Wants them to behold him. And invites them to behold him. For who he is. And so he moves toward them. He moves toward them. So brightly. So clearly. That they might see the beauty of God's love. And holiness. He himself is this one who is saying. Behold your God.
[31:01] And a right beholding of Jesus. Who he is. And what he does. Is to see God. In all his love. All his beauty. All his holiness.

It is to be completely and totally captured by him. So that you fully and wholly belong to him. That's who Peter writes to. He writes to those who have been ransomed.
By the precious blood. Of the holy one. They've been bought from their sin. And now belong to God. And he writes to those who belong.
And he says. Be holy for God is holy. Only those who behold God rightly. Are going to see his holiness rightly. And see it as something. It doesn't just say back away.
But something to behold. And that captures them. And see it not as something just to imitate. But what motivates their doing. Because they see holiness. It's not something that just says stay back.
[31:57] But something to behold. And they see it as a divine beauty. Ravishingly. Ravishingly. Lovely. And they see it as a divine beauty. Consisting in beautiful love.

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And so they are the kind of people who want to be holy. And not only is Christ the pattern. To imitate as the holy one.
But he is the motivation now. Because when we behold God. We see this beautiful love. We see this beautiful holiness. And the command is that we are to reflect that.
Everywhere in our lives. As God is holy. And he is comprehensively holy. We are to be holy. So when we hear the command to be holy.
We are talking about something a lot more. Than just reflecting God in certain pockets. In areas of our lives. The command to be holy as God is holy.
[32:58] Means that we are to reflect that holiness of God. Everywhere. To be fully devoted to God. To be fully devoted to his standard of righteousness. Because we want to be holy as he is holy.

This goes way beyond. A back away kind of understanding of holiness. A back away understanding of some sort of holiness. As a system of rules. As lines not to cross.
Be holy as God is holy. Means that no part of our life is off limits to God. As something that is to be devoted to him. And to conform to him. And to look like him. Every part is before him.
And every part of it is to be motivated by who he is in himself. So that we might reflect it in our lives. This is the one we belong to.
Not in part but in whole. So there's no area that's off limits. Whether we're in school or at church. At home. Or out at a restaurant.
[33:56] Wherever we are. Playing sports. All of it. We are people who belong to God. And are to be holy. In all those places as God is holy. If God himself.

Is the pattern. And the motive for holiness. Then I think too often. It seems that we are asking. And thinking about the wrong kinds of questions.
When we think about God's holiness. How far is too far in a relationship? Can I watch this movie? Or can I not watch this movie? Should I listen to this song?
Should I not listen to this song? Should I spend this money? Should I not spend this money? What's acceptable? Is this sin? Is it not sin? I'm not saying those questions are completely out of line.
But I am saying. So often those questions are revealing a heart. That's saying. I don't want to be holy. As God is holy. I want to know where the line is. That's not the same thing. Churches and groups of people.
[34:53] Spend all kinds of time. Trying to discuss. All the possible exceptions to the rule. Rather than just saying. Be holy. As God is holy. Now I'm not saying. We shouldn't talk again. About all the difficulties.

Of different commands. But the thing that we need to grapple with. First and foremost. Before we go to all the difficult questions. Is the clear command from God. To be holy. As he is holy. Not different interpretations first.
Without saying. Be holy. So often the desire is. Just again. Where's the rule? Where's the line? So we can get as close to it as possible. Without going over it. Rather than. Being holy as God is holy.
We're only hearing. Part of the message of be holy. We're only hearing. Back away. Don't get near. And God invites his people.
Those who have been ransomed by the blood of Christ. Those who are now. Those who have been born again by his great mercy. He invites them near. To behold his glory. To look at it rightly. To see beauty in it.
[35:49] And to let it motivate their holiness. And holy living. Which is not looking for a line. It's looking for how I can reflect God. And his greatness. And his beauty. Everywhere in my life. In my thinking.

In my doing. My actions. Everywhere I am. No matter what. I want to reflect that. If we are looking for just the line.
And only hearing from God's holiness. Back away. And looking for. Some line that we're not to cross. Then we will only ever be looking inwardly.
For the right kind of motivation to obey his commands. And that will only lead us so far. And it's not far. And it minimizes. God's holiness. So the question for those who understand God's holiness. Rightly. Who see him as this God who is absolutely morally perfect. And divinely transcendent.
When they see the beauty in God being God. And the godness of God.

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[36:49] The commands and the question for holiness starts to shift. Because we see in God's holiness something warm. And delightful. And inviting. And we see something that we're attracted to.

And that captures us. We understand that it doesn't mean we come however we want. We understand that it means that we only come through a certain means. That he's provided for us. We've been ransomed with blood. Like we only come in that way.
But we need to come. And behold. And what's beheld is something that's so captivating. That when we have our eyes fixed on him. And his holiness. And his beauty. He invites us to draw near. In not only seeing him in his doing.
But in his being as the one who is holy. And the questions begin to change. When we see him rightly. The question stops being like. How far is too far? Can I watch this? Can I not watch it?
The question starts to shift to. How holy can I be? To reflect the beauty and the holiness of God in my life. How can I most honor him in all areas?
[37:46] Not just in certain parts. But how can I honor God? And be holy like God in this area. In this area. In this area. In all these areas. And not just have certain segments of my life. That I think belong to him. Where all the others kind of belong to me.

Okay. We start to think. How can I be like God? How can I be holy? How can I resemble this holy beauty? How can I devote myself holy to God? Surely some of you are familiar with the movies Toy Story.
Right? I think Five is actually coming out soon. Surely some of you know Toy Story. Do you know this story? In Toy Story. The kind of the main character is Woody the cowboy.
And these toys. This is the story of these toys that belong to Andy. And Woody is the leader of the pack. And Woody is this toy who loves belonging to Andy.
And in different times throughout the movies. Throughout the series. Like they have different crises that happen within the bedroom. As toys. And like what's going to happen to them. But Woody always goes back to what's written on the bottom of his boot.
[38:51] You remember what's written on the bottom of his boot? A-N-D-Y. Andy. That's his kid. That's who he belongs to. So he says over and over again. And has to rally the toys around him all the time. We belong to Andy.

So if we got to stay in the closet and get dusty. Because that's what Andy wants. Fine. We belong to him. We're going to be available and ready for Andy. No matter what Andy needs. Right? Because it's written on the bottom of my boot. Sometimes he forgets it. But he goes back to it. And he reminds the toys of it. Over and over and over again. So everything. Including when he has to like. They're thinking about they're going to put him in the attic.
He says this is not going to be a burden. It's a joy. Because I belong to Andy. I'm here to be Andy's toy. It's a joy. And a beautiful reminder throughout their years.
As Andy's toys. That they belong to him. And if you're a Christian. If you have trusted in Jesus. You belong to God.
[39:47] You have written and stamped on your life. H-O-L-Y. Holy. It's stamped on you. Because you belong to the holy God.

You are one who in him. And belonging to him. You now are set apart for him. Not in part. But your entire life is set apart for God's use.
And the invitation that you get as one who is now in him. Belonging fully to him. The invitation is. Be holy. Reflect him.
Everywhere. Because you belong fully to him. This is a good and beautiful thing. Because again. God's holiness. Is a good and beautiful thing.
It's not just a harsh and angry attribute of God. The flip side of love. It is a beautiful, ravishingly, lovely, divine transcendence. Of who God really is.
[40:43] And you are invited to behold it. And to then live it out in reflection in your life. God's holiness doesn't just say back away. It says behold your holy God.

And when you behold him rightly. You behold one who is holy. And what does it mean to say that he's holy? It means to speak of the godness of God. To speak of God as holy. Is to describe his absolute excellency.
His comprehensive perfection. His transcendent being. His moral purity. And it may seem at times. That that sounds like something we're saying. That God has a scowl in his face at times.

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Especially in our sin. Or that this is a sour and unpleasant thing. But if we keep beholding God. We keep looking to God. In the face of Christ Jesus.
We see not only what he does. But who he is. His being and his doing. And you keep looking there. Until you see something divinely ravishing. Something lovely.
[41:40] You keep looking until you see divine beauty. Keep looking until you see holy. And holiness is something that draws you in. Something that you want to reflect.

Because you see it. Something that is beyond your description. Beautiful. And the good news is. Is not only do you get to behold it in your God. But you get to reflect it.
You don't have to wait. You just look to him. And the right look to this God. Transforms you on the spot. So behold your God.
Your God is holy. He is transcendent. And utterly unique. And he wants to invite you in. To reflect his holiness.
In your life. To be fully devoted to him. Not in part. But in the whole. To reflect his beauty. Here and now. As we live as those who belong to him.
[42:37] Let's pray together. Father I pray that you.

Would minister to our hearts. Convict us of sin where it's needed. Comfort us. Where it's needed. But please. Don't let us walk away. From looking at your holiness. Without seeing something beautiful. Please capture us. By the greatness. Of who you are.
And what you have done. And please transform us. Because. The sight of you. And your greatness. And your glory. And your holiness. Is so good. So beautiful. So lovely. That we can't.
Walk away. The same. God if there's something. That's been unhelpful. I pray that it would flee. Quickly from our minds. But if there's something. From your word.
[43:36] That needs to get hidden. In hearts. I pray. That you. Would do that work. Soften our hearts rightly. To receive from you. Thank you.

For being. Our. Holy. God. Would you please help us. As your people. To be holy. It's in Christ's name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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