

“Who May Dwell with the Lord?”
(Psalm 15)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We've seen something of the blessings of heaven.
 - a. Not the landscape.
 - (i) Buildings, streets, gates.
 - (ii) Or even houses/mansions.
 - b. But the spiritual atmosphere:
 - (i) No suffering, pain, grief, crying, loss, separation, etc.
 - (ii) But perfect joy, peace, love.
 - (iii) In the presence of God and of the Lamb.
 - (iv) We need to remember our happiness isn't here, but there.
2. But we need to remind ourselves again how to get there.
 - a. We so often forget; get our eyes back on this world.
 - b. We need to be admonished to seek the things above.
 - c. The path to heaven is the path of holiness; we must follow it.
 - d. We must press forward in obedience; subdue our sins.
 - e. “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).
 - f. Owen: “There is no imagination wherewith man is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious as this – that persons not purified not sanctified, not made holy in their life, should afterwards be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. Neither can such persons enjoy God, nor would God be a reward to them. Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven: but the beginning of it is invariably confined to this world.”
 - g. Unless we love God in this world, we won't in the next.

B. Preview.

1. Our psalm reinforces this.
 - a. David asks who may abide in God's tent, or dwell on His holy hill?
 - b. The answer in a nutshell is: the one who is holy.
 - c. Not the one who says he is or merely thinks so.
 - d. But the one who shows he is by a life growing in holiness.
2. This morning, I want us to be reminded of the principle: without holiness, there is no heaven. I want us to see three things:
 - a. First, only the righteous may dwell with God.
 - b. Second, there is only one way to be righteous: Christ.
 - c. Finally, if we are truly made righteous, it will show by how we live.

II. Sermon.

A. First, only the righteous may dwell with God.

1. David asks, "O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? (v. 1).
 - a. He was referring to the earthly representations:
 - (i) The tent of meeting.
 - (ii) Mount Zion.
 - (iii) Even as our call to worship (Psalm 84).
 - b. But the earthly representations were only glorious/desirable because of the Lord's presence and the reality they pointed to:
 - (i) The house of the Lord: His tabernacle.
 - (ii) The one in heaven: the holy mountain of the Lord.
 - (iii) They are desirable because God is there.
 - c. Who may dwell with the Lord in His heavenly house?
2. David's answer has all to do with holiness.
 - a. With true holiness:
 - (i) With obedience to the commandments.
 - (ii) With love: to keep the commandments is to love.
 - b. Consider his answer. The one who will dwell with God:
 - (i) Walks with integrity (v. 2): Sincerely walks with God in all His ways from the heart, not hypocritically.
 - (ii) Works righteousness (v. 2): does what is right, obeys His commandments.
 - (iii) Speaks truth in his heart (v. 2): either from the heart or to self.
 - (iv) Doesn't slander (v. 3): doesn't damage another's reputation by saying things true, only assumed to be true, or knowingly false.
 - (v) Does no evil to his neighbor (v. 3): loves neighbor as self.
 - (vi) Doesn't take up a reproach against a friend (v. 3): does not begin or pass on a false accusation/insulting remark.
 - (vii) Despises reprobates (v. 4).
 - (viii) But honors those who fear God (v. 4).
 - (ix) Swears to his own hurt and doesn't change (v. 4): keeps his promises, even if they cost him.
 - (x) Doesn't charge interest (v. 5): not loan money to the poor to take advantage of them, but freely gives.
 - (xi) Won't accept a bribe to pervert justice (v. 5): won't take money or some other favor to support an evil cause.
 - (xii) Those that do these things – and the many more like them – from the heart, for God's glory, shall not be shaken.

B. This leads us to the second point: There is only one way to be righteous: Christ.

1. Which of us has done or is able to do what David says?

- a. Who passes the test?
 - (i) Have you done these things perfectly (review above)?
 - (ii) Out of love for God?
 - (iii) For His glory alone?
 - b. There is no one perfect; who doesn't sin.
 - (i) Solomon prayed, "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near" (2 Chronicles 6:36) and they repent and pray to You, then hear and forgive (vv. 37-39).
 - (ii) Notice he doesn't say "if", but "when." It is certain to happen.
 - (iii) Paul reminds us, "There is none who does good, there is not even one" (Rom. 3:12).
 - c. If we think we're perfect, we're even further from perfection than we thought. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).
 - d. But if we admit we're sinners, then we will be made well. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9).
 - e. If we acknowledge we can't do it, we'll look to the One who can.
2. The Lord Jesus has passed the test: He dwells on God's holy hill.
- a. You've heard this many times before.
 - b. We couldn't do it, but Jesus could.
 - c. Because we couldn't, He had to, if we were to be saved.
 - d. He has done all David spoke about and more.
 - e. After He did all His Father's will, He laid down His life for us.
 - f. If we trust in Him, we are made righteous:
 - (i) We may dwell with God.
 - (ii) We may have our heart's desire.
 - g. But if we trust Him, we won't be righteous in standing only.
- C. Finally, if we are truly made righteous, it will show by how we live.
- 1. We will desire to obey.
 - a. We will love God and Christ.
 - b. Our love for them will make us want to please them.
 - c. Our love for them will make us want to be like them.
 - 2. And we will, in fact, obey.
 - a. This is why James tells us that faith without works is dead.
 - b. Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6).
 - c. Love fulfills the Law (Rom. 13:10).
 - d. Therefore if we believe, we will love, and if we love, we will obey.

- e. Edwards: “We are abundantly instructed in Scripture, that true Christians do lead an holy life; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. And that everyone that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as Christ is pure, 1 John 3:3. In Pro. 16:17, it is said, The *highway* of the upright is to depart from evil, *i.e.* it is, as it were, the common beaten road in which all the godly travel. To the like purpose is Isa. 35:8. “A *highway* shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the *way of holiness*; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for *those*.” *i. e.* those redeemed persons spoken of in the foregoing verses. It is spoken of in Rom. 8:1, as the character of all believers, that they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. (Hypocrites Deficient in the Duty of Prayer).
 - f. Who may abide in the Lord’s tent? Who may dwell on God’s holy hill? The one who walks with integrity and works righteousness.
- 3. And even though imperfectly, it will be for the right reasons.
 - a. Not to save ourselves/for a ticket out of hell.
 - b. But for God’s glory and honor, born out of love for Him.

III. Application.

- A. Only those holy will live with the holy God in heaven. Are you holy in Christ?
 - 1. Are you trusting Him to save you?
 - 2. Is He your only ground of hope?
- B. Does your life show it through growing in Christ’s likeness?
 - 1. Holiness is not merely something claimed.
 - 2. It’s true or not true.
- C. Only those who live a holy life will dwell with God.
 - 1. If you’ve given yourself to any sin, repent.
 - 2. Put on Christ; leave no place for the devil.
 - 3. Only those who pursue Christ-likeness are safe.
 - 4. Remember, “There is nothing destroyed by sanctification but that which would destroy us” (William Jenkyn, *Treasury*).
 - 5. May the Lord help each of us by His grace to press forward in holiness. Amen.