

Friday, April 6, 2018

## Set apart

Leviticus 19-20

*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.*

Leviticus 20:26

These chapters, in some ways, sum up what most people think about when they think about God. It is a list of rules. Even as I read these chapters, if I'm not careful, they become a checklist for me and I can pretty easily transmit that into a checklist for the people around me as well—and, in the process, quickly find them lacking. If I allow myself to slip into that mold, I believe that I miss the heart of God—even though He expresses it repeatedly in these chapters (19:1, 3, 4, 10, 14, 16, 18, 25, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37; 20:7, 24, 26, for example). God is making the case clear. He is the LORD. There is no other. He is not a god; He is not one among many. He IS LORD. Period. As such, He will be revered. He is Holy, so everything about Him is holy—and everything around Him must be holy. There is no option for God. All He is and all He owns must, by His nature, be holy. These rules and all the others were given so that His nation could keep themselves holy—set apart for Him. He owned them. He owns me. He has redeemed me. I am His. He is my LORD. As such, my life should be a continuous effort to live in a way that proclaims all that my LORD is. I have been set apart to be His own!!! I will not give my heart to any other god. I will not worship puny things. I will not feed my own lusts.

*Dear LORD, I am Your very own. Remind me of this often, please. Remind me that whatever I do, I do as Your property. Help me love that and see it as a privilege! Amen.*

Saturday, April 7, 2018

## Maimed

Leviticus 21-22

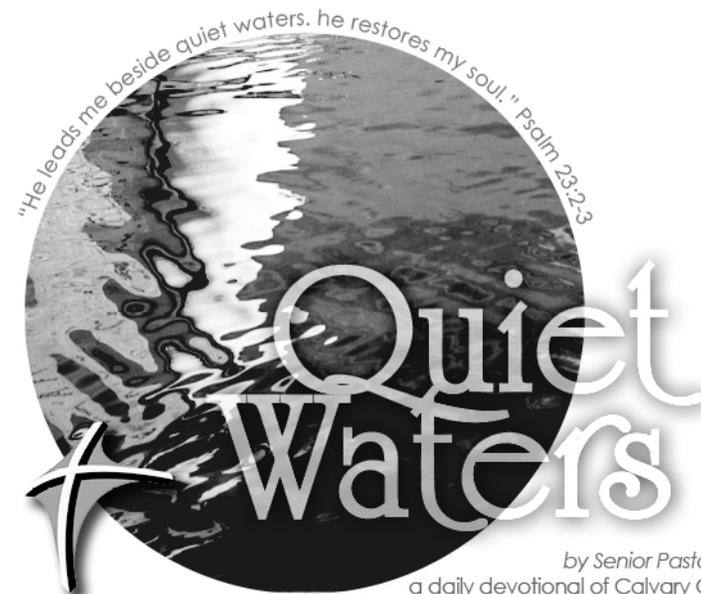
*When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores.*

Leviticus 22:21-22a

Truth be told, when I was a kid, lots of times I did just enough to get by. Perhaps there are ways that I still do. As God continues to define the holy actions the priests are to have—and so the community—He speaks to them about offerings that will be unacceptable. I think it is interesting that He needs to make this point. If He is considered holy by the one bringing the sacrifice, why would they need to have this instruction? Malachi 1:7-8 reveals why. When the heart of a person begins to drift from the LORD, the sacrifices that person offers become less significant. So, if something is just going to get burned up anyway to some invisible god, why not dump off the least desirable and save the best for oneself? What are the ways that I am tempted to do this? Does God get my best as a sacrifice to Him? Are there any ways in which the sacrifices I bring are full of warts and festering, oozing sores? Do I bring Him the best that I have in all that I bring or do I save the best for me and just skate by? Does He get first place when I choose what to bring as a sacrifice? Is it acceptable?

*Dear Lord, forgive me, please, for the times I have brought You the second best from my "herd." Forgive me, please, for all the sacrifices that should have come to You that I kept for myself. Change me. Move in my heart to give You the best that I have. Amen.*

April 2 - 7, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka  
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, April 2, 2018

## To Be

Leviticus 11-12

*I am the LORD who brought you out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.*

Leviticus 11:45

Again the Israelites are reminded of why God has rescued them. It is not directly for themselves that they have been rescued—and yet it is. God has brought them out so that He could be their God. He brought them out *to be* their God.

I become like that which I worship and I influence those around me to become like that which I worship. God rescued this group of people so that they could become like Him. By these laws and regulations, He is setting them apart. He is making them distinct. He is allowing them an opportunity to emulate Him. He is calling them to emulate His holiness. Actually, He is commanding it. In his first letter, Peter will call me to the same, restating this command. I have not been rescued from the grip of sin and Satan so that I can continue to allow that sinful pattern to be demonstrated in my life. He has brought me out of the bondage of sin and He is to be my God. I have not been saved from sin so I can sin; I have been saved from sin so that I can live choosing to live as one who is considered holy by making holy decisions. In this way, I am an example of the one true God, whom I worship, to the world.

*Dear Lord, please remind me continually that You have bought me out of my sin so that You can be my God. May You always be first in my heart and mind and may my actions and choices be holy as I emulate Your holiness with my life. Amen.*

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

## Unclean

Leviticus 13-14

*“The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.*

Leviticus 13:45-46

Leprosy was a terrible disease that needed to be quarantined. While many of the regulations set apart a people for God, others were meant to protect the community. It can not be overstated how important community is to God. He has not chosen an individual—He has chosen a people. Even as He works through His promises to individuals, it is for the community. To have leprosy was to be a dead man walking. It was to be the living dead. And not only was it a physical death, it was a separation from the community. This would have been devastating as well. It is hard for me to understand this—in a day of great individualism—but God’s plan for the Church that it be a place of community. I am part of the body of Christ. I am one member and I need all the others—and they need me! It is God’s plan. The only way that relationship with the community could be restored was if God moved in a miraculous way. It reminds me of the leper (Matthew 8) who cried out to Jesus. It is not recorded that he cried out, “Unclean!” What is recorded is that he cried out, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

*Dear God, please remind me that You can heal. Let me never take for granted what it means for me to live in the community of the family of God. Amen.*

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

## How

Leviticus 15-16

*This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area... And it was done as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Leviticus 16:3a, 34b

This chapter describes how and when Aaron could come into the Most Holy Place. This was the area behind the curtain that contained the ark of the covenant. It was here that God appeared in a cloud. It was here that, once a year, the high priest could enter and offer a sacrifice of atonement for the people. It was indeed a special day that was set apart as holy to the LORD. Everyone would observe this day. It was a day that there was a provision to bring cleansing from all sin. It was a day when people would deny themselves. It was a day that God was very specific about. And Aaron was careful. The penalty for not following the command to the letter was death.

Because of the sacrifice that Jesus made, I can enter the Most Holy Place of heaven. This is the true Holy Place. It is this Holy Place that was the pattern for the Most Holy Place that was built here on earth. God sits on His throne in the Most Holy Place. I can come before Him clean because all my sins have been forgiven, since I have trusted in Jesus to be my Savior, asking for forgiveness from God through Jesus’ sacrifice. Atonement is complete—once for all. I am free. I am judicially forgiven of all my sin. Even though I am declared forgiven, it is through direct confession of my sin to God that I keep my relationship pure with Him. Jesus makes that possible!

*Dear God, please help me keep our relationship pure through my confession. Amen.*

Thursday, April 5, 2018

## Worship

Leviticus 17-18

*You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices.*

Leviticus 18:3

The Israelites are leaving a land where it may have seemed that everything but God was worshiped and they are being brought by God into a land that also seems to a place where everything but God is worshiped. God is making it clear that this is to be a people that is set aside as holy. The sacrifices they offer are not to gratify God. He provides the sacrifices. The blood of the sacrifices was for the spiritual welfare of the worshiper. One who worshiped God was then told not to worship any other gods. He specifically tells them not to sacrifice their children to Molech—one of the gods in the land of Canaan. God is clear. He is to be worshiped above all. He is to have priority. If I am tempted to place anything in this world—even really good things—above God, I am not worshiping Him as He has designed. I am not to follow the practices of this world. I am a child of God. I must be careful that in no way do I offer my children on the altar of a false god—the god of this age.

*O Lord, keep my heart in pure worship of You. Please help me to not get distracted and start worshiping temporary things above You. I am so vulnerable in this area. Help me worship You alone. Amen.*