

Friday, March 18, 2016

**Most holy**

Leviticus 27– Numbers 1

*But nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD—whether man or animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD.*  
Leviticus 27:28

These final words of God in this book are words that relate to that which is His and how it should be viewed. It was possible to redeem some of the items that were dedicated to the LORD. Instead of offering that which was dedicated, that which was dedicated could be bought back for the value plus twenty percent. In this way, the person or item that was dedicated by a special vow could be redeemed and the money would take the place of that which was dedicated. But there were some things that were not dedicated, rather they were devoted to the LORD. This was given in a more solemn act than a dedication. At this point, it became the LORD's completely, without the option of redemption. This causes me to considered yet again all that I have. Do I carefully and prayerfully consider what I can dedicate to the Lord in a solemn vow? Do I ever devote things to Him? What does that look like? I devoted my life to Him as I asked for His forgiveness and salvation. Do I see that as most holy to the LORD? My life is no longer my own. I have been bought with a price and I now belong to Jesus. Are there ways in which I try to buy back that which is most devoted to the LORD? How about the things I have dedicated? Am I tithing and keeping my vow?

*Dear God, Please help me stay totally devoted and dedicated to You. Amen*

Saturday, March 19, 2016

**Worship**

Numbers 2-3

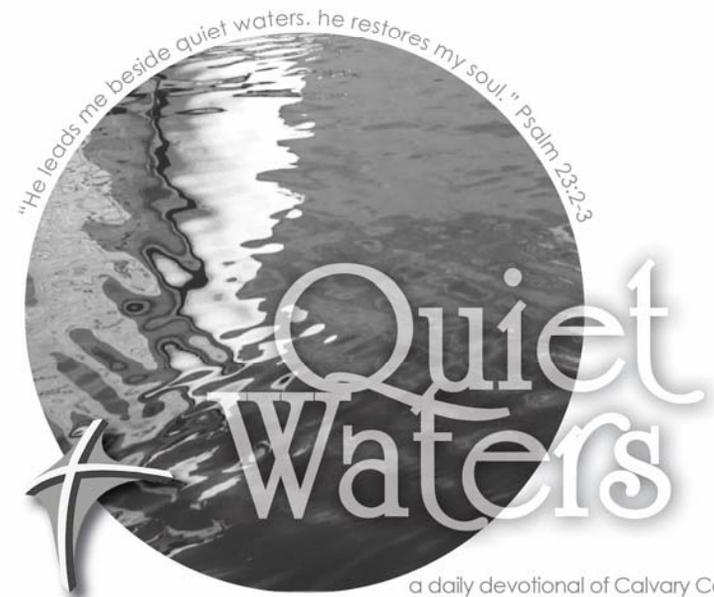
*The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: "The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family."*  
Numbers 2:1-2

As I begin to read Numbers, I see that God is a God of order. It tells me that each man was not only counted, but that they were listed by name. 603,550 names. No computers. I think about the process and the time that it must have taken to accomplish just that part of this account. And then came the organization of the camp. Each tribe was to have a special place that they would camp and a special order in which they would go out. God was the One who determined this. It shows to me His loving care in every detail of the lives of those who were so very special to Him. It was this arrangement that would allow them to all look toward the Tent of Meeting. It would be in the middle of them all. They would be able to look to Him as the center of their camp. Corporate worship for me is the same. It is coming together in an orderly fashion and keeping God at the very center of all that we do so that we can all have the opportunity to look to Him and focus on Him alone.

*O Lord, prepare my heart when I go to worship with my brothers and sisters. Please help us all to keep our eyes fixed on You as the center of all we are! Amen*

  
Pastor Chuck Cervenka

March 14-March 19, 2016



a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, March 14, 2016

### 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 all that is about Him is holy—and all that are about 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 are 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*

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

### 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.*

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

### Sabbath

Leviticus 23-24

*There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.*

Leviticus 23:3

Leviticus 23 is a very special chapter, as it summarizes the feasts that God appointed. Many Jews see the Sabbath as the Queen of Feasts. It is thought to be the nearest and dearest to the heart of God. It is a weekly observance. It recognizes the provision of God. It reminds people of the principle of the Sabbath that finds its roots in Genesis chapter two as God ceased creating on the seventh day and He rested—setting for His people a sanctuary in time—a place in time where His people can go to worship Him in a special way each week. He calls it a gift when He first introduces it to His people in the desert, when He provides the daily bread. He calls it rest. He commands that His people observe it so that they can reflect on all that He has done for them. He calls them to set the day apart and consider the fact that He has made it holy. It is a sacred day. It is the same for me. The principle of the Sabbath remains for me. I must learn to unwrap the special gift of ceasing and resting in the holiness of this sanctuary in time. I must take hold of that which God has set apart for me, so that I can know Him more and reflect on all that He is and all that He has done.

*Dear Lord, please bring me into this amazing sanctuary of worship. Help me see that pausing in Your presence is pleasing to You. Amen.*

Thursday, March 17, 2016

### If

Leviticus 25-26

*If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands... But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands...*

Leviticus 26:3, 14

This is a conditional covenant. This is different than some of the covenants that God makes. This one included blessings based upon obedience. Obedience is an indicator of love for God. All that has been given to His people in these laws has allowed them to know the heart of God. The conditional covenant that we are reading lets them determine how they will handle the heart of God that has been displayed for them. He has redeemed them from their bondage in Egypt and has set them apart for His service. He has clearly laid out what is required and now lets them know that they can choose—blessings or curses. Moses will restate this in an abbreviated form in Deuteronomy 30:19. The difference is staggering. Consider the difference between what comes from obedience and what comes when they will not obey. The rest of the Old Testament unfortunately unfolds much more of the latter. Obedience, as an indicator of love, is stated in an "if" clause in John 14:23. If I long for the presence of the Lord in my life in an overwhelming way, it comes from obedience that is motivated by my love for God! I get to obey. I am not forced. It is not an obligation. It is a joy. The benefits for being willing to obey because of love far outweigh the pain that comes from disobedience.

*Dear God, please stir in my heart a love for You that radiates out in obedience. Please let my actions show my love for You. Flood me with joy in Your presence so that I may experience Your blessings in my life as You alone are glorified. Amen.*