



## Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: NEW LENS – HOLINESS \* LEVITICUS 11:45, 1 SAMUEL 11, PSALM 51, EXODUS 19:6,  
2 CORINTHIANS 7:1, 1 PETER 2:9 \* 9/7/2025

### MAIN POINT

The Proclamation of Holiness

### INTRODUCTION

**What comes to mind when you think of the word "holiness?"**

**Have you ever come into personal contact with someone famous? What was that experience like?**

**Are you intimidated by others who you believe are morally superior to you? Why or why not? What feelings do you have in their presence?**

We often feel nervous, intimidated, or even insecure around someone famous. Being in the presence of those we view as morally or socially superior can stir a range of emotions. We might be drawn to them, hoping to learn or emulate them, or we might feel guilty and want to avoid them entirely. Similar dynamics occur when we approach a holy God. His holiness sets Him apart from us, and our hearts respond in many different ways—awestruck, humble, or even hesitant—because of the gap between His perfection and our imperfection.

### UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LEVITICUS 11:45

**What is the connection between God delivering Israel from Egypt and His call for them to be holy?**

**What does it mean that God is "holy"? How is His holiness different from human understanding of goodness or morality?**

**Why do you think God commands His people to be holy as He is holy? How does God's holiness inspire both awe and reverence in your personal relationship with Him?**

Leviticus 11:45 reminds God's people that He is the Lord who delivered them from Egypt, establishing Himself as their God. Because of His holiness, He calls His people to be holy as well. Holiness is not just ritual purity—it reflects God's moral perfection and sets His people apart for a life devoted to Him. The verse links God's saving work with His call for a transformed, set-apart life.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 11

**How does David's sin unfold step by step? What role does David's position of power play in this story? How might his status have influenced his choices? What does this chapter reveal about temptation and human vulnerability?**

**How does David's response to Bathsheba and Uriah reflect his priorities and character at this moment? What emotions or rationalizations do you think David experienced before and after his actions? How might pride, desire, or a sense of entitlement contribute to moral failure in our own lives?**

2 Samuel 11 tells the story of King David's sin with Bathsheba. While his army is at war, David stays in Jerusalem and sees Bathsheba bathing. He summons her, sleeps with her, and she becomes pregnant. To cover his wrongdoing, David tries to manipulate her husband Uriah into lying with her, but Uriah refuses out of loyalty to his fellow soldiers. Eventually, David arranges for Uriah to be placed on the front lines of battle, where he is killed. This chapter highlights the dangers of unchecked desire, abuse of power, and the far-reaching consequences of sin.

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 51**

**What are the key emotions and themes expressed in David's prayer in Psalm 51? How does David acknowledge his sin in verses 1–6? Why is confession an important first step in repentance? How does David appeal to God's mercy and steadfast love rather than his own righteousness? What does it mean to have a "clean heart" and a "renewed spirit" (vv. 10–12)? How does David's prayer teach us to seek God's restoration after sin? What role does God's forgiveness play in personal transformation according to this psalm?**

Psalm 51 is David's heartfelt prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba. He openly confesses his wrongdoing, acknowledging that his sin is ultimately against God. David appeals to God's mercy and steadfast love, asking for forgiveness, a clean heart, and a renewed spirit. The psalm emphasizes that true repentance involves humility, recognition of God's justice, and a desire for inner transformation. It also links personal restoration with worship, showing that a repentant heart leads to genuine praise and obedience.

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 19:6**

**What does it mean for Israel to be a "kingdom of priests"? How does this differ from the role of priests in other cultures?**

**What is the significance of being called a "holy nation"? In what ways are believers today called to reflect the identity of a holy nation?**

**How does this passage emphasize God's desire for His people to be set apart for Him?**

**How does God's holiness challenge or inspire you in your personal faith and community life?**

In Exodus 19:6, God calls Israel to be a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation" after delivering them from Egypt. This verse highlights both their identity and their purpose: they are set apart to represent God, mediate His presence to the world, and reflect His holiness in their lives. Being holy and serving as priests is not just for ritual purposes—it defines how they are to live, relate to God, and interact with others as a community devoted to Him.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:1

**What “promises” do you think Paul is referring to in this verse?**

**What does it mean to “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit”?**

**How does Paul connect holiness to the “fear of God”?**

**Are there areas in your life where you feel you need cleansing or renewal?**

**What practical steps can you take to address both physical and spiritual defilement in your life?**

In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul calls believers to respond to God’s promises with intentional holiness. He urges them to cleanse themselves from all moral and spiritual impurity, pursuing a life that reflects God’s character. Holiness involves both the body and spirit and is carried out in reverent awe of God. This verse emphasizes that God’s promises are not only a source of hope but also a motivation to live set-apart lives that honor Him.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 2:9

**What does it mean to be a “chosen race” and a “royal priesthood”?**

**Why does Peter emphasize that we are “a people for his own possession”?**

**What is meant by “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness”?**

Believers are described as God’s chosen people—set apart as a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Their identity is rooted in God’s ownership and calling, having been brought from darkness into His marvelous light. The purpose of this calling is to proclaim God’s greatness and goodness to the world. It emphasizes identity, purpose, and mission: we belong to God, we are set apart for Him, and we are called to share His light with others.

## APPLICATION

**What does David's moral failure (2 Sam. 11) and his response to God (Psalm 51) reveal to us about personal holiness?**

**Is there anything you refuse to share with someone closest to you? In your experience, why does someone's attempt to be holy by behavior modification lead to hypocrisy, secrets, guilt, judgment, and pride?**

**Are there things you assume pastors can do with or for God that you are not as capable of? Do you have an area of life where your actions don't reflect your appreciation toward God or his presence in your life?**

## PRAYER

## COMMENTARY

Leviticus 11:45

The verse begins by reminding Israel, “I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” This references God’s saving action in delivering His people from slavery. Their identity as God’s covenant people is rooted in His redemptive work. Salvation is not only past deliverance but also an ongoing call to live in accordance with God’s character.

The key command, “you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy,” connects God’s holiness to His people’s behavior. Holiness refers to being set apart, morally pure, and fully devoted to God. God’s holiness is both transcendent—He is utterly other—and relational—He desires His people to reflect His character.

God’s act of deliverance from Egypt serves as the foundation for the call to holiness. Because God saves, He is both able and justified in calling His people to a life set apart. Holiness is not an abstract ideal; it is grounded in God’s relationship with His people and His ongoing work in their lives.

## **2 Samuel 11**

This chapter opens with David remaining in Jerusalem while his army goes to war. His inactivity and isolation create a context for temptation. Even a man after God’s own heart can fall into sin when he neglects spiritual vigilance and becomes self-indulgent.

David sees Bathsheba bathing and is immediately drawn to her. The text highlights how unchecked desire, when combined with opportunity and power, can lead to sinful actions. Sin often begins with a seemingly small lapse—a look, a thought—but grows when it is not confronted.

David abuses his royal authority by summoning Bathsheba and later manipulating Uriah. This shows how privilege and power can exacerbate sin, enabling one to take advantage of others and attempt to hide wrongdoing.

David’s actions result in multiple layers of consequences: Bathsheba becomes pregnant, creating personal and social complications. Uriah is sent to die, making David directly responsible for murder. Sin spreads beyond the initial act, affecting multiple lives and threatening David’s moral and spiritual integrity.

This chapter serves as a cautionary tale: even godly leaders are vulnerable to temptation. It emphasizes the importance of accountability, self-discipline, and awareness of one’s weaknesses.

While God’s judgment is not fully revealed in this chapter, the stage is set for eventual correction (2 Samuel 12:1–15). The narrative reminds readers that God sees sin, holds people accountable, but also provides opportunities for repentance and restoration.

## **Psalms 51**

Psalms 51 is traditionally understood as David’s prayer after his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11–12). It reflects the raw emotion of guilt, repentance, and a desire for restoration. This psalm models how to approach God honestly after personal failure.

David begins by pleading for mercy based on God’s steadfast love and abundant compassion. He confesses that his sin is ultimately against God, not just human laws. This acknowledgment underscores that sin distorts our relationship with God and ourselves.

David asks God to cleanse him and create a pure heart. The imagery of washing and renewal points to the desire for inner transformation rather than mere external ritual. Verse 12 highlights the goal of restored joy and a willing spirit to sustain obedience.

True repentance leads to action: teaching others, praising God, and living in alignment with His will. David emphasizes that God desires a humble and contrite heart more than ritual sacrifices, showing that spiritual authenticity outweighs ceremonial formality.

David concludes by seeking God's blessing on Zion and the temple, linking personal repentance with communal worship and the broader purposes of God. This reminds readers that restored hearts contribute to the flourishing of God's people and kingdom work.

## **Exodus 19:6**

Exodus 19 occurs after God delivers Israel from Egypt, demonstrating His power and faithfulness. God summons the people to Mount Sinai to establish a covenant, giving them instructions that define their relationship with Him. Verse 6 highlights the unique calling and identity God gives His people as a result of His saving work.

"Kingdom of Priests" - The phrase emphasizes Israel's role as mediators between God and the nations. Unlike the priests in other cultures, God calls the entire nation to represent Him, offering spiritual access, guidance, and blessing to others. This calling reflects a life of service, obedience, and devotion to God.

Holiness here refers to being set apart for God, morally and spiritually distinct from surrounding nations. Israel is called to reflect God's character in its worship, laws, and social conduct. Holiness is both a gift from God and a responsibility for the people to live in alignment with His will.

God's deliverance is not an end in itself; it establishes Israel's identity and mission. Being a holy nation and kingdom of priests is both a privilege and a calling: they are to live distinct lives that glorify God and reveal His presence to the world.

The calling of Israel foreshadows the New Testament reality in Christ. Believers today are part of a spiritual kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9), called to live holy lives and represent God to the world through faith, service, and worship.

## **2 Corinthians 7:1**

Paul reminds believers that their motivation for holiness is not fear or obligation but the reality of God's promises. Divine commitment empowers human response.

"Beloved" - Paul often uses this affectionate term to establish pastoral warmth. He is not commanding from a distance but urging those he cares deeply for.

"Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit" - The word "cleanse" conveys active purification. "Every defilement" implies no part of life—physical or spiritual—is exempt. Moral, ethical, emotional, and even physical habits all fall under God's call to holiness. Paul emphasizes personal responsibility; God promises, but believers must cooperate with grace to live holy lives.

"Bringing holiness to completion" - The Greek term for holiness implies a process of growth toward maturity. Holiness is not instantaneous; it is a lifelong journey of aligning character and conduct with

God's standards. There's a sense of progressive sanctification: the believer continually grows in holiness, aided by the Spirit.

The "fear of God" is not mere terror but reverent awe, acknowledging God's greatness and moral authority. It motivates obedience and shapes how believers live in purity. True holiness is never self-righteous—it flows from respect, love, and awe of God.

### **1 Peter 2:9**

1 Peter 2 addresses believers as God's spiritual house and holy priesthood. Verse 9 highlights the identity and purpose of Christians, drawing on Old Testament imagery (Exodus 19:5-6) of Israel as God's chosen people. Peter shifts the focus from Israel to the church, showing that all believers now share this privileged status in Christ.

"Chosen" emphasizes God's initiative—salvation is God's act, not human merit. "Race" or "people" underscores the communal nature of faith; believers belong to a spiritual family. Priests mediate between God and people; every believer now has direct access to God through Christ. "Royal" highlights dignity and authority—Christians are both honored and empowered to serve.

"Holy" signifies being set apart for God's purposes, distinct from worldly values. "Nation" implies collective identity; believers are called to live as God's distinct community.

"A people for his own possession" - This echoes the Old Testament idea of Israel as God's treasured possession. It underscores intimacy and care: God claims believers as His own, not merely as followers but as cherished children.

The purpose of this identity is witness and praise. God's call moves people from spiritual darkness (sin, ignorance, despair) into light (truth, salvation, hope). "Marvelous light" conveys both the beauty and transformative power of God's presence.