

Pursue Holiness  
October 25, 2020

Are satisfied with your current level of obedience to Jesus? Do you want to be more confident in your prayers? Do you desire to be closer to Jesus in your daily living? If so, then pursue holiness.

We are starting today a new series of sermons dealing with holiness. God is holy and calls us to be holy. We see both of these truths in the first two passages this morning.

**Leviticus 11:44 (NIV)**            **I am the LORD (Yahweh) your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.**

**1 Peter 1:15 (NIV)**    **“... just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do”**

Before we can understand what it means for us to be holy, we must understand what it means that God is holy. The Biblical word holy means “set apart”.

**holy = "set apart" (different from)**

**God's holiness is how he is different from us.**

God is significantly different from us. We are finite; God is infinite.

**God is different from us in power.** We have limited power. The strongest men in the world can lift around 1,100 pounds. The record is disputed, but stands between 1,100 and 1,200 pounds. At best, that is only 60% of a ton. It is doubtful that any person will ever be able to lift a ton of weight.

In contrast, God created the stars and the planets and placed them in the heavens. God has control of all the power and energy in the universe. When it comes to power, God is holy and we aren't even close.

**God is different from us in knowledge.** Another example concerns knowledge. Benjamin Bradley Bolger, 45 years old, is a perpetual student. He has earned 14 college degrees. He claims to be the second-most credentialed person in modern history after Michael W. Nicholson, who has 30 degrees.

All of us are putting information into our brain's memory banks every moment we are awake. We may not be able to access it all, but it is there. Even if we lived to be 150 years old and could read and recall everything available to us in that time, our knowledge of the earth would be very limited. And most of the universe would remain a vast mystery to us.

Our knowledge is limited, while God has total knowledge. God knows every byte of information in the universe.

**God is different from us in presence.** We are limited in space. While it is true that others could see and hear us on many places on the planet with an internet-connected device, that is still different from being with us in person. God, on-the-other-hand is everywhere on earth and beyond, in person, at the same time. There is no place that God is not present. And he needs no devices to make himself known to others.

God is holy. He is significantly different from us. We were made in His image, meaning we have some features that are like God. But we have more in common with the fishes and animals than we do with God.

**God is unique, as is his name, Yahweh.**

"Yahweh" is God's personal name. It means, "I AM". His personal name is not "God". God is what He is.

Just like me, pastor is not my name. Robin is my personal name. I am a pastor, a shepherd. Pastor is what I do, a function. But it is not my name. My name is Robin.

The word "god" is what Yahweh is. Yet, we have made it a name for him because he is the only one we believe exists. Muslims speak of their god. Hindus speak of their gods. But we do not believe them to be actual deities. So we use the word god as a designation for the creator. We see this same use in the Bible. We will see it so used in the following passage, while at the same time seeing God's personal name.

**Exodus 3:13-15 (NIV) Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"**

**God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.' " God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD (Yahweh), the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.**

See how the word "LORD" is written in verse 15. Notice that it is written with a capital "L" and smaller, but still capital "ORD". Most English Bible translations have done this. They do this so you will know when God's personal name is used. Whenever you see that writing of LORD in all caps it is where God's personal name appears in the Bible.

It was the Jewish leaders who ceased to speak or write God's personal name in violation of what God told Moses in verse 15.

**Exodus 3:15 (NIV) This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.**

Yahweh told Moses His name, to draw the Israelites into a more intimate relationship with himself than they had ever had before. He was holy and distant from man. At the same time, he was inviting them to be close to him.

But to be close to God required that they be holy too. They had to choose to be holy. They had to choose to be different from all the other peoples around them in order to know Yahweh. The commands of God in the Law of Moses spelled out how they would be different from the peoples around them.

God is holy, different from us in power, knowledge, and presence.

**Another aspect of God's holiness is His perfect character.**

God is perfect in character. God is without sin. Nor can he be tempted to sin.

God is perfectly good. Everything he does is good.

God is perfectly faithful. He always keeps his word.

**Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV) ... his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.**

**1 Chronicles 16:34 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.**

God is perfect in morality, true to his word, kind, compassionate, just, and loving. We all fail at one or more of these, but God never has and never will.

God is holy, significantly different from us. Never-the-less you can know God today.

**To know God you must call upon the one God has designated as Lord.**

Part of Peter's first message on the first day of the first church was this...

**Acts 2:36 (NIV) "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and (Messiah) Christ."**

In order to know the one true God, creator of the heavens and the earth, you must call on Jesus. Jesus is the Lord. Jesus will judge the world of sin. Jesus is the Savior of those who call on him for salvation.

**Acts 4:12 (NIV)      Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."**

Only through Jesus can you know the Holy God. And only through Jesus can you become holy yourself.

**You are holy to the extent that you are like Jesus and different from unbelievers.**

In the weeks ahead we will look at some of those aspects.

God's holiness is how different he is from us.

Our holiness is how different we are from unbelievers.

Choose to pursue holiness.