

The Holiness of God – Part V

Let's review to get our hearts set afresh each time we come in here to escape the distractions of the day. We began using a gift from God, human logic to escape the trap of the human mind. We used Pascal's wager to demonstrate to us that there is nothing more pointless than to believe that life is pointless. We also used it to realize that we don't come to God by logic, but to realize how logical it is to begin to seek God. Then I used the Pratney questions as a format for teaching us something about evangelization to the atheists and agnostics. To not argue so much, as to ask them questions to let them come to grips with their own faith; the faith that they, in fact, do not know they have. Because every man who has ever lived, has in fact, walked by faith, not by sight. He uses logic to come to the end of human reason and then makes a leap of faith to believe as if things are true that are in fact un-provable. So the people who pooh-pooh faith are walking by faith while not knowing that they are.

Then we began where God told us to begin. God is not a God of confusion. He said to His children, "In the beginning, God." And that's the beginning of all true revelation. If we simply start with where God told us to begin, "in the beginning, God" then God is in an explosive manner right off the bat, two things. He is the only uncreated thing in all of existence and He is the only self determined thing in all of existence, meaning that everything else in existence is determined by God. It has its meaning and value set by the God, Who in fact, created it. And the whole struggle between God and man from that time forward has been man to pronounce that he is, in fact, self determined rather than God determined.

We looked at the origin of choice. God is... "in the beginning, God." We learned in I John 4:8, He is love. We know that love is relational, not slavery; and that relation requires choice. It cannot be called love except one have the right to choose something other than the object of love. And if one choice is God, every other choice is, by definition ungod or ungodly. Then we began to come to grips with a deeper revelation of what love is. It's beyond caring, beyond effortful caring, beyond even sacrificial service. Love in the mind of God is a passion for oneness. That's John 17:21-23. God has an absolute, burning passion to be one with us; in fact that no part of ourselves remain outside of Himself. He's delighted when we are in His kingdom as his children by salvation. But He's not satisfied until we are transformed by the renewing of the mind to, in fact, become one with Him in every thought, every word, and every deed to release only the mind of Christ on the planet Earth as opposed to releasing that part of our mind which is in fact, un-renewed.

We came to Genesis 1:1 and began to receive the revelation of the Holiness of God with the three meanings. He is "other than." He is perfectly pure, and holy is anything called holy by the Holy One. We learned, in fact, that this is part of our testimony and explanation to men locked in their natural minds. Because if God alone is holy, how can we be holy, and if we are holy, how can we become holy? Yet Scripture tells us clearly all three things are true. So in the one frame of reference, "other than", God alone is Holy. In regard to perfectly pure, He alone is perfectly pure. But we have His perfect purity imputed to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. And we're called holy by the Holy One, so if He calls us holy, we are holy. We're holy because we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and He tells us that that temple is, in fact, holy.

When we receive the revelation of starting where God tells us to begin, "in the beginning, God", then truth can only be defined in terms of that God that "in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth." So we define truth, then, as what God is and how God views everything else. And again the struggle between God and man from that time on has been man to try to determine that he can determine what truth is and pronounce himself as able to do that. Though, the way God views reality, He tells us that it

is not in man to direct his own paths. Knowledge, then, became a tidbit of truth, a tidbit of how God views reality. Understanding is in depth tidbits of truth about a primary tidbit of truth. And wisdom, then, is taking all the knowledge and understanding and adding it together, integrating it and then applying it. Wisdom then is the godly integration and application of understanding and knowledge. But we learned, no matter what knowledge, what understanding, and what wisdom that makes up my truth, God's truth is transcendent. God transcends every limitation that the mind of man tries to put on Him. So whatever truth we have, is in fact, only a tiny drop out of the ocean of God's omniscience. And we'll come to this poster, shortly.

We talked about worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Well, if we define truth as what God is, and how He views everything else, what is the foundational truth in order to worship God in truth? Well, the truth is, He is Holy. Isaiah 57:15, remember, "His Name is Holy." So, if we're to worship God in truth, it must begin with regarding Him as Holy. And not just a little bit holy, but fully holy, "other than." And only then are you beginning to regard Him with awe and reverence which is called the fear of the Lord. So if we do not fear Him, do not regard Him in total awe and reverence, so that our hearts are smitten by that revelation, then we're, in fact, worshipping a lesser god. We're reducing God to our manageable level, instead of worshipping Him in truth as He is; this "other than" God. Habakkuk 1:13, remember, "Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and Thou cannot look on wickedness with favor." Somehow we keep approaching God as if evil, something contrary to God, is excusable. But this Holy God cannot look on anything that is departing from His will, His purposes, and His character and regard it with favor. Not one single thought. To have God's favor, remember, is to have full access to His goodness through His grace. And when we begin to receive those revelations, we reach this point. Isaiah 33:6 – "The fear of the Lord is his treasure." Because when we first start to awaken to the awe and reverence of this Holy God of Genesis 1:1, we initially resent it. Because whatever we regard in awe and reverence, means some part of ourselves has to die. Because remember if we cannot regard the God of Genesis 1:1 with awe and reverence, then we cannot have awe and reverence for anything because there is nothing that approaches this Holy God of Genesis 1:1. And if we can't have awe and reverence of the God of Genesis 1:1, we can't have awe and reverence of anything. That means we are in awe and reverence of ourselves. Because we think that we can determine, pronounce, that this Holy God of Genesis 1:1 is not worthy of being held in awe and reverence and is not worth our awe and worth our reverence.

But when we begin to treasure the fear of the Lord, we treasure it because we now have the only thing that has intrinsic value in all of existence. That's why Paul can say everything else is rubbish compared to the surpassing value of gaining Christ. Then you begin to fulfill Matthew 6:21 – when you treasure the fear of the Lord, "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." So when you begin to treasure this Holy God of Genesis 1:1, your heart belongs to Him. And when the fear of the Lord is not resisted, but treasured, then what happens? II Chronicles 16:9 – "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the Earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is truly and completely His."

Now let's shift focus and look at it from a different angle. Isaiah 42:8 – God says through the prophet, "I will share my glory with no one." Well, is that selfish on the part of God? No. Because if He shared His glory with someone, it would be a lie and God cannot lie. Because there is nothing else in all of existence that is intrinsically worthy of being given glory other than God. So how can God share His glory and live a lie if, in fact, God is the source of all which is true?

Well, how does that tie in with fear? Because whatever we fear, we are giving glory to and God will not share His glory with anything because nothing else is worthy of glory. See, whatever we fear on planet

Earth, we are holding in a certain attitude of awe and reverence. And nothing, other than God, is worthy of being held in awe and reverence. That which is sovereign over what we fear, is what we should be holding in awe and reverence. That's why Scripture constantly says, "fear not," "cast your anxieties upon Me." So the call of Scripture is to consolidate our fears, our dread and terror of anything is to be totally submerged under the awe and reverence of God with this holy fear. Can you see? So, how can we hold anything with fear? How can we fear death when He says, "I am life."? The grave could not hold Him. And if you can't fear death because you're so smitten with this Holiness, this "other than" God, then what else should you fear, because all other fears are little microscopic parts of the ultimate fear of death.

What you fear is what you're holding in the utmost awe and reverence. So, if I fear Islamic terrorism, then I'm giving more awe and reverence to the power of Islamic terrorism than I am to the sovereign God that created the Heavens and the Earth. Fear of anything but God is simply the revelation that we do not fear God.

Now there are four key words that can be distinguished but not separated. Part of my testimony is that I had to learn to let go of this thinking...the logical mind that wants to compartmentalize everything in neat little parts. But God is a continuum; He is not compartmentalized, so that over and over in Scripture, you can distinguish, but not separate, certain critical definitions in revelation. So let's look at holy, fear, glory and worship. Holy is that which is "other than." Now whatever we truly regard as "other than"; beyond capturing by any frame of reference; beyond capturing by language description, beyond capturing by the mind of man; so other than as to be unapproachable. If we hold God in the right-minded fear of the Lord, then we're holding Him in awe and reverence and that is, by definition, the fear of the Lord. And that which we are holding in such a way, we are giving glory to and that which we give glory to is, in fact, what we are worshipping. So these things can be distinguished, but not separated. We fear what we regard as holy, we give glory to what we fear, and we are worshipping what we give glory to. That's to be right minded toward God. And to be right minded toward God, is the foundational thing about all truth. You can't be right minded toward anything else if you're not right minded toward God.

So the revelation of how other than God is, began with Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth." And remember, any thought, word, or deed that you have that cannot be directly translated back and rooted in Genesis 1:1, will be a misguided thought, word, or deed. So, why should we begin anywhere else other than "in the beginning, God..." The most foundational revelation of all Scripture, because you cannot regard the Son of God with awe and reverence in the New Testament if you don't regard the God of Genesis 1:1 with awe and reverence.

The fear of the Lord, then, becomes the beginning of what we explored - the beginning of knowledge; the beginning of understanding; the beginning of wisdom. So you can't even talk about any subject in human endeavor without beginning with—in the beginning, God. Or else you will be stating an untruth, not a truth. Because truth, remember, is what this God is and how this God views everything else. So at the wedding feast, is it water or is it wine? It's whatever God wants it to be. It is water because it's serving His purposes to give hydration to the human race at the wedding feast until He wants to intervene in this physical universe, declare His glory in an unmistakable way, and then it's wine. So truth is, it isn't water, it isn't wine, it's how God views it at any given moment and what He wants it to be. That's how foundational that revelation of truth is.

Repetition is a Jewish form of showing extreme reverence. Saying something once about God, in Scripture, we know it's important because He wrote the book. Saying something twice should capture all our attention for it is critically important because our God thought enough to say it twice so we wouldn't miss it. And saying something three times is considered the ultimate superlative. It gets at the essence of our relationship with God because it teaches us what God Himself considers His essence. Because He wrote the book and He wrote it for us, not for Himself. He didn't need to write it as a reminder to Himself so He wouldn't forget Who He is. Now only one attribute of God is ever carried to that third level of superlative, and you know it. Isaiah 6:3 – "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." Revelation 4:8 – "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty." I'm not underplaying the love of God. God is love. But He didn't say "love, love, love." He said "holy, holy, holy." That's God, Himself, Who tells us that. He is love; but He's not only love. His holiness includes His love, but His love can't be understood except you know how "other than" God is; because His love is an "other than" kind of love. And until you know the Holiness of God, you'll always be interpreting His love by comparing it with something. But His love is incomparable. His love is unconditional. His love is other than. His love can't be understood and captured by human mind and human emotion. Because His love is a holy love because He is Holy. And He is holy in all of His attributes.

So holiness gets at the very Godness of God Himself in all His attributes. So are you beginning to get an aroma of how holy this God is? How He is to be regarded, approached, and known by us, His creatures? In holy fear, awe and reverence. Anything less is not true worship, but is a pretense of worship. It becomes a form of godliness while denying the power. Because the power is rooted in worshipping God in truth and the truth is, He is Holy. In fact, holy, holy, holy.

Now regarding God as Holy is actually at the root of all obedience. The tolerance and cavalier attitude that we in the church tend to have toward ungodliness is in fact the revelation of how little awe and reverence of this Holy God that we truly have. Regarding God as Holy and fearing Him rightly, are at the root of all obedience. The first four of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 – "You should have no other gods before Me. You shall not make unto yourselves any graven image. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain and remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Commandments only need to be written when you're not regarding Him as holy. Because if you're regarding Him with awe and reverence as the creator of the universe that He is, and that truth is what He is and how He views everything else, you will obey Him. You will not debate Him.

And when we fear the Lord, we have a passion, not just to honor Him as we honor Him by being here today, but to honor Him as God. By bringing Him pleasure in all things. By giving Him glory in all things, and by revealing His character and His person to the world because He is supreme and He is transcendent and the only thing of true value. When you regard Him that way, then you obey the remaining six of the Ten Commandments that have to do with our behavior toward each other. When you know that your God cannot lie, then you cannot lie to your fellow man if you have the fear of the Lord. If not, you can always use your human rationale to come up with some justification for lying to your brother. Well, when we fear the Lord, remember, we regard the Earth and all it contains, including us, as being His; as we're told in Psalms 24:1. We are not our own and the whole struggle of man against God from Genesis, chapter 3 on, is man trying to declare himself to be his own, to be self determined, to be able to judge what God is, or what God ought to be.

When we regard anything as our own, at that moment, we are withholding that area from God, not regarding Him as holy, not regarding it as His. And if we're regarding it as our own and not His, then we have not viewed Him with the awe and reverence that this Holy God is worthy of. Ecclesiastes

12:13 in the KJV – “to fear the Lord and to obey His commandments; this is the whole duty of man.” So, I want to make one point. Fear and obey are two things. Duty is singular. That’s because fear and obey are one thing. They are two sides of the same coin. They can be distinguished, but not separated. Because what we fear, we will obey. And what we disobey, we do not fear. That is hold in awe and reverence. It’s stated a different way in Matthew 6:9-13 – the Lord’s model prayer – “Lord teach us to pray.” And He says, “Our Father, Who art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come,” “Hallowed be Thy name” and “Thy kingdom come” are two things. They can be distinguished, but not separated. Because His “kingdom” insofar as it comes to planet Earth, through us, can only come when we follow Him. And what we do not hallow, we will not follow. And when we are not following, His kingdom is not coming on Earth. So if our prayers for His kingdom to come on Earth insofar as it can through us, it begins with hallowing Him. Awe and reverence of this Holy God and then obedience follows and the kingdom comes. So we have a choice as Christians. We either grasp the Holiness of God and surrender to the awe and reverence of God, what we call the fear of the Lord, or we mimic the children of Israel that we are fond of kind of laughing and snickering at it in the Old Testament; where they ran laps in the wilderness for 40 years to accomplish what should have been accomplished in three weeks. Why? Because they did not regard God as Holy. They felt they could still declare what God is or what God should be or what God should do instead of just letting God declare Who He is and what He wants to do.

So let’s continue toward the face of God. We’re taught to seek His face and fan the flame like Paul wrote to Timothy...kindle the flame. So, let’s in our meditation, in our prayer, and in our Bible study, kindle the flame of the fear of the Lord, the Holiness of God.

So, let’s begin to look at this God Who is holy. Now this poster is probably the most foundational poster that I’ll use throughout if we go forward through this series. Acts 20:27 – Paul wrote “for I did not shrink from declaring to you all the council of God.” Now people who try to escape part of the council of God usually try to escape one part of this diagram. God is all of these things. He can’t be compartmentalized; I compartmentalize it just for diagrammatic representation to the peanut brain of man. He is a sovereign king; He is a sovereign, majestic, creator king. He creates, Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth.” And in John 1:3 – we see Who that creator is, speaking of Jesus. “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” And He doesn’t just create and ignore. “I will not leave you as orphans.” Colossians 1:16-17 – “and in Him all things hold together.” So if you wonder why is this complex group of molecules and organs, and so on hanging together so I can stand up here and speak the truth of God to you, it’s because I’m being upheld at this very moment by the God Who created me. He has sovereign authority over that which He created and upholds. Philippians 3:21 – “By the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things unto Himself.” Is that not a holy power? Is that not an “other than” kind of power? How can the mind of man understand that kind of power? I mean, yes, we can build a nuclear bomb, but what’s a nuclear bomb compared to that kind of power. We could build a million nuclear bombs and God could speak through the sovereign power that He has to exert over all things and defuse them all—can turn them into lemonade at any instant that He chose. That’s the sovereignty of God—a holy kind of power. He’s a passionate lover, John 4:8 – God is love. And John 3:16, we know so well – for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. See, love is a passion for oneness and God has a passion for oneness with us; that burning passion that no part of ourselves remain outside of Himself. Is that not a holy love? Is that not something that is beyond any frame of reference that man can construct? That’s an “other than” love.

Then we look at the fierce, but righteous judge. Now this is a part where we commonly see through a glass dimly and not face to face. We tend to find it a bit distasteful and refuse to gaze fully upon it. We tend to either over emphasize it and run from Him in condemnation; or we under emphasize it and drift from it while remaining apathetic toward sin. But doing either of those is to be self determined to determine what God should be as opposed to simply letting God show us Who He is and why He is that way. John 5:30 – “My judgment is just.” John 8:16 – “My judgment is true.” Romans 2:5 – “You’re storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath.” Hebrews 10:31 – “It’s a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 12:29 – “For our God is a consuming fire.” See, He’s going to consume at one time or another everything that is apart from Himself. So if you do anything walking in self determination, not regarding God as holy, you’ll be wood, hay, and stubble to be consumed. You shall be saved yet so as by fire as everything you did on Earth as a Christian from the moment of salvation is consumed. Why? Because it was not regarding Him as Holy. Thus, you have dead works; you have dead testimony, and you have no abundant life - all those things that God has for us, but we do not access. It is accessible, but we do not access it because we are not right-minded toward this God, Who is holy. They shall give account to Him, Who is ready to judge the living and the dead. That’s I Peter 4:5. Revelation 19:15 – He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God. And Revelation 21:8 – their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. That’s scary stuff, isn’t it? A loving God would never do that, would He? Would He? We run from that revelation of God. But as we’ll see later when we get further in the series, we will take that distasteful revelation and it will become the most powerful revelation about the character of this God that we worship. All things work together for good, including the revelation of the fierce righteousness of God. Does God find His fierce judging distasteful? I don’t think so. I don’t think God is displeased with Himself. So if God is not displeased with His fierce judging, should we be displeased with His fierce judging? Truth is how He views judging. Righteousness is what He is...not how we view it, not how we think about it. To love God is also to love His judging. And that’s where we will end up.

So as we progress through the series, we’ll come to the point of loving the fierce judging of God and that’s when we’ll begin to have joy when He disciplines us. Because what greater value can a creator God attach to you than to want one thing—to be one with you and to see you created in His exact likeness; to go and bear witness of Him on planet Earth, you see. So that what you release to planet Earth is the mind of Christ, not the un-renewed mind that you have been clinging to in your self determination. To release the love of God; not the conditional love that we think is love. But that only happens when you go back and regard Him as Holy; because until then, you’ll be regarding His holiness as small—worshipping a lesser God, shrinking your own sin and shrinking the value, and shrinking the price paid by Jesus on that Cross. Because you only need, remember, a little savior if you’re to pay for a little sin unless you’re viewing God as Holy and then you’re just smitten by the payment of God for your sin for one reason only. Because He would rather have you in communion unto oneness for all eternity; He’d rather pay the price for your sin through Hell itself, rather than to spend eternity without you. That’s a Holy Love! Once you grasp that, you never have to say, if God would do this, I would know He loved me. Or God must not love me because of this, you see. You forever let go as your mind is shattered and smitten at the unconditional love of God Who reached down to planet Earth to save you unto Himself; not just from wrath, but to be one with Him for all of eternity. But it is rooted and grounded in the Holiness of God and anything other than that is not true worship and will leave us lukewarm and apathetic in our Christian walk, you see. As we insist on worshipping a God that we shrink to the level that we want Him. So, let’s forever let go of that notion and see this God as the Holy God that He is.