

Sermon, January 9, 2011,
“Holy Living”, Leviticus 26:1-6,
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

Introduction

- In our study of the Bible we now come to the 3rd book of the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible written by Moses)
- It is said that Leviticus is among the least read and least understood books of the Bible.
- Leviticus is given to Moses at Mt. Sinai, shortly after the Exodus from Egypt.
- In Exodus, Moses received the 10 Commandments, in Leviticus, he receives detailed instructions on holiness, how God requires His people to live.
- Covered daily aspects of life:
 - 1-7 Laws of Sacrifice
 - 8-10 Ordination of Priests
 - 11-15 Uncleaness and its treatment
 - 16 Day of Atonement
 - 17-27 The Practice of Holiness
- The contents seem arcane and antiquated, even boring and uninviting.

Why should we study a book that begins and ends with animal sacrifices and presents detailed laws concerning ritual purity and priestly practices?

- Remember that the Bible is:
 - Progressive Revelation
 - Grammatical (words have meaning)/Historical Revelation
 - Redemptive Revelation
 - The “Golden Thread” that runs through Scripture is all about God restoring His relationship with you through Jesus Christ
- In almost all of Leviticus God is the direct speaker. No other book in the Bible contains more of God’s very words.
- In Leviticus we move from God on Mt. Sinai to God in the Tabernacle.
- Henrietta Mears, In “What the Bible is All About”, says that, “This book is for a redeemed people, showing how God is to be approached and worshipped. The book of Exodus is the book of redemption, but the book of Leviticus tells how the redeemed ones can worship God.”

Understanding Leviticus:

- The things that happened to Israel in the Old Testament are symbolic pointers to the wonderful salvation we have begun to enjoy in Christ.
- Like Israel of old, we need to be constantly reminded of who God is, how he is to be approached and worshipped and how we should live our lives as God's people in a hostile environment. God is holy, his people are to be a holy people
- Leviticus indicates the kind of people God's covenant community ought to be in the light of God's grace. It is essentially rules for holy living.
- Laws and sacrifices directed their relationship to God
- Obedience is an expression of faith
- Part of God’s covenant, obedience yields His provision

What does Leviticus point to?

- Need for an intermediary (priests): Leviticus points us forward to the one who came to save his people from their sins and bring them to God.
- Coming sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sins: without this book we cannot begin to understand the death of Christ and his priestly work on our behalf.
- Reflecting God (made in His image), living holy (separated) people: we can appreciate more the many references to cleansing, purity, wholeness, separation and holiness that we find in the New Testament.
- It is also from this book that Jesus quoted the second great commandment: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (19:18)

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The primary theme in Leviticus is the holiness of God and His people

- Holiness and holy are used 123 times in Leviticus, more than any other book of the Bible.
- The Hebrew word for holy is *קֹדֶשׁ* (qodesh), which means apartness, sacredness.
- The Greek word for holy is *ἅγιος* (hagios), set apart for divine purpose
- God calls His people to be apart from the other nations. As His consecrated people we are to lead lives that are set apart from the world around us.
 - **Leviticus 19:2** ² *Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*
 - **Leviticus 20:7** ⁷ *You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.*
 - **Leviticus 20:26** ²⁶ *Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.*
 - **Leviticus 21:6** ⁶ *'They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.*

Holiness is that which we are to strive toward, that which we must BE.

- This holiness comes from Christ, not from ourselves...
 - **Hebrews 2:11** ¹¹ *Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.*
 - **Hebrews 10:10** ¹⁰ *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

God demands a holiness that only Christ can give, for we are sharers in His holiness

- **Hebrews 12:10** ¹⁰ *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*

This holiness is for you and me, believers in Jesus Christ and as we live in Christ we must exercise the holiness we have been given by obedience to the Lord.

- **Obedience is an expression of faith, we are to BE holy...**
 - **Ephesians 1:4** ⁴ *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (see also 1 **Corinthians 1:2**; 2 **Corinthians 7:1**)*
- **God promises blessings for obedience and chastisement for disobedience**
Leviticus 26: 3 ³ *If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, ⁴ I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.*

Leviticus 26: 14 ¹⁴ *But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments,*

Holy living is only possible through Jesus Christ in your life, the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you counsels you toward the Father's will for your life.

Following the Father's will for your life is living holy, obedient, and blessed.