

Title: Living Holy: God's Standards for His Treasured Possession

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the connection between God's commandments in the Old Testament and Christian living under grace in the New Testament. The pastor emphasizes that the Ten Commandments are not burdensome rules but God's gracious insights into the best way to live—comparable to physical laws like gravity. Just as God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery, He has delivered believers from slavery to sin through Jesus Christ. The call to holiness means being separated from our natural inclinations and stepping into God's character through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. God's standards haven't changed, and while we cannot earn salvation through obedience, our response to His grace should be willing submission to His ways, which are designed for our good and the good of those around us.

Key Points:

- God promises rewards for those who serve Him faithfully, not as earned wages but as generous payment for stepping out in faith beyond our natural abilities
- The Ten Commandments are God's keys of insight into spiritual laws that govern blessing and flourishing, similar to how physical laws like gravity govern the natural world
- Holiness means separation—choosing to step away from our natural character and into God's character through faith
- God called Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, set apart and distinct from other nations; Christians are called to the same distinctiveness today
- We are saved by grace, not by keeping the law, but God's standards remain as the best way to live for our benefit and others' benefit
- The fear of the Lord is healthy and necessary; no fear of God is dangerous
- America was founded on biblical principles, and the nation flourishes when God is honored but suffers when His ways are abandoned
- Serving others and giving sacrificially goes against our natural inclination but demonstrates Christ-like holiness

Scripture Reference:

- Revelation 22:10-21 (Jesus's warnings and promises about His return and rewards)
- Exodus 19-20 (God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments)
- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Stories:

- The pastor's personal struggle with giving a twenty-dollar bill to a homeless man in San Diego, illustrating the difficulty of acting against our natural selfishness and the importance of obedience to God's promptings
- The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel challenging the prophets of Baal, demonstrating the powerlessness of false gods compared to the living God who speaks and acts
- Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery through the ten plagues, showing God's power over false gods and His faithfulness to His promises
- A recent baptism of a seventy-year-old man who finally committed to Christ, showing it's never too late to respond to God
- Childhood memory of getting soap in the mouth for using inappropriate language, illustrating the importance of honoring God's name