

# A Clarion Call to Gospel Holiness

*Gospel Holiness*

By Albert N. Martin

sermonaudio.com

**Preached on:** Monday, October 19, 2009

**Trinity Baptist Church**

160 Changebridge Road

Montville, NJ 07045

**Website:** [www.trinitymontville.org](http://www.trinitymontville.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tbcnj](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tbcnj)

The following sermon was delivered at the 2009 pastor's conference held at Trinity Baptist Church in Montville, New Jersey. The preacher is pastor Albert N. Martin.

---

The clarion call to gospel holiness. This is the theme that I propose to address in the ministry of the Word tonight and I begin by raising and answering the question: What do I mean by the term gospel holiness? Well, I mean basically two things. I mean that holiness or sanctification, that purity of heart and life which a Spirit wrought in grace of the gospel alone can produce. I am not speaking of the legalistic or pharisaic holiness which knows nothing of heart transformation, knows nothing of gospel motives, knows nothing of gospel dynamics and power. I am speaking of a holiness that the gospel alone can produce in the life of a true believer.

But, secondly, when I use the term "gospel holiness" I am speaking of a holiness that always and without exception follows a saving embrace of the gospel. There is no such thing as being saved by the gospel without being saved unto a life of holiness. And so as we open up the Scriptures we find that these two things are inseparable, a saving embrace of the truth and the sanctifying holiness producing work of the Spirit.

So Paul in writing to the Thessalonians can say in his second letter, "God be thanked that the God who chose you from the beginning called you in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

So whenever God's effectual call terminates in any fallen son or daughter of Adam it is in terms of a belief of the truth accompanied by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

And so in issuing this clarion call to gospel holiness, I want to do so under three heads. First of all, the absolute necessity for gospel holiness. Secondly, the essential elements of gospel holiness. And, thirdly, the gracious provisions for gospel holiness.

First of all, then, the absolute necessity for gospel holiness. And I want to set out three lines of biblical evidence that make it unmistakably clear that gospel holiness is an absolute necessity if we are concerned about true saving, biblical religion.

Line of evidence number one. Gospel holiness is essential if we would go to heaven and not to hell. A hundred years from now every single one of us in this building tonight will be in heaven or in hell. It is a sobering thought, but it is true. It may be the intermediate heaven, the intermediate hell if the Lord has not returned. If the Lord returns it will be the consummate heaven, the new heavens and the new earth inhabited by those who have been glorified, perfected spirits dwelling in deathless bodies or bodies and souls joined together in the chorus of the damned, the weeping, the wailing and the gnashing of teeth where the smoke of the torment goes up forever and forever.

And if you sit here tonight concerned that you will not be among the damned in hell, then you must be passionately concerned about this matter of gospel holiness. For according to the Scriptures gospel holiness is essential if we would go to heaven and not to hell.

Listen to several clear witnesses from the Word of God.

In Hebrews 12 and verse 14 the writer to the Hebrew says, "Follow after peace with all men and the holiness or the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

Pursue, track down, Paul, the writer to the Hebrews uses that very vigorous verb translated often for persecute. And he says, "Persecute, track down with intensity holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," that is see him with delight or in what the old writers called the beatific vision. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

Or the words of our Lord in the Beatitudes, Matthew five and verse eight, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they and they only shall see God."

If we would see God in the delight of that face to face vision in heaven, we must know purity of heart, something far beyond the mere external holiness of the Pharisee who Jesus said appears like a white washed sepulcher, beautiful, spotless before the eyes of men, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Or take Romans six and verse 22 in a chapter where the apostle is demonstrating that all who are justified by faith have also been brought by their faith union with Christ to a radical severance from sin unto a life of holiness emphasizing in the first 14 verses that this true because of our union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. And in verses 15 to the end of the chapter that in that union with Christ we experience a change of masters from sin to grace, from dominion of sin to the dominion of God's will and God's purposes. And then he summarizes in verse 22, "But now having been made free from sin," that is sin's lordship, "and become servants or slaves to God," that is genuine biblical conversion, "you have," not you ought to have, you may eventually have, some of you may attain to a place where you have. No. He says, "In everyone who has experienced true biblical conversion, made free from sin, become slaves to God, you are having your fruit unto holiness, unto sanctification and the end, eternal life."

Change of masters, change of practice, leading to change of destiny. But no change of destiny without change of masters leading to the change of practice.

It is what our Lord taught in the metaphorical way when he spoke of a narrow gate that leads to a restricted, constricted, compressed way which lead unto life. If we would attain life we must get through the narrow door. If we have come through the narrow door, the proof, the only proof we have come through the narrow door is that we are on the compressed, restricted, narrow way, the way of gospel holiness which leads unto life.

There is no skipping the narrow way if we would attain unto life. And while gospel holiness is never to be thought of as the ground of our acceptance with God, our title to heaven, that is to be found in Christ's righteousness and in Christ's righteousness alone so that we may say with conviction, "No Christ, no heaven."

Although gospel holiness is not the ground of our acceptance, it is the proof of our acceptance and it is the way into the consummate blessings of eternal life. So we may say with equal conviction, "No Christ, no Heaven, no holiness, no heaven."

Settle it in your heart, my hearer. No holiness whatever it is, no heaven. You have it on the testimony of the apostle. You have it on the testimony of our blessed Lord. You have it from the writer to the Hebrews, the absolute necessity for gospel holiness if we would escape hell and be found in heaven at last.

And I say by way of brief application of this heading, anyone who assures people of heaven without gospel holiness is a false prophet. And anyone who believes himself or herself to be saved and on his or her way to heaven who is not in the way of gospel holiness is deluded with a faithful, frightening delusion, the same delusion the false prophet gave to the Israelites in Jeremiah's day where we read in chapter six, "They have healed slightly the hurt of the daughter of my people saying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'"

Holiness is not a desirable option. It is not a possible accompaniment of saving faith. It is an indispensable accompaniment, essential if we would go to heaven and not to hell.

Secondly, gospel holiness is essential if we would validate to ourselves and to others our professed faith.

Would you have solid biblical validation that your professed faith is the real deal, not the faith of the demons, not the temporary faith of temporary believers, not the faith of those of whom John speaks in several instances many believed on him to whom Jesus says, "You are yet of your father the devil," John eight.

Would you validate to yourself and to others that your faith is the real thing? Then it is only in the way of gospel holiness that this can be done.

Listen to the apostle again in 2 Timothy two and verse 19. “The foundation of God stands sure having this seal. The Lord knows them that are his.”

He infallibly knows from his place in heaven looking upon this group of men and women, boys and girls. He infallibly knows every one who is truly his. But if you claim to be his, listen to what God says to you.

“The Lord knows them that are his and let everyone that names the name of the Lord...”

You say, “I am one of those the Lord knows in a way of saving love and grace.”

“Let everyone that names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.”

Would you validate the genuineness of your faith? Then you must be one whose lifestyle is that of departing from unrighteous, the negative side of gospel holiness.

Or listen to the testimony of John in 1 John chapter three. Clear words, words that have no wiggle room as we listen to them.

1 John 3:9. “Whosoever is begotten of God does not make a practice of sin because his seed,” that is the principle of divine life, “abides in him and he cannot make a practice of sin because he is begotten of God.”

In this, in this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever does not righteousness as a pattern of life, is not of God. Neither he that loves not his brother.

John’s testimony is clear. And if you would validate to yourself the genuineness of your faith, that you possess divine seed within you, John says, “In this... this is the acid test.”

Or take the passage read in our hearing, Romans chapter eight. This chapter in which the work of the Spirit is highlighted in so many ways, not the least of which is verse 14.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these only are the sons of God.”

And in the context, what is this being led by the Spirit? The context is the putting to death the deeds of the body. It is an ongoing life of sanctification, of gospel holiness, putting sin to death.

And the apostle says, “As many, bless God there are many who are led by the Spirit of God, these and these only are the true sons of God.”

And if you would validate the genuineness of your faith to others, again, it is only in the way of gospel holiness. For our Lord said in Matthew seven verse 16 and following these very familiar words.

“By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit. But the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them.”

And then our Lord goes on to say in the last day there will be many who will say to him, “Lord, Lord,” not just Savior, Savior, Jesus, Jesus. They will make a confession of his lordship.

“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, by thy name cast out demons, by thy name do many mighty works?”

These are not liberals. These are not skeptics. These are people that believe in demons. These are people that believe there is something peculiarly powerful in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he does not in any way debate with them about their claims. But he says this to them.

“Depart from me. I never knew you, you that are workers of iniquity. Your feet were never taken out of the path of a life of sin and planted in the path of gospel holiness. You had manifold gospel works, but you had no internal and external gospel holiness. Depart from me. I never knew you.”

William Gurnall said these very perceptive words. “Say not that thou art born of Gode and hast royal blood in thy veins unless thou can show thy pedigree by daring to be holy. Say not thou art born of God and hast royal blood in thy veins unless thou can show they pedigree by daring to be holy.”

Again, briefly, by way of application, any assurance of sins forgiven divorced from a life of holiness is a damning delusion. Any assurance of divine acceptance divorced from a life of holiness is a damning delusion. It places you in the very category of 2 Timothy 3:5, holding to a form of godliness, but having denied its power, its power to wrench us loose from a life of sin and self centeredness and self will and worldliness and preoccupation with the things of the stuff of this world and plants us in the world of gospel holiness.

But then, thirdly, gospel holiness is absolutely essential if we would become what we are called to be before an onlooking world. If we who profess the name of Christ are to become what we are called to be before an onlooking world, gospel holiness is absolutely essential.

After our Lord gives the composite description of the character traits of the true sons and daughters of the kingdom in those beautiful Beatitudes—and that is what they are—they are our Lord’s portrait of the leading character traits of those who are truly his, the sons and daughters of the kingdom.

At the very first Beatitude, “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

And after our Lord describes their leading characteristic, then he says, “This is the kind of influence such people will have upon the world about them. You are the salt of the earth,” verse 13. “You are the light of the world.”

When God’s professing people are described by those Beatitudes, those characteristics of a life of gospel holiness are manifested, then they are not you should become, you may become. He says, “You are the salt of the earth.” You check putrefaction in the society around you. You are the light that shines in the midst of darkness to people stumbling about not knowing their left hand from their right. You manifest what man was made for, to know God, to be like God, to manifest God in these transforming characters wrought in the hearts and lives of all the sons and daughters of the kingdom.

And the apostle Paul picks up that motif when writing to the Philippians. And he says this to the Philippians in verse 14 of chapter two.

“Do everything without murmurings and questionings.”

Whether these were sins peculiar of that particular society at Philippi we do not know. But he focuses upon living a life free of that sin that was so characteristic of the wilderness generation, their murmuring again and again against God and Moses.

“Do everything without murmurings and questionings, grouching and complaining.”

To what end?

“That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you are seen as light in the world.”

You are seen as lights when in your lifestyle there is the mark of gospel holiness touching such practical things as your attitude and disposition in the regular hum drum affairs of life. You are not marked by grouching and complaining and murmuring to the end. You become lights shining in the midst of darkness.

When the world seeks to fill itself with sand and sawdust and they see you, a joyful, peaceful, loving man or woman, not having to drink at their fountains, not having to sit at their tables. It is then that what Peter anticipates comes to pass.

“Sanctify Christ as Lord always in your hearts, ready always to give answer to him who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.”

“John, why in the world are you always so consistently cheerful when all of us in this shop are grouching and complaining about our hours, our work conditions. We don’t... you

are the one that is going about humming a gospel tune. What in the world makes you tick?"

And it is then we have opportunity to open our mouth and to declare the hope that is in us.

Gospel holiness is absolutely necessary if we would be sure of heaven, if we would validate our professed faith to ourselves and others and if we would become what we are called to be.

Now, secondly, follow with me as I try to open up the essential elements of gospel holiness. And when I speak of the essential elements, I mean those things without which the thing ain't there.

The essential components of an aircraft are a fuselage, wings, a tail, a rudder and some power, some engines. Take away any one of those essential elements and you don't get off the ground or lose one of them when you are up there and you are on the ground. Those are the essential elements, the thing without which you don't have the thing itself.

And I want to set before you five essential elements of gospel holiness. If any one or more of these is not descriptive of your life, you have no biblical grounds to say that you are in the way of gospel holiness.

Bishop Ryle in his masterful treatment of this theme in his collection of essays called *Hell or Holiness* he has 11 essential elements. I believe he has made some distinctions without a difference. But I believe and I trust to persuade your conscience there are at least five things that are essential, not addons, essential element of gospel holiness. And if you have believed what I have preached thus far, that without gospel holiness there is no heaven, then you are not going to sit there laid back and say, "Well, let's see what the..."

You are going to listen with all the intensity of a man, a woman, boy or girl bound for that day when the Lord will either welcome you or say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

First essential element of gospel holiness is the continuous killing of our remaining sin. Romans chapter eight verse 12, "So then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh you must die. You will go to hell, to the second death."

He is not talking about physical death. The most spiritually minded, Spirit filled, walking after the Spirit believer dies this side of the coming of Christ. So when he says if you live after the flesh you must die, he is talking about the ultimate death.

What is the alternative?

“But if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.”

Live, the opposite of die, heaven and hell.

Dear people, do you really believe that gospel holiness is a matter of heaven or hell? Do you really believe in the depths of your being, “I must be a holy man or woman or I will perish forever”?

And what is the first essential element of gospel holiness? It is this negative dimension, the continuous killing of remaining sin, the killing of sin so graphically described by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount where he says in Matthew five verses 29 and 30, “If your hand offend you,” here is a member of your body that becomes the occasion of you sinning. It is the hand that reaches out and takes the bottle and over indulges in alcohol and you become a drunkard and all drunkards have their part in the lake of fire. He says, “If your hand offend you, cut it off and cast it from you.”

You don’t cut it off and leave it lying there waiting for some wretched, foul, demonic ability for spiritual microsurgery to reattach it. You cast it away. You are done with it. You will say, “That sin must die or I will die seeking to kill it.

If your eye offends you, pluck it out. Cast it from you. Better to enter into life maimed than having two eyes, who hands, to go into hell. It is either mortify the offending member or go to hell.

Dear people, do we believe that? Do we really believe it is kill the sin or be damned?

Jesus wants us to believe it. So he spoke in the most graphic exaggerated language not calling us to self immolation, but calling us to the all out effort to kill our sins no matter how dear they may be to our flesh.

And then in Colossians 3:5 after opening up to the Colossians a book my wife and I are studying in our family worship so rich of all that we have in Christ, all that we are in Christ, complete in him, united to him, in death, in resurrection, in the light of all that we are. The apostle then says in verse five of chapter three, “Put to death, therefore, your members which are upon the earth fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness which is idolatry for which thing’s sake comes the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience wherein you also once walked when you lived in them.

This was once your native sphere of life. These were the things you lived in and reveled in. In your union with Christ you have been wrenched out of that lifestyle. But though sin’s dominion has been broken, sin no longer reigns. It yet remains to the grief of the true believer. His greatest grief is not the diminution of the figures on his IRA. It is that horrible house devil, his own remaining sin, that which he finds within him that hinders him from being all he desires to be and moves him to be what he doesn’t want to be. And Paul says those remnants of what you once were are still within you and plague you. Put



them to death. Don't just stare at them once in a while and say, "I don't like you," and ask the Lord to forgive you for falling into it and then say to it again, "I don't like you."

He says, "Kill it. Kill it."

Wage all out death warfare with your remaining sin. That is one of the indispensable elements of gospel holiness, the killing of remaining sin.

Secondly, the continuous cultivation of Christ like graces, an indispensable element of gospel holiness.

When God set his love upon us in Christ before the foundation of the world—and we just babble when we talk about eternity—but when God did according to the Scriptures and God says that sinner, that sinner and this sinner and that and made his choice among all the kindreds of the tribes of the earth, a multitude who no man can number out of every kindred, every tribe and tongue and nation and God determined that for them his own Son would become incarnate, live the life of perfection they should have lived but did not, died a horrible death of the cross to provide a righteousness that could be theirs, what was God's ultimate purpose?

You say, "To advance his glory in their redemption."

Yes, we are redeemed to the praise of the glory of his grace. But what is going to secure that glory?

Paul answers in Romans 8:29.

"Whom he did foreknow," that is those whom he loved beforehand, those upon whom he set his heart to redeem them, "he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son that the, the Son, might be the first born, the chief among many brethren."

And, if again, we babble, but we have to say something to try to express what is in the Scriptures. God sees these horribly distorted, marred, twisted, ugly former beautiful image bearers of himself and he says, "I will love them. I will redeem them. I will make them my own. And in so doing I am going to take that distorted, twisted, gnarled, ugly son or daughter of Adam and I am going to so work in them and for them that when I am done with them they will bear perfectly the image of my incarnate glorified Son. They will have perfected spirits that perfectly mirror the moral perfection of Jesus in sinless perfected bodies that will perfectly mirror what Paul says is the body of his glory so that when that vast multitude out of every kindred, tribe and tongue and nation, when I am done with them it will be this vast family in whom the family likeness will be unmistakable and my son will be the chief, the first born among his whole family, everyone who perfectly reflects his likeness.

That is God's purpose.

“Whom he did foreknow he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.”

Well, then how does he go about accomplishing that? Well, he begins it when he takes that gnarled, twisted, ugly former image bearer of himself and in regeneration he implants a principle of life within them by uniting them to his Son and giving them the Holy Spirit. He breaks the dominion of sin over them. Sin is no longer their master. In their union with Christ they have died to the dominion of sin, Romans chapter six, Colossians chapter three. God, according to the promise of the new covenant takes out that heart that was unresponsive to him and to his law. He takes out the heart of stone. He gives them a heart of flesh. And those who hated his law, we read tonight, “The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God neither, indeed, can it be.” And he plants within them a love for his law, writes that law upon their hearts, puts his fear within them and he sets them in the path of desiring with all their heart to begin to become what they one day shall be in perfection, just like Jesus.

That is how he begins in. And how will he complete it? Well, most of us will get the completion in two stages. When our body and our spirits are separated in death our spirits will join the spirits of just men made perfect. In an instant God will put forth an energy and power of the Spirit that in an instant will complete the work that we have been carrying on for decades some of us and feel we have made such pathetic progress. And in an instant, our spirits will be totally conformed to the perfect moral likeness of Jesus. And then at the Second Coming God will take up the other half and take those bodies, gather its dust together and conform it to the body of the glory of his own Son.

But now what does he do between here and there? Does he suspend his purpose to make us like Christ? No. Absolutely not. What he began in our regeneration, conversion, union with Christ experience he carries on relentlessly in progressive gospel holiness, no little part of which is implanting in the believer a passion to cultivate likeness to Jesus.

1 John 2:6. “He that says he abides in him ought himself so to walk even as he walked.”

Or 1 Peter 2:22. “Christ has left us an example to follow in his steps.”

And that is not just a mere externalism. It means the cultivation of the graces of the heart. That is what the fruit of the Spirit is. It is a description of Christ likeness.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control. It is being like Jesus.”

Or 1 Corinthians 13. What love is, what love does, what love does not. And it doesn't mean just a selective imitation and a selective cultivation of Christ like graces. The full spectrum of Christ likeness, loving more and more what he loves, hating what he hates. Having the capacity to be moved with compassion in the face of human need like Jesus, having the capacity for holy anger when his temple is defiled by the changers of money and the sellers of animals.

When you read the description and the graphic verbs that he wove that scourge of cords and he drove out the oxen and the sheep, whacking them on their flanks. And one can see their heels kicking up and making the noise of an ox and a sheep and running helter, skelter through the temple, finding the changer's table, turning them over. And they weren't little molded plastic tables, folks. Thick, wood tables and he turned them over and the money clunks on the temple floor.

And later on it says the disciples remembered, "Zeal for thy house has eaten me up."

Do you have the capacity to be stirred by holy anger when God's temple is defiled with human contrivances that are called worship, when human intrusions into the sacred honor of the living God?

Yes, we want to cultivate the meekness and the gentleness of Jesus, the love and the tenderness of our Savior, the ability to so relate to children that when you need one for an illustration you just need to say, "Hey, sonny, come here."

In those instances where Jesus called little children to him, no indication they were intimidated. They felt at home with him because he was at home with them. And sinners were not repelled by him even though they knew his searching eye would search out his sin.

Look at the thing we will hear about tomorrow night when his piercing eye went to the depths of the soul of that woman at the well in Samaria. She didn't run away scared. She ran away and said, "Come see a man. Come see a man. Come see a man."

Oh, to be like our Savior in the full spectrum of his holy character. And if you are in the way of gospel holiness, you are with varying degrees of intensity, yes, with varying degrees and stages of integrity, yes, I am fully conscious of those things. I have lived with myself as a Christian for 57 years.

But there will be a continuous cultivation of Christ like graces. And the text that nails this down indisputably is 2 Corinthians 3:18 where Paul includes himself, his fellow workers and all the Corinthians in the we.

"But we all with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into that image from one stage of glory to another even by the Lord, the Spirit."

We all are being transformed. Either the apostle is right or there are some of you sitting here have little grounds to say you are pursuing gospel holiness.

You ask your wife. "Dear, do you see any progress in my irritability over the past 10 years?"

She'd say, "Dear, I have to be honest, none whatsoever."

“Do you see any progress in my being short tempered over this?”

You wives, can you say to your husband, “Do you see any progress in my tendency to carp and criticize and nitpick?”

He would have to say, “No, dear, no progress. You get worse with the passing of the years.”

Are you accepting that?

We all with open face are being transformed. That is what the text says. We are being transformed. Are you being transformed? Can your wife bear witness to your ongoing transformation? Can your husband? Can your children? Can those you work with in the Church or are you known to be opinionated, stubborn, determined to have your own way? No evidence of that being transformed into the compliant gentleness of the Lord Jesus.

It is an essential element of gospel holiness, the continuous killing of sin.

Secondly, the continuous cultivation of Christ like graces.

Thirdly, the continuous and serious effort to conform heart and life to the spiritual demands of the law of God. The continuous and serious effort to conform heart and life to the spiritual demands of the law of God.

If that is not the teaching of Matthew 5:21 through the end of the fifth chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, I don't know what is. Jesus said, “You have heard from your religious leaders that the law of God only demands thus and thus. But I say to you, no.”

The law, as Paul says, is spiritual and the commandment is holy and just and good. Let me tell you how spiritual it is that twinge of unrighteous anger is of the essence of murder. And to experience it is to violate the command, “You shall do no murder.”

That look with the first thought. Wouldn't it be nice to have him or her in bed? The first look to lust. It doesn't say the first look to appreciate. Here is an attractive man or woman.

“Whoso looketh to lust in order to lust, to desire to have hath committed adultery already in his heart.”

So what I mean when I say the spiritual demands of the law of God and the mark of a true Christian is this, God is taking out his heart of stone, given him a heart of flesh, placed his Spirit within him. And, again he says, “I will cause them to keep my statutes and my judgments,” not in some limited external wooden view, but in the light of the spiritual demands of the law that touch the inner springs of the heart so that we can say with the apostle in Romans seven, “I delight in the law of God with my inward man.”

I want with all of my heart to keep the law in its spiritual demands, not to gain brownie points with God, certainly not with any silly notion that every act of obedience will cancel an act of disobedience, but because I love that God and I want by his grace to fulfill that which is the distillation of those 10 words. Love God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength and my neighbor as myself. And when I say, “How will my love to God be manifest?” the 10 words exegete what love to God and what love to man means. And the rest of the precepts in Scripture flower it out into a full blown ethic.

And this is why though the apostles in their writings never point us away from the 10 Commandments, they point us beyond them, but never away from them and never against them. That is why in that marvelous epistle to the Ephesians speaking of all our privileges in Christ in the new covenant, Paul does not have the slightest scruple to write in chapter six, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with promise.”

Paul, don't you know? We are new covenant believers. We have no relationship to anything Mosaic. It is dead and buried in Christ's tomb.

Well, Paul says, I am going to reach in and resurrect one of those commandments. And he resurrects the Fifth Commandment.

If that saying is true, Paul didn't understand his own theology.

Now, there was this constant recognition, Romans 13:9-10, Galatians 5:13, the book of James, a host of texts that indicate that the true child of God, the man or woman pursuing gospel holiness manifests this continuous and serious effort to conform heart and life to the spiritual demands of the law of God.

Fourthly, and I must hasten. Here is the fourth essential element of gospel holiness, the continuous and growing non conformity to the world.

According to the Scriptures Christ died not only to deliver us from the penalty and the dominion and power of sin, but he died to deliver us from the enslaving power of the world. Yes, he did.

Galatians 1:4 says, “Who gave himself for us that he might deliver us from this present evil world.”

And what is the world? The best simple definition I have ever come across is this. The world is the present order of the society of the unregenerate around us who are under the governing power of the devil. Society around us, unregenerate men and women in their lifestyle are under the governing power of the devil.

Ephesians 2:1-3 makes this abundantly clear. I won't take time to quote it. And it was Christ's purpose in his death not only to deliver us from the condemnation which our sins

deserved, from the power and reigning stranglehold of sin upon us, but out of that system by which we lived and in so living the Scripture tells us we were the children of the devil walking according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the power of the air that works, actively works, ενεργεω (en-erg-eh'-o), actively works in the sons of disobedience.

And that world has its standards of right and wrong, truth and error, what is modest, immodest, what is legitimate entertainment, how we ought to think of retirement, leisure, use of money, male female relationships, use of time. It has standards for everything dictated by the prince of the power of the air. And when Christ rescues us out of this world it is that part of our new life in Christ will be a continuous, growing, non conformity to the world.

So, you see, when we come to the narrow gate of true conversion and we take the ring of our marriage to the world and we rip it off, throw it away and renounce the world, pass through the narrow gate with a heart set upon living by the standards of the age to come, the place to which we are going, the Lord of that age and we want to please him and live to him and think his thoughts about leisure and entertainment and boy girl relationships and retirement and the use of money and the use of time, the world doesn't like to be jilted.

No sooner do we get through the narrow gate when the world is on the other side and the Bible likens worldliness to spiritual adultery and the world is that temptress who sits there, bears her thigh, shows her voluptuous bosom, speaks in alluring tones and says, "Come. There is still something to be found with me."

That is why Paul wrote to the Romans, "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, holy, to present yourself living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God," and what? "Be not conformed to this world."

J B Philips paraphrase is beautiful. "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God."

God has redeemed you that you might live to his will, not to the standards of that world out of which he has delivered you. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold. Don't think its thoughts after the world. Don't dance to its tune. Don't jump to its bark. Don't let this world's system mold you.

It is so serious that John could say in 1 John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life is not of the Father. It is of the world and the world passes away and the lust thereof. But he that does the will of God," you see we are back to Romans two, that you may prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. The will of God is antithetical to the world. God help us to believe that. It is not as though the

world is just a few degrees left, right or center of the will of God. It is antithetical to the will of God.

And if you don't believe that and begin to view all of life with this biblical perspective, my mind must be transformed to think God's thoughts after him concerning everything or the world will continue to mold me, continue to mold me.

And James speaks with even more strident tones when he says, "Whosoever would be a friend of the world makes himself the enemy of God."

That is what God thinks of the world. Yes, the world of unregenerate men he loves, I know. And he has his elect among them and we are to love and we are to seek to win them. I know that. That is not the element of biblical truth I am homing in upon. What I am saying is if you are pursuing gospel holiness, you are committed to a continuous and growing non conformity to this world.

Is that your life? Or do you let the world just wash over your mind by the entertainment you indulge, by the magazines you flip through and you let the world tell you what attractiveness is?

I remember some years ago dealing with a young woman who was struggling with Anorexia. And I knew her home very well that they didn't have the kind of women's magazines that glorified skinniness and a lot of bare flesh. The only magazines I had ever seen in there was *Good Housekeeping* and maybe one other family magazine, *Family Circle*. But I have looked through those to see and I said, "Did you get your ideas of what the ideal body is like by looking at your *Family Circle*?"

She said, "Yes."

The world, *Family Circle*, an innocent... the world saying, "You want to be the ideal woman? Be skinny like us in all the ads."

They don't put the fatties in there. They put the skinnies.

The world. Sit passively, not critically in front of your television. Let the ads wash over you. The world's music, let it wash over you. Say, "It doesn't affect me."

You are in lala land, my friend. It does affect you.

Why do you think the world is so aggressive to get it in your ears and get it in your eyes? Because it hates the fact that you jilted it and it says, "We want you back."

A little tryst here, a little tryst there.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

But then the fifth and final element, essential element of gospel holiness is the continuous and serious effort to frame all of life by all of God’s precepts, especially those of our Lord and his apostles.

Now I labored long in putting that statement together and wrestled. One of my friends here who is more theologically astute, I bounced it off. I said, “Brother, is that precise? Is that skewed in any way?”

Listen to it again. Gospel holiness involves the continuous and serious effort to frame all of life by all of God’s precepts, especially those of our Lord and his apostles.

Now let me open this up, hopefully briefly, by first of all saying we are not New Testament Christians. It bothers me when I hear people say we are New Testament Christians.

No, we are whole Bible Christians. If we are Christians we are whole Bible Christians. How do we know that?

Paul said to Timothy, “From a child you have known the sacred writings,” 2 Timothy 3:15, “that are able to make you wise unto salvation. All Scripture,” referring in its context to the Old Testament Scripture, “is inspired of God, profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”

That is the Old Testament. We are not New Testament Christians. We are whole Bible Christians. And when we see how our Lord handled the Old Testament in Luke chapter 24:27, 45-47 we hear our Lord saying in John 6:39, “You search the Scriptures. In then you think you have eternal life. These are they which testify of me.”

We want to see our Lord in the Old Testament Scriptures. We want to know the perceptual will of God from our Old Testament.

The writer to Hebrews in Hebrews 12 says to new covenant believers who are tempted to go back to the old covenant. He says, “Look, you have forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as sons.”

And then he goes back to the old covenant documents in the wisdom literature, chapter three of Proverbs and he quotes chapter three of Proverbs and he says it is reasoning with you as sons under the new covenant.

Jesus even said there is perceptual directive in historical parts of the Old Testament. At the end of Mark two he says to these people upset with what he was doing on the sabbath,



“Have you never read what David did?” David’s bidding is perceptual for people under the new covenant.

So I have said the continuous and serious effort to frame all of life by all of God’s precepts, that is what I mean, but especially our Lord and his apostles.

For did not Jesus say, “My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me”?

Did he not say, “If you love me you will keep my commandments. He that loveth me not keeps not my sayings”?

Did not the writer to Hebrews say, “He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him”?

Did not John say, “If we say that we know him and keep not his commandment we lie and do not the truth. Hereby do we know that we know him if we keep his commandments”?

And what did Jesus say in the Great Commission? “Make disciples. Baptize them, teaching them to observe all things,” that is intensive, “Whatsoever,” extensive, “I have commanded you.”

So that is what I mean when I said this. It is not we throw out the old and we say we are new covenant believers. We are New Testament Christians. No. We are whole Bible Christians. And when I said the followers of Christ are those who listen to the words of his apostles for they are the words of Christ...

1 Corinthians 14:37. “If any man seems to be spiritual or a prophet, let him acknowledge that the things that I say unto you are the commandments, the εντολη (en-tol-ay’) of the Lord.”

And so our hearts are being taken up in a peculiar way with those perceptual directives that gather to them the statement about an accomplished redemption They couldn’t take until after the Savior came and lived and died and rose again and sent the Spirit. And now they ooze with all the realities of the privileges of the new covenant.

That is gospel holiness. We take seriously what God has to say to us as children, as parents, as husbands, as wives, as workmen, as citizens. We take seriously what he has to say about churchmen, our relationship to our leaders, our relationships to one another, our relationships to offended brethren. We take seriously what the Scripture says. And with the psalmist we say, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my pathway. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep your statutes. Then shall I walk in liberty when I have respect unto all your commandments.”

Well, my brothers and sisters, I am persuaded that that is what gospel holiness is. Those are its essential elements and I ask you in the theater of your own conscience, can you say

that those things are descriptive of who you are and how you live: continually killing remaining sin, continually cultivating Christ like graces, continually with serious effort seeking to conform heart and life to the spiritual demands of the law of God, continuous and growing non conformity to the world, continuous and serious effort to frame all of life by God's precepts, especially those of our Lord and his apostles?

Well, I will just take a few minutes to give you the heads of my third point. We have looked at the absolute necessity for gospel holiness, the essential elements of gospel holiness, God's gracious provision for gospel holiness. God is not like Pharaoh and like his taskmasters. He doesn't tell us, "Make bricks," and give us no straw. And the God who said, "Be holy for I am holy, be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," he has made ample provision for us to actually become holy men and women so that this pursuit is not an unattainable ideal though we will never know it in perfection and there is never a day when we don't have to pray, "Forgive us our sins, our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

What has God given us? I say let me just give you the headings. First of all, the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. In redemptive grace, think of it, one of the persons of the godhead actually takes up dwelling in me.

1 Corinthians 6:19. I have been bought with a price. I have been purchased unto God. I am now a living temple of the Holy Spirit.

The passage read in your hearing from Romans eight, the gift of the Spirit is such that we have been delivered from the realm of the flesh and placed into the realm of the Spirit. That Spirit who effectually moves us both to desire and to do what is pleasing to God, Philippians chapter two. He works in us to will and to work for his good pleasure.

He, in the hidden depths of my being gives me a continual inclination to want to please God. And then he gives me the power to do what is pleasing to God.

Secondly, the reality of our union with Christ. The great doctrine that when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us in the language of Sinclair Ferguson, "It is the Holy Spirit who binds us to Christ, the Spirit that rested upon him and dwelt in him in fullness. When he imparts that Spirit to us, that binds us to Christ so that there is in our union with Christ all the stuff, the seed bed out of which gospel holiness arises The power of his death becomes our death to sin. The power of his resurrection becomes our resurrection to newness of life. The glory of his ascension to the right hand of the Father becomes our portion in him so that our life is hidden with Christ in God, raised up and seated with him."

All of John 15 and the precious truth of drawing our life from the vine that we might live well pleasing to him.

Thirdly, the precious promises of the Word of God.

2 Peter 1:3-4. “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

And we take those promises and we hold them before God and say, “Lord, make them good in my life.”

And then, fourthly, the manifold provisions of his grace mediated through his Church. The whole truth of Ephesians 4:1-16, God never intended that anyone should make progress in gospel holiness as a lone ranger. It is in the context of the Church as a living organism, a body and that which every joint supplies coming down from Christ the source of life and power that we grow up into Christ in all things.

Those are just the heads. I don’t have time to develop them. But if you are serious about gospel holiness, you will be driven to your Bible to say, “Oh, Lord, what are my resources? Teach me my resources. Teach me how to avail myself of them that I may indeed make progress in true biblical gospel holiness.”

May God grant that the things we have considered may not just be another sermon that goes over our heads and on to other more important things. These are life and death issues. And if you sit here and say, “If that is what being a Christian is, I don’t have a clue what it is,” my friend, don’t be discouraged. Be thankful God is showing you that. And then go to God through Christ and say, “Oh, God, I want to become one of those people. Lord, do in me what I can’t do for myself. And I apply to your Son. I have heard enough tonight to know that all the grace and the power is in him. All the virtue is in him. Lord, I come to him and I plead his promise: Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Let’s pray.

*Father, we pray. Take your Word. Make it effectual in all of our hearts. May we be dead in earnest about this matter of gospel holiness. Deliver us from the careless worldly, self indulgent brand of Christianity that is the curse of our land. And make us to be the real thing by your power, that we may indeed be salt and light, that our Lord Jesus might see the reward of his sufferings worked out in us as he beholds his image being more and more perfected in us until that day when the work is completed.*

*Seal, then, your Word to our hearts we pray in his name. Amen.*