

Forms Vs. Spirituality (Part 3)

The Process of Holiness

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I said at the end of my sermon on the holy day—the last day of Unleavened Bread—that I would pick up at the same scripture that we began the series with, the one in Acts 15. But I am changing that because I have decided to rearrange the order of some of the material that I am going to be giving to you today. Actually it is pretty much the same material I planned on giving, but I have just rearranged it a little bit. Whether we get to Acts 15 or not, I'm really not quite sure. But eventually we will. We will probably get to it today, but not in any detail.

Twice I have mentioned to you that all holiness is not the same. More specifically, holiness under the Old Covenant is not always the same as holiness under the New Covenant even though the words translated "holy" or "holiness," whether in Hebrew or in Greek, whether in reference to the Old Covenant or to the New Covenant as they are used, are essentially the same.

Now this phrase, "as they are used," is important, because neither word denotes any kind of spiritual or moral purity of and by itself. Very much depends upon the context in which they appear, as well as a knowledge of the way the word was understood at the time these things were written.

We are going to begin this with what I think might be an extreme example of what I mean, but I think that it will also illustrate quite clearly why you have to be careful about assigning *holy* or *holiness* to somebody or some thing without explaining a little bit more about what you mean.

Genesis 38:15 When Judah saw her [Tamar], he thought her to be a harlot; because she had covered her face.

This is an indication that harlots in those days dressed in a way that they would be recognizable, almost as if they had on kind of a uniform, and Tamar, whether for good or bad, had dressed herself in a way that caused Judah to think that she was a harlot.

Genesis 38:21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot?

I think you will recall what happened. He had to give her a pledge. She had demanded it of him. She became pregnant by him, and then she sent word to him that she was pregnant by him, and Judah came at her breathing fire, you might say. I am sure that he was going to make sure this gal was put to death because she was playing the harlot. When he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot that was openly by the way side?" They said, "There was no harlot in this place."

Genesis 38:22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said that there was no harlot in this place.

The same word is used for harlot in verse 21 and verse 22. If you want to look it up in *Strong's* a little bit later, it is *Strong's* #6948. Phonetically, it is *ked-ay-shaw*. This is the feminine of #6945. It is #6948 for the one, #6945 for the other, which is *kaw-dashe*. This word means "a sacred holy person." For *kaw-dashe*, it technically means a male prostitute; a Sodomite.

Now *ked-ay-shaw* is the feminine of *kaw-dashe*. They both have the same root. One is masculine, the other is feminine. *Kaw-dashe* means "a sacred holy person; a temple prostitute." That is why the *King James Version* translated it "harlot." But she was a *holy* woman. That literally is what that word translated *harlot* means. It means a holy woman.

Depending on the context, you are going to find that "holy" can indicate "clean, wonderful, exalted, great, unreachable, incomprehensible, incomparable, majestic." It indicates remoteness, and is even used in association with fire—holy fire; jealousy, fear, and wrath. You have to be very careful of this word, and see what kind of a context in which it appears.

Tamar was mistaken for a holy woman—a harlot; someone set apart for sacred duties which is kind of foreign to our thinking, but it is not foreign to the Hebrew at all. Incidentally, it is not foreign to Greek either, because they also used prostitutes in their temple, and those prostitutes were considered to be "holy women."

Both of these words—*kaw-dashe* and *ked-ay-shaw*—are derived from *kaw-dash*, which is the root of *ko-desh*. You can see all the words are cognate, and they all came from the same root *kaw-dash*. *Ko-desh*—the one most frequently translated *holy* in the Hebrew—is synonymous with the Greek *hagios*. Both words, of and by themselves, without any context to read them in, indicate *separateness*.

The Hebrew word *ko-desh* itself comes from a root indicating *to cut*, thus meaning *to cut away* and separate. Thus, if you cut away a branch from a tree in order to make a special use of it, you are cutting it away to maybe make a staff. You are separating it from the trunk for a special use.

When the word is used in relation to whatever is considered *divine*, or in association with religion, it [*ko-desh*] has the sense of the English word devoted, dedicated, consecrated, holy. The same is also basically true of the Greek word *hagios*. The word *hagios* in the New Testament carries with it a clearer sense of moral and ethical purity than it does in the Old. A great deal of this is because of what is done in the Old Testament. In fact, one source I looked into says that they have never found in secular Greek the word holy—*hagios*—used in the way that it is in the Bible. It is apparently completely and totally an invention of the apostles. There is not one sense of moral purity to this word when it is used in a secular sense.

What I am driving at here is, you might say, parallel with or in agreement with the other sermons I have given in this series. That is, we just do not accept the word *holy* as all being the same. There are different kinds of holiness, and it takes judgment to understand them correctly.

When the Greek word *hagios* is applied to humans in the New Testament, it is either stated or implied as an attribute of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. This is why the word in the Greek carries with it more of a sense of

purity than it does in the Old Testament, but I am not about to tell you that the word *ko-desh* in the Old Testament is never used in the sense of God's Spirit, because I think that it is. I just did not research into that.

I am going to give you just a short version of why the Greek *hagios* has with it more of a sense of moral and ethical purity than does the word *holy* when found in the Old Testament. I am not going to use a large number of scriptures because that would probably take up the entirety of the sermon.

In the Old Testament holiness is shown to derive simply because somebody or some thing is used in reference to being consecrated, or devoted, or dedicated to God. In the same manner, a man or a woman (a Sodomite or prostitute) who is separated from the public to perform a service in the idol's temple is thus considered holy without any ethical or moral purity. So can this same principle be applied in reference to God? Now hang onto this, because this is important to understanding the difference between holiness under the Old Covenant and holiness under the New Covenant. They are not the same.

A person can be separated and called *holy* in the Bible, even though the person is a dirty rotten sinner, simply because the person has been separated to work in the idol's temple. In the same manner, a person can be separated under the true God's service and also be considered holy because he was used in the Tabernacle or the Temple service as a priest, a Levite, a Nazarite.

An altar, a censer, a bowl, a lamp, bread, or clothing can be considered holy. An entire nation (Israel) can be considered holy because God separated them from all the other nations by entering into a covenant with them. He cut them away from the rest of the world and separated them to be dedicated to Him.

Now we have to ask a question. Because God did this, were they themselves literally holy, morally and ethically pure as God Himself is? Not on your life! The moral and ethical purity may be implied, but it is not actual. It is purely holiness by *God's* choice, not the people separated. You have got to remember that. Under the Old Covenant, the moral and ethical purity is implied. It is not actual. It is purely holiness by God's choice, not theirs.

God gave them the opportunity to have a *true* holiness when He entered into the covenant with them by giving them all three of His own laws: ceremonial, civil, and moral, in order that they might be in the people. Thus the literal and true moral and ethical aspects of holiness were a possibility for them, but they never lived up to it. Many warnings and exhortations from God to obey those laws were given, but they did not live up to their responsibilities, and therefore they were never truly holy from the inside out. They were only holy from their association with God through the covenant.

Thus they were holy almost in the same way that the ground God stood on was holy at the burning bush when He talked to Moses. It was no different from any other ground anywhere in the area in the Sinai. It was holy only because God was associated with it, because He was there.

Israel was holy in exactly the same way only because of their association with God, because He cut them off the main trunk of the people of this world and separated them to be associated with Him. It was His choice. They were holy. They were cut away. They were separated, but they were not morally and ethically pure.

In the New Covenant, holiness has some of these same elements, but very much more. The New Testament/New Covenant holiness is of such greater significance that it makes the Old Covenant holiness insignificant.

We are going to go to Hebrews 8 and read a small portion of the covenant and take a look at the wording.

Hebrews 8:8-9 For finding fault with them, he says, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord.

The fault was with them, not with His laws. He offered them the opportunity to be holy. You can look back in Exodus 19. Right in the wording of the covenant He says that He was going to separate them as a holy people.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

You can see it never got into the Israelites of old. Having those laws in us has a great deal to do with holiness. Now here is one of the better promises of the New Covenant. One of the major factors that makes a person truly holy from the inside out is living life without sin the way God does, not living life either in the way or the attitudes or the motivations that everybody else in the world does. This cannot be done unless God's law is in our hearts. This is why the New Covenant is better. "I will put my laws into their mind [into the intellect, the thinking parts] and write them in their hearts. [Right into the emotional aspect of a person as well.]"

Having the holiness God desires that we have cannot be done unless God's law is there, guiding the way that we live our lives. Sin keeps us from being morally and ethically holy.

We are going to go back to the Old Testament again and we are going to pick up another one of the better promises of the New Covenant back in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 36:24-26 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

What we have here is a promise from God of a new spirit, a new heart, and if you look at that, actually being *caused* to walk in obedience to His laws. I

would have to say under the New Covenant nothing is being left to chance. There are going to be powerful motivations from God taking a personal interest in each and every life to whom He gives this new heart and new spirit that is almost going to force us to walk in His way.

When I say *force*, what I mean is, He is not going to take away our choice in a matter. He is going to work in such a way as to make the choice we ought to make so obvious we would be absolutely stupid and foolish not to make it the way He wants us to make it. This is so that we can be holy like He is holy, and so that His laws can actually truly literally be written in our hearts and mind.

Let us go back to the book of Acts where we see here the beginning of the church, and that God fulfilled His promise.

Acts 1:4 And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise [We just read of that promise of a spirit] of the Father, which said he, you have heard of me.

We just read of that promise of a spirit.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power, after that the holy spirit is come upon you.

And then He ascended to heaven, and we know what happened.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.

Drop down to verse 17. Peter is quoting the prophet Joel.

Acts 2:17-18 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy.

I just wanted to drop in on that verse to remind us that God fulfilled at least the first portion of His promises in Ezekiel 36 to His church, and He has continued up to this time. If you want to look at Ezekiel 36 and its context, you will find that it most specifically applies to the time that God is re-gathering Israel out of their captivity, which is yet in the future. The promise then will be extended to those people as they come out of their captivity, but the promise has already been given to *us*.

What we have added to us then is a truly Holy Spirit to enable us to not be merely holy by consecration by God's choice, but in actuality as morally pure character displayed in our conduct. Already you ought to begin to be able to see that the holiness of the New Covenant is much different from the holiness under the Old Covenant. There was no promise of God's Holy Spirit given to those people.

God did give His Spirit to some few people that He was going to use in a specific way, and those people were holy in the same way we are holy. They were holy in a way different from their fellow Israelites. They were holy not merely by consecration to God by God's choice. They were holy by the fact that they had God's Holy Spirit. God's law was being written in their hearts and minds, and they were making choices to do the right things that were going to inscribe that holy law into their character. The combination of God's Holy Spirit, God's holy law, and obedience to a holy God was going to make them holy from the inside out.

Deuteronomy 29:1-4 These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

These people under the Old Covenant were at a very definite disadvantage in terms of holiness as compared to us. But remember that this book is written to *us*. It is for the church. Those people never saw this book. At best they saw a couple of the writings of Moses. They never really had an opportunity for salvation. They were consecrated by God, set apart from others, in order that *we* might have understanding, not them—**yet**. Their time is coming, and they are going to be in that second resurrection. Do not feel badly for them. God has every right to use anybody anyway He good and well sees fit, and God also says that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In Romans 11 He says that all Israel is going to be saved, so He did not treat these people badly. He provided for them very well, but they were used of Him in order to set examples and so forth for you and me. In I Corinthians 10 Paul said, "These things were written for our admonition [meaning the church] upon whom the ends [meaning the goals, the purposes, the designs] of the world are come." God did not give them a heart to be able to understand. They were not behind the door when the brains were handed out, nor was it that they could not see because they were too dumb and stupid or whatever. They were not given the advantages that you and I have been given, and brethren that puts a very weighty responsibility on you and me, because now it is for keeps. For them then it was not for keeps.

Let us go back to the book of Mark because Jesus made a very significant statement in relation to this. Jesus was always having confrontations with the Pharisees, and brethren, they just did not understand. They probably understood less than Paul did before Paul was converted because he was an unusually apt and intellectual person. He probably understood more than they did, but he admitted himself that he did not get it even though he had been a student of one of the best teachers available there at that time.

We all understand that this context here in Mark 7 involves a confrontation with the Pharisees over a ceremonial responsibility of washing their hands and so forth.

Mark 7:17-19 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And He

said unto them, Are you so without understanding also? Do you not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without enters into the man, it cannot defile him: Because it enters not into his *heart*....

God says that He is going to write His law in our heart. On the other hand, He told the Israelites back there in Deuteronomy that He did not give them a heart to be able to understand. Now Jesus is clarifying things here. I think a major part of the magnification responsibility He had from God was to clarify what it is that makes a person holy. Well, we got our answer in a broad generality, a broad principle. In order for us to be made holy, the holy has to enter into our heart. See, what *is* holy has to enter into us because we are not holy of and by ourselves. Holiness can only be given by a holy God. Even dirt does not have the power to defile a holy person because it does not enter into the heart.

Let us connect this with something Paul wrote in Hebrews 9. At the beginning of the chapter he is talking about the tabernacle and the furniture that was in the tabernacle, and most specifically the furniture that was in the Holy of Holies, and the Holy of Holies is what he eventually gets to.

Hebrews 9:8 The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all [into the very presence of God] was not yet made manifest while [or as long as] the first tabernacle was yet standing.

In other words, these people really did not have any access to God. Now why? He tells us why.

Hebrews 9:9-10 Which was a figure [a symbol, a form] for the time then present in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect [or holy or righteous in the New Testament righteous], as pertaining to the conscience. [Those things had no affect on the heart.] Which stood only in meats and drinks and different washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Those things Paul is talking about there could not change the heart. God has already told us what changes the heart. It is receiving a new heart. A new spirit is what changes the heart. I said in another sermon that I gave you that

human nature cannot be changed. It is impossible. We will not become like God until we are changed totally at the resurrection.

We are on our way. We are becoming holy because we have a holy spirit. We have a new heart. Holy things can enter into our lives because they have the means to become a part of us now. None of this does away with Old Covenant law because Jesus said not to think He came to destroy the law or the prophets, but rather we are to search for and to practice the highest and greatest application of the law, and that is almost invariably in the area of spiritual principles contained within the form given in the Old Covenant.

Brethren, look how much information we are getting out of those sacrifices! If they were done away we would not even consider them. Now we see what God's intent was in giving those sacrifices. It is for *our* benefit so that we could become holy by understanding their use in the form in which they were given, which is a wonderful teaching tool.

The heart—the mind—is where knowledge from our experience is stored and where decisions are made, and *that* is what is going to determine holiness. The tools are given, and it has to be something that involves the process of decision making. We are going to become holy not merely by God setting us apart, consecrating us to Him. We are going to become actually holy because we *choose* to become holy. There is a major difference between those two.

II Peter 1:2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life [eternal life; life without end; the abundant life] and godliness [which means being like God, and it includes holiness], through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue:

Something that can enter into the mind, or as the Bible might say, *into the heart*, contains the memory of our experiences, including the knowledge.

II Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature....

He means *fully*. There is where holiness is—the divine nature. Since God has consecrated us through His calling, and we have repented, and we have received His Spirit, we are now a dual-natured person, and as Galatians says, these two are at war with one another. It is up to us to make the choices.

II Peter 1:4having escaped the corruption....

Corruption is the diametric opposite of what the New Testament *hagios* implies, which is purity that results from God setting us apart and giving us His Spirit.

II Peter 1:4that is in the world through lust.

So we have the divine nature developing within us because we have God's Holy Spirit, and as we yield to His instruction in obedience, using the power of His Spirit, holiness or further sanctification occurs. No physical thing has the power to impart holiness or to defile, because it does not go into the heart. That does not do away with things like the food laws or with avoiding leaven during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

It takes a holy God's Holy Spirit and obedience by and through that spirit to His holy and righteous law—the spiritual law especially—to impart the holiness of God. That holiness is so much greater than the mere consecrated holiness of the Old Covenant that there is no comparison. Now this is as far as I am going to take that. I just want you to understand that all holiness is not the same. Holiness that God is developing in us is so far above the holiness that was given to those people under the Old Covenant that we are *out of sight!*

The more radical of the "no law" advocates sometimes fail to think through what they are saying in their arguments, one of which is that biblically laws are done away under the New Covenant. We just read in Hebrews 8 that God's laws are to be written in our heart. Now how does that happen? Does it just happen by magic? No, brethren. It happens in exactly the same way that secular knowledge becomes a part of us. It comes through the experiences of life, including reading God's Word, studying God's Word, observing godly people and ungodly people. It comes by practicing, but it has one addition,

and that is *revelation*. That is something that the worldly way, the secular way, does not have.

Now how can something that is *done away* be written in our hearts? That is rather a dumb question. Something that is done away cannot be written in our hearts. Does that not indicate what is done away is no longer valid? Why would God want to write something into our hearts that is no longer valid? Stupid thinking, see. Maybe stupid is not the right word. Ignorant would be better, because these people are not stupid. They are misinformed, misled, ignorant. Does not *no law* mean vetoed, annulled, canceled? Something done away no longer exists.

The argument is that everything under the New Covenant revolves around love, and if you have that love, you do not need law. Let us consider that for a little while. Without law there is no rational basis for love. Love, without law, would be entirely a matter of highly variable feelings. Now feelings are good, but they are in no way a good guide for conduct within relationships.

Let us let Jesus answer this. This is so clear. This is a verse that Evelyn and I had all our children memorize as they were growing up.

John 14:15 If you love me, keep my laws.

I changed one word there—the word "commandments" to "laws." But are not commandments laws? Of course they are. Jesus means exactly what He said. If we love Him, it will be expressed through keeping laws.

Dakes Annotated Reference Bible lists 1050 New Testament commandments which, according to this verse, are to be obeyed by those who love Christ, but in a wider application "My commandments" refers to the Old Testaments laws as well, because Christ is also the author of them. He was the God of the Old Testament and spoke from Mount Sinai. They are **His** laws.

The distinction that is drawn between the Old and the New Covenant is that the Old Covenant is a religion of law, and that New Covenant is a religion of love. Well brethren, that is unfounded. The difference between the two is in the gifts and the promises. God's own Word says that.

Both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are based on law, mercy, and justice, because one cannot exist without the other. So what place does law play in this? Law gives love its foundation. It gives it its stability. It gives guidance. It gives love the evenness that keeps love from turning into a highly variable sappy sentimentality.

When Paul defines love in I Corinthians 13, he does not define it as a feeling. He gives a very long definition of love, or what love will do, but he does not define it at all as a feeling. Paul says in Galatians that faith in God works out in *love*. It will express itself. Faith expresses itself in love, and love in the biblical sense is first and foremost an action, and it implies devotion. Devotion takes action. It implies loyalty. Loyalty takes action. It implies knowledge—intimate knowledge. Do you know what I mean? I mean sexual knowledge. Do you know that sometimes when God uses the word *love* in relation to His people that it is implying sexual intimacy?

It also implies responsibility. If a person carries out responsibility, he is doing something. Loyalty, intimate knowledge, devotion, and responsibility. You see, love is something that is done, and because love produces deeds, it fulfills the law. You cannot have one without the other. The evidence of a person's faith is love.

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments [His laws].

If we wanted to just limit this to Christ, then we could say, "Well, Jesus said that we only had to keep **His** commandments back there in John 14:15." But it looks to me like the reference to God here is to the Father. If people want to think that God the Father was the God of the Old Testament, then they are in trouble because this verse defines love as keeping the **Father's** law, but of course we know that it is the same law for both of them. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous."

God in His wisdom supplies us with a foundation for relationships and for love, and that foundation is His laws. We need to understand then that love is incomplete without the keeping of the commandments—most specifically

the Ten Commandments—but I think more broadly *law* in general, and therefore all love is not the same. Even as all righteousness is not the same, even as all holiness is not the same, neither is all love the same.

We will just look briefly at *eros* and *phileo* love. I think we all understand that *eros* describes passion, which is certainly part of the best that love has to offer in some cases, and in many cases with many people that might be just about all they have.

Jeremiah 3 shows an interesting way God used a word here.

Jeremiah 3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But you [meaning the nation of Israel] have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, says the LORD.

God called those who aided Israel in its harlotry (prostitution) *lovers*, so to me then it is an admission from God that at least some form of love is involved in prostitution. It is not a lawful love. It is a passionate love.

In Proverbs 7:18 a young man is having a confrontation with a harlot, and it is being described. Here the harlot is speaking, and she says:

Proverbs 7:18 Come, let us take our fill of **love** until the morning: let us satisfy, or delight ourselves with love.

I think we can understand that the Greek *eros* is not used in these Hebrew contexts, but the principle here is the same. *Eros* love used in this circumstance is completely self-centered, even predatory. Is that good? This prostitute was trying to take advantage of him. She was coming at him as a predator, but God calls it love. Is that the kind of love God wants? Of course not.

What we see here in *eros*, and what we have just seen here in Proverbs 7 and Jeremiah 3 is something that neither *phileo* nor *agape* love would do. *Eros* is nothing more than a highly unstable aspect of love. It cannot be trusted. It can be completely self-centered. It can even be predatory. You know there

are men out there preying, as it were, on women, and here we see a woman preying on a man.

Phileo love is the well-known brotherly love, and while it is exceedingly better than *eros* can be under some circumstances, it is still not on the same level as the *agape*. *Phileo* love is essentially a love of those who are the same as you.

Phileo love is expressed for brethren in the church, family members, fellow team members, army buddies, and company employees. These are people who generally respond to us in kind. In other words, because we are friendly and good-natured and gentle and good to them, they tend to be friendly, good-natured, and gentle to us as well, so *phileo* love is expressed with people who respond in kind. In other words, it is with people of shared experiences and things accomplished together, and so there is a strong sense of camaraderie like there would be on an athletic team. It is an "Oh! I just love my buddies! I'd go out of the way for them" kind of a thing, but this too falls short by God's own definition.

Matthew 5:43-45 You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father.

We are already beginning to see that this is the kind of love He will accept, where you love your enemy, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:45-48 For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be you therefore perfect.

I want you to see the word *perfect* appears in context with *love*. Two different loves are described. The second one—"If you love them which love you, what reward have you?"—is *phileo* love. The other love is not the same. Already we are beginning to see that all love is not the same.

This will seem like a little bit of a digression. In a broad sense, righteousness (right doing) and *apape* love are synonymous, but there is a righteousness derived from keeping the commandments, as well as reaching a certain level of love, but it is not necessarily the righteousness or the love that our Father wants us to have.

Matthew 5:20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I read that verse because I want you to see that here is an admission from God's Word that the Pharisees had a righteousness. Despite all the confrontations they had with Christ, there was a righteousness there.

Philippians 3:3-6 For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. [Paul gives his pedigree.] Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, *blameless*.

That is pretty high, yet he himself said that he really did not get it, but as far as the law was concerned, he was a good upright person "in the letter." Did you notice that I began where it says "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit"? A contrast here.

Romans 10:1-3 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. [And that is

where Paul fits. His zeal was not according to knowledge.] For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Do you see Paul drawing a difference between the two? Not all righteousness is the same. That is the way Paul was righteous and the way these Pharisees were.

Romans 10:4-5 For Christ is the end [the goal] of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which does those things shall live by them.

The Pharisees had a zeal for God, and they had a righteousness. Now we all understand that it was a righteousness according to the law. It was a self-righteousness that was produced by means of, in most cases, a very intense striving to keep God's laws and their laws which they added, and I have no doubt at all that they were an intensely moral people. They were the kind of people that most of us would like to have in the community, because they were moral.

Now, did they have love? Well, yes they did, but only that which comes from keeping laws, even God's laws, by human effort. In other words, if people humanly strive to keep God's laws and keep them to the extent that they are able, a love is produced because that is what it says in I John 5:3 that "Love is the keeping of the commandments."

We also learn from Matthew 23, that among other things, the Pharisees bound heavy burdens. They refused to help others who might be in a bit of trouble. They exalted themselves. Jesus said that they devoured widows' houses, meaning that they were rapacious in business dealings in taking advantage of weaker people. They swore falsely, which means that they were not going to keep their word in contracts. They lacked justice, mercy, and fidelity. They outwardly appeared righteous, but they were hypocrites. They were hard-hearted, closed-minded, and appeared to be interested only in trapping Jesus in some difficult technicality that they thought He could not find His way out of.

I am sure that Jesus intended this only in generalities. I do not think that He intended to give the impression that every Pharisee exhibited all of these characteristics, but they are the Bible's clearest model of a confused, contradictory, rigid, even cruel, and hypocritical state of love of some quite moral people.

We are going to compare this with the love that Paul describes in I Corinthians 13. Now think of the Pharisees—generally a moral people.

I Corinthians 13:4 Charity [love] suffers long.

It means love is patient. This is an *agape* love that is being described here. It can include that love is calm, unhurried, always ready to go to work whenever it is needed.

I Corinthians 13:4 Love is kind.

"Kind" is love in action, spent being thoughtful, making people happy, making them feel comfortable, doing good turns for them, giving them pleasure, relieving burdens. It is being thoughtful.

I Corinthians 13:4 Love envies not.

It means that love is not puffed up. It is humble. It does not blow its own horn. It hides self-satisfaction, considering oneself less than others.

I Corinthians 13:5 Love does not behave itself unseemly.

It means today courteous, polite, love in relation to etiquette; gentle, considerate.

I Corinthians 13:5 Love seeks not its own.

This is really interesting, especially in this litigious country where everybody is suing everybody else. Very interesting, because we are so concerned about our rights, but the love of God does not even seek its own right. That is

pretty good. With this love the self is moved completely out of the way. I will tell you, that is a tough one.

I Corinthians 13:5 Love is not easily provoked.

This one incidentally is one of the major vices of otherwise moral people. They cannot stand other people's weaknesses, their foibles. Love is tolerant without being permissive. Love has good temper. It is not easily ruffled. It is not touchy. It does not wear its feelings on its sleeve. It is almost impossible to offend a person who has the love of God.

I Corinthians 13:5 Love thinks no evil.

This is the equivalent of the English word *guilelessness*. It means that a person of love is not suspicious. It is trusting. It imputes no motive. It always sees the bright side of things, like a Pollyanna almost.

I Corinthians 13:6 Love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

The closest English word that we have to this is *sincerity*. It is not really adequate, but I think it is the best that we can do here. It means that love has self-restraint. It refuses to make capital out of other people's faults, and therefore it will not gossip. It will not expose other people's weakness. It will not gloat when the enemy is getting his. It makes every effort to cover people's weaknesses, and rejoices when it finds things are better than they might have been.

There are nine characteristics there, and I want to say to you at this point that these characteristics do not exhaust the list of characteristics of the love of God, because how God acted and reacted to Israel, and how Jesus acted and reacted to the Jews are further examples of the characteristics of love. Therefore love can correct, after the manner of Galatians 6. They can be righteously indignant, and even become angry without sinning.

There are more characteristics, but let it be understood that this love is a tall order. If we truly are working toward it, this is the process that leads to the

holiness I spoke of in the first half of the sermon, because it makes us into the image of God by means of the power of His Holy Spirit.

The love that merely keeps the law is falling short of the love of God, because this love of God goes *beyond* what the letter of the law merely requires. (It goes into those principles Richard was talking about in his sermon last Monday ["Repentance and Righteousness (Part 2)"].) Now how is it achieved? Well Paul continues right on into the first verse of chapter 14. In the *King James Version* it says "Follow after charity." That is really a weak translation. It says "Pursue it!" "Run after it!" "Chase it!" "Strive to get it!" "Wrestle to get it!" It is a very strong word. Love just does not happen. It is *made* to happen!

Love is an action that begins first of all by keeping the Ten Commandments, and then it branches out from there and makes every effort to always be concerned for the other person. So we have to chase after it, which tells me that even though we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, we still must strive after this love because it is an action and it is subject to decision-making.