

It's my intention to spend the next several weeks to preach upon the broad theme of Gospel Holiness—so far I'm thinking of categorizing our messages within 7 or 8 main categories—Its Necessity, Nature, Mistakes, Source, Cause (author), Work, Motives, and Completion—some of these categories will necessitate more than one sermon—so in total, we are likely looking at about 10 messages...

Now—let me quickly address the title I've chosen for this series of messages—Gospel Holiness—why call it Gospel Holiness, why not merely Holiness—well simply because, there is great confusion in our day concerning what true holiness is and is not—thus—I've purposefully entitled this a GOSPEL HOLINESS because it's the holiness that results from a saving attachment to Christ, who is the sum and substance of the gospel...

Now—here byway of introduction I want to briefly suggest three major goals of our study—[1] to expose sinners or hypocrites who lack true holiness—that is—if there are any of us indifferent to the nature and necessity of holiness—I pray the Lord would awaken you from your slumber and show you—that holiness isn't an option for Christians...

[2] To correct or instruct Christians on the nature of true holiness—this is a major goal of purpose of mine in these sermons—I'm really convinced that all of us, to various degrees, could use some clarification as to what IS and IS NOT true holiness—for example, oftentimes holiness is reduced to mere externals—as if holiness existed in short hair and long skirts—but then others err in denying that Christian holiness is concerned with externals or with what we do and say—but as we shall see true holiness has it's origination in the heart, and entails a whole-souled conformity to Christ and the precepts of His word, which evidences itself in word and deed...

[3] To bring honor and glory to Christ in 2014 are beyond—this, as we shall see this morning, is the primary purpose or reason for holiness—to bring glory to God the author and perfecter of our holiness—to be a people who honor God in the way we think, feel, and act—both individually, as individual people and families, and corporately, as a church...

I. The Necessity of Gospel Holiness

II. The Lessons From This Necessity

I. The Necessity of Gospel Holiness

Now—before I provide these five reasons behind the necessity of Gospel or Christian holiness—I want to make a brief disclaimer—it's NOT my purpose here to discourage Christians—it would be very easy to do that while addressing the necessity of holiness—but I do want to challenge every Christian to have a biblical based conviction concerning the absolute necessity and importance of pursuing a distinctly Christian or Gospel holiness...

A. Holiness is necessary for entrance into heaven

1. Let me clarify—nobody goes to heaven because of their holiness—but—nobody goes to heaven without holiness...
2. Here I want to briefly examine two texts, Heb.12:14—"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord..."
3. [a] What we are to do—"pursue peace with all people, and holiness"—this word "pursue" means—to run or chase after...
4. Notice we are to "chase or run after" two things—"peace with all people" and "holiness"—peace with man and holiness with God...
5. That is—"peace" here has reference to our relationship with man, and "holiness" to our relationship with God...

6. These are not things that simply come to us, but must be chased after—we must "pursue" or "chase after" them...
7. The word "holiness" literally means "consecration" and refers to our sanctification or process of being made holy...
8. Now—let me remind you of a distinction I made in the SS class between—imputed and imparted righteousness...
9. Imputed righteousness, or holiness, is the perfect obedience of Christ, which serves as the basis of our justification...
10. Imparted righteousness, or holiness, is the renewal of a soul, which begins in regeneration and is perfected at glorification...
11. Now—with regards to our imputed righteousness, or our justification, this is a once for all declaration of our person as righteous before God...
12. Christians have NO need to pursue this righteousness—as they are already perfectly righteous in Jesus Christ...
13. But—Christians are responsible to "pursue" and "chase after" a practical righteousness, or a personal holiness...
14. A.W. Pink—"The 'holiness' referred to in our text is not imputed holiness, for we cannot be exhorted to 'follow after' that! No, it is personal and practical holiness, which is not attained by standing still, but by an earnest, diligent, persistent pursuit after the same..."
15. [b] Why we are to do it—"without which no one will see the Lord"—that is—see God in the beatific vision...
16. You know that Scripture often uses this phrase "see the Lord" to refer to that glorious sight of God in heaven...
17. Matt.5:8—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—that is—they shall "see God" in heaven...
18. Thus Christians must pursue after a personal and practical holiness—without which—nobody goes to heaven...
19. Richard Philips—"Holiness is necessary for us to be saved. It is not necessary as a *condition* of our acceptance with God, since we are justified by faith in Christ alone, apart from works. But it is necessary as a *consequence* of our acceptance with God..."
20. Matt.7:13-14—"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it [Matt.5:20; Rom.6:22]..."
21. [a] A broad gate and way—"wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it..."
22. This refers to a profession of religion that brings with it no demands for repentance and pursuit of holiness...
23. [b] A narrow gate and way—"because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it..."
24. Every professing Christian is traveling on one of two paths—one is broad and easy, the other narrow and difficult...
25. Every person who's entered the narrow gate, experienced a true conversion, travels upon the narrow and difficult way...
26. This way is narrow because it's defined by the standards or commandments of God—the moral law of God...
27. Isa.35:8—"A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others..."
28. A.W. Pink—"Unless we are made partakers of the Divine nature, unless there be personal devotedness to God, unless there be an earnest striving after conformity to His will, then Heaven will never be reached. There is only one route which leads to the Country of everlasting bliss, and that is the Highway of Holiness; and unless (by grace) we tread the same, our course must inevitably terminate in the caverns of eternal woe..."
29. [1] Everybody going to heaven POSSESSES holiness—that is—they are presently on the Highway of Holiness...

30. This is in part WHAT a Christian is—he, or she, is a person presently walking in the narrow path of holiness...
31. Now—this doesn't mean that all Christians possesses the same degree of holiness—or are at equal stages of holiness...
32. But it does mean—that all Christians travel to heaven upon this single path—it's the ONLY way to heaven...
33. [2] Everybody going to heaven PURSUES holiness—that is—they are striving after it—they are longing for it...
34. Thus—there's a definite connection between what Christians are NOW and what they WILL BE in heaven...
35. That is—Christians are the same people in heaven than they are now—what they love NOW they will love THEN...
36. This doesn't deny there will be a change—but we are NOT changed from what we fundamentally are in this life...
37. Rev.22:11—"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still..."
38. I could paraphrase this text like this—those who die loving and pursuing holiness, will be holy for all eternity...
39. Brethren—heaven would be hell to a unconverted man—it would simply be miserable—for everything is holy...
40. J.C. Ryle—"Suppose for a moment that you were allowed to enter heaven without holiness. What would you do? What possible enjoyment could you feel there? To which of all the saints would you join yourself, and by whose side would you sit down? Their pleasures are not your pleasures, their tastes not your tastes, their character not your character. How could you possibly be happy, if you had not been holy on earth..."

B. Holiness is necessary for fellowship with God

1. That is—because God is holy, He only has fellowship with those who possess a personal and practical holiness...
2. Amos 3:3—"Do two men walk together, unless they are agreed" 2Cor.6:14—"For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness..."
3. Ps.15:1—"LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart, etc..."
4. Now—let me concede that this Psalm untimely describes Christ—who alone is worthy to dwell in God's presence...
5. Christians have a right to the throne of grace ONLY because they come at His back and dressed in His righteousness...
6. But—remember—every person who is declared righteous (justification) is also made righteous (sanctification)...
7. [a] A question, v1—"Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill"—who may have fellowship with God...
8. The tabernacle or temple was the special dwelling place of God—it was the place where God specially dwelt...
9. Thus—some commentators, and I especially think of John Gill, understand tabernacle to refer to the church...
10. The point being—it's in the church that we have fellowship with God—that we enter the unique presence of God...
11. Thus—the question is basically this—who does God allow into His special, unique, and covenantal presence...
12. [b] An answer, v2—"He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart, etc..."
13. That is—those who walk in harmony to the commands of God—both as they relate to God and our neighbor...

14. Thus—this passage reaches us—nobody has fellowship with God unless they are marked by gospel holiness...
15. Ps.29:2—"Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" Ps.96:9—"Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth..."
16. John Calvin—"The meaning of his discourse, to express it in a few words, is this, that those only have access to God who are his genuine servants, and who live a holy life..."
17. 1Jn.1:5-7—"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin..."
18. [a] Walking in darkness, v6—"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth..."
19. To "walk in darkness" refers to walking or living in darkness—to walking or living in moral impurity and pollution...
20. If we claim to have fellowship with God and walk in darkness—"we lie and do not practice the truth"—our profession is a lie...
21. The reason is found in v5—"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all"—God is perfectly pure and holy...
22. Thus—because God is holy, He only has fellowships with holy people—He doesn't fellowship with those in darkness...
23. Christians, like every other person, is born in darkness—this is their native sphere of existence and preference...
24. But—God does a mighty and powerful thing in salvation—He calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light...
25. [b] Walking in light, v7—"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin..."
26. That is—Christians are people who "walk in the light" they have been taken out of darkness as a way of life...
27. Think of two kingdoms—the kingdom of light and darkness—each one is governed by a king—God and Satan...
28. Acts 26:18—"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God..."
29. Thus—those brought into the kingdom of light—now have fellowship with God and with the other citizens...
30. Oh my dear brethren—Christian people are those who are no longer in darkness—but they live in the light...
31. To "walk in the light" is to live in the light—to live with your minds illumined—to understand the nature of sin...
32. To "walk in the light" is to have fellowship with God and other Christians—it's to know God and love the saints...
33. Does this mean they are perfect or that they never sin—NO—it means they know the remedy for their sins...
34. V7—"and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"—that is—continually cleanses from all sin...
35. This ongoing and continual cleansing has to do with out sanctification—what Jesus meant by the continual cleansing of the feet...
36. v9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness..."
37. A holy person, is continually confessing their sins to God—they are continually being cleansed by the blood of Christ...
38. Thus—only those who are walking in the light—are having fellowship with God who is Light and the saints...
39. 2Cor.6:14—"For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness..."

40. Thomas Brooks—"Without holiness no man can have any spiritual communion with God in this world; he may hear, but he can have no communion with God in hearing without holiness; he may pray, but he can have no communion with God in prayer without holiness; he may come to the sacrament, but he can have no communion with God in the sacrament without holiness; he may come into the communion of saints, but he can have no communion with God in the communion of saints without holiness; he may read and meditate, but he can have no communion with God in reading and meditation without holiness..."

C. Holiness is a primary reason for Christ's death

1. The Christian's sanctification, or holiness, is as much a purpose of Christ's death, as is their justification and glorification...
2. Simply put—Jesus came to earth, lived, died, and rose again—for the express purpose of making us a holy people...
3. Now—most of us are aware, that because of the fall, man's problem is twofold—he's GUILTY and he's FILTHY...
4. Thus the salvation planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, applied by the Spirit—meets these two needs...
5. J.C Ryle—"We must be holy, because this is one grand end and purpose for which Christ came into the world...To talk of men being saved from the guilt of sin, without being at the same time saved from its dominion in their hearts, is to contradict the witness of all Scripture..."
6. Jn.17:16-19—"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth [Tit.2:11-14; 2Cor.5:14-15]..."
7. [a] Christ's sanctification, v19a—"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself"—that is—He sanctifies Himself upon the cross...
8. Here sanctification simple means "to set apart"—it refers to His being set apart as the sin-bearing Lamb of God...
9. [b] Our Sanctification, v19b—"that they also may be sanctified by the truth"—that is—set apart from sin and made holy...
10. [c] Christ's intercession, v17—"Sanctify them by Your truth"—both parts of Christ's priestly work serve our holiness...
11. Eph.5:25-27—"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish..."
12. Notice [a] what Christ did—"Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her..."—that is—He died for her...
13. He bore her sin and satisfied God's wrath—He paid her debt—because she was given to Him from eternity past...
14. He came in time—to pay her debt—when a man weds a woman he inherits her debts—they become one flesh...
15. Thus—in the eternal purposes of God—Christ agreed to assume His wife's debt—and He came and paid it in full...
16. Notice [b] why Christ did it—"that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word..."
17. He did not merely die to justify her—but He also (and equally)—died to sanctify and purify her from her sin...
18. Oh brethren—we must understand—when we slight the importance of holiness—we slight the purpose of the gospel...
19. Christ died to make us holy—He died to sanctify us—to set us apart from this world—and to make us pure...
20. The end or goal of sanctification is found in v27—"that He might present her to Himself a glorious church..."

21. J.C. Ryle—"He who supposes that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again only to provide justification and forgiveness of sins for his people, has yet much to learn. Whether he knows it or not, he is dishonoring our blessed Lord and making Him only a half Savior. The Lord Jesus has undertaken everything that His people's souls require: not only to deliver them from the guilt of their sins by His atoning death, but from the dominion of their sins, by placing in their hearts the Holy Spirit; not only to justify them, but also to sanctify them. He is, thus, not only their righteousness, but their sanctification..."

D. Holiness is necessary to validate our profession

1. Since Christ saves us from sin's penalty and corruption—there can be no assurance that we are saved from one where there's no signs of being saved from the other...
2. That is—a consistently holy life is necessary to validate our profession—put more theological—our sanctification validates our justification...
3. Now—that our personal holiness validates our profession or is means of assurance, is evident from our Reformed and Puritan confessions...
4. Canons of Dort—"This assurance...(1) springs from faith in God's promises...(2) from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God...and lastly, (3) from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience, and to perform good works..."
5. LBC—"This assurance is grounded upon (1) the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon (2) the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and (3) on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God..."
6. 1Jn.3:18-19—"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him..."

E. Holiness is necessary to fulfill our calling

1. That is—one of the primary purposes God has called us and left us in this world—is to be lights within the darkness...
2. 1Thess.4:3—"For this is the will of God, your sanctification (holiness)...v7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness..."
3. God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light for the express purpose and intention of living holy...
4. Phil.2:14-15—"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world [Matt.5:13-16; 1Pet.1:14-15]..."
5. One of the several reasons why we are left in this world—is to be salt and light to a world that's in darkness...

II. The Lessons From This Necessity

A. A solemn warning for unholy professors

1. Here—of course I want to speak to those who profess to be Christians but know nothing of gospel holiness...
2. 1Cor.6:9—"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God..."
3. 1Jn.3:7—"Little children, let no one deceive you. he who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous..."
4. Rev.21:27—"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life..."
5. My friend—what you need is NOT to pursue practical holiness—you need to abandon your supposed holiness...

6. What you need is what we all need—you need Christ—for it's only in Him that you find everything needed...
7. In Christ you find a holiness or righteousness for your justification, but also a practical holiness for your sanctification...
8. 1Cor.1:30—"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption..."

B. An encouragement for doubting Christians

1. That is—if gospel holiness is an absolute necessity—then those who possess it necessarily are true Christians...
2. Here I'm not concerned with how much holiness you have—but the least among of true holiness argues true grace...
3. [1] Do you love holiness—that is—if you see in gospel holiness a beauty and excellence this argues the presence of holiness...
4. [2] Do you long for holiness—that is—does your heart long for holiness—do you hunger and thirst after it...
5. Matt.5:6—"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [holiness], for they shall be filled [in heaven]..."
6. How gracious is our Savior—He not only pronounces the pure as blessed, but also those who hunger and thirst after purity...
7. It's as He says—the very hungering and thirsting after holiness, is in some sense, put for the holiness itself...
8. Pink—"There is none upon earth who is full conformed to God's will. Practical holiness is a matter of growth. In this life holiness is but an infant (infantile), and will only be matured in glory. At present it exists more in the form of longings and strivings, hungerings and efforts, rather than in realizations and attainments. The very fact that the Christian is exhorted to *'follow'* or pursue holiness, proves that he has not yet reached it..."
9. [3] Do you lament your lack of holiness—a sure sign of a holy person is that they feel their remaining unholiness...
10. Rom.7:24—"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death"—that is—the flesh that hinders our pursuit of holiness...
11. Thus—a Christian person is someone who possesses and pursues holiness—it's the desire of his renewed heart...

C. A motivation for tired and weary Christians

1. That is—if gospel holiness is absolutely necessary—then surely God will provide every needed for holiness...
2. This is something that I want to address at greater length—but I think it's important here to simply mention—true holiness is NOT the result of our own resources or strength...
3. Nobody achieves true or Christian holiness apart from their own work—we are NOT passive in pursuing holiness...
4. But—we can NOT achieve true holiness in and of ourselves—holiness is the result of abiding in Christ and walking by the Spirit...
5. All that's necessary for Christians to live a holy life—is freely and fully given to us in Christ—our Head and Husband...
6. God is very unlike Pharaoh who commanded the Hebrews to make bricks but failed to provide them with straw...
7. This is NOT like God—for while He does command us to be holy—He also provides everything needed for that holiness...