



A Passion for Holiness – Part 8
Ezekiel 43:12
GCSP – 05/02/2009

In the 1400's a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have "The rule of thumb."

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on; hence the phrase, "Goodnight, sleep tight."

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down." It's where we get the phrase "Mind your P's and Q's."

Many years ago also in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. "Wet your whistle" is the phrase inspired by this practice.

A saying we use today with a more obvious origin and meaning is "The law of the house" or "The rule of the house." It is a term we use to set forth rules and models of behavior for those who are staying in our homes. These rules may or may not be standards that the people observe in their own homes or outside of their homes, but while they are abiding in your home they are to be observed.

I was talking to a person recently who mentioned that her grandkids were watching some movies in her home. When she sat down to watch with them she was appalled at the content of the movies. She stopped the movie and would not allow movies like that to be watched in her home. The children may be allowed to watch those movies in their own home but the law of this house was no objectionable movies.

I have known some who have unsaved adult children who come to stay at their homes with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Although these consenting adults normally sleep together, the law of the house is unmarried couples do not sleep in the same bed together.

Each of us may have other house rules such as, you have to bring cookies when you come to my house.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Prophecy of **Ezekiel**.

Ezekiel 43:1-12

Let's pray.

The physical Temple in Israel is no longer in existence. God's house is now the church; and by church I do not mean buildings but those who are God's true children. In **2 Corinthians 6:16**, God says through the Apostle Paul, "**I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**" God's dwelling is now within those who have confessed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord of their life, and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead.

It is in God's house that He makes Himself known. Those outside the house, meaning those unbelievers who are in the world, do not know God. They may know a little about God but they do not know Him; only those "in the house" truly have the opportunity to know God. It's just like your casual acquaintances and neighbors, they may know who you are but they truly do not know you. It is only those who are in your house that have the opportunity to come to know who you really are.

And for that matter, coming to a church service is a good thing but you will not get to know God just by sitting in a church service. The church building is not God's house. You do not come to this building to meet with God. Now if you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and through the conviction of the Holy Spirit you happen to pray and are genuinely saved, then you may indeed meet God for the first time here in this building but once you have been saved you meet with God everywhere you go because His house is now within you.

God also cares for and protects His house. If your house had a window busted out you would be quick to replace the window or board it up until the repair could be made. You tend to the things that attention when it is your house. You spend your strength, your energy, your substance, and your time in tending to the needs of your house. God does the same but with infinitely more care and concern – God will see to it that His house does not fall to spiritual ruin or decay.

I don't want to confuse the picture here so bear with me a moment. The Bible tells us that our bodies are the Temple of the living God if we are truly one of His children. We are in essence the house of God. But we are also now part of the household of God. We are God's children and we are brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ according to **Hebrews 2:12**. And since we have been given this great privilege to be sons and daughters in the family of God we had best understand the law of the house.

The Separateness of Holiness

In **1 Timothy 3:15**, the Apostle Paul says, "**I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God and the pillar and support of the truth.**"

God's house is not lawless. It is a place of great liberty and freedom but it is not a place of license; your liberty and freedom must never lead to sin. They that dwell in God's house are in His immediate presence, and **Hebrews 12:29** tells us that our God is a "**consuming fire.**" God will judge sin in the house.

He or she who dwells with the holy God must also be holy. Again, the Apostle Paul says, "**If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are**" (**1 Corinthians 3:17**).

Ezekiel 43:12 – “This is the law of the house: Its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.”

God makes Himself abundantly clear by beginning and ending this immense statement with the words, **“This is the law of the house.”** There can be no mistaking what is being said. God does not allow us to claim ignorance of His law. God frames His law with a proclamation before and a proclamation after; and we had best pay attention.

And the law of the house is that everything about us is to be holy – check that, everything about us is to be most holy. In the physical temple of God only the small inner chamber was to be most holy, but here God says the **entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy**. Every room, every hallway, every chamber, every court, and every nook and cranny is to be most holy. God’s house, God’s church, God’s people must be pure, and clean, and righteous, and gracious, and kind, and patient, and loving, and commendable, and separate, and like God.

The law of the house is that we are to be most holy by being separate from the world.

The Scope of Holiness

The scope of this kind of holiness is all-encompassing. This is far from being on your best behavior when we gather together and letting your guard down throughout the rest of the week. This kind of holiness leaves no room for being one person in church and another person outside the church. This kind of holiness doesn’t come and go depending upon your company, or your geography, or your circumstances, or your mood.

The same awe and wonder and reverence you display around the Lord’s Supper should be present at the dinner table. The same behavior you display at church in the company of your brothers and sisters in Christ should be indicative of your behavior on the job or in the fields or on the highway or in the grocery store. Paul says in **Colossians 3:17**, **“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”** And by now I shouldn’t have to remind you of what the word all means.

We are to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. We cannot separate the different functions and roles of our lives and justify behaving one way here and a different way there. You are not a different person behind the wheel of a car than you are lifting your hands in worship here on Saturday nights – at least you’re not supposed to be according to the law of the house. You are not a different person talking to a contentious person than you are when talking to God in prayer. We simply are not to compartmentalize our lives to the degree that we are two or three or four different people. The law of the house is that we are to be most holy everywhere we are and everywhere we go.

According to **1 Thessalonians 4:3** it is God’s will for our lives that we be sanctified in all we do. Being sanctified literally means to be set apart from the evil and wickedness of the world and to be set apart to holiness and righteousness and obedience to God’s Word. When we choose to be less than this just because “that’s the way I’ve always been where I work” or “because people might make fun of me if I change now” or any other excuse you can come up with, you are refusing to abide by the law of the house;

and beloved, when you choose to disobey the law of the house you will suffer the consequences.

I have been asking the Lord to reveal to me where I am lacking in my life. There are far too many struggles in my life right now. I had a huge and unexpected tax bill that put us behind the eight ball financially again, my time seems to be squeezed more each day, my energy level is dropping, and various other little annoyances. I have been standing on the promises of God but things seem to get worse instead of better. Where am I violating the law of the house?

For me, I felt compelled to go back to **1 Corinthians 3:17** - "**If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**" I am not taking care of God's temple. Contrary to what you see in front of you, I rarely overeat. A couple of eggs and toast, or a bowl of cereal is enough at breakfast. One sandwich will do me in at lunch time. I hardly ever clean my plate at dinner. But I do eat too many unhealthy snacks and sweets in between meals. I hardly ever get any exercise.

I will continue to ask the Lord to reveal where I am violating the law of the house but it appears He has given me a starting point: Severely curtail the snacks and sweets, and make the time for exercise.

For you it may be something different, but maybe you also need to consider what ways you are destroying the temple of God.

This is the law of the house.

The Public View of Holiness

We also must notice that this holiness was not concealed in a valley or hidden in the woods. The illustration Ezekiel uses is of the Temple on top of the mountain where all could see from far away. Our holiness should never be for show but it is not to be overly hidden either. Yes, I know that Jesus tells us to pray and fast and give in secret, but we are also at times to pray and fast and give in public. We pray out loud together in the public assembly, we sometimes fast together, and we have the example of Barnabas and others who gave publicly and it was commended in front of all.

The Bible says the world will know that we are Christians by our love for one another. How will they see our love for one another if we hide it? Jesus speaks of letting our light shine before men and not hiding it under a bushel basket. Our faith, our testimony, our witness, our holiness and righteousness must be able to be seen. Again, it should never be seen for the sake of gaining glory or honor for yourself, but to bring glory and honor to God. There is a fine line between humility and pride but it is a line we called to walk.

We are called to be a peculiar people before the world. You can't be peculiar to the world if you are never seen by the world. You also can't be peculiar to the world if you choose to act like the world in their presence. Be courteous, be kind, be gentle, be loving, be joyful, be giving, be humble, be honest, etc., especially when you are in public. The world won't know how to react. I sometimes get strange looks from people

when I hold a door open for them; some act like that has never happened to them before.

We are in the world but we are not of the world – when we allow ourselves to act like the world does we are being of the world. So let your light shine before men, let your good deeds be seen if you are able to give God all the glory and honor, and let your holiness be in the **entire area on the top of the mountain all around**. Again, not for the exclusive purpose of others being able to see, but because your whole life is immersed in obeying the law of the house, and others cannot help but see if they see you at all.

And that is the key. If your life is as holy as it should be you are not going to have a problem with pride. If your life is as holy as it should be every time someone sees you they will see acts of holiness. If your life is as holy as it should be your light will shine brightly before men and your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ will be so evident it will draw others to Jesus Christ.

When you think about it, if your holiness is never seen by others isn't it actually a false holiness of some sort? Isn't that a form of hypocrisy since you are someone different in private than you are in public?

“This is the law of the house: Its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy.”

The Consecration of Holiness

The utensils and other items in the Temple were holy because they were dedicated for the Lord's use. So it must be with us. We belong to the Lord and we are to be completely and singularly dedicated for His use.

If you took a spoon out of your silverware drawer and then went outside and started digging in the dirt with it, the spoon has no right to tell you it shouldn't be used like that; your wife might but the spoon can't. It's the same with us when we continue to do everything we want to do in the timeframe we choose and in the way that we choose. Where is God in that picture? Where is the One who paid for the right to use us as He pleases? The law of the house is that the Master of the house chooses not the servants.

Beloved, if God has a particular use in mind for your life, you are crazy to think you know better and then to resist. God's plan and purpose and use of your life is the absolute and ultimate best thing for you. There is no debate about it and no questions; God's way is not just the best way it is the only way.

We are not consecrated to holiness and consecrated for the use of the Lord when we have our life and time mapped out without allowing room for God to come in and rearrange everything. We are not our own for we have been bought with a price and it is up to the Lord to use us in anyway He sees, at anytime He sees fit, in anyplace He sees fit, and for however long He sees fit.

God asks, albeit in a different context, **“Will a man rob God?”** What do you call it when you take your life back after it has already been purchased by the blood of Jesus

Christ? And isn't that what you are doing when you determine to use your lives how you see fit instead of submitting to what God wants to do with your life? Are we not in essence consenting that the world, the flesh, and the devil should use the vessels that have been dedicated to God alone?

You are consecrated for the Lord's use – and this is the law of the house.

The Conformity of Holiness

True holiness is not complete unless you add conformity to the will and character of God. If we are God's children and His servants then we must obey His commands. Our will must be conformed to His. We must be ready to do His bidding at any moment. And His bidding is written down for us in His Word. Holiness means there is absolutely no hesitation when we know what the Word says. Holiness means immediate confession and repentance the moment you realize you have violated even what you consider to be a small command of God's Word.

As I preached about last week, we must pattern our lives after Jesus Christ. We must take out that divine tracing paper and copy every curve and angle of His character. Back in **verse 10**, Ezekiel says we must **measure the plan** when we are ashamed of our iniquities. We must realign our thinking and our behavior according to what God has outlined for us. In every situation and before every decision the question must be asked, "What would you have me do Lord?" Or at the very least you must know the Lord Jesus so well that you could easily determine what He would do in your shoes.

Conformity to the will of God is the law of the house. Being like Jesus Christ is the law of the house.

The Communion of Holiness

Lastly, holiness requires close communion with God. We spent 13 weeks looking at several aspects of prayer in the believer's life, so we have a good foundation at least to build upon in this regard. But having a knowledge about prayer and actually spending ample time in prayer are two totally different things. Any efforts you make at becoming holy will fail miserably apart from prayer. For all of the many faults of the Pharisees, and for all of their misunderstandings and sins, they still had at least a head knowledge that the Temple was a place of prayer.

How much more should we understand this? The Pharisees by and large didn't even know God yet they came to the Temple to pray. We who know God and now are the temple of God should be all the more fastidious about our times of prayer. Prayer should overflow from our hearts and our lips on any occasion throughout the day. "Thank You Lord" should be as common as the beating of your heart. "Praise You Father" should sound out of every breath you take.

Communion with God is the law of the house.

So where are you tonight? Are you separate from the world? Are you consecrated for the Lord's use? Are all areas of your life holy before the Lord? Is your life so consistently holy that you have no choice but to let your holiness be seen by men? Is your will conformed to God's will? And do you commune with God through prayer as you should?

This is the law of the house.

Let's pray.