

## LIVING ON PURPOSE

You have all probably played the game with a child, which one is different. So which one is different? It's not hard for us to see. But when we examine these different chairs I want you to think about this. The distinction in these chairs is not the outward looks even though that is what we see. **The distinction ultimately comes from the purpose of the chair**. The distinct purpose of each chair is reflected in the design and looks of the chair.

Two of these chairs are dining room chairs. They serve a distinct purpose for sitting around a table. It does not matter if they are used at meal time or for game time, they were designed for a person to sit up straight, even lean forward. Although there is a back on these chairs and are used they are not comfortable the rest against. Slouching or sitting in one of these chairs for an extended period of time would grow very uncomfortable.

The one chair is a sitting chair. Its purpose is for sitting comfortably. Whether reading, relaxing, or watching, the distinct purpose is comfortable resting. The back is designed to be rested against, and yes, it even reclines. This chair could be used at the table but it would not be comfortable. The arms are too high, and its meant to be used with the back rest.

This morning we are going to examine God's covenant call to Israel. That covenant was for Israel to live set apart for the purpose of pointing people to Him. God called Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

All too often when we think of God's call to live holy or priestly, we focus on the externals. How it looks, what are the ruling guidelines, etc. THIS IS NOT WHAT LIVING HOLY MEANS! God's covenant with Israel was for them to live distinctly set apart with the purpose that God would receive the most glory possible.

LIVING as a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation was NOT about what Israel did and did not, but about whom they were living for.

We left the Story of God and His creation with God's covenant people in Egypt where they remain for 400 years. During this time the Israelites grew to a

people group of over 2.5 million. The Bible says, the size of Israel caused the Egyptians to fear them. The result was slavery.

The bible says in **Exodus 2**:<sup>23</sup> During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.<sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.<sup>25</sup> God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

Last week we examined God's response to sin. We noted that God justly and rightly judges sin. We also noted though that God is merciful. He does not always demand the penalty for sin. The Bible says, God's mercy was to be received through substitutionary atonement. God also proved himself faithful to his promises. We see God's faithfulness in verse 24. God remembered his covenant promises to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob.

- God knew of Israel's hardship.
- God sovereignly raised up a man named Moses.
- God chose Moses and his brother Aaron to lead His covenant people, the Israelites.
- God used miraculous events to bring about Moses and Aaron's leadership;
  - a burning bush,
  - a staff that turned into a snake,
  - a hand that turned leprous and back again, and
  - this was only the beginning.
- God would send 10 devastating plagues to prove that HE is the ONE TRUE God.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and culminating plague was an angel of death, sent to kill all the first born in the land. The only deliverance from this plague was through the death of a perfect lamb. The animal was killed, its blood collected and then smeared on both sides and the top of the doorposts. This blood signified a substitutionary atonement for the first born of the home. God provided a way to escape death through death.

**Exodus 12:** <sup>12</sup> For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: **I am the LORD.** <sup>13</sup> The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

God continued to prove to Israel verse 12, “**I am the LORD.**”

After this final plague, the Israelites were told to go. As you can imagine, they left in a hurry.

God continued to providentially protect Israel.

- He miraculously saved Israel from the Egyptian Army while destroying them at the same time.
- He revealed himself as a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day leading Israel to the Promise land.
- God provided water, manna, quail and everything they needed to survive.

Exactly 3 months after leaving Egypt, God lead Israel into the desert of Sinai where they camped by the mountain, Mount Sinai. We pick up the story in

**Exodus 19.**

**19** On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. <sup>2</sup> They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, <sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup> You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

<sup>7</sup> So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>8</sup> **All the people answered together** and said, “**All that the LORD has spoken we will do.**” And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

God had just established His covenant with His people. Up to this point, the people of Israel were a group assembled around a common ancestry. God was going to take this group and make them into a nation just as he had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY, GOD IS FAITHFUL.

In Exodus 19 God established Israel as “HIS TREASURED POSSESSION AMONG ALL PEOPLES.” God was not playing favorites but he was playing for keeps.

I've talked about my coffee and coffee mugs before and this works well. We have about a dozen coffee mugs in our house. However, I use 1. It is mine. Darla bought it for me, it's big, its blue and brown, and it says French Roast on it. This is my treasured coffee mug. Every morning one of the first things I do is look for it. If it's dirty I rinse it out and clean it. Then use it. If you come over and I offer you coffee I will not give you my cup but will give you another like this. I take care of it and use it almost exclusively.

When God says he would make Israel his treasured possession he was declaring Israel as exclusively his. He would be the protector/provider for Israel. The people of Israel would his people.

Verses 5-6 reveal God's covenant expectation with Israel. This covenant was like the one made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Notice that it is conditional. God required Israel to OBEY GOD and remain FAITHFUL TO GOD'S COVENANT. When Israel obeyed God, Israel would hold a special place within God's creation.

Notice in verse 5 God is able to do this because He is the creator owner of the world. As creator he can chose any people to favor he desires. Israel was that people group, yet to receive God's favor they were required to OBEY!

I am the owner of the my cup. Although I did not create it, I am the owner. As long as the cup is pleasing to me, not chipped, marred, or broken, I choose to use it as my primary holding place of warm coffee. As long as Israel was obedient to the LORD, they would be God's ...

1) Israel would be GOD's kingdom of priests and

## 2) God's holy nation.

Before we look at these two outcomes in detail we need to understand verses 7-8. God was speaking to Moses in 5&6. Moses took God's message to Israel where the Bible says, "**all the people answered together, ALL THAT THE LORD HAS SPOKEN WE WILL DO.**" **ALL** of Israel agreed to the conditions. Why wouldn't they? They just saw God do mighty, awesome, and miraculous deeds. They wanted God's favor. They wanted to be his priests and his holy nation. They all agreed to the terms to Obey His voice and keep his covenant.

### I. ISRAEL BECAME GOD'S KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.

The Hebrew word for priest is **Kaw-han**. It has to do mediating or officiating a religious service. Therefore, within the nation of Israel, God would appoint mediators to lead people in receiving God's mercy and worshiping Him. Worship of the true God, creator of heaven and earth, would be facilitated by Israel.

As God's Kingdom of priests, God would **PRESCRIBE** within Israel his **PLACE** of worship, His **PRIESTS** of worship, and his **PROCESS** of worship.

1. God begins in EXODUS 25 where God prescribes the place of worship.

### READ Ex. 25:1,2, 8-9

**25** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>"Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. ... <sup>8</sup> **And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.** <sup>9</sup> Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the **tabernacle**, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

God instructed Moses to collect resources to build a sanctuary for Him. Sanctuary in the Hebrew is **Miqdawsh**. **Miqdawsh is a place of consecration or holiness.** It is a sacred place of purpose and distinction. The Mosaic Tabernacle was to be distinct and sacred **because** God would dwell there. (v.8)

*Miqdawsh* is not strictly a ceremonial religious location, but it obviously takes on that distinction within God's conversation to Moses. In Exodus 25-28 & 30 God prescribed the furniture and building requirements for His sanctuary.

God's presence would remain distinctly with Israel as they were his kingdom of priests as long as Israel obeyed God's voice. God's *miqdawsh* was with Israel.

2. Furthermore, God prescribed the people of Israel who would be His priests, officiating or mediating God's mercy to the people.

Everyone in Israel was NOT a priest. God's promise was that within his treasured nation there would be priests to mediate between God and man.

**TURN TO Exodus 28** where we find Aaron and his sons ordained as the first priests.

**28** *"Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.*

Aaron and his offspring were God's priests. As priests they would fulfill the prescribed process of worship by God in the Tabernacle or place of worship. Without the priest no ordinary person, Jewish or otherwise could come to God on God's terms. As a kingdom of priests, Israel had the only people chosen by God to mediate between God and mankind.

To assist the priest, God set apart the tribe of Levi. Their job was to

- serve the priests,
- serve the people in the Tabernacle,
- guard the priests,
- guard the people
- guard the Tabernacle. This is found in Numbers 3:5-10.

The Levites did NOT offer sacrifice or perform priestly duties. They were only to assist. Worship of the True God required His place, sanctuary, and His officers, the priests.

### 3. God prescribed the process of worship. Leviticus 1.

By Leviticus 1 the Tabernacle had been built and furnished. In Exodus 40 God filled and cleansed the Tabernacle with his glory. The book of Leviticus prescribed for the priest's and the Levites God's method of receiving mercy through sacrifice and offering. As you finger through Leviticus you will see the various offerings for sin, guilt, peace, burnt and so on. Last week noted how these were to take place as a substitutionary atonement.

Later on in Leviticus God prescribes various processes for receiving mercy in life's circumstances that would make a person unclean.

God's way of substitutionary atonement came to a peak on the Day of Atonement. **TURN TO Leviticus 16.** Once a year on the Day of Atonement the High Priest would offer sacrifices for the sin of himself, his family, and the people. He would go into the Most Holy place to atone for the sin of the people by sprinkling the blood of a goat on the mercy seat. The Bible says God would meet with the High priest in the MOST HOLY PLACE.

Afterwards he would wash himself, and a second goat 21, *shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness.*

Through this process God would atone for the sin of the people. The Day of Atonement happened once a year as God's way for Israel to receive his mercy.

As a kingdom of priest's, Israel was the mediator of God's mercy through atonement by having God's sanctuary, God's priests, and God's procedures.

All of this was to be a foreshadow of what was to come. As promised beginning in Genesis 3:15 that God would provide a Deliverer to man's sin problem. The

Tabernacle was only a temporary solution. This foreshadow was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

**HEBREW 9:11-14** <sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered **once for all** into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**, thus **securing an eternal redemption**. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ...

Note what the writer of Hebrews says regarding Christ's fulfillment.

- Christ is high priest mediating between God and man.
- He only enter the holy place 1 time.
- The Sacrifice was himself, *His own blood*. He is the substitute.
- The redemption he offers is eternal.
- He was the perfect sacrifice as he was without blemish to God.
- The purpose of his sacrifice is so that those who in faith trust his sacrifice would serve the living God.

Friends Christ put away sin through his sacrifice so that those who trust him might serve him. Sin no longer requires animal sacrifice, it requires Christ's. Because Christ's substitutionary atonement secured eternal redemption we do not need a high priest for Christ is our high priest who intercedes on our behalf.

The Bible goes on to say that those who have believed are priests.

### **1 Peter 2:9**

But you are a chosen race, a royal **priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

**What is atoning for your sin?** Animals will not, and your works cannot, your parents faith will not, only by placing your trust in Jesus as your substitute to atone for your sin will you secure eternal redemption.

A kingdom of Priests is only part of the promise Israel looked for, jumping all the way back to Exodus 19 we find God promised that they would be a holy nation.

## II. Israel was to become a holy nation.

**<sup>5</sup>Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup>and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."**

The Hebrew language gives insight into understanding what **holy** means.

### 1. HOLY

- a. the **adjective**, *qadosh*, "holy,"
- b. the **verb** *qadash*, "to be holy,"
- c. The **noun** *qodesh* that has the meaning of "apartness, sacredness."
- d. The word *qedesh*, "sanctuary."
- e. The word *miqdash*, "sacred place." This should pop out at you because God called Israel prepare for him a miqdash as part of their priestly kingdom.

### 2. Etymology from Hebrew Lexicons

- a. Brown, Driver and Briggs (BDB) list the meaning of the word as "**separation**" or "**withdrawal**," and the denominative verb *qadash*, "**to be set apart, consecrated**."
- b. The dictionary by Koehler and Baumgartner (KBL) list the various meanings as "**to be holy, withheld from profane use, to be treated with special care, fallen to the sanctuary's share**."

**Holy in the Hebrew designates something that is set apart or distinct for a purpose.**

Without going into much detail, a biblical study of the English words holy, holiness, consecrate, and sacred will reveal things that have been set apart by God to further His glory. Day seven of creation, God declared holy, because he

celebrated his creation which was very good. In Revelation 21 God's New Jerusalem is declared holy because of its awesomeness in looks and purpose.

This is even seen within **God, who is holy**. God's holiness is an all-encompassing attribute. God's nature is distinct for the purpose of his own glory. To say that God's holiness is his righteousness and purity would miss the essence of what holiness is. **Holiness is more than a moral attribute**. Holy is an all-encompassing character trait. God is holy. God said, "I am holy." God's nature is holy, and God's nature does not change. Holiness as a part of God's nature impacts all his attributes.

Therefore, when God told Moses, Israel would be his holy nation, God was saying that Israel would be set apart from the other nations for the purpose of revealing God's glory.

This chair is a holy chair in my office because it is a resting chair. It is set apart for reading and resting. We can note all the attributes that help this chair give rest. It is soft, it reclines, it has arm rest, the list goes on, however it is set apart from all other chairs in this building because its purpose its design is rest.

When God told Israel they were to be a holy nation to HIM. It means their purpose was to point people to God. God provided them with the place, people, and process. Yet, as a holy nation, God was providing Israel with the purpose. Israel was to live purposefully reflecting the glory of God he had favored on them. This purpose would require living in a way that was **distinct within their culture**. This distinction is revealed by God Law, as seen by the 10 commandments.

## Exodus 20

1 <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me." Israel was to live purposefully ONLY for the LORD God. Israel's distinction is monotheism. Israel would be tempted by paganism and pluralism yet the number one distinction Israel was to have was ONLY the LORD as their God.

2 <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I

the LORD your God am a jealous God. Furthermore Israel was to live on purpose without false gods, images, or idols. God was not only concerned with being number 1 but he was concerned with being the only God worshiped.

3 <sup>7</sup>“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, Israel was commanded to live purposefully with respect toward God. The LORD God was not to be taken flippantly. He was to be respected and kept in the most honored place of a person’s heart and life.

4 <sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Israel was to live purposefully setting aside a day to remember their holy covenant. Sabbath was a sign between Israel and God recognizing God was the one who made them holy.

Commandments 1-4 speak to purposeful living towards God. Commands 5-10 speak to purposeful living toward others.

5 <sup>12</sup>“Honor your father and your mother Israel was to live purposefully within God’s family structure. Children were to live purposefully through respect, order, polite, and obedience. Children would be a factor in Israel’s holiness by their actions and attitudes towards their parents.

6 <sup>13</sup>“You shall not murder. Israel was to live purposefully promoting life. 6 condemned the taking of life which God gives. Life was to be respected, honored, and cherished. Life was not to be flippant. Furthermore, this meant the Israel would be made up of people who would be able to control their anger and emotions. Even in their attitude they would not have the disposition of murder.

7 <sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery. Commandment 7 struck at the heart of pagan practices, worship, and lust. Marriage is the only acceptable time and place for sex. Chastity was a virtue of holiness that would point toward God’s distinction of Israel.

8. <sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal. Command 8 reveals respect and honor for another’s property. Taking another’s property would not be tolerated. Simply because it was lying around or you desired it, did not make it fair game. Property had an owner. No holy nation could allow stealing of property.

9 <sup>16</sup> “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Commandment 9 is about honesty. Lying and deceitfulness are not righteous and therefore cannot be holy. As a holy nation, the people of Israel were to speak honestly about one another.

10 <sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet Not only was Israel not to steal but they were not to envy other peoples possessions, abilities, looks, or anything they did not have. They were to be content with what the LORD had given them. God had given them everything they had from the land of Egypt. God would give them back the promised land. All they needed was God’s continued blessing.

In all these 10 commandments would offer the distinction between Israel and the nations around them.

I want to emphasize to you God’s law provides the external attributes of a holy nation. Holiness is purposeful living for God. NOT following a list of rules. This does not mean the law God had given was unimportant, it is holy. Romans 7:12 “So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and righteous and good.”

The attributes of this chair are important. They are good, they help serve its purpose, they do **NOT** create its purpose. So to the Law helped Israel serve it’s purpose of holiness, BUT ONLY God could create HIS purpose for ISRAEL as a holy nation.

Listen to Deuteronomy 7 as Moses instructs the people on holiness and God’s rules. <sup>6</sup> “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is **because** the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, <sup>10</sup> and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. <sup>11</sup> You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

Israel was to be God's holy nation. There is great blessing and great responsibility within this distinction. In Exodus 19 I remind us the promise of God is conditional. God would **ONLY** keep the nation of Israel holy and special if they **OBEYED** him.

The Redeemed of the Church are called to be holy. We read this in 1 Peter 2. We find throughout the N.T. God's expectation of Believers to be and live holy.

**Ephesians 5:**<sup>25</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* <sup>26</sup> *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* <sup>27</sup> *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish*

Sanctify is the idea of holiness. It is only possible through the death of Christ.

**Colossians 1:22**  
*Christ has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you **holy** and blameless and above reproach before him,*

Set apartness comes by reconciliation through the death of Jesus Christ. We are holy because of what Christ did. Just as Israel was holy because of God's choosing, believers are holy because of Christ's atonement.

**Ephesians 1:4**  
*even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy** and blameless before him.*

Like Israel there is a matter of election likewise there is a matter righteousness and purity to holiness. . **Holiness is BECAUSE of what Christ has done, NOT to receive what Christ has done.** Holiness is affirmed through pure living. We are to be live on purpose so that we might be blameless.

**2 Corinthians 7:1**  
*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing **holiness** to completion in the fear of God.*

Again we see this truth in Romans 12.

### Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, **holy** and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Furthermore holiness is seen for the believer as an over-arching nature, not an attribute. We are to live distinct with purpose at all times and in all things.

### Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, **holy** and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

For the believer ...

- Holiness for us today and for Israel is less about **what** you and I do and MOST about **who** you are living for.
- Holiness is less about the **rules** you follow but MOST about **THE ONE** you follow.
- Holiness is about living on purpose. For the believer Christ has set you apart through faith in his death and resurrection. Your purpose is now to live in such a way that God would receive the greatest amount of glory possible. Yes, God gives us commands and guidelines, but the more concerned you are about giving him and bringing Him glory in everything, the less concerned you will be about a checklist of rules and regulations.

Christ was the fulfillment of what God had instituted within Israel. Do you believe this? If Not Today is the day you can trust him.

Believer, Who are living for? For what purpose is this time of your life? You are called to live holy. To live with a purpose that would bring God the most glory possible. As you look at your life, can you say you are living in distinct with the purpose of bringing God glory?