

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

“When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Pro 16:7)

**Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,
(2Ti 1:9)**

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

The Holy, Holy, Holy God

March 22, 2026

Sermon Text: Isaiah 6

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died

before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, '**By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.**'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. (Lev 10:1-3)

Aaron's sons decided that they could improve upon the worship of God by introducing some mixture of incense or perhaps by using coals from a source other than that which had been designated. They must have approached their priestly duties with a flippant attitude – “hey, got a match?” The exact details are not given, but the

important point is they had decided to do it their way. Not the way God had commanded. Their way. It was the last time they would. They found out – too late – that God is a consuming fire. Moses gave this sober reminder to Aaron, a truth which the Lord had already spoken to them:

'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'"

This morning, I want to talk to you about the *holiness of God*. In that great 6th chapter of Isaiah which tells us about how God called Isaiah to be His prophet, we have God's holiness described to the 3rd degree:

Isa 6:1-7 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. (2) Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3)

And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." (4) And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. (5) Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (6) **Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.** (7) He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

NOTE: It is possible that Isaiah 6:6 identifies the correct fire that Nadab and Abihu were supposed to use?

What is Holiness?

What does it mean to be holy? What is *holiness*? It is a word used so commonly in the Bible that we

easily assume we know, when in fact we do not and you will see this if you are asked to define it.

Now, this ignorance is something we need very much to correct. After all, the Lord has said it:

'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'"

So then, how do we treat the Lord as holy? What does this mean? WE are people who come near to Him, so....??

Qadosh

This is the Hebrew adjective. The Hebrew lexicon defines it this way:

Qadosh describes that which is intrinsically sacred or which has been made sacred by a divine rite. It describes that which is separate from the common or profane.

Separate. God is separate. From what? From us. From sin. The Holy One of Israel cannot condone sin. God hates and punishes sin.

This explains Isaiah's reaction when he saw the Lord lofty and exalted in the temple:

*"Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips."*

"Num 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

Nadab and Abihu treated God as if He were just a man, whose commandment was no big deal. Their censers and firepans and incense were regarded by them like any other common instruments. They did not regard the Lord as holy.

Many other items in the Bible are called "holy." The temple and it even had the "holy place" and the "holy of holies." The showbread. The garments of the priest. The altar of incense and much more.

Why? *Because all of these things were separated from the common and devoted to the sole worship of God.*

When Yahweh appeared to Moses in that burning bush, suddenly the dirt upon which Moses stood was *holy*. He had to remove his sandals to acknowledge this. The presence of God was using that bush and that piece of land for *uncommon and sacred* purposes. You have it in the Lord's commandments as well:

Exo 20:7-11 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. (8) "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. (11) "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested

on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

When anyone treated God's name or His Sabbath day as common, as just another name or just another day, they met the same fate as Aaron's sons:

Exo 31:14-15 'Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. (15) 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death.

Holiness then is *apartness, sacredness, hallowed*. "Hallowed be Thy name..."

God is holy, holy, holy. He is not a creature. He is not a man. He is *other*. He is UN-common. Even His Book is *the Holy Bible*. Many, many times in the Old Testament

we read of people or things as being “Holy to the Lord,” including the Lord Jesus Himself –

Luk 2:22-23 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (23) (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),

Failing to regard the Lord as Holy. The sin of Nadab and Abihu – treating the Lord as common rather than “other.” Acting as if God were profane, one of us, rather than sacred. Thinking and acting as if the commandments of the Holy, Holy, Holy One are suggestions, optional. Regarding His Church as just another common, everyday social club organized by man, and treating the things He has declared to be Holy as if they were no different than a dish or hammer.

What is Holiness for Us?

'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'"

In the history of this church, what would we say has been the greatest sin? Divisiveness? Heresy? Pride? Immorality? All of these things have come in among us at one time or another, but I do not believe that any of these sins, though very wicked in themselves, have been the worst. The greatest sin has been this:

This is a great sin, and it is one we need to repent of daily and do battle against it. I have been guilty of it I am sure – often – and so have you. It is the great sin of the visible church today – regarding Christ’s church as a place for man to do whatever he wants, rather than in awe and reverent fear confessing that we are on holy ground.

Let me give you an example – this one more subtle I suppose than the more obvious cases. This is the “about” statement on the web page of a church which grew out of a

Bible study I led for a number of years –

Welcome to.....Our church is located in beautifulLiving in an area full of beauty and the wonder of God's creation, we are also aware of the hurts and struggles of everyday life. In this exact moment God sees both your struggles and joys. Our desire as a church is to share with people the life-changing message of Jesus Christ and how the truth of the Bible speaks to our everyday struggles and longings.

Do you see it? The church, even the gospel of Christ, *is fundamentally about YOU. About YOUR everyday struggles and longings. That is what the good news of Christ is – to meet your longings and struggles.*

Let me ask you – do you think this is what Isaiah had on his mind when he saw the Lord? Of course not.

Isaiah was overcome with his sinfulness. With his UN-holiness.

All in contrast to the Holy, Holy, Holiness of God. And of how he deserved to be consumed by holy fire because he, a sinner, was in the presence of the Holy One of Israel.

But that truth does not attract crowds, does it? Nevertheless, this is where our preaching must begin. Man's longings and joys are polluted because his heart is polluted by sin. He deserves, everyone of US deserve, the same fire that consumed Aaron's sons because in his sin, man does not regard God as holy nor honor Him.

Only then, only when Isaiah was undone – coming apart at the seams because he saw his own sin juxtaposed to the holiness of God – only then was he ready for this:

Isa 6:6-7 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. (7) He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

By God's amazing and saving grace, His own consuming fire becomes the instrument by which the sinner is made holy – "your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." Christ bore that fire for us on the cross.

You Are to be Holy For I am Holy

1Pe 1:13-16 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (14) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, (15) but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; (16) because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Lev 20:26 'Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

1Pe 2:9-12 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (10) for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. (11) Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. (12) Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

If you are in Christ, if you have been born again, then then you are a holy one, a saint. And we are to live out that holiness in our lives. What is holiness? *It is separateness. It is sacredness. It is devotion to God's purpose. It is UN-commonness. It is this:*

2Co 6:14-18 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (16) Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. (17) "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you. (18) "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Holiness is the opposite of worldliness. It is to live out what God in Christ has declared us to be.

So, how are you doing in this regard? How separate, how apart from the world are you?

Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy

Now, let me give you a very practical example of living out this holiness. (And by the way, just consider how much of the New Testament is God's instruction and commandments to His people on living in holiness).

Here is a hands-on way of holiness for us –

Exo 20:8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Now, lest anyone try to dismiss this as "well, that is Old Testament Law, not for us today," consider:

1Co 16:2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

Act 20:7-8 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. (8) There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

It is very plain that in the New Testament era the Church regards the first day of the week as the sabbath because Christ rose on the first day. This is what our confession says:

As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the

beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe a holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

The Lord's day is *holy to the Lord*. It is *other*. It is set apart for the worship of God. When we treat the Lord's day as common, we profane it. We sin the same sin as Nadab and Abihu because like them we are failing in this very regard:

'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'"

Treating the Lord as common by regarding His commandments as optional, is just as serious today as it was in the Old Covenant era. Here it is in Hebrews:

Heb 10:23-31 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (26) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a terrifying expectation of judgment and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.** (28) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the

testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know Him who said, **"VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY."** And again, **"THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."** (31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Heb 12:28-29 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; (29) for our God is a consuming fire.