

We've been considering the Activities of Holiness—which I have suggested are two—mortification and vivification—to *mortify* is to put to death—to *vivify* is to animate, foster, and promote life—the first is negative and the second positive—these two comprise two sides of the same coin—and are necessarily related...

Furthermore—I suggested that vivification entails both the—Cultivation of Grace and Conformity of Life—concerning the first (the cultivation of grace in the heart)—we learned there are four key graces that need cultivation in our pursuit of holiness—FAITH in God, HOPE in God, LOVE to God, and FEAR of God—these graces are cultivated through the intercession of Christ, the indwelling of the Spirit, abiding in Christ, and the private/public means of grace...

Concerning the second of these (the conformity of life)—this refers to our outward conduct or behavior—that, as we shall see, is ultimately, conformity to Christ—thus—holiness first concerns what we ARE and then what we DO—or, what we ARE manifests itself in what we DO—the true having been made good, the fruit is now good...

John Owen—"There can be no more vile and sordid hypocrisy than for any to pretend unto inward sanctification (holiness), while their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness and duties of obedience. Wherever this root is (inward holiness), there it will assuredly bear fruit..."

Now—before I come to our headings—I want to say a few brief words on this text—it contains many of the themes we have recently seen—[1] the place of hope (v13), [2] mortification (v14), [3] vivification (v15), [4] motivation—[a] the character of God (v16), [b] the fear of God (v17), [b] the knowledge of our redemption (vv18-19)...

- I. The Doctrine Stated
- II. The Doctrine Applied
- III. The Doctrine Clarified

I. The Doctrine Stated

1. Gospel holiness entails the conformity of life to the holy character of God, as revealed in the law, and fulfilled in Christ...
2. Now—before I examine the various phrases in this statement—let me say—this conformity is in fact singular...
3. The holy character of God revealed in the law—is the same moral character fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ...
4. This holiness, as seen in God's character, revealed in His law, fulfilled in Christ—is what Christians are being conformed to...
5. [1] Conformity of life—here I simply want to remind you, that holiness concerns both the HEART and LIFE...
6. These necessarily go together—the one is the soil from which the other grows—if the tree is good the fruit will be good...
7. But having dealt with the heart in the last two messages—I'm here referring to the outward activity of word and deed...
8. V15—"be holy in all your conduct"—the Greek rendered "conduct" means—"behavior, and manner of life..."
9. This word refers to the outward activity or behavior of a person—yes, it anticipates the inward activity of the heart...
10. But—it specifically refers to the outward activity of LIFE—to that which is visible—to our WORDS and DEEDS...

11. [2] Character of God, vv15-16—"but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy..."
12. Notice—that our holiness is to patterned after God's—who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light...
13. Now—it seems likely that Peter is specifically referring to the Father—obedient children (v14), call upon the Father (v17)...
14. We are to be holy because He is holy—our holiness is to reflect His—there is a similarity between Father and son...
15. Every Christian, when he is born again, is recreated after the image of the Father—we share His image or likeness...
16. And—sanctification entails the slow process of being changed every day—further into the moral image of God...
17. Thus—oftentimes Christians are commanded to imitate their Father—to CONFORM their behavior after His...
18. Eph.5:1—"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children"—that is—CONFORM your behaviour after His...
19. Matt.5:44-45—"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust..."
20. That is—be loving towards your enemies because God is loving towards His—conform your behavior to His...
21. Lev.11:45—"For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy..."
22. There are two things about this OT quotation that shed light upon our present subject—[a] redemption, and [b] obligation...
23. [a] Redemption—"For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God"—this refers to redemption from Egypt...
24. This was typical of our redemption from this world—by blood more precious than that of the Passover Lamb...
25. To be redeemed is to be delivered at a price—those redeemed belong to the Redeemer—they are His possession...
26. [b] Obligation—"You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy"—that is—morally pure and separate from all that defiles...
27. Now—in the context this meant—obedience to the various dietary restrictions associated with the Old Covenant...
28. They were to refrain from all that would defile them, v43—"You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping things that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them..."
29. V44—"For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy..."
30. That is—they were to refrain from all that defiled, because they belonged to God—who was Himself holy...
31. [3] Revealed in the law—that is to say—God's moral purity and holiness is revealed to us in the moral law...
32. The Ten Commandments are a reflection of the eternal and moral character of God—a reflection of His moral image...
33. The moral law of God, as summarized in the TC, is a verbal expression, of God's holy and moral character...
34. Rom.7:12—"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good"—by "law" is meant—the moral law as summarized in the TC and reduced to two—love God and your neighbor...
35. By "commandment" is meant—the ninth commandment in particular, v7—"I would not have known covetousness unless the law has said, You shall not covet..."
36. In other words—the entire TC as a whole and each commandment in particular is—"holy and just and good..."

37. These are three attributes of the law—the law is "holy and just and good"—the law defines what is holy, just, and good...
38. Everything that disagrees with the law is unholy, unjust, and evil—the law is the standard that defines holy...
39. But each of these three attributes also define God's moral character—for God alone is—"holy and just and good..."
40. In other words—we find in the moral law a perfection reflection of God's eternal and unchanging moral character...
41. John Murray—"Moral law is in the last analysis but the reflection or expression of the moral nature of God. God is holy, just and good, and the law which is also holy, just and good is simply the correlate of the holiness and justice and goodness of God..."
42. Thus—the conduct of Christians is conformed to the law—when they live lives in harmony to its holy demands...
43. [4] Fulfilled in Christ—that is to say—we see both the holy character of God and the law—in the person of Christ...
44. Michael Barrette—"It is easy enough to say, Be like Christ. But what was Christ like? What made Him *'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners'*? The answer is simply that He perfectly obeyed the law of God..."
45. Everything Christ did was in perfect harmony to the law of God—His life was a living transcript of the law...
46. Ps.40:6-8—"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law *is* within my heart..."
47. The writer to the Hebrews quotes and applies these words to Christ in Heb.10:5-9—these are the words of Christ...
48. Historically—our reformed forefathers—often divided Christ's obedience—into PASSIVE and ACTIVE obedience...
49. [a] Passive obedience, v6—"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened, burnt offering and sin offering You did not require..."
50. Verse 6 must be understood in a qualified sense—the sacrificial system was but typical and temporal (positive)...
51. V7—"Then I said, Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book if its written of me"—that is—in the eternal purposes of God or in the OT Scriptures...
52. In other words—He came in fulfilment of the OC sacrificial system—He came to become the burnt offering...
53. [b] Active obedience—this refers to His perfect obedience to God's law in thought, word, and deed—He must be the spotless Lamb...
54. V8—"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heat"—the Father's will and law are one...
55. The imagery here is of the Ark of the Covenant—into the Ark was placed the two tablets of stone—the TC...
56. This is to say—that the TC—the moral law—was in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ—perfectly and fully...
57. Or—to put it another way—Christ obeyed the law perfectly—He fulfilled it in THOUGHT, WORD, and DEED...
58. Thus as we behold Christ—we behold the perfect fulfilment of God's law—we behold the embodiment of law...
59. Thus—while Christ came to fulfill all law—ceremonial and civil—these were but temporal applications of the moral law...
60. It's for this reason, as we shall see next week, the NT constantly put's Christ before us as—our perfect example...
61. Furthermore—the NT also expressly teaches that Christ is our perfect pattern—into which we are being conformed...

62. Rom.8:29—"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren..."
63. [a] Morally—that is—we are being conformed to His moral likeness—and one day will be pure and blameless...
64. Peter described Him as—"a lamb without blemish and without spot"—that is—morally perfect without a flaw...
65. One day—every Christian shall stand before Christ—without blemish and without spot"—morally perfect...
66. Eph.5:27—"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..."
67. [b] Physically—that is—Christ is not only the pattern of our perfected souls—but also our glorified bodies...
68. This is the meaning of the phrase—"firstborn among many brethren"—He is the firstborn of many, from the dead...

II. The Doctrine Applied

There are two fundamental applications I want to suggest in light of this doctrine—we will look at the first of these this morning, and the second next week—[1] There is no true holiness without OBEDIENCE to God's law, [2] There is no true holiness without IMITATION to God's Son

A. There is no true holiness without OBEDIENCE to God's law

1. Here—I want to address two issues—WHY obedience to God's law is essential to holiness, and WHAT obedience to God's law is essential to holiness...
2. But before I do that—I want to make sure that everyone understands what I mean by—the moral law of God...
3. It's summarized in TC—it's reduced to love God and your neighbor—it's spiritual (or it concerns the thoughts, motives, and intents of the heart)—it's pervasive (that is—includes all the moral commands of the NT)...
4. Let me provide an illustration that I've used before—the moral law of God could be likened to a single tree...
5. This tree has two great branches—from the first come the first 4 commands and from the second come the latter 6 commands...
6. But from these 10 smaller branches come the various twigs that comprise every command found in the NT...
7. [1] WHY obedience to God's law is essential to holiness—that is—why is God's law important to our holiness...
8. [a] Obedience to the law is obeying God's will—that is—God's will and law are synonymous—they are one...
9. Ps.40:8—"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart"—His WILL and LAW are one...
10. Now—it is true that the Father's will for Christ was unique—it was His will that He die for our sins on the cross...
11. Let me ask you this question—what does God expect from us—what does He desire His redeemed people to do...
12. Or, put another way—how do Christians please their Heavenly Father—what does He expect from His children...
13. Well—His law is His will—it is His desire for His people—He wills that they obey or comply with His law...
14. 1Pet.4:1-3—"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles – when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries..."

15. V1—describes our union with Christ and death to sin—because of what Christ has done—we've ceased from sin—as a master...
16. V2—describes the practical result of this deliverance—that we should no longer live for the will of the Gentiles...
17. That is—by faith in Christ we've become true sons of Abraham, spiritual Jews, and no longer Gentiles—morally speaking...
18. Thus—we should no longer live to fulfill the will or desire of the Gentiles—as it's graphically described in v3...
19. The list of sins recorded in v3—can be categorized into two kinds—sins against the first table and second table...
20. Basically there are two wills or desires contrasted—there is the will of the Gentiles and the will of our Father...
21. By nature—we live to do the will or desire of the Gentiles—and by grace we live to do the will of our Father...
22. [b] Obedience to the law is an expression of love—that is—God's law is the track upon which our love runs...
23. Every Christian loves God and wants to show that love—well, how can they show or express that love but through obedience...
24. 1Jn.5:3—"For this is love for God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome..."
25. In other words—how are Christians to express love to God—this is love for God—"that we keep His law..."
26. Well—the law shows us how to express that love—You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image...You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...Remember the Sabbath...Honor your father and mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall bear false witness. You shall not covet...."
27. [c] Obedience to the law is a purpose of the gospel—that is—Jesus died to enable us to obey the law by faith...
28. Think of it like this—since sin is lawlessness (1Jn.3:4)—the gospel delivers us from a sinful or lawless life...
29. Christ died to secure gospel resources—that Christians will be enabled to, from the heart, obey the law of God...
30. Thus—Christians get new hearts that have the law written on them, and the Holy Spirit to cause them to walk in His commandments...
31. This is what it means to be under grace and not law—Christians are no longer under the law as a covenant...
32. They are now under grace—which means—they have everything necessary to obey and fulfill the law by faith...
33. Rom.3:31—"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law (Lk.1:74; Tit.2:14)..."
34. This verse is in response to a supposed assumption—Paul has repeatedly stated that salvation is not by the law...
35. Well then—if salvation is NOT by the law but by FAITH—then does that mean the law has no value or purpose...
36. V31—"Do we then make void the law through faith"—does salvation by faith make the law useless or empty...
37. There's hardly any way the apostle Paul could have stated it any stronger—May it never be, Not at all, God forbid...
38. On the contrary—"we establish the law (by faith)"—literally—"by faith we put the law in its rightful place..."
39. [i] In our JUSTIFICATION—faith lays hold of Christ who is the goal of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom.10:4)...
40. [ii] In our SANCTIFICATION—faith lays hold of grace in Christ—to fulfill the righteous demands of the law...

41. [2] WHAT obedience to God's law is essential to holiness—that is—not all supposed obedience constitutes holiness ...
42. [a] THANKFUL obedience—that is—obedience fuelled by gratitude for God's gracious redemption in Christ...
43. Christian obedience is not obedience to gain God's acceptance—it's obedience because we have God's acceptance...
44. Christian obedience is not obedience to gain deliverance—it's obedience because we have received deliverance...
45. Ps.119:32—"I run in the path of your commandments, for you have set my heart free"—law obedience is the result of deliverance...
46. Ex.20:2—"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me..."
47. Lev.11:45—"For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy..."
48. 1Pet.1:15—"but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct"—called you out of sin...
49. [b] HEARTFELT obedience—that is—it's obedience from the heart—it isn't merely external or outward obedience...
50. Ps.119:34—"Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole HEART..."
51. Ps.119:69—"The proud have forged a lie against me, *But* I will keep Your precepts with *my* whole HEART..."
52. [c] UNIVERSAL obedience—that is—obedience to the entire law—each particular commandment in both tables...

III. The Doctrine Clarified

1. Here—I want to close by providing a very important clarification—the law is good providing we use it rightly...
2. Samuel Bolton—"Let not Moses take the place of Christ; but, at the same time, make a right use of Moses. When works and obedience take their right place, when the law is rightly used, then it is holy, just and good. But if we use it as our life, then we trample the blood of Christ underfoot, and make His life and death in vain. Let the servant follow the Master; let Moses follow Christ; the law follow grace; obedience follow faith; and then all act their proper and designed parts..."
3. [1] The law isn't able to make us holy—now don't misunderstand me—the law shows us WHAT holiness is...
4. The law shows us what is pleasing to God—it defines what is holy, just, and good—it reveals God's will for us...
5. Thus—I'm in now way going back on what I've said—there is no true holiness without obedience to God's law...
6. But—the law does not in and of itself provide the strength to obey—this comes solely from Christ in the gospel...
7. You can look at your duty as found in the law all day long—but that will never give you the strength to obey...
8. Remember, what we've learned—the SOURCE of holiness is Christ and the CAUSE of holiness is the Spirit...
9. [2] The law isn't able to make us Christian—you can strive to obey God and your parents—but it's NOT enough...
10. I fear some of you will leave this morning thinking—I need to strive more and more to obey God's commands...
11. And yet for some of you—this is the last thing you need to do—you need to stop trusting in your obedience...
12. Rom.4:5—"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness..."