

“Attitudes Necessary To Live a Holy Life” - Part 2

Holiness

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1 Peter 4:1-6

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Bruce: Lord Jesus, when we are near the cross we are closest to You. Father, we pray that You would open our eyes, that we might behold You more clearly this day for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Over the last year, brothers, we've been studying the book of 1 Peter. We'll continue on with that probably for another year to get into 2 Peter. The major theme of that particular epistle is the holiness of God. And the reason the subject of holiness is so important is because holiness is the basis of our witness.

Our witness is not based upon our programs, upon our presentations or our personalities. Our witness for Christ is really an expression of our holiness, something that God produces within us. Holiness is not something that you and I achieve. Holiness is something that you and I receive.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: In our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes we do not see the forest because of the trees. Sometimes we get wrapped up so much in the skirmishes of life that we forget the campaign. And oftentimes in life we spend so much time talking about the tactics rather than focusing on the strategy.

The book of 1 Peter really is about holiness. And one of the reasons holiness is so important is that I want to take you to a major theme of the book of 1 Peter. Look at 1 Peter chapter 3.

And you see sort of a summary verse of the whole book of 1 Peter. It's found in this—verse 15 of chapter 3. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

Now notice. The first thing that we want to do if we're going to have the opportunity to give a defense for the hope that we have in us is that we need to honor Christ as Lord.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It starts with our view of God. If you and I do not have the right view of God, we're not going to have the right view of ourselves.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And if we do not have a right view of ourselves, we're not going to have a right view of understanding of what it means to be a witness.

We've been talking a lot in recent weeks about persecution, about suffering for righteousness' sake. We've been talking a lot about the difficulties that we have in life. And sometimes we get wrapped up too much in the tactics and forget the campaign. Sometimes we need to think more about the campaign and less about the skirmishes. In other words, we need to understand the big picture.

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The big picture in the books of Peter is this. When you and I understand how God is making us into a holy vessel—“we have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the all-surpassing power comes from God”—we begin to understand this, that when you and I go through the normalcies of life, we’re going to suffer persecution. But there’s a reason behind it, and don’t forget the big reason. Don’t get so wrapped up in what’s happening to me. We need to remember what’s going on in the big picture. Focus on the campaign, which is the marvelous act of redemption, and not the skirmishes.

The skirmishes are the everyday things in life that we’ve been talking about. The skirmish is what happened down in Charleston. But the big picture is this. God is using the normal situation, when people are suffering needlessly, to bring attention to Himself. That’s the big campaign, folks. It’s about redemption. God is redeeming His own.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He is the sovereign Lord of the universe. We don’t understand why things happen. Don’t get so wrapped up in the why. Look at the big picture and realize that the campaign is this. God is redeeming His own because He is the Lord.

Now Peter says this. When you and I understand what it means to be holy and what God produces in us through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, there are going to be times when you go through the normalcies of life where you’re going to have an opportunity to give a reason for the defense that’s in you.

Now notice our dear sisters and our dear brothers in Charleston. I was just so moved the other day and I just wept when I saw this woman speak about forgiveness. The commentator, the news anchor, had no idea what she was talking about. It was a foreign concept. “How can you forgive when your husband was just shot? How can you do that?”

And her gracious spirit came forth and she said, “I am the free person because I can forgive.”

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now folks, that is not normal.

Participant: Come on, sir!

Bruce: You can’t do that apart from the absolute grace of God. You see, that’s 1 Peter on display! And she’s giving a reason for the hope that’s within her. How can you have hope when your family was murdered? You see, it’s because of this. She has honored Christ as Lord. And as a result of that, she can give something away to somebody else that God had given her.

That’s why you heard me say a couple of weeks ago that one of the easiest things for a follower of Christ to do is to forgive. It ought to be one of the easiest things we ever do, because the Scripture says this: “Forgive as Christ has forgiven you.” If you don’t understand how much Christ has forgiven you, then there’s no way that she could ever say, “I forgive this man.”

But she understood one concept of the Scripture, and that’s this. She has been forgiven more than what this man has done to her family. That’s what Peter has been teaching us in our passage right now.

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Let's go to 1 Peter chapter 4, because he's saying this. Our attitude determines our outcome. And the attitude that you and I need to have as we move into the system of this world, there are three attitudes that we need to look at.

First of all, we need to have the right attitude toward sin. Second, we need to have the right attitude toward suffering. And thirdly, we need to have the right attitude toward judgment. Let's see our passage in 1 Peter chapter 4, beginning at verse 1.

“Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.” Same attitude. “For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions, but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do—living in sensuality, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties and lawless idolatry. With respect to these they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery. And they malign you. But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. And this is why the gospel is preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.”

One of our great defenses, men, in going through life are the attitudes that we have. Do we have the same way of thinking? You've got to have the proper view of your sin. That's why she could forgive! In God's grace she has a proper view of her sin. She also had a proper view of her suffering. And she also understands a proper view of judgment.

You see, she was able, in the normalcy of life, to give a reason for the hope that's within her. Do you know what that's called? That's called witnessing. Witnessing is giving a reason for someone else to want to follow Christ.

Now the thing that I got excited about her comment was this. She gave a reason for somebody to say, “How can that happen?” She was laying the foundation, the framework, for somebody to come along and say, “How is that possible, that you can forgive?” You see, she was giving people a reason to want to follow Christ.

And that's what our witness is. In the system of this world, when you and I live a holy life produced by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in us, you're basically saying to people, “Let me give you a reason to want to follow my Lord.”

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now let me take you back to an Old Testament illustration. The best illustrations we always find are from the Scripture. Let me take you back to 1 Kings chapter 18.

It's where Elijah confronts Ahab on Mount Carmel, down around verse 21. He makes one of the most amazing statements that you'll ever read in the Scripture.

Look at verse 20 of chapter 18 of 1 Kings. “So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go on limping between two different opinions?””

Now notice what he says next. “If the LORD is God, follow Him. But if Baal, then follow him.”

And notice the response. “And the people did not answer him a word.”

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Basically, friends, this is what he’s saying. If you say that God is God, then act like it. And if He’s not, then don’t act like it. If God is God, follow Him! If Baal is God, then follow him. But don’t be wishy-washy. Don’t sit on the fence. Make up your mind who you’re going to follow. Are you going to follow God or are you going to follow Baal? Are you going to follow God or the gods of this world? Make up your mind! And the people were so convicted that they had no response.

But I want to walk you through what happened in the next verses, because all Elijah is doing is he’s giving the people of Israel a reason to want to follow God.

Now notice what he does. He brings in all of these false prophets, and he says, (*Paraphrase*), “You erect your altar. You put the slain animal on it. And then you call down your god to send fire and consume the sacrifice. And I’m going to do the same thing. I’m going to build an altar over here. In fact, we’re going to cut the oxen in half. We’re going to put it on the altar. And I’m going to pour some water on it. I’m going to pour some water on the wood. I’m going to make it much more difficult. So if you really believe God is God, then follow Him. But if you believe Baal is God, then follow him. Don’t sit on the fence anymore. I’m going to give you a reason.” And so you can read the rest of 1 Kings chapter 18.

Now all Elijah does, folks, is this. He gives the people of Israel a reason to want to follow God. I want to encourage you to read the rest of this sometime today, this wonderful illustration, because you’ll notice that the people who worship Baal cry out for him.

Notice the sarcasm that Elijah has down here. “And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying,”—you see, because they cried out for Baal and nothing happened. Now here’s what Elijah says. “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing or he is relieving himself,” (*laughter*), “or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” Pray to him. If he’s God, follow him. But don’t sit on the fence anymore! Either God is God or He’s not God. If Baal is God, then follow Him. (*Paraphrase.*) “How come he’s not answering you? Maybe he’s on vacation.” (*Laughter.*) “Maybe he’s relieving himself?” (*Laughter.*) Now those are his words, not mine. (*Laughter.*) So I can say them. (*Laughter.*) And then he calls down fire from heaven and God answers.

Now there’s a wonderful analogy in all this, but the big picture for me is this. Elijah was giving to people a reason to want to follow God. And men, that’s what you and I do every day of our lives. That’s why we’re studying the book of 1 Peter. That’s why we’re studying the tactics of 1 Peter.

The tactics are these. You’ve got to have the right attitude towards your sin. The tactic is this. You’ve got to have the right attitude towards your suffering. And you’ve got to have the right attitude toward your judgment.

You see, those are tactics. But don’t get lost in the tactics. Remember the campaign. The campaign is this. You are giving people a reason to want to follow Christ. You’re basically saying, “If God is God, follow Him. If He’s not, then don’t. But don’t sit on the fence anymore.” And the people had no answer. Yes, please?

Participant: Interestingly enough, Elijah means Jehovah is God. I follow Jehovah. Elijah means that.

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Bruce: Thank you.

Participant: You're welcome.

Bruce: Now do you understand the illustration? That's what Peter has been teaching us for the past year. Give people a reason to want to follow Christ. Give people a reason to want to follow God. You see, that's what we do as a witness.

We think that witnessing is all sorts of manipulations that we do. Witnessing is the most natural thing that you and I are involved in because we go through the normalcies of life. And God uses the circumstances of life to put us into a situation where we can say this. “But thanks be to God who always,” always, always “leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and spreads the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him.” You see, men, every situation in which you and I find ourselves in the crucible of life is a reason to give somebody the opportunity to follow Christ because they see the way you and I respond.

The woman who said, “I forgive”—that's supernatural! That doesn't happen in this world apart from the sovereign grace of God. Yes, Tom?

Tom: I think the thing that hit me in that interview was that the press tended to think that the shooter was in control. But the lady knew that Christ is in control. And that changes everything.

Bruce: Absolutely. You see, that's the attitude.

Now Peter has been telling us in this passage in 1 Peter chapter 4 that you and I have three weapons. We've got three tactics in this campaign of redemption, in this campaign of giving people a reason to want to follow God. That's the big picture. Don't get wrapped up in what you're going through, so much as you realize that there's a reason behind what you're going through. And the reason behind it is that you may be placed in a position to give a witness so that somebody might want to follow God because of the way that you've handled this situation.

So it starts with—Peter says this—that you've got to have right attitudes. And the first one is this. You've got to have the right attitude towards your sin. You know you've been forgiven of the sins of your past. Colossians says, “Forgive as Christ has forgiven you.” The Disciples' Prayer—“Forgive us our trespasses, our debts, as we forgive our debtors, those who trespass against us.”

Now I'm not saying that this is easy to do. Yet it ought to be the easiest thing we ever do and that is to forgive, because you understand this. I'm not forgiving you because you deserve it. I'm forgiving you because I didn't deserve it. That's why we forgive. How can I not forgive you this time when Christ has forgiven me all the time? How can I forgive her so little when Christ has forgiven me so much? See, men, if you don't have the right attitude toward your sin, you're going to get lost in the tactics, and you'll miss the big picture. You'll forget the campaign. The campaign is that God is in the act of redeeming His own for His own glory.

You see, God is really interested in mankind. He really is interested in mankind. And that is because His glory is at stake. That's why He's concerned about man, because God's glory is at stake.

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Go back and read. In my mind the most important chapters in the whole Bible are Genesis 1, 2 and 3. If you don't understand Genesis 1 2 and 3, you'll get lost in the tactics, because the campaign is the redemption of fallen man because God's glory is at stake.

You have the right attitude towards sin. My past sins have been forgiven. I'm free in Christ. I'm no longer a victim; I'm a vessel. I'm set free.

You see, when you understand your sin, the sin of the past helps you understand how you manage potential sins of the future. That's realizing this. I don't have to live like that anymore. I've been set free because I've been forgiven by the grace of God. And now when you have to make a choice in your own life, you don't have to choose that anymore because you know this. I now can live in the will of God because I've been set free from my sin. You see, that's what Peter says.

He's saying that when you understand the sins of your past, you're free to live a holy life because your sins have been covered in the blood of Christ. And now you have an opportunity to make a decision to live in God's will. Now we've talked about God's will, His revealed will as opposed to His secret will. But if you don't understand the freedom that you have because your past sins have been forgiven, you're going to have a tough time making the right choices when sin confronts you now in your present life. The right view of your past sins puts you in a position to manage the potential sins of your present life. You just don't want to do it anymore because you know this. I would offend the One who has forgiven me.

You see, it all starts with the attitude, brothers. Do I understand the significance of my past sins being redeemed? I'm set free, no longer the victim. Now I can make a different choice. I don't have to make that decision anymore. I don't have to choose to do that anymore. I have no such thing as peer pressure anymore because the pressure now is that I want to glorify God by my choices because I understand this. I have been forgiven. Yes, Don?

Don: I think that what you say is crucial, Bruce, because it's not that I'm so fearful of committing that sin because I'm going to suffer judgment.

Bruce: Correct.

Don: But it's that I love my Savior! I don't want to offend Him! After all He's done for me, I don't want to do that. Unfortunately, we still do sin. But now it's that I love Him. I don't want to offend Him. I don't want to disappoint the One who has done all this for me.

Bruce: Amen. Amen. When you look at 1 John chapter four, we're told to test the spirits. Now let me just move off into a little bit of a tangent.

We talk about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If there's a Holy Spirit, there has got to be a what? An unholy spirit. Why does the word *holy* describe Him? Because he's setting up a contrast between that which is from God and that which is from the world.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: The unholy spirit is the system of this world. If there's a Holy Spirit, there's going to be a myriad of unholy spirits.

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And the apostle John says, “Test the spirits to see whether or not they are from God.” They’re either from the Holy Spirit or they’re from the unholy spirit. And one of the productions of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is this. It increases our love for God and our love for one another.

We often attribute works to the Holy Spirit that are really works of the unholy spirit. Because what is the role of the Holy Spirit? In John 15 Jesus says this. (*Paraphrase.*) “His role is to testify to Me and exalt Me.” Whenever the Holy Spirit is not exalting the Person and work of Christ, you know that it is not from the Holy Spirit. It is from the unholy spirit. His job description is not to call attention to Himself. It is to exalt the Person and work of Christ. And yet we attribute all this stuff to the Holy Spirit. “He told me to do this. He said to do this. He led me to do this.” And that’s from the unholy spirit, not the Holy Spirit because it does not exalt Christ. If it is not exalting Christ, it is not from the Holy Spirit.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: And get over this idea that we need to spend so much time talking about the Holy Spirit. His role is very simple—to guide us into all truth and to testify about the Person and work of Christ. If Christ is not exalted in whatever the Holy Spirit leads you to do, you know this, that it is not from the Holy Spirit. It’s from the unholy spirit.

Participant: Amen.

We need to test the spirits, men. This is serious stuff. Don’t forget the campaign. The campaign is redemption. Don’t get wrapped up in the tactics. Don’t lose the forest because of the trees. We’ve got to have the right attitude towards our sin. You’re forgiven! Now you can choose to live in God’s will for His glory. You just don’t want to offend the One who has done so much for you.

And you know this. If you leave this session on a Friday morning, if somehow there has not been a little bit more of a flicker of your love for God, then you know it’s not from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will do something and it’s to testify about Christ. And one of the consequences is this. You develop a greater love for God. And when you develop a greater love for God, you don’t want to do those things that offend Him. That’s how you handle your present sin. It’s recognizing that my past sin has been forgiven. Thomas?

Tom: Tim Keller makes a point in one of his books that a lot of times in so-called Christian societies, people use the expression “well, the Holy Spirit told me to do this,” as a means of control rather than a means of fellowship. And so you really need to test it. Just because someone says, “God said to me,” it doesn’t mean that happened.

Bruce: There’s all kinds of stuff attributed to the Holy Spirit that is the work of the unholy spirit.

Participant: Come on, sir.

Bruce: If you can’t confirm it by Scripture, you know it’s not the work of the Holy Spirit.

We need to be serious about this stuff! If you believe God is God, then follow Him. If you believe Baal is, follow him. But don’t sit on the fence anymore. And the people did not respond. They didn’t know what to say.

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Don't get wrapped up in the skirmishes of life, men. Realize the campaign. It's the marvelous ministry of redemption of a lost humanity for God's glory. God has great interest in mankind. And that is because His glory is at stake.

So first of all, Peter says to have the right attitude toward your sin. Secondly, have the right attitude toward your suffering.

Now we're talking about suffering for righteousness' sake, not for stupidity—not because we do something stupid, or call attention to ourselves very selfishly. He's talking about living a life as the people in Charleston did, where in the Bible study their lives were taken from them.

You see, that's suffering for righteousness' sake. And the response is this. I forgive. You see, the campaign was this: I forgive. You and I need to have the right view of suffering. It's expected. It's part of our calling. And Christ has given us the right attitude towards it, that when you suffer for the cause of Christ, you may be putting yourself in the position to give a reason for somebody to say, “I follow God because I believe He's God.” We give them a reason by our response. You see, the issue in life for us, men, is this. It's never what happens *to* us. It's our response *to* it. The real issue is how do I respond to it, not why did it happen. One question I quit asking myself several years ago because I never could get an answer, and that was this. Why? (*Laughter.*) Why? How come? What for? I quit asking that because I was getting lost in the tactics and forgetting the campaign. The campaign is that God is redeeming. You've got to have the right view of suffering. When you're suffering for righteousness' sake, it's normal. If you're not suffering for righteousness' sake, there might be something abnormal.

Now I'm not saying that you and I go out and do things to cause people to want to persecute us. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that when you have the right attitude towards your sin in your past and the right attitude toward the sin in your present, the consequences are that your life is going to change. And when your life has changed, the world is going to be after you because they can't understand it. Why is it that you're not joining them in debauchery anymore? You used to do that. We all had such great fun doing all that stuff. How come you don't do that anymore? They don't understand that. You're likely to suffer for that. Yes, Don?

Don: Bruce, I think it may be even more subtle than that, particularly if the Supreme Court hands down, for example, the decision legalizing “gay marriage.” “Well, why aren't you bigoted Christians for that? Don't you love? Are you so hateful? Why don't you go along with that? What's the big deal?” Or, you know, “Why are you so intolerant? How can you believe that Christ is the only way to heaven? Look at those poor Muslims or pygmies in Africa that never heard the gospel! How can you be so intolerant?” So I think that it might be a little more subtle than that. I mean, maybe some of us are tempted to, you know, engage in drunkenness or revelries or drinking parties. But I think it might be even more subtle with the philosophy of this world.

Bruce: Amen to that. It may be personally directed or corporately directed—personally directed to you individually as a member of the body of Christ and collectively aimed at the whole body of Christ because of bigotry, or whatever it may be. Yes?

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Participant: I’ve been thinking about this a lot lately because I can be very critical on people. But I thought, Well, you know what? I think that we should be critical—not critical with a critical spirit but critical in discerning, with a loving spirit. So I think that we really as men, as leaders of the home, as leaders in the church, that we really need to have that critical eye, that discernment, but do it in a loving fashion. And that’s what I’ve been trying to figure out lately.

Bruce: Go back to our key verse in 1 Peter. Yes, Bishop Rodgers, please?

Bishop Rodgers: I was just thinking that I read in the paper that in Canada they now want to put a pastor in jail because he spoke disparagingly of Islam as a false religion, and they now want to call that hate speech. Now there’s the thrust that we’re already beginning to experience.

Bruce: That’s the subtlety. Now one of the tests of the spirits in 1 John chapter 4 is this: that the ministry and message of the Holy Spirit opposes worldliness. That’s from the Holy Spirit. Any message that does not oppose worldliness is from the unholy spirit. That’s one of the tests in 1 John chapter 4, that Christ is exalted and it opposes worldliness. Yes, sir?

Participant: One of the moments I think I said something that was fairly well spoken was when my ten-year-old—this goes way back!—wanted to go to an R-rated movie.

Bruce: R-rated movie?

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: Okay.

Participant: Yes. There are a lot of things in the background. He couldn’t go alone. So, at any rate, him and his friend, you know, we sat and talked for about five minutes. And I didn’t make any sense. I mean, it was just, you know, not a conversation. Then finally I thought, and I don’t know why. I said, “You know, I don’t want to. I try not to go any place that would embarrass Jesus Christ.” Now I don’t know anything more than that I was convicted. I was probably the best recipient because I don’t go to R-rated movies today because I don’t lie to my son. And I just said something that I thought that for me, that was profound. For other people it may be just basics. But that’s all I have.

Bruce: Amen. Excellent, excellent. Thank you.

So we have to have the right view of our suffering. When you and I are living a Spirit-led life in the will of God—we are found *in* God’s will. Remember, you don’t find *out* God’s will, you’re found *in* it.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: When you and I are found in God’s will, the world suddenly or directly is likely to persecute us for righteousness’ sake, not because we’re stupid.

Now go back to 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 15, our key verse, because Brian brought up something very important for us to understand. 3:15 again of 1 Peter. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

Gentleness and respect. That’s how we respond to the suffering of this world because we understand the campaign and we’re not lost in the tactics, in the skirmish. Don’t get

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hung up on the skirmish, men. Realize the campaign! It’s much bigger than what you and I are going through. So you and I need to have the right view of suffering.

And thirdly, Peter tells us in this passage that we need to have the right view of judgment. We understand this, that God is the judge. That is not a ministry that I’ve been given.

And notice. He says that the gospel is being preached to those who are dead. In other words, he’s giving an illustration of those people who are unjustly treated, unfairly treated by the system of this world and they’ve gone on to be with the Lord. God is going to reverse that one day and judge it. His judgment will be upon them in His grace as opposed to what the world gave them. In other words, when judgment comes, it’s going to be rejection for those people who reject Christ and it’s going to be reversal for those of us who are in Christ because He will reverse what the world put upon us—reversal when the judgment comes. In other words, if you and I are treated unjustly, unfairly because of the persecution of this world, when Judgment Day comes God is going to reverse that. And He will make up the difference between what the world subjected us to and what He will give us in His grace. Yes, Don?

Don: Let me ask you something. In regard to that, knowing it will be reversed one day,--

Bruce: Mm-hmm.

Don: And knowing what Christ said about praying for our enemies, is there a balance there? In other words, can we pray, for example, imprecatory prayers? What I mean by that is some of the Psalms that say, (*paraphrase*), “Lord, destroy Your enemies?” Can we pray that and at the same time pray for our enemies, that they would come to Christ?

Bruce: Yes.

Don: Yes, okay. I agree with you.

Bruce: Thank you. (*Laughter.*)

Participant: That’s a relief! (*Laughter.*)

Bruce: Thank you. Now we need to have the right view of judgment. God is the judge.

Participant: Yes, He is.

Bruce: And He will reverse whatever the world throws at us during our lifetime. In His mercy and His grace one day that will be reversed.

One of the greatest prayers we can pray is to pray for our enemies. Pray for the lost, because it may be that God will place us in a position because of our attitudes towards sin and our attitude toward suffering, that you and I might be in a position to give a reason for our hope in this world, even to those who persecute us, even to those who treat us unfairly and unjustly, who persecute us for righteousness’ sake. God may reverse that one day.

So we can pray for them, that God might use you and me as a witness to give them a reason to want to follow Christ.

Brothers, that’s why we’re studying holiness, because holiness is the platform for our witness. It’s not our programmatic activity. It’s not our presentations. It’s not our personality. God can use all of that, certainly. But the basis of somebody wanting to say,

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“He is God. I will follow Him. You have given me a reason.” It’s because of the holiness of our lives that God produces in us through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, not the unholy spirit of this world.

Men, test the spirits. Do they exalt the Person and work of Christ? Does the message you’re listening to, does it oppose worldliness? Does the message you’re listening to incite a love for God and a love for people? Does the message you’re listening to exalt the Scripture? And does the message that you listen to lead you to study the Scripture more diligently? You see, those are the tests of 1 John chapter 4. We’ll get to that later on sometime, but those are the tests.

Test the spirits, men. There’s a lot of the unholy spirit working around us. We say that the Holy Spirit leads us, and He has nothing to do with it, because the primary role of the Holy Spirit is what? To exalt the Person and work of Christ. If that is not happening in a message you hear, you know it’s from the unholy spirit.

May God give us the ears to hear and the eyes to see and the hearts to discern the difference between that which is holy and that which is unholy.

Let’s pray. Father, thank You for the reminder that You are in charge. We need to honor You as Lord. That means we submit to Your sovereignty, that You do have a right to rule over our lives individually, our lives collectively, and the things of this world. We honor You as Lord. Father, give us the opportunity to give a reason for the hope that’s within us so that we can say this. “If God is God, follow Him. If God be Baal, follow him. But don’t sit on the fence.” May it be so for Jesus’ sake, that He’ll be glorified. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.”