

THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE

Exodus 6:6-8; Leviticus 22:31-33

INTRODUCTION

- A. The agony of choosing up sides for a neighborhood game.
 - 1. The biggest, fastest, strongest chosen first.
 - 2. The dread of being the last child chosen.
 - 3. Being chosen proves we are wanted and needed.
 - 4. But, it also brings about pressure – to perform!
- B. The Israelites chosen by God.
 - 1. Exodus is the “*good news*” (Chosen!), Exodus 6:7-8.
 - a. This nation of slaves – chosen by God.
 - b. God’s team. On God’s side!
 - 2. Leviticus is the “*bad news*”, Leviticus 22:31-33.
 - a. God’s expectations of Israel, in graphic detail.
 - b. If they were to play on His team, there were rules to follow.
 - c. Along with privilege came responsibility.

I. GOD, THE PERFECTIONIST.

- A. Understanding That God Is Different.
 - 1. The deeper into the Old Testament, the better understanding we have that God is different than us (stronger, greater).
 - 2. Perhaps even more is His purity and holiness.
 - a. We are flawed human beings – He is perfection personified.
 - b. We are full of sin – He has absolutely no sin.
 - c. We easily excuse our wrongs – He hates wrong with a passion.
- B. The Emphasis on Holiness.
 - 1. “Holy” appears 87 times in Leviticus – more than any other book.
 - 2. God stresses His holiness:
 - a. “Holiness” is the primary quality of God’s character.
 - b. His very name is holy.
 - c. The place He lives is holy.
 - d. The priests who serve Him are holy.
 - e. Whatever is dedicated to Him is holy.
 - 3. God’s people must be holy.
 - a. Lev. 11:44-45
 - b. Lev. 19:2
 - c. Lev. 20:7, 26
 - d. Lev. 22:31-32
- C. The Emphasis on Perfection.
 - 1. Anything dedicated to God had to be “without defect”.
 - a. The sacrificial animals had to be perfect.
 - b. The animals given as a tithe had to be perfect.
 - c. Even the priests who served God in the Tabernacle were to be required to be “without defect.” Blindness, lameness, any physical defect disqualified from serving in the Tabernacle.

2. “Without defect” in the physical realm symbolized God’s requirement that His people were to be “without defect” spiritually.
3. God took perfection seriously.
- D. The Emphasis on Cleanliness.
 1. “Clean” or “Unclean” is used over 200 times in Leviticus.
 2. Lev. 10:10-11. The task of the priests – to distinguish between clean and unclean, and to teach Israel to do the same.
 3. Leviticus is a handbook on “clean living”:
 - a. clean and unclean **animals**.
 - b. clean and unclean **foods**.
 - c. clean and unclean **sicknesses**.
 - d. clean and unclean **objects**.
 - e. clean and unclean **people**.
 - f. clean and unclean **relationships**.
- E. The Story of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:1-3.
 1. The Sin (vs. 1) – strange fire.
 2. The Punishment (vs. 2) – deadly fire.
 3. The Point (vs. 3) – “I will be honored.”
- F. Leviticus shows clearly: a holy God must have a holy people, a perfect God requires a perfect people and a clean God insists on having a clean people.

II. GOD, THE MERCIFUL.

- A. [Perfection] Beyond Their Ability.
 1. An incredible standard required by God for His people.
 2. Leviticus is even more about second chances.
 3. Man is unable to meet the requirement of perfection.
 4. God bends over backwards to make up for our failures.
- B. The Ideal and the “Allowance”.
 1. Holiness and Mercy.
 - a. God required people to be holy – the ideal.
 - b. People required God to be merciful – reality.
 - c. Leviticus tells how God takes unholy people and makes them holy.
 2. Cleanliness and Purification.
 - a. God required people to be clean – the ideal.
 - b. People required God to purify – reality.
 - c. Leviticus tells how God takes unclean people and purifies them.
 3. Here we have the standard; and here the means by which the standard can be met.
 - a. Not through man’s effort or goodness or perfection.
 - b. It is all through the mercy of God!
- C. The Purpose of Sacrifice.
 1. Sacrifice – a prominent theme in Leviticus.
 - a. All the animals killed – all that blood flowing.
 - b. All the ceremony and sacrifice and regulations.
 - c. The sacrificial system instituted for the fact that people could not be holy and clean and perfect.
 - d. God finds ways to make the imperfect perfect again.

2. Day to day sacrifices.
 - a. The sin Offering.
 - i. A sin is committed – confession made – animal sacrificed.
 - ii. The blood poured out at the base of the altar, fat burned on altar, meat eaten by priest.
 - iii. Lev. 4:31, “*Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.*”
 - b. The Guilt Offering – much the same.
3. The Day of Atonement.
 - a. Once a year, the sins of entire community forgiven.
 - i. The high Priest sacrifices young bull for self, sprinkles blood in most holy place on Ark of Covenant.
 - ii. Then sacrifices male goat for sins of people, following same procedures as above.
 - iii. Another goat, confess sins of all the people, releases goat into desert – the “scapegoat”.
 - iv. Finally, he bathes, sacrifices two rams as burnt offering – one for self and one for people, and pronounces people cleansed from sins.
4. The purpose – so God could give His people a second chance.
 - a. He required holiness – they were unholy.
 - b. He required perfection – they were far from perfect.
 - c. He required cleanness – they were an unclean people.

CLOSING

- A. God, the “Soft-touch”.
 1. God is the God of the second chance.
 2. God doesn’t go just the second mile – He goes a second “hundred” miles.
 3. The Case of the Poor Man.
 - a. Lev. 5:6 – a female lamb.
 - b. Lev. 5:7 – two doves or two pigeons.
 - c. Lev. 5:11 – a few handfuls of flour.
 4. God wants **nothing** to separate us from Him.
 - a. He doesn’t want sin to get between us, so provides a system of sacrifice to remove that barrier.
 - i. Then – an animal sacrifice.
 - ii. Now – the sacrifice of His Son, Col 2:13-14.
 - b. He doesn’t want cost to keep us from taking advantage of the sacrifice.
 - i. Then – a matter of finances.
 - ii. Now – a matter of response. No great deeds of daring, no conditions required.
 - iii. Only simple faith and obedience.