

Part 5 - Who is God?

A Study of His Attributes – Holiness

Opening

- Our studies are based around “Secret Church” – David Platt

One Big Question

What’s one of the big questions that get levelled at God?

After – Do you exist? What’s the question people ask?

In the midst of our own personal and family storms:

- Financial stress (money worries, climbing debt, unable to pay the credit card)
- Employment issues
- Business failures
- Health concerns
- Wayward kids playing up or getting into trouble

In the midst of the calamities in the world:

- storms (e.g. Vanuatu – cyclone Pam, 15 killed, 75K homeless)
- floods (e.g. Queensland 35 deaths, 90 towns inundated, 200K people affected, \$2.4B)
- earthquakes (e.g. Nepal)
- bushfires

Unexplained Suffering – the question of Suffering:

- sickness & disease
- rampant sexual abuse
- good people dying while bad people survive

Are You Good?

In the face of what seems to be evidence to the contrary, we ask 'Are you good?'

When God revealed Himself to Moses and the nation of Israel, it was in these terms:

 **Exodus 34:6 (NIV)**

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abounding in goodness and truth.**

The Bible says this about the eternal, Creator God:

 **James 1:17 (NIV)**

Every **good** gift and every **perfect** gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

If a gift is "good," it ultimately comes from God - the unchanging God.

The very nature of God is good.

 **Psalm 119:68 (NIV)**

You are **good**, and do **good.**

The Goodness of God

The following attributes of God deem that He is good:

- Holiness
- Integrity
- Love
- Mercy
- Grace
- Justice
- Wrath
- Jealousy

God's Holiness

It's a big subject so let's look at the subject of holiness today and what it means to say that 'God is Holy' and how this reveals His goodness.

First, the meaning of Holiness:

- set apart
- consecrated
- perfectly pure
- without corruption

 **Exodus 15:11 (NIV)**

Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

And we get this incredible scene revealed in Isaiah.

 **Isaiah 6:3 (NIV)**

I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

The words of the Seraphim (angels among the highest order of the heavenly creatures) are very telling.

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

This is the only attribute of God that's mentioned three times in a row in a succession like that. It's like Scripture is putting a bold, or italics, or underline on God's holiness.

They are revealing the following things about God.

1. God is Perfectly Unique

The Bible says several times that our God is:

- utterly unique among all the gods in the world and in history – and
- is utterly unique among all of creation

- He is different
- He is unique from us
- There's nothing like Him in all creation
- There is no one else like Him
- He is completely unique from all other Gods
- He is unequalled by any other

God says about Himself:

 **Isaiah 40:18 (NIV)**

With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?

2. He is Completely Separate

There is an “otherness” to God – to His nature, to who He is.

- He is separate from us
- Completely whole within Himself
- Completely satisfied within Himself

He stands completely alone as God of the universe – there is no rival:

 **Isaiah 34:10 (NIV)**

Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

It's one of the reasons that we worship – we are inspired by the sense of God's wonder, this 'otherness' about God. Without the sense of wonder, our worship is dry and indifferent.

I love what singer & song-writer Matt Redman says about God,

 ***He is beyond the grasp of human reason - far above the reach of even the loftiest scientific mind. He is inexhaustible, immeasurable and unfathomable—eternal, immortal and invisible. The highest mountain peaks and the deepest canyon depths are just tiny echoes of His proclaimed greatness. And the blazing stars above, the faintest emblems of the full measure of His glory.***

3. God is Absolutely Pure

God is not only unique and separate from us – but he is entirely pure.

- God is untouched by sin
- Morally and ethically pure
- His eyes are too pure to look on evil
- He is completely disassociated with evil
- He will not tolerate sin & wrongdoing

The scripture says:

 **James 1:13 (NIV)**

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

Aside: You might say, “what about the Lord’s prayer where it says, lead us not into temptation..?” What Jesus is saying (about requesting God to ‘lead’ us – to be our leader) – is “do not allow us to be tempted, but lead us away from temptation”. Temptation always come from the enemy – not from God.

The scriptures teach us that God is in fact opposed to sin – God calls us to holiness!

 **Hebrews 12:14**

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and **to be holy**; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

How does God reveal His Holiness?

You see it happening in so many ways throughout Scripture.

Through people

- His people - the Jews
- His disciplines - His church

Through objects

- The Ark of the covenant was so holy that it was dangerous

Through places

Exodus 3:5, and Joshua 5:15, are both times when God says,

“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.”

It's holy because God is there in His Holiness.

Through the Law

Leviticus 11:45 is when God says, “...be holy, because I am holy.” “

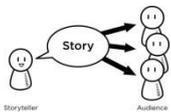
God says in essence, “Here's my law - it displays my holiness. You follow this, and you'll be reflectors of my holiness to the people about you.”

Through the Prophets & His judgments

Consider Achan's sin in Joshua 7.

Achan commits a sin and jeopardises the blessing of the presence of God on the entire of people of God.

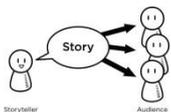
I want you to understand this story well for it reveals much about our lives as we live them today – I have tried to live by the standards set in this story.



Story of Achan and Ai. Achan hid the spoils of war under his tent. This was a violation of God's commands. The disobedience of Achan caused the deaths of many people as the blessing was lifted off Israel. His sin was ultimately punished by God's judgement of death.

Consider Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.

It is the beginning of the early church, and Ananias comes in first, he deceives, and falls over dead. Sapphira comes in next, she deceives, and she falls over dead.



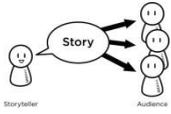
Story of Ananias and Sapphira. They both brought deception into the fledgling church. They both lied to the Holy Spirit and so brought judgement upon themselves.

And it says in

Acts 5:11

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

I imagine that would get your attention!



I always remember the story that Ian Bunnett used to tell about the 'Sin Sniffers' who were posted at the doors of a church in the Islands. If you had sinned and were not right with God they would send you away to repent before you could come back and enter the church!

God is more interested in the sanctity of His people than He is the size of our church. God is very serious about showing His holiness through His judgments.

Through His Church

You and I are supposed to be reflectors of the Holiness of God.

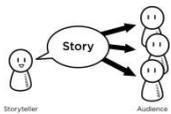
God is very serious about this – don't miss it:

- Our speech – what we say, how we talk (lie, gossip, slander, back bite)
- Our service – what we do with our time, talents and treasures
- Our love – how we treat each other (care, support, encourage, provide)
- Our lives – what we are given to or consumed by

We are supposed to look different for a reason – to reflect the Holiness of God!

We are intended to be a demonstration of the holiness of God in the communities where we live. This is why we must not be lazy when it comes to holiness.

People will see the holiness of God in us – or they will recoil from the hypocrisy on display (when we refuse to bring our lives into submission to God's demand for holiness).



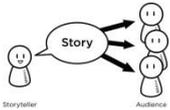
Shane was a lapsed catholic. He decided to visit a church after I shared Christ with him. He spoke with me later, and one of the stand-out things to impact him was the church car park and how polite everyone was. Sometimes the small things to us, can mean very large things to others as they watch on and experience God through His church.

Through His Son Jesus

He shows His holiness through His Son, Jesus, who is without sin.

It's in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we see the attributes of God revealed:

- Holiness
- Justice
- Wrath
- Mercy
- Grace



Story of 2 friends who grew up together – one became a criminal, the other became a judge.

Isaiah's Reaction to Holiness

Woe to me – I am ruined!

Isaiah 6:4-5 (NIV)

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

Touching Holiness without the cover of Christ's blood is a frightening thing. But we have the cover of Christ's blood that avails for us – and allows us access into the holy place with God. We are encouraged to come with boldness into His presence in Hebrews 4:16.

Let's pray.