

THE LEVITICUS FIVE

Part 1 • February 8, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

A HOLY GOD. A DWELLING PLACE. A HOLY PEOPLE.

If we're honest, Leviticus is one of those books most believers either skip or struggle through. Genesis gives us stories. Exodus gives us miracles.

Then Leviticus shows up with laws, sacrifices, and instructions that feel distant from modern life.

But Leviticus is not where God became rigid. It's where God moved closer and became relational.

The book opens with these words: "And the LORD called to Moses."

That matters. God had just filled the tabernacle with His glory. His presence had moved into the center of the camp. He reached out to Moses. The "phone" was ringing, not God's phone, ours was. He was the one that was calling.

And now the question becomes this: How does a HOLY God live in the middle of an unholy people without destroying them?

That is what Leviticus answers.

Not how to earn God's presence, but how to live with it. Not how to approach God once, but how to walk with Him continually.

Leviticus is part of Israel's journey from Egypt to promise. It is God teaching a redeemed people how to live as His covenant community.

And the central theme of the entire journey is holiness.

HOLINESS IS THE POINT

LEVITICUS 19:2 (NKJV), SAYS

"You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy."

LEVITICUS 20:26 (NIV), ADDS

"I have set you apart from the nations to be My own."

Holiness is not a side theme. It is the defining requirement of God's people.

Holiness is not about being weird. It is not about external appearances.

It is not about religious superiority. Holiness is about belonging to God. It's a calling out from something to something.

HOLINESS BEGINS WITH GOD

Holiness starts with who God is, not what we do. A self-centered faith will always struggle to grasp a holy God. Holiness confronts us before it comforts us. Holiness reorders our loves.

We have to unlearn the instinct to make our relationship with God about us, and relearn how to see Him for who He is.

God is holy. Completely pure. Morally perfect. Entirely distinct.

God does not measure Himself against everything else. Everything else is measured against Him. When Scripture calls God holy, it means He is utterly unlike anything corrupted or compromised.

And because God is holy, everything connected to Him becomes holy by extension. If you are connected to Him you and the things you touch will become holy. People. Places. Objects. Time. Holiness means set apart for one purpose. Reserved. Consecrated. Claimed by God. And here is where the tension begins.

Because holiness does not stay in the tabernacle. Leviticus teaches us that it follows God's people into everyday life.

Holiness is not defined by rituals we perform, but by the relationship we honor.

Leviticus is often misunderstood as a book of rituals and rules only. But embedded within the laws are instructions about how people treat one another.

Leviticus 19 speaks about honesty, justice, generosity, sexual integrity, business practices, and care for the poor.

God makes something clear. You cannot worship Him sincerely and mistreat people casually.

Holiness touches how you speak. How you work. How you handle money. How you treat your neighbor. How you care for the vulnerable. Holiness is not separation from people. It is distinction in how we love them.

HOLINESS WAS ALWAYS A RESPONSE TO GRACE, NOT A REQUIREMENT TO GAIN GRACE.

Now here is something crucial, that will help us today. Israel did not sacrifice to earn God's love. They sacrificed because God had already redeemed them.

Sacrifice was never payment. It was response.

God saved Israel first. Then He gave them instruction. And that same pattern carries into the New Testament. Just as Israel responded to God's grace at Sinai, the church responds to God's grace at the cross.

CHRIST IS THE FINAL SACRIFICE

Jesus fulfills everything Leviticus points toward. The book of Hebrews explains this clearly. Hebrews is known as the "Leviticus of the New Testament"

The blood of bulls and goats could never fully remove sin. They were shadows. Pictures. Temporary coverings. They were like mowing lawns to only have to mow them again, etc.

Jesus is the greater priest. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Jesus entered the true Holy of Holies once and for all with His own blood.

When Jesus died, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom. This wasn't pageantry. It was proclamation. The way into God's presence was opened.

Access was no longer limited. Forgiveness was no longer repeated. Atonement was no longer temporary.

IT WAS FINISHED.

SO WHAT ABOUT SACRIFICE NOW?

Here is where holiness becomes personal. The New Testament does not remove sacrifice. It redefines it.

Our sacrifices are no longer atoning. They are atoned for. They do not pay for sin. They flow from forgiveness.

Scripture calls the following sacrifices:

- Faith lived out in obedience.
- Generosity given to advance the gospel.
- Care for the poor and vulnerable.
- Proclaiming the good news.
- Praise offered to God.
- And ultimately, our lives.

ROMANS 12:1 (ESV), SAYS,

"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

God no longer asks for animals on an altar. ***He asks for you.***

EVERY BELIEVER IS A PRIEST

First Peter says something radical. "You are a holy priesthood." "You are a royal priesthood."

In the Old Testament, only priests offered sacrifices. Only priests entered sacred space. Only one priest entered the Holy of Holies. And only once a year.

But now, in Christ, every believer is a priest. Not by title, but by calling. You represent God to the world. And you bring the world before God.

And here is the shift that changes everything. The sacred place is no longer a building. The people are the temple.

THE TEMPLE MOVED, GOD DID NOT

Jesus said His body was the temple. Paul said believers are the temple. Peter said we are living stones being built together.

God still dwells among His people. But now He does so through His Spirit within them.

Your life is sacred space. Your obedience is worship. Your integrity is testimony.

Holiness is not about visiting God once a week. It is about carrying His presence every day.

ACCESS HAS BEEN UPGRADED

Hebrews says we now enter the Holy Place with confidence through the blood of Jesus. The Old Testament high priest entered once a year with fear and trembling. You enter daily with assurance.

That does not reduce reverence. It increases responsibility.

Because access without transformation leads to entitlement instead of awe. Holiness still matters.

HOLINESS TODAY

Holiness today looks like:

- Integrity in business.
- Purity in private.
- Faithfulness in calling.
- Generosity in giving.
- Courage in witness.
- Obedience empowered by the Spirit.

Your job becomes an altar. Your generosity becomes incense. Your life becomes a sacrifice. Not to earn God's presence. But because you already carry it.

Leviticus teaches us how a holy God lived among His people. The New Testament shows us how that same holy God now lives within His people.

Holiness is not the barrier to God's presence. It is the result of it. God is still saying what He said then.

Be holy. Because I am holy. And because I have made a way for you to live with Me.

Next week, we will look at what it means to approach God rightly and why reverence still matters in a grace filled age.

Because access has been opened. But holiness still defines the encounter.

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