



THE LEVITICUS FIVE

Part 2 • February 15, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

HOLINESS DEFINES THE ENCOUNTER

Last week we established something foundational. Leviticus is not about distance from God. It is about dwelling with God.

LEVITICUS 10:3 NKJV

By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.

Moses knew this already. Encounter is defined by how we regard God as Holy. Casual Worship will never equate to Holy Reverence.

EXODUS 3:5 (ESV)

Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

From Eden to the tabernacle, from the temple to the torn veil, God has never changed His requirement for encounter.

A Holy God chose to live among a redeemed people. And holiness was not optional. It was the condition that made the relationship possible.

Today we are going to talk about ENCOUNTER. Because while access has been opened through Christ, ***the quality of encounter is still shaped by holiness.***

ENCOUNTER IS NOT THE SAME AS ACCESS

This is where many believers get confused.

Access is about position. Encounter is about posture.

Through Jesus, every believer has access to God. The veil is torn. The way is open.

But Scripture makes something clear. Not everyone who has access experiences the same depth of encounter. God has no favorites, but there are people who favor Him.

God does not withhold His presence. ***The type of encounter with His presence is determined by OUR willingness to be near him,*** we already know he wants to be near us.

But He does respond to reverence. ***Reverence "thickens" His Presence.*** Makes it tangible. Obvious. Real.

Leviticus is deeply concerned with how people approach God. Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement, stands at the center of the book.

Everything before it explains access. Everything after it explains living in response. The message is simple. God is holy. And approaching Him carelessly is dangerous. This is not because God is harsh. It is because God is holy.

The Presence of God is likened to fire. Fire warms when respected. It destroys when mishandled.

NADAB AND ABIHU: A WARNING ABOUT CASUAL WORSHIP

Leviticus 10 tells the story of Nadab and Abihu. They were priests. They were anointed. They were authorized.

But they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord. They approached God in a way He did not command. And the result was immediate judgment.

This is one of the most sobering moments in Scripture.

Not because God was cruel. But because God was clear.

Holiness is not negotiable in God's presence. ***You cannot live contaminated and expect God's presence to dwell in your home.***

GOD'S STATEMENT AFTER THE JUDGMENT

After Nadab and Abihu died, God said this: ***"Among those who approach Me, I will be regarded as holy."***

That is the heart of this lesson.

God does not say, "I will be loved." "I will be enjoyed." "I will be celebrated."

He says, "I will be regarded as holy."

Holiness defines encounter.

JESUS DID NOT LOWER THE STANDARD, HE FULFILLED IT

Now here is where we must be careful. Jesus did not remove reverence. He restored access. ***The Access paves the way to intimacy through Holiness.***

The cross did not make God less holy. It made a way for unholy people to be made holy.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus entered the Holy of Holies with His own blood.

The veil was torn not to make worship casual, but to make intimacy possible.

Grace did not make God approachable by ignoring holiness. ***Grace made holiness attainable.***

THE VEIL WAS TORN, NOT THE THRONE REMOVED

The tearing of the veil did not remove God's holiness. It removed the barrier of sin.

We now draw near with confidence. But never without reverence.

Hebrews says we enter boldly, yet with a sincere heart, a clean conscience, and holy fear.

Confidence and reverence are not opposites. They are partners.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In Leviticus, God's presence was localized. Tabernacle. Temple. Holy of Holies.

In the New Testament, God's presence is internal. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

That means holiness is no longer about preparing a place. It is about preparing a life.

If the presence of God lives in you, then how you live matters deeply.

WHAT CASUAL CHRISTIANITY COSTS US

We live in a time where access is emphasized, but reverence is often missing.

We talk about God constantly, but tremble rarely. We enjoy worship, but sometimes forget Who we are worshiping. ***Casual Christianity does not lose salvation. It loses sensitivity.***

It dulls the awareness of God's holiness. And when holiness fades, encounter becomes shallow.

Video we watched in service is called: "Anguish" - by David Wilkerson

HOLINESS IS THE LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN

Isaiah encountered God and cried out, "Woe is me."

Not because God rejected him. But because God revealed Himself.

John encountered Jesus in Revelation and fell as though dead.

Not because Jesus was distant. But because He was glorious.

Encounter always produces awareness. Awareness of God's holiness and our dependence.

HOW HOLINESS SHAPES ENCOUNTER TODAY

Holiness today shapes encounter in several ways:

- It produces humility instead of entitlement.
- It produces repentance instead of excuse.
- It produces obedience instead of familiarity.
- It produces awe instead of boredom.

Holiness does not push us away from God. It draws us deeper.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Holiness defines encounter when:

- We refuse hidden sin.
- We honor God in private.
- We approach worship intentionally.
- We submit our desires to the Spirit.
- We listen before we speak.
- We obey promptly when God convicts.

Not to earn His presence. But to experience it fully.

The greatest tragedy is not that God withholds encounter. It is that we approach Him casually.

The invitation is open. The way is clear. The presence is available. But holiness still defines the encounter.

The same God who tore the veil still sits on the throne.

And those who draw near must regard Him as holy.

Next week, we will talk about atonement and transformation, how God cleanses His people so they can remain in His presence.

Because access brings us in.

But holiness keeps us close.

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