

The Levitical Law of Love

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[0 : 0 0] But we're going to turn now to our Bibles, and we're reading once again in the Old Testament in the book of Leviticus, early on in the Bible after the first few books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus.

And we're coming this morning to chapter 19, and I'm going to read from the beginning down to verse 18. And if you don't have a Bible, if you need a Bible, there's some at the sides, some at the front and the back.

Don't be embarrassed. Go and grab one. The red Bible's at the sides, and you'll be able to follow on and see what we're saying. So Leviticus 19 then at verse 1.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy. For I, the Lord your God, am holy.

Every one of you shall revere his mother and father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God. Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal.

[1 : 1 1] I am the Lord your God. When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or the day after.

Anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. If it's eaten at all on the third day, it's tainted. It will not be accepted. And everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity because he's profaned what is holy to the Lord.

And that person shall be cut off from his people. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap the field right up to its edge.

Neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare. Neither shall you gather the fallen grapes for your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner.

I am the Lord your God. You shall not steal. You shall not deal falsely. You shall not lie to one another.

[2 : 1 6] You shall not swear by my name falsely and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him.

The wages of a higher servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind. But you shall fear your God.

I am the Lord. You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great. But in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people. And you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. But you shall reason frankly with your neighbor lest you incur sin because of him. And you shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people.

[3 : 2 3] But you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. Amen.

May God bless to us his word. Good morning all. Please keep your Bibles open at Leviticus chapter 19 as we go through the first 18 verses of this chapter together.

What does it mean to be holy? I think it's something we can often have misconceptions of. It might be helpful if right now in your mind's eye you try to build up a picture of someone who is a holy person.

For me if I try to picture someone who is holy, who leads a holy life and walks in holiness. I would usually picture someone who is quite a serious person. And perhaps is always thinking of something quite lofty, quite high-minded.

They're devoted and love spending hours in prayer and in their Bible. Enjoying reading theology in their spare time. There's nothing they love more than being alone with the Bible and their thoughts.

[4 : 42] Which are not bad things by any means, of course not. And they are definitely aspects of holiness. But there is something absent from that picture of holiness. Which leaves it utterly incomplete.

And that is people. Because growing in holiness means loving other people. That's what the Lord teaches us in Leviticus 19.

He makes his people like him holy. And what that looks like is loving people well. Holiness is far more down to earth than we perhaps may have realized.

And it becomes real as it is lived out towards others. You can see that through this chapter. That when the Lord teaches what it means to become like him. He fills that with pictures of how to love people well.

In very mundane, day-to-day circumstances. He gives different examples of how to care for people. As you go about your work, your family, your business dealings.

[5 : 50] Holiness, you see, it's not a concept which hides itself away from the world. Within some kind of monastic existence. Or a holy huddle where we try to cut off the outside world.

Cut off people who make it difficult to be holy. But it's made known through loving the Lord. And loving people. Even those who have wronged us. And that holy love is not only a feeling.

It's not mere sentimentality. But it is full of content. And that content is the law itself. So the most holy people you know are those who love the law.

And live it out by loving people. That's what shows their Christian maturity and their devotion to God. That they love him. And they love their neighbor as their self.

Which should come as no surprise to us really. Because the law being loving is all over the Bible. Paul says in Romans 13 that love fulfills the law.

[6 : 55] In Galatians 5 he says that the whole law is fulfilled in one word. That you love your neighbor as yourself. And James wrote that loving your neighbor is the royal law.

The supreme law. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment in the law is. He said that you shall love the Lord your God. With all your heart. And with all your soul.

And with all your mind. Referring to Deuteronomy 6. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Referring to this passage. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. And it's often said that in doing that Jesus refers to the ten commandments.

Where the first four commands are primarily focused on loving God. And the preceding six are focused on loving your neighbor. The two tables of the law. And that's a very helpful point.

[7 : 49] Because this passage we've read has the ten commandments written all over it. Each command in this whole chapter is either a direct quotation of. Or an allusion to the ten commandments.

As the Lord teases out the implications of the commandments. In the lives of his people. You can see that at the beginning and end of this chapter. So verses three and four. Are direct pointers to the fifth, fourth and then second commandments.

And towards the end of the chapter we didn't read it. But look at verse 36 with me. The second half of it. I am the Lord your God. Who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Which is exactly the same wording as in Exodus 20 verse 2. Right before the Lord gives the ten commandments at the foot of Mount Sinai. The implication of all that is that this chapter which centers on love.

On loving your neighbor as yourself. It means that you do that by living out the law. By being a person who loves the law of God.

[8 : 57] This is like a brief sermon on how the ten commandments are to shape life. Because the law is not an unloving formulaic textbook meant to curtail life.

But it's the manual teaching us what it means to be fully human and to truly love God and our neighbor. The law is our best teacher when it comes to love.

So let's dig into this chapter. Our passage this morning has one main point. And then gives several different examples of that worked out in real life.

So we'll take it as it is. Our one big point is that those who belong to the Lord are to become like the Lord.

Look at verse 2 with me. Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them.

[10 : 01] You shall be holy for I, Lord your God, am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and father. And you shall keep my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal. I am the Lord your God. And that phrase, I am the Lord or I am the Lord your God, is a key phrase in Leviticus.

Before the Day of Atonement in chapter 16, it's only used twice. But then after the Day of Atonement, after this great sacrifice and reconciliation between the Lord and his people, the phrase pops up over 30 times and 16 times in this chapter alone.

As the Lord establishes what it means to be a person saved by him. And this chapter had to come at this point in Leviticus.

It couldn't have been in chapters 1 to 15. Because that sacrifice had not been made yet. It had to come after. And this makes clear that these laws, they're not the path to becoming saved.

[11 : 10] They're not a ladder for us to climb to reach God's holiness. But these laws are the privilege of being God's people. Of being saved. The Lord shows us how to act now that we have been saved.

Grace always precedes law. Because they belong to the Lord, they are to become, like him, holy. And God's holiness is his set-apart nature from creation.

He is utterly distinct and unique from creation with nothing quite like him. And there is so much more that you could expand on that one word, holy, in terms of his nature.

But for this passage, the key aspect of that is his moral holiness. His moral purity. As the rest of the chapter unfolds, it becomes clear that the holiness we are to share with the Lord is that of moral holiness.

Reflecting who he is and that we belong to him. As believers who have been saved by the Lord, we are devoted to him now. For his purposes.

- [12 : 16] For his glory. Different from all the other peoples of the earth. So we should expect to live differently from all the other peoples of the earth. That difference is very true when we think about loving people.

Because our world defines love in a particular way. Usually attaching it to quite mushy feelings and general sentimentality. Without ever landing on a specific definition of what love is.

It rarely becomes concrete. But as ever, we are not to take our cues from the outside world. We're not to consider what love is in light of what the world thinks.

But what the Lord says. And the Lord defines holy love as someone who does the law in all areas of life. That's why there are several different commands in verses 3 to 8.

Which show just how fully encompassing the law of love is for the believer. Verse 3. Holiness starts in the home. As you honour your parents.

- [13 : 22] The foundation for holiness is laid in the home. As parents bring up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord. Continuing in verse 3. Holiness goes through the whole week.

As you honour the Lord by working six days. Then resting the seventh. Worship the Lord as part of the regular rhythm of life. Holiness impacts your calendar every day.

And it concerns your worship too. From verses 4 to 8. As you devote yourself to worshipping the Lord alone and no one else in the way he has commanded.

Family life. Work life. Daily patterns. Worship. The Lord mentions these to communicate that all of your life is his. All of your life is holy to him.

It's not only our spiritual time that we hand over to the Lord as though that were a category in itself. But everything that we do in our lives is handed over to him.

- [14 : 23] We are under new ownership. And just as new owners of a business or house or restaurant will want to go through their place and put their stamp of ownership on it.

So does the Lord. In all of life we are to become holy. Set apart for the Lord. And that is wonderfully down to earth holiness.

It's not someone who is barely attached to reality. Not concerned with the goings on of the real world around them. Finding people trivial.

Finding their problems unimportant. But it's someone who lives in this world and loves the people around them. Particularly within the church family we are joined to in faith.

That's what these first few verses establish. That since we are saved to God. We belong to him. So we are to become like him. To act in the way he acts.

- [15 : 20] And become like him in the way he treats people. And then we come to verses 9 to 18. Which function as a living illustration of this law being lived out.

There are several different examples given. And it's easy to read them as quite isolated. Almost random laws. But I think here it's helpful to think that the Lord is picturing one person.

An average Israelite farmer. An Israelite everyman who is going about his work. Who owns his land. Hires people to work for him.

Sells his produce. Has opportunities he can take advantage of. And has disputes with his neighbours. And the Lord is using this one man to show that in one life.

The whole thing is devoted to him. Everything. Is to become holy. And this picture is particularly useful in Israelite culture.

[16:17] Because in their agricultural society. Everyone is a farmer of some sort. Or at least has some land to make produce with. So it was instantly relatable. Holiness was not just for the life of the priests.

It didn't only belong in the tabernacle or temple. Not just for the religious keen beans. But it's for all people in the church. For the home. The field. The workplace.

Everywhere. The farmer. The minister. The student. The teacher. The nurse. The tradesman. The lawyer. The retired person. The child. Everyone. Is covered by the Lord's holiness.

It's to shape every area of our lives. Whatever we do. And so there's a degree of work we need to do. To apply these laws to our own lives. As with much Old Testament law.

It's not simply a case of copying. And then pasting them into your life. But these laws are teaching God's values. God's morals. And we are to consider carefully.

[17:17] How they land in the context of our own church family. Because the church family. Is the primary context these are to be found in. It's addressed to all the congregation.

The covenant community. Repeatedly it's been made clear. That it's to the people near you. Your neighbours. Your people. Your fellow citizen. Your brother even. So the place that these laws.

These laws of love. Should be most evident. Are within the church family itself. That's always our primary arena. For holiness and love.

But. It also goes out into the world. As we are a scattered people. Who live lives surrounded by those. Who don't believe. We are to follow these laws.

To be a light to the nations. As we go about our work. Our normal day to day lives. Showing people. What the Lord is like. Through our actions. And words.

[18:16] There are points that applies to one of these arenas. Or both. And we'll try to be sensitive to that. As we go through. Through. So here are five implications. Of God's holiness for us. Each displaying God's mark of ownership.

I am the Lord. That's what each section ends with. I am the Lord. Or I am the Lord your God. So firstly. In verses 9 to 10. Holiness is. Generous.

This is looking forward to life. In the promised land for the Israelites. Where they would all have their own piece of land. To call their own and work with. And the harvests were people's livelihoods.

Their earnings. They depended on them. The Lord wanted Israel to. Verse 9. Deliberately leave some of their crops unharvested. Not going right up to the edge.

When it came to gathering it all in. Our farmer wasn't to harvest everything. For himself only. Maximizing every bit of profit he could out of that field. And the gleanings.

[19:16] What naturally fell on the ground while harvesting. Well they were to be left behind too. Verse 10. Even the vineyards weren't to be fully harvested. They were to let some of that go too.

Even the valuable precious crops. That you could make great wine with. Were included. In God's laws. But why was the everyman farmer. To do any of that?

So that near the end of verse 10. The poor and the sojourner. Would have something to eat. They would come along. And gather what they needed. From the ground.

And they'd have earned self-respect. In the process. Because they were working. For their meal. They were being given the opportunity. To provide for themselves. Given the dignity.

Of work. Israel was to be a people. Not obsessed. With its own wealth. But using what it had been given by the Lord.

[20 : 14] To be a blessing to others. Particularly those. Within the church family. As all of this is applied. To the covenant people. Those who belong to the Lord already.

And of course. There is a wonderful picture. Of this very law. Being put to good use. In Ruth's story in the Bible. As a foreigner. And her recently widowed mother-in-law.

Are blessed by Boaz. Doing this law. By leaving the margins. For others to benefit from. What an excellent example. Boaz is of seeing this law.

Applying it to himself. And even going further. And giving more. He got that this law. Was a beginning point. And saw generosity. As part of his faithful obedience. Loving people with your possessions.

Means. Sacrificially giving. As a priority. So that your brothers and sisters. May be blessed. In ancient Israel. The responsibility. For looking after the poor.

[21 : 14] Was on the individual. Not the collective. Or just the government's job. The responsibility. God laid upon his people. Was that they would be generous. With their own money first.

Rather. Than being generous. With other people's money. Thinking that it's someone else's. Responsibility to pick up the bill. So our responsibility. Is that when we see a need before us.

When we see. People in the church. Who are in genuine need. We personally. Are the ones to take action upon it. If we're able to. Whether that is. Financial donations.

To those less well off. Loving some of our. Farsi brothers and sisters. Perhaps. Who are unable to work. Or making meals. For the young family. You know. Who are struggling.

Or anonymously. Giving someone. Some cash. Or a voucher. For their groceries. Because you know. It would be a blessing to them. It's recognizing. That what the Lord.

[22 : 12] Has given us. Is a gift. From him. To bless others with. It's not for us. To hoard ourselves. And maximize. For our own. Plans and purposes.

And the Lord. Loves a cheerful giver. Because it means. That you are looking like him. Even if you give. When you don't have to. Every paycheck. We get. Is an opportunity.

To grow in holiness. By loving people. Other than yourself. That's why the Lord. Jesus said. It is better. To give. Than to receive.

Because as we become. More generous. More giving. We become more like God. The giver. Of all good gifts. Second implication.

Verses 11 and 12. Holiness is. Honest. The people weren't to steal. By dealing falsely. And lying to one another.

[23 : 09] As our farmer. Gathered in his crops. And went to sell them. At the market. He would have a set of scales. And weights. On his table. And weigh everything. On those scales. To make sure. The right amount of money.

Was paid. It was a common way. Of working out. How much something was worth. By weighing it. So the weights. You had on your table. Had to be spot on. They had to be honest. And it must have been tempting.

To have your own set. Of scales or weights. That weren't. Exactly truthful. So that you could sell. Whatever you had. For more than it was worth. And this kind of thing.

Happens all the time. Today. The tale of fraud. Of scamming people. Of over promising. And under delivering. Or just downright lying.

About what something is worth. Is common. In business dealings. But Israel was to be honest. In all things. Because their honesty. Speaks. Of what they think.

[24 : 03] Of the Lord. That's why in verse 12. Swearing falsely. Profanes his name. If you're promising. To do something. You have no intention. Of following through on. Or you know is a lie.

Then what does that say. About the God. You say you belong to. As Christians. We bear the Lord's name. In everything we do. So it's bringing.

His name. Into disrepute. If we are going around lying. Calling him. Into question. The people. Reflect.

The God they belong to. Bearing the Lord's name. Matters. And belonging to him. Means being honest. In our dealings. Inside and outside. Of the church too.

If you're working. You're saying to your colleagues. I belong to the God of truth. So. You can trust me. I won't lie to you. And. I won't lie for you.

[24 : 59] I won't promise our client. We can do something. We aren't able to. That would be manipulating. People being made in God's image. The people the Lord has put into our lives.

Are not to be. Taken advantage of. Not to be used. For our own benefit. Cash cows. For us to milk. But are to be loved. And cared for. Our third implication.

Verses 13 and 14. Holiness is. Fair. There is to be no oppression. Meaning verse 13.

Our farmer was not to refuse. Paying someone's wages. That they have rightfully earned. If people in Israel. Needed to feed their families. And didn't get enough. From their own land.

Then they. Hired themselves out. Working day to day. As a day labourer. Working for different landowners. Depending on. Who needed work. Wherever work was going. And apparently.

[25 : 56] It was common at the time. For these day workers. To do their work. And then come away. At the end of the day. Empty handed. The landowner. Would essentially. Hold them hostage. Over their wages.

They needed to live on. And feed their families with. Because they knew. They could get away with it. Always promising. I'll pay you tomorrow. Because they knew. The worker needed it.

And they'll keep being. Forced to come back. And work to get it. It's so helpfully. Put in verse 14. It's an. Odd sounding verse there. But it's clearly connected. To the preceding one. If you have a deaf person.

In front of you. You could call them. Every name under the sun. And as long as their back. Was turned. You could get away with it. And the blind. Well. You could put a stumbling block.

In front of them. And they wouldn't be able to see. Wouldn't be able to know. That you were the one. Who had done it. You could get away with it. But just because you won't get caught. Obviously doesn't mean.

[26 : 53] That it's right. And there are occasions. We come across every day. Where we think. We can get away with it. Where no one's watching us. No one's. Seen me do this.

We think we've covered our tracks. The money you think. Won't go missing. The time sheet at work. That no one is looking over your shoulder. Checking. The comment you made.

That you think that person didn't hear. But we belong to a God. Who is holy. And sees. Even what we do in secret. So we are to have integrity.

In our dealings. Knowing that we are to. End of verse 14. Fear. Our God. Whether we're getting caught or not. Our fourth implication.

Verses 15 to 16. Holiness is. Just. Well our farmer. Has had quite the day. And he's either got himself. Into a tricky legal situation.

[27 : 50] Or has been called up for jury duty. Whatever it is. There is to be no injustice. Whatever a person's circumstances. We know.

Don't we as people. We know that we can be intimidated. By a person's power. Or money. And we see it happen all the time. But at the other end of the spectrum. We can also be tempted.

To favor the poor. Taking justice. As you perceive it. Into your own hands. Rebalancing the scales. Because you think the poor. Have been harshly treated. Right.

And we see it. But the Lord is very clear here. It doesn't matter who a person is. Or what status they have. Everyone. Should get justice. righteousness should decide their fate not power not money that's why slander is mentioned as the person accused their neighbor under false pretenses since in ancient israel there wasn't cctv or fingerprint analysis or dna swabs the testimony of normal people was central to come to the right judgment witnesses were crucial for justice to be served so that lives were not ruined by false accusations and it's an evidently unloving thing to harm people like that we might not stand up in court and speak damaging lies about people but how often when you're talking do you make someone else look worse than they are so that you look better we may not send someone to prison but we can do serious damage to the reputation of others by slandering them so that you look holy and they look sinful we're very good at inventing bad motives that people never had we can make them sound more harsh or more selfish than they actually were we can just play a lie about them and say that they did or said something that they didn't do and this verse speaks right to the heart of those who have a tendency to gossip about their fellow brothers or sisters viewing them in the least favorable light but making sure you always come out well you're always squeaky clean but as people belonging to the lord we can't be obsessed with making ourselves look good at the cost of others that's not how the lord loves them and we are to follow in his ways our fifth implication verses 17 to 18 holiness is loving you shall love your neighbor as yourself this is the verse which jesus quoted from most in his ministry that we have recorded and it's probably the most pr friendly verse in the whole book of leuiticus but it's always worth understanding the the context of these well-known phrases because it adds to and deepens the meaning if you look at verse 17 the context of this is found in being wronged verse 17 you shall not hate your brother in your heart but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor the lord is picturing a situation where our farmer has been wronged in some way to such an extent that it could evoke hatred and deep hurt against his brother even to the point that you might seriously hurt this brother or want him dead incurring sin becoming guilty of severe punishment there instead don't let thoughts of vengeance or grudges rule your heart but reason frankly with them there's a quality to that person and that friendship there that means they can have an honest conversation about it they may have wronged you but holiness has a mature discussion with those who have offended you and even if they don't listen to that and you want to sit and fume in your rage and plan how to get even instead of doing that love them love them as you love yourself it's quite funny the lord taps into our inner narcissist that we have don't we we find it very easily to love ourselves and we don't need taught how to do it it comes so naturally to us but feels so unnatural towards those who have wronged us to love them so the great call of love here is to love

when it is particularly difficult when we are genuinely wronged in some way not just the people you find easy to love not just loving as the gentiles do but loving even your enemies blessing those who persecute you overcoming evil with good and that's a wonderful pointer to god's own holiness and how we are to be like him for god demonstrates his own love for us in this while we were still sinners christ died for us while we were the wrong the people doing the wrong christ died for us lord is not calling his people to do anything that he is not willing to do himself and has done himself well if you picture your israelite everyman farmer again what was this man to be like well he was to love people when someone in the covenant community needed help it was known that this man was the first to be generous with his possessions when people worked for him they knew they could trust him and gladly worked hard for him as a result they knew they weren't getting ripped off when they bought his produce when judgments were made he could be trusted because he wasn't going to be swung by circumstances but by truth and righteousness and when people did wrong against him as inevitably happens when sinful people live with sinful people he went out of his way to make amends dealt with it maturely and didn't hold it against them which is just obviously the kind of neighbor you would like isn't it that's the kind of people we want to be that's the kind of people our world wants us to be and that kind of neighbor he is one who is holy to God and shows that by living out the law that God has given him and we are given the greatest commentary possible on this passage by the Lord Jesus in the book of Luke chapter 10 verses 29 to 36 it's worth turning there now

[34 : 36] Luke chapter 10 verses 29 to 36 we'll spend a few moments there in this parable Jesus is approached by a lawyer who is seeking to inherit eternal life cheaply his motives are very questionable and Jesus answers his question with the parable of the good Samaritan as we know it by that's Luke chapter 10 we'll read from verse 29 but he this lawyer desiring to justify himself said to Jesus and who is my neighbor and you can tell from Luke's comment that he is trying to put limits on who his neighbor is but Jesus doesn't answer his question instead he tells a story Jesus replied a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed leaving him half dead now by chance a priest was going down that road and when he saw him he passed by on the other side so likewise a Levite when he came to the place and saw him passed by on the other side two people who knew the law who knew all the theology in the world but did not have love for people but a Samaritan a religious outsider as he journeyed came to where he was and when he saw him he had compassion he went to him and bound up his wounds pouring on oil and wine then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him and the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper saying take care of him and whatever more you spend

I will repay you when I come back which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers you see Jesus doesn't answer his question instead he responds with another question he turns it back on the lawyer who answers well it was the one who showed him mercy of course and Jesus said to him you go and do likewise and that question the lawyer asked there was a search for limits who is my neighbour tell me who I must love so I know who I don't have to love what is the least I can do to obey this law but as Jesus answers he says that the onus is not on us to define who our neighbours are in a limited sense but to be a neighbour ourselves to everyone we come across that is our responsibility to be a neighbour wherever we come across people that's why

Leviticus 19 speaks of such a wide variety of folk the poor the foreigner one another your neighbour an employee the deaf the blind the great the brother your own people and very unsurprisingly Jesus preaches Leviticus 19 wonderfully to this lawyer there are at least six allusions explicitly or implicitly to Leviticus 19 in this parable that I can count Jesus says that well it's not about what type of person your neighbour is it's about loving all kinds of people that's what holiness and doing the law is designed to do love God and love people the Samaritan was a good neighbour because he was generous giving the man oil and wine which you get the component parts from fields and vineyards just as Leviticus 19 commanded be kept aside for those in need he was honest with the innkeeper and didn't withhold money paying it up front from his own pocket promising to settle the bill

Jesus preaches Leviticus 19 perfectly here showing that this lawyer this man whose whole profession was dedicated to studying God's law didn't understand it one bit because it's not only meant to be studied to be learned and stored up for yourself in isolation but lived out in the real world because holiness is not just having a head full of theology but a heart full of love for the Lord and his people that's what growing in holiness and Christ likeness is like we don't learn what love is by looking inwards by mustering up feelings ourselves but by looking to God's law of love which always shows grace and care to our fellow man and so the Christian life today continues to be all about people we are in the people business as we build the Lord's church worship him and serve in his kingdom so invest your life in people holiness is not about getting the absolutely perfect theology or of locking yourself away so that you can unlock the mysteries and knowledge of the gospel but it's about living the law by loving those you come by particularly those who are hard to love there is a kind of Christian who only ever seems to grow in knowledge but not in love they hear all the faithful sermons attend all the conferences read doctrine for fun and can quote

Calvin's institutes like it's a nursery rhyme but it never translates into sacrificially spending time loving people other than themselves if you recognize yourself in that then repent of your knowledge which leads to arrogance and look to the Lord Jesus to see how you can grow in holiness he is the one who knew the law better than anyone because he is the law giver yet he chose to spend his time with sinners and he was generous with them even to the point of giving up his life for their sake for greater love has no one than this that a man gives up his life for his friends we today have the words of the law which are to be written on our hearts and more than that we have the Lord Jesus the only one who has ever fully loved his neighbors himself and who has filled us with his spirit to rule our hearts to fill us with love and to make us holy like him so if you want to grow in holiness friends if you want to become more like

[41 : 34] God then know that it is not found in borrowing yourself away and living a monastic existence holiness is not found in airtight sealed environments where people can't bother you but true holiness is found in loving people that's what it means to become more like God to be holy to be like him so let's continue to commit our lives to that friends as we learn to look like our savior more and more and become a church family where we love our neighbor as we love ourselves let's pray our father god we thank you for the great dignity of being made holy in your son and father we know that that only happens because of the great grace you lavish upon us in the gospel we thank you that you have in your kindness and love demonstrated your love by saving us while we were still sinners please help us to respond to you with the obedience of faith growing in holiness as we live out your law of love in Jesus name amen to the