

**'Be holy because I am holy'**

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What a handsome congregation you are! It is truly a privilege and honour to be preaching in front of such a good-looking group of people. For Will to have this every Sunday must be an absolute treat. And you're such *nice* people as well; salt-of-the-earth, you are. And so good-natured. That's what people say, you know: that you're good-natured, salt-of-the-earth, good-looking people. I ask around; I do research; I survey people and they tell me these things about the good folk at Tawa Baptist.

You think I'm flattering you, don't you. You think that after this over-flow of compliments, this bunch of bouquets, I'm about to throw a brick-bat your way. But you'd be wrong. I look at you and I see, well, I see people that, frankly, are a lot like me. That's why I'm part of this congregation, you see. I know Groucho Marx said that he'd never join a club that would have him as a member, but *this* congregation is different; we're unique; we're *special*.

And you know *why* we're special? It's because of the god we worship. Truly. I mean, if we did a little exercise, if we all took out a large sheet of white paper and wrote down all the things that god meant to us, you know, I think we'd have a pretty good picture of god: good-natured, salt-of-the-earth, good-looking. And white, of course; English-speaking; well-educated; probably votes for the same political party we vote for; well-off; owns a couple of cars; very open-minded too, I dare say; accepts the sort of people we accept, likes the sort of people we like; doesn't tell us what to do so much as let us do what we like to do, because we always make good, sensible decisions.

If god were one of us, well, he'd look a lot *like* us. If we took that white sheet of paper, with our picture of god on it, I expect we would find that that white sheet of paper had, by some remarkable turn, become a reflective mirror and in that white sheet of paper we would see ourselves.

Please turn in your Bibles to Leviticus Chapter 19, beginning from verse 1.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

<sup>3</sup> "'Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>4</sup> "'Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>5</sup> "'When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. <sup>6</sup> It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. <sup>7</sup> If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. <sup>8</sup> Whoever eats it will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the LORD; they must be cut off from their people.

<sup>9</sup> "'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup> Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>11</sup> "'Do not steal.

"Do not lie.

"Do not deceive one another.

<sup>12</sup> “Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>13</sup> “Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

“Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

<sup>14</sup> “Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup> “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

<sup>16</sup> “Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

<sup>18</sup> “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

<sup>19</sup> “Keep my decrees.

“Do not mate different kinds of animals.

“Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

“Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

<sup>20</sup> “If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment. Yet they are

not to be put to death, because she had not been freed.<sup>21</sup> The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the LORD.<sup>22</sup> With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.

<sup>23</sup> “When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten.<sup>24</sup> In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD.<sup>25</sup> But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>26</sup> “Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

“Do not practice divination or seek omens.

<sup>27</sup> “Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

<sup>28</sup> “Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> “Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness.

<sup>30</sup> “Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.

<sup>31</sup> “Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>32</sup> “Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>33</sup> “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. <sup>34</sup> The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>35</sup> “Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. <sup>36</sup> Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt.

<sup>37</sup> “Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the LORD.”

And now to the Book of Ephesians, first Chapter Two, then parts of Chapters Four and Five, from *The Message* paraphrase:

<sup>1-6</sup> It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.

<sup>7-10</sup> Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

<sup>11-13</sup>But don't take any of this for granted. It was only yesterday that you outsiders to God's ways had no idea of any of this, didn't know the first thing about the way God works, hadn't the faintest idea of Christ. You knew nothing of that rich history of God's covenants and promises in Israel, hadn't a clue about what God was doing in the world at large. Now because of Christ—dying that death, shedding that blood—you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything.

<sup>14-15</sup>The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.

<sup>16-18</sup>Christ brought us together through his death on the cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father.

<sup>19-22</sup>That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.

<sup>1-3</sup>In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God

called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

<sup>4-6</sup>You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

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<sup>17-19</sup>And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion.

<sup>20-24</sup>But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

<sup>25</sup>What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.

<sup>26-27</sup>Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

<sup>28</sup>Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work.

<sup>29</sup>Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

<sup>30</sup>Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.

<sup>31-32</sup>Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

<sup>1-2</sup>Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

<sup>3-4</sup>Don't allow love to turn into lust, setting off a downhill slide into sexual promiscuity, filthy practices, or bullying greed. Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, those who follow Jesus have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect.

<sup>5</sup>You can be sure that using people or religion or things just for what you can get out of them—the usual variations on idolatry—will get you nowhere, and certainly nowhere near the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God.

<sup>6-7</sup>Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him. Don't even hang around people like that.

<sup>8-10</sup>You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true—these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it.

<sup>11-16</sup>Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ.

Wake up from your sleep,  
Climb out of your coffins;  
Christ will show you the light!

So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

<sup>17</sup>Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.

<sup>18-20</sup>Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge draughts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.

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Now if Yvette said to me ‘be Malaysian-Chinese as I am Malaysian-Chinese’ there are certain things that I could do to become *more like* a Malaysian-Chinese: I could eat with chopsticks, I could learn to speak Mandarin, Cantonese and Malay, I could cook Malaysian food, I could move to Malaysia to live. But, *no matter how hard I try*, I will never be Malaysian-Chinese; I will always be a white European.

So when God gave instruction to Moses, in the passage we’ve read from Leviticus, to tell the Israelites to ‘be holy as I am holy’ what on earth did he mean? Did he mean for the Israelites to follow the laws that he the passage then goes on to list? Did he mean for them, somehow by their own efforts, to become as holy as God is?

Well, before we answer those questions – and there is, I’d suggest – an answer we can offer, we need to go back to the beginning. What does it mean to talk about a holy God? What is it that makes God holy? Finally, after prioritising the holiness of God in our enquiry, we may ask ourselves *how* we can ‘be holy as God is holy’.

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Through the ages, pastors and preachers, theologians and church historians, people in the pew and people in the street have all tried to describe God. Sometimes the ways we describe God and the words with which we describe God are called ‘divine attributes’ or ‘divine perfections’. In other words, we ask what are the attributes, the characteristics, which make God *God*?

In the same way I began with listing what some of the attributes might be of this congregation, people have tried to list God’s attributes by looking at who they see God to be and then writing down what they see. Other people think about the kind of God that they would like God to be and write down those attributes – if you like, painting an idealised version of God based on what we would be most comfortable with. The problem with each of these approaches, however, is that it relies on us to decide what God’s attributes are. It is as if God is that blank white sheet of paper, without shape or order, onto which we place *our* shape and *our* order.

It's a little like me going up to those of you whom I don't know so well and telling you that I think you are a certain sort of person, which might be a million miles away from the sort of person you actually are. It's like people asking Yvette if she is Korean or Japanese, assuming that, because she is ethnically Asian, she must be *this* particular kind of Asian. The problem, as you'll see, with this kind of approach is that we often end up in completely the wrong place.

So, how might we know what God's attributes are? We know by beginning, and ending, with Holy Scripture. Our Christian confession is that Scripture – the books that make up the Holy Bible – reveal to us the God whom we worship and that are totally satisfactory and complete in revealing this God. We have no need for any other source, any other material or any supplementary papers in order to find out who God is; the Bible is entirely self-sufficient in its witness to God. We believe that God reveals himself through the pages of Scripture.

As some of you might know this year is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *King James Bible*. I am currently reading a book by Melvyn Bragg about the history of the *King James* from its rather inauspicious beginnings, to its intense production by a group of learned and hard-working scholars, to the role it played in bringing to an end the reign of Charles the First, to the way it profoundly shaped the Puritan settlers of the United States as they arrived at Plymouth Rock, to how it still is used to justify both war and peace, build bridges and divide people, and remain – through thick and thin, different waves of philosophy and theology, the rise of religion to the rise of secularism – on top of every best-seller list there is.

What gives the *Bible* such power? As Christians we believe that it is unlike any other book that there is. We believe it is the *living* word of God. We believe that even though it was written over 1500 years by a multitude of authors in various styles that it is still a book through which God reveals himself and his work in the world. And we believe in reading the Bible we can see the attributes of God, not because we *give* God those attributes but because God reveals those attributes, those inherent, innate attributes, to us.

As we read of God giving the promise to Abraham that he shall have as many ancestors as there are stars in the sky; as we travel with the Israelites out of Egypt guided by alternate pillars of

fire and cloud; as we lament with Jeremiah about immorality and corruption; as we feel the nervousness of the expectant mother Mary as she's told to not be afraid; as we feel the excitement of being called by Jesus to 'follow me' as he walks past us as we fish on the Sea of Galilee; as we gasp in horror at the stoning of Stephen and the persecution of the church; as we, like Mary Magdalene, look amazed into an empty tomb and find that the Gardener protecting that tomb is not a gardener at all but our dear friend Jesus; as we stand amongst the nations of people on that Pentecost morning and recognise our native tongue; as we read the letters written by an imprisoned Paul, praising God even after shipwreck, illness and flogging; as we look astounded at the colourful and evocative picture painted by John the Revelator; as we read from 'In the beginning' right through to 'Amen! Come Lord Jesus!' we get to know, deeply, intimately, freshly, the God who reveals himself through these pages of these stories of this Holy Bible.

So what do we know then of the holiness of God?

We join Jacob who, woken by a dream by God, exclaims (in Genesis 28:16), "God is in this place—truly. And I didn't even know it!" He was terrified. He whispered in awe, "Incredible. Wonderful. Holy. This is God's House. This is the Gate of Heaven".

We join Moses who, standing by the burning bush, hears the voice of God warn, in Exodus 3:5 "Don't come any closer. Remove your sandals from your feet. You're standing on holy ground."

We join the Israelites, in Exodus 12, instructed to set aside certain days as 'holy' and, through Leviticus, the detailed instructions on how to prepare a holy sacrifice.

We join Hannah, in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 2:1-3, learning that she will bear a son, praising the holiness of God.

We join the priests, in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8, bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies.

I could go on, through each book of the Bible, as we have revealed to us this Holy God interacting with His people.

In this way, we may join countless others, encountering in favour and in fear the holiness of God. In favour because the holiness of God is a wonder to behold; in fear, because to behold it means that we must do so conscious that we bring nothing to it except for our confession of sin.

The holiness of God reveals to us that God is a jealous God. We sometimes find this notion of a jealous God to be deeply uncomfortable; to us, jealousy is a negative term. But God opposes anything which opposes his Lordship. There is a cliché that says 'if God is not Lord of all, he is not God at all'. What that means in this context, I would suggest, is that God does not allow room for anyone or anything else. His demand is exact: our undivided loyalty. And this is not just a matter of not worshipping other idols, although that is part of it, it is also 'putting to death' the sin within us which, by its very nature, opposes the holiness of God.

We sometimes think of sin as particular sets of behaviour; we identify sinful people by what they do. But sin isn't behaviour as much as it is a disposition, an orientation, a direction of looking. Sin looks away from God and toward ourselves; it sets a path that, while wide, is following a map that has not been drawn for us by God but is drawn by us for our own benefit; it orientates our sights not upwards to God but inwards to our innermost desires. All of these take us away from approaching a holy God with humility and reverence and saying, as Isaiah did, 'Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips'; or, as Paul did 'everything I have I consider as rubbish when compared to the love of God in Jesus Christ'. This is not false modesty or low self-esteem; it is an appropriate response when encountering the holiness of God. It is, to use that now out-dated phrase, to approach God with fear and trembling.

In the movie *Polyanna* there is a preacher who is well-known for his 'fire and brimstone' sermons. "Death comes unexpectedly!" he thunders down from his pulpit raised high above the congregation, who aren't paying him much attention. But Polyanna befriends this preacher and

we see him become softer and gentler; we see him weep tears when Polyanna falls from a tree and is convalescing in bed and we see him treat people with a niceness that was hitherto well hidden.

We may see the way we approach the holiness of God in a similar way. We might first approach God as if he is on high smiting the sinner below, casting them into hell and warning them of eternal damnation unless they immediately turn to him. This way of looking at God is a way built on fear.

There are, broadly speaking, two types of leaders. There are leaders who lead through fear and there are leaders who lead through respect and encouragement. I have sung in choirs where the choir conductor definitely leads through fear. The motivation for the choir to learn its notes and keep in tune is the fear of the cutting criticism they will receive in a tongue-lashing from the conductor.

I knew someone who approached God in a similar way. She was absolutely terrified that she would do something wrong and that God would disown her, or punish her in some way. She lived a life of fear and, I would imagine, a very unhappy and dissatisfying life at that.

We approach the Holy God through Jesus Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit. Some people have talked of the Holy Spirit both *mortifying* and *vivifying* – that is, both putting to death *and* bringing to life. Those who live a life of fear latch onto the mortification: the putting to death of those things which keep us from God, about which I will say more shortly. But God is a *life-giver* – that, surely, is the heartbeat of Scripture – and through the Holy Spirit, so Scripture reveals to us, we are made new in Christ, we are given life in all its fullness, we inherit the kingdom, we are co-heirs with Christ, we are born again.

The preacher in *Pollyanna* knew a lot about the putting to death – and that is an important element of what it means to approach the Holy One, God – but it was through the kindness and generosity of Pollyanna that he learned what it meant to bring to life. We put to death sin in all its forms, and the epistle to the Ephesians gives clear guidance how we do that, and we put on

the life-giving grace of God in its place. Listen again to how Paul instructs those in the Ephesians church:

“Don’t waste your time... on the barren pursuits of darkness.”

“The good, the right, the true – these are actions appropriate for daylight hours.”

“Don’t talk dirty or silly... Thanksgiving is our dialect.”

“Make a clean break with all... profane talk.”

“When you lie to others, you ending up lying to yourself.”

Our response to a holy God is worked out in our relationship with others. Both the Leviticus and Ephesians passages describe behaviour, talk, attitudes that impact others. Ephesians is full of contrast, between darkness and light, old and new, past and present, sleep and wakefulness. Paul says that before “in Christ” we lived in the darkness; we indulged in our old behaviour; we were asleep in the light. But now – *now* – we are called to live to a different order; we are asked to follow a different path; we are told to “put away” our old lives and “put on” our new lives in Christ.

If you were to buy a new shirt, you’d want to try it on before you walked out of the store with it in the plastic bag. But before you can try the new shirt on in the changing rooms you have to take off the shirt you’re currently wearing, otherwise you won’t know whether the new shirt will fit; you’ll also look pretty silly!

In the same way Paul says, take off your old clothes and put on the new clothes that you received when you became a Christian. It’s not possible to wear both sets of clothes at once – you might call yourself a Christian but still be wearing your old set of clothes, but you can’t wear both the old *and* the new shirts: for one to go on the other must go off. And we cast aside our old way of doing things not because we’re obligated to, or because we’re afraid of the consequences if we don’t, but because the new way of doing things, the new shirt if you like, is so much better than the old way of doing things, the old shirt. The new shirt looks better and

fits better because it's the shirt that we were designed to wear. It's our own personal shirt, tailor-made by the Master. Once we wear this shirt, why would we want to ever go back to the shirts we used to wear?

But – and this is very important to grasp - there is nothing we can do to become holy as God is holy. There are no courses we can take, no amount of meritorious behaviour we can perform, no special phrase we can incant. There are no special shirts that we can choose that will make us more holy; we have to accept the gracious gift of the shirt specially designed for us. Because it is only through God's capacious, generous, extravagant, over-flowing, limitless loving grace, through the work and ministry of his son Jesus Christ, born in human form, ministering to human needs, dying sacrificially for human sin, rising for human freedom and sitting in authority over everything on earth and heaven, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit drawing us to God, that we can approach a holy God *in freedom* and without hindrance.

We can, of course, choose to cast aside that grace; we can, as it were, throw it back in God's face; we can turn to the desires of our hearts and luxuriate in self-indulgent behaviour and thinking – and all of us do that, and we would both foolish and arrogant to think that any of us were exempt from such behaviour.

But we can also come back to God, with humility, confessing our need for him to give us freedom and fullness of life. We may, like the Prodigal Son, have squandered the inheritance which was rightfully ours anyway and be afraid that we might not be welcome home and that, even if we are, we shall have to be as a servant and not as a son or daughter.

And it is from this very place – this recognition that we are utterly, totally, without hesitation, reservation, excuse or demand wholly, totally, fully, entirely, completely reliant on the grace of God through Jesus Christ – that we then can see and approach the Holy God, that we can then see him running toward us welcoming us home, that we can feel his embrace and hear his voice calling for a party to be held in honour of our return, that we can hear the song of angels and smell the feast of celebration and know – with every fibre of our being *know* - that we are loved by a holy God, and because of that love, love that is beyond our very comprehension and is

limited by the frailty of our human expression, that we are holy in the sight of the Lord and shall therefore praise His Holy Name.