The Pope goes to New York and gets picked up at the airport by a limousine.

The Pope says to the Limo driver; "Do you mind if I ask you a favor?"    
  
"A favor for the Pope??", the driver says "of course - anything!"   
  
The Pope says; "I hardly get to drive anymore; would it be okay if I drove for a while?

At first the driver was scared thinking… “what if he gets into an accident?”    
  
On the other hand, he felt he couldn't say no to the Pope…, so he reluctantly obliged and let his Holiness get behind the wheel.    
  
To his utter shock & dismay, the Pope turns the key and lights up the tires… taking off like a maniac!    
  
He gets it up to 100 mph in a 45-mph zone!!

Suddenly a police officer flies up behind them, siren blaring, and lights flashing…

So, the Pope pulls over.

The police officer walks up to the Limo and recognizes that it’s the Pope!

He immediately runs back to his car and calls the station.

He says; sergeant, I have a problem."    
  
"What kind of problem?"  the sergeant asked.  
  
"Well, I pulled over this Limo for speeding, but he's someone really important."    
  
Sergeant: "Important like… the mayor?"    
  
Officer: "No, no - a lot more important than that."    
  
Sergeant: "Important like... the governor?"    
  
Officer: "Way more important than that, Sarge."    
  
Sergeant: "Important like... the President?"    
  
Officer: "Even more important than him."   
  
Sergeant: "Who's more important than the President?"

Police officer says: “It must be God, cause the Pope is his chauffeur!

I’m learning (slowly) that Holiness can be better understood by not just focusing on behavior, but looking at it with respect to times, places and things.

Because if they can be sanctified holy (set apart for God’s use), then you and I can be holy as well, amen?!

That’s good news for us today. Tell the person nearest to you:

There’s hope for me yet!

Last week we discovered why holiness is critical…

Hebrews 12:14 - Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

And that holiness is separateness. Separated unto God, for His Holy, redemptive purpose.

We discovered our need for a “Sacrosanct” relationship with God. Viewing God and the things of God as hallowed, sacred, and too important to be interfered with.

Doing so will keep us (set apart unto God) and prevent sin, which is the enemy of God and holiness.

Let’s go a little deeper today into the reality of holiness.

Since things don’t “behave” (sometimes I wish they could), they provide an excellent example to show that holiness is, being set apart to & for the Lord, and not a matter of conduct per se.

1. Things, times & places are not holy (at least not in and of themselves).

But they can be made holy, when like the ground and the bush that we saw last week in Exodus 3:5, they are redeemed and therefore cease being “common”. When they are intentionally set apart for God’s use.

I believe that before the fall of mankind in the Garden, nothing was common… and that everything and everyone was holy (set apart) and was being used for God’s special use.

But now, because of sin’s presence and power in the world. All of creation is suffering…

Romans 8:22-23

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.23Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

What a day that will be:

* When creation has been restored
* When our adoption is complete, and we legitimately inherit eternal life.
* When we are given our eternal bodies that will never get tired, never hurt, never get old or require surgery!

Imagine with me… creation as it was, when it was holy, before the fall…

Revelation 21 says we will see it one day in the New Heaven & New earth.

Until then our minds can’t fully conceive what it was like… we only know what God promised as a result of the fall… because we live in it everyday.

Because of sin, everything, all creation experiences sickness, disease & eventually death.

Let’s try to walk Genesis 3:17-19 back and get a hint of what God might have in store for us when He redeems creation…

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
    through painful toil you will eat food from it  
    all the days of your life.  
18It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
    and you will eat the plants of the field.  
19By the sweat of your brow  
    you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
    since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
    and to dust you will return.”

What can we deduce from Genesis 3 is that before sin, God’s “holy” creation produced for mankind all on it’s own… That is what it was set apart to do… To make life totally AMAZING for mankind.

* No painful work required!
* No thorns or thistles (weeds)!
* No shoes needed!
* No sweat
* No deodorant needed!
* Just enjoying God’s perfection as we lived out God’s purpose for which He created us because He wants us…
* To be like Him (fruits of the Spirit).
* For men and women thru obedience to keep themselves set apart to worship Him as the only God, to marry, pro-create, teach and fill the planet He gave us with people who reflect His divine character.
* Essentially making earth the paradise that we now hope & believe that heaven will be when we get there.

So, what about us? How can we be redeemed and cease being “common”?

1. God redeems us WHOLY, with HOLINESS of heart & life as our purpose.

* John 14:6
* Revelation 5:9
* Titus 2 -13-14 – Redeemed (bought back) to serve our Father in unity & love…
* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Thru Christ alone, God poured out His grace that makes holiness possible. We celebrated it last week by partaking in communion.

Thru Christ alone, God has opened the door for us to live un-common, un-ordinary lives… “separated” unto serving God alone.

Meaning putting Him at the center of our life, so every area of our life is touched and impacted in a positive way by His Spirit.

His promise to His Holy children?

* Everything! Everything that is His, will be yours to enjoy…
* Not just for a week or two of vacation, but for all eternity.

Imagine the most beautiful, most glorious, most perfect day that you’ve ever had… then multiply that by a million and you might be close to what God has waiting for His redeemed, “holy” children.

To connect with and grow the list of things that God has already made “holy” and therefore have a part to play in His redemptive plan…

If you tried to make a list of all of the things that God redeems and makes holy, you’d probably get writers cramp after the first page…

But praise God for our Bible’s that have a concordance that lists over 2 dozen “common” things that God has redeemed and calls holy.

* Holy nation (Israel)
* Holy city (Jerusalem)
* Holy name (Jesus)
* Holy kiss (my wife)
* Holy ground (we are standing on it)
* Holy water (we baptize with it)
* Holy angels (they gave me this message that I am passing on to you)
* Holy Scriptures (that we love and are blessed by because they are the very voice/word of God.

Continuing on from last week in the book of Exodus…

God spoke to Moses about making “Holy Oil” in Exodus 30:22-25 (NLT).

Then the Lord said to Moses, 23“Collect choice spices—12-1⁄2 pounds of pure myrrh, 6 1⁄4 pounds of fragrant cinnamon, 6 1⁄4 pounds of fragrant calamus, 24and 12 1⁄2 pounds of cassia—as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel. Also get one gallon of olive oil. 25Like a skilled incense maker, blend these ingredients to make a holy anointing oil.

This combination of spices had both qualities of healing and a beautiful fragrance both symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

After the consecration of the Tabernacle (which we will do here when the remodeling of God’s sanctuary is complete)…,

Moses was instructed to anoint Aaron and his sons with it for their special (set apart) function as priests.

This act was also symbolic of the “anointing” of the Holy Spirit upon God’s servants today.

The rest of the passage says that this “Holy oil” was set apart for God’s purposes and should never be used by “common” people or for “common” purposes.

How is the anointing oil like the Holy Spirit?

* Both are (set apart/used) for God’s Holy purpose.
* Therefore, they both (set things apart for God’s redemptive purpose.

1 Samuel 16:13 - Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.

Setting David apart, as the soon and coming King of Israel.

Acts 10:38 – The Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit for purpose of redeeming others and making life better for them.

Isaiah 61:1 – God anoints His servants with His Spirit, to live out our redemptive role in His family business by proclaiming the “Good News” of Christ and seeing those who are not “set apart to God”, set free from their captivity.

He doesn’t anoint (set apart) the world, but those who are redeemed by the Blood of Christ to reach the world.

So why does it sometimes feel like Christians aren’t leading the world to Christ?

There is an old saying that may apply… “familiarity breeds contempt”

When God’s (set apart) people become so familiar with God and the things of God…

Times, things, & places can, if allowed, start to lose there “Sacrosanct”, sacred meaning…

Things that were once:

* Hallowed
* Respected
* Unchallengeable
* Untouchable

Are allowed to become “common”, “ordinary”…

Then it shows itself in unfaithful behavior.

The problem is not the behavior, the problem is that God and the things of God are no longer holy (set apart) in that persons life.

The the prodigal son, one can repent and return to setting the Lord apart in their heart again…

But too often folks allow themselves to be used more by the enemy to judge the world, than by the Holy Spirit to fix the problem in them.

I found an illustration that may work to help us understand…

Fred Rogers of Mister Roger’s Neighborhood (who attended seminary to become an ordained minister & preach the Gospel) once said: “Years ago my wife and I were worshipping in a little church with friends of ours.

I was in the middle of my homiletics course at the time.

During the sermon I kept ticking off every mistake I thought the preacher (who must have been 80 years old) was making.

He said: When this long-winded sermon finally ended, I turned to one of my friends… Intending to say something critical to her about the sermon.

I stopped myself when I saw tears running down her face.

She whispered to me, “He said exactly what I needed to hear.”

Looking back on that moment, Mr. Rogers recalled it as a pivotal time in his life and calling.

He remarked: “I was judging, and she was needing, and the Holy Spirit responds to needs, not judgement.”

We’re going to close the service today and give all who would like to be, the opportunity to be anointed with God’s special oil;

What needs do you have today?

* Perhaps some know now that they need to finally come down off of the fence and dedicate themselves, set themselves apart for God and His redemptive purpose.

Remember, the Holy Spirit responds to needs, not to judgement.