



**Face the Issue:**

This week, we were reminded that our inward being is what truly counts. Jesus had some of His most scathing words for people that focused on the outer appearance while ignoring the inner person.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and every impurity.” Matthew 23:27

Jesus wasn’t pulling any punches. He was pretty clear that the outside appearance was not that important. He valued the inner person. We have a word for that. It is holiness.

For us here in the Bible Belt, “holiness” is many times confused with “following the rules”. The people that Christ was speaking to in the above passage were really good rule followers but Jesus said that is not the point.

*What is holiness? Is there a difference between holiness and legalism (following the rules)? If so, what are the differences?*

*When you hear the word holiness, what is your immediate response?*

**Into the Word:**

When we become a Christian, we are united with Jesus Christ. Jesus is holy, and it is only through that relationship with Him that we can be holy. This is what the Pharisee’s didn’t understand. No amount of obedience to a set of rules will produce holiness, because holiness is not dependent upon our doings. We can only attain “holiness” through our relationship with Christ. That is an inward change.

**Read Ephesians 2:1–10.**

*According to this passage, why did God choose to provide salvation and holiness through Jesus?*

*What happens in our lives when we participate in God’s holiness through Jesus Christ?*

**Read Philippians 2:1–16**

Some get confused by Paul’s statement that we are to “workout” our salvation. If salvation is a gift from God, how are we to work it out? What does he mean?

Here in January, lots of folks join a gym. They intend to “workout” and improve their bodies. They already have bodies, they just want to strengthen them and make them better.

*How does “working out” to improve a body you already have compare to Paul’s instruction of “working out” your salvation?*

*How does “working out our salvation” relate to living a holy life?*

## **Application**

Jeremy's bottom line was this: *If your foundation is shaky within, your external walls will eventually fall.*

**If you are trying to live a good life that looks great because you are following the "rules", it will fail.**

True holiness is about a relationship with God. Holiness is about a life that is fully abandoned to serving God, His church, and the world. Holiness is a way of life that is a result of the inner change.

*What ministry opportunities are available to you that would help you to "workout" your salvation? How would participation in this ministry help to fulfill God's call to holiness?*

Have you accepted the free gift of salvation through Christ? This is the first step in changing the inner person. If not, find a trusted follower of Christ and take that step.