

Exodus 37:16

“He made of pure gold the utensils which were on the table: its dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitchers for pouring.”

Here in the closing chapters of Exodus, the focus is upon building an elaborate tent designed as the focal point for Israel’s worship. This tent went by many names; it is called the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle, and the Holy Place. Each of the titles reveals something of the purpose of this structure. The term, Holy Place, helps us to understand what holiness actually means.

It seems holiness is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the Bible. If we go back to the time of Jesus, we find holiness was defined by the clothes a person wore, the food they ate, and the time of day they chose to pray. The Pharisees became the embodiment of holiness, and all others in Israel were considered to be somewhat common. Things have not changed much as the years have passed.

Today, it seems holiness is still defined by what we don’t do, rather than by who we are. I think a quick glance at the utensils designed for the Tabernacle might help us better understand what it means to be holy.

Aholiab and Bezalel were instructed to take common earthly materials like silver, gold, wood, and a variety of fabrics, and construct them into what would become a holy place, filled with holy instruments. It was not the material the objects were constructed from that made them holy, but the fact that they were dedicated to the Lord. One spoon stood out above all other spoons, because it had been given to the work of God. Holiness then, is more about dedicating ourselves to the Lord, than it is about the kind of food we refrain from eating.

Years later we will read of these utensils no longer being treated as holy.

Belshazzar, king of Babylon, will use the cups that were once dedicated to God, as common drinking cups to hold his liquor. His actions will invite the judgment of God upon himself and his nation.

Perhaps today it is time to take inventory of your life and the way you are living. Have you dedicated yourself to God and His glory? Are each of your members being used for His service?

When life has passed, only what we have done for God will last.

Pastor Jim