

# The Holy Pursuit

Sermon Title: **The Holy Pursuit**

Sermon Number: **6569**

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Elisha Bronner: God being Holy is a big deal. Him being with us is a big deal.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:15 – 00:00:21)

And now for, "The Holy Pursuit".

Elisha Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because brother and sister, you need the word. So lately, I've just been in this place of prayer just really asking God to help me to see Him as the Holy God that He is. Because I can see God as my father, as my friend and have this close relationship with God and I feel like sometimes we can get so comfortable with God that we forget that He is Holy. We forget that He is the God who created the entire universe. We forget that there is no blemish. We forget that He is not like us at all. So, I just been praying and put in this place, God help me to remember that You were holy. Help me to remember that You are holy and I am not. And so, I want to just speak from a subject today of The Holy Pursuits because God being holy and us being not holy, God has chosen to pursue us, and so I don't want us to lose sight of that. I feel like again, it could be so easy to just be comfortable with God.

But I don't want to lose sight that this is a big deal. God being holy is a big deal. Him being with us is a big deal. And so, I want to start off with Exodus, Chapter 3. So, for this whole message, I'm going to be jumping around Exodus a lot so don't have to turn there but starting in Exodus, Chapter 3, starting in Verse 1. It says, Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses looked he saw the bushes was on fire but not consumed. So Moses thought, I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn't the bush burning up? When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses." "Here I am," he answered. "Do not come closer," he said. "Remove the sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is Holy Ground." And so in this encounter that Moses had with God. God is reminding him. This is Holy Ground. He says you

can't even come closer. She stops right there because this is Holy Ground, and He's reminding Moses that, "Moses, you are a man. You're imperfect and you cannot come close because I am Holy."

And later in Exodus, Chapter 20. God is giving Moses instruction and He tells Moses to put a barrier around the mountain and tell the people that they cannot come, they can't even touch the mountain because this is the mountain where I'm going to come and I am Holy and they cannot even come close. And it says in Verse 21 of Chapter 20 of Exodus. It says, "And the people remained standing at a distance as Moses approached the total darkness where God was." So, God has to remind the people, "I am Holy and because I am Holy, you cannot even come close to me." Only Moses was allowed to go in close because he had such intimate relationship with God, but even, remember God still had to remind Moses that this is Holy Ground. And so, it is not that God did not want intimacy with his people. He did and he still does to this day. It's just that God could not have that full intimacy because of the sin that was in the hearts of the people. So, the problem is not God's holiness. The problem is our sin. And so the crazy thing is though that God being completely holy still desired fellowship and desired intimacy with his people. He was after intimacy the entire time.

So, while God is still holy. We see in Chapter 35 that God is giving the people an opportunity to be a part, to come and to work together, to build a Tabernacle so that they can be some way that God can dwell among them. Even in God's complete holiness. God's so desire to be with the people that he made a way for them to build this Tabernacle so that he could come and dwell.

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And so Exodus, Chapter 35, verses 4 and 5. It says, "Then Moses sets the entire Israelite community." This is what the Lord has commanded. Take up an offering among you for the Lord. Let everyone whose heart is willing. Bring this as the Lord's offering and Moses goes down a list of things for them to bring us the Lord's offering to bring and to contribute to the building of the Tabernacle.

So, while they knew God was holy and while God himself knew that Him being holy, the people could not come that close. God still provided a way for them to come and to dwell together. And so God was giving them an invitation to be a part of building the meeting place for God's presence to come and dwell. And so throughout the rest of that chapter, Moses is giving off a list of materials that the people need.

And in verses 20 through 22, it says, then the entire Israelite Community left Moses' presence. Everyone whose heart was moved and His spirit prompted him, came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its services and for the holy garments. Both men and women came. All who had willing hearts brought brooches, earrings, rings, necklaces and all kinds of gold jewelry. Everyone who presented a presentation offering of gold to the Lord. And so what you see is that all these people they're bringing their gold, they're bringing their silver, they're bringing all kinds of things. And so when God was first bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. One thing that God commanded them to do was to take the gold from the Egyptians.

And so, in Exodus, Chapter 11 verses 2 and 3. The Lord said to Moses, I will bring one more plague on the Pharaoh and on Egypt after that He will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he would drive you out of here. Now announce to the people that both men and women should ask their neighbors for silver and gold items. The Lord gave the people favor with the Egyptians.

And then in Chapter 12 verses 35 to 36. It says the Israelites acted on Moses' word and ask the Egyptians for silver and gold items and for clothing. And the Lord gave the people such favor with the Egyptians that they gave them what they requested. In this way, they plundered the Egyptians. So, what you see here is that God is telling the Israelites, I'm bringing you out of Egypt, but before I do, take the gold, take the silver. They didn't know what that was for. They had no idea that God was preparing them as they were coming out of Egypt. God was preparing them take this gold, take the silver because you're going to use that to create this dwelling place for me to dwell with you. And so, God from the beginning have this plan in mind, I'm going to come and dwell among the people. I'm going to pursue intimacy with them, I'm going to come even though

I'm holy and they are sinners. I'm going to make a way to dwell among them.

But what happens is that after the Israelites take the gold from the Egyptians and they're making their way through the wilderness and Moses has this encounter with the Lord on the mountain, and so Moses is up on the mountain communing with God and listening to God and God has given him instruction and giving him commands. And what happens in Chapter 32 is that the people use the gold to make a golden calf. So while Moses is on the mountain with the Lord and God is giving him commands and giving him instructions and one of those commands is you shall have no other gods before me. The people are at the bottom of the mountain making a golden calf, out of the gold that God commanded them to take from Egypt.

So, in Exodus 32, verses 1 through 4. It says when the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make God's for us who will go before us because this Moses, this man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." Aaron replied to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons and your daughters and bring them to me." So all the people took off the gold rings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into an image of a calf. Then they said, Israel these are your Gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt. So what God intended to be used for intimacy with Him was traded over and given over to idolatry, right? And how many times do we do that today? God gives us things and people even us, even our bodies, our bodies are to be temples of the Holy Spirit. But how many times are we giving ourselves over to idols that were putting before God? But what do we also know? We also know that God is a God of Redemption, and so even though the Israelites took this gold that was intended for intimacy with the Holy and perfect God and took that gold and turn it into an idol, God brought redemption.

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He gave another chance until later on in that chapter, you have God and Moses are both very very angry with the Israelites because again, they committed idolatry and they have forgotten

they lost sight of God's holiness. That's what happens when we lose sight of who God is. When we lose sight of the Holy God that He is, we turn our affections and we start making these idols, we start creating these idols and at the very lives that were given to us for intimacy with God, we turn those over and we give them over to idols. And so that's what we see here, and we see Moses and God being very angry with the people, but then we also see Moses having compassion and seeking God's favor for the Israelites.

And then in verses 25 and 26. It says, Moses saw that the people were out of control for Aaron had let them get out of control making them and laughing start to their enemies, and Moses stood at the camp's entrance and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me." And all the Levites gathered around him. So at this moment, after they lost sight, they forgot God's holiness and they turned their affections to these idols, and make these idols. God provided a way of redemption. Moses said, "Whoever is for the Lord come to me," and so the Levites left the idols and came to Moses and recommitted themselves to God. And so at that moment, you have to leave and make the decision to remember that God is Holy. They remembered his holiness and they recommitted to Him.

And because they remember God's holiness, they were made so aware of their sin and they realize I made an idol, put in place of be holy imperfect God. And so they recommitted to God, but God being holy and God being just, he still had to punish the sinners. Punishment for the sin still had to take place just because they turned from -- just because they turned from the idols and came back to God and recommitted. The punishment still has to take place so what happens in the next couple of verses is that God commands these Levites to recommit themselves into him. To go and kill every person who did not make that commitment, who still stood by this idol that they created. And so it sounds harsh, right? It sounds very harsh but we have to remember that God is a Holy God and He cannot be in the presence of sin. So it's not that He doesn't want to, He can because He's holy.

But then you have in verse 29. You have this redemption story that happens and so Moses tells the people, the Levites that came to him that made the decision, that made the declaration that I'm going to be on God's side. Moses tells them, "Today, you

have been dedicated to the Lord.” So, because they first took their sin, they first took their idolatry, they recommitted to God, they remembered God’s holiness, they rid themselves of the sin, they have now been dedicated to the Lord. And then what’s interesting what happens next is that Moses he says that he has to go atone for their sin, and he says, “Perhaps, I’ll be able to atone for your sin but praise God that we have Jesus who did atone for our sin, who did pay the price for our sin, who did make us at one with God.” He renewed our relationship with the Father. He found us in our sin and he asked us to forsake our sin, forsake our sidles and come after him and to dedicate ourselves into him so he could atone for us, so that he could be our one true holy living Go. The one that we’re dedicating our lives too.

And so after the Israelites dedicated their lives back unto God, they recognize the Lord’s holiness in a new way. In Exodus 33, starting at verse 7. It says, now Moses took a tent and pitched it outside the camp out of distance from the camp. He called it the tent of meeting. Anyone who wanted to consult the Lord would go to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand up. Each one at the door of his tent and they would watch Moses until he entered the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and remain at the entrance of the tent. And the Lord would speak to Moses. As all the people saw the pillar of cloud remaining at the entrance to the tent, they would stand up and then bow and worship each one at the door of his tent.

So, they’re remembering God’s holiness because they knew in the very beginning they knew that God was holy because they said we can’t even approach, but then they forgot and they gave themselves over to these idols, but now they’re back and they remembered God’s holiness because they recommitted themselves to Him. They saw the destruction that their sin brought. They remembered God’s holiness, and so the response that they had to seeing Moses go and meet with the Lord must have bowed down into to worship.

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That should be our response. When we were in the presence of God, let us bow down and to worship to remember that he is a

Holy God and we don't deserve to be here but He is a Holy God and He has His holy pursuit of us that while we were still sinners, He sent Jesus to die for us so that we could be brought in.

And then going back to Chapter 35, again you have the people that are bringing this gold and they're bringing these materials to help prepare Tabernacle and what I love about this, this is so beautiful because what they previously used for idol worship, now they're bringing to build the Tabernacle of God, which is what God intended from the beginning. God is restoring it back to His original intention. God redeemed this gold so back when they made the golden calf, Moses did destroy that calf, but the rest of the gold that they still had instead of making another idol, which is what we sometimes do, then so they turned that gold and they brought it to use, they brought it as a willing offering as a free will offering to use to build the Tabernacle so that God could dwell among them.

And so while we previously have given ourselves over to sin, God is calling us back. He's calling us to repentance. He's calling us to remember his holiness because He's having this holy pursuit of us, but He cannot dwell as closely. What does I see once to if we are still stuck in our sin, if we are giving ourselves over to our idols and to our sin. He cannot dwell intimately with us as he desires. He desires us to be set apart for him. He has made it so that we no longer have to build this Tabernacle because Jesus died on the cross and He left us with the Holy Spirit. We ourselves have become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We are now temples of the Holy Spirit but he gives us a choice.

So in this chapter when you have the people and it says that they are willingly bringing their offerings, God isn't forcing them. He's not going to force you. He's not going to force anybody to accept, and He's not going to force anybody to live for him. He's not going to force anybody to dedicate their life to Him, to commit to Him. He's not going to force you but he gives you a choice. We have free will. He gives you a choice because He doesn't want robot, he wants children who loved Him. So He gives us a choice because when we make the choice, if we're forced to make the choice, our hearts really don't have to be in it. But if we have a choice and we choose God and we could have chosen something or someone else that means our hearts are in it and that is what he wants. He is after our hearts. And so he

gives us this choice. He wants us to willingly choose Him because again, He's not going to force us.

And again in Exodus 35, verses 4 and 5 where it says, Moses said to the entire Israelite community. This is what the Lord has commanded, take up an offering among you for the Lord. Let everyone whose heart is willing bring this as the Lord's offering. And then in verse 21, it says everyone whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted Him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its services and for the holy garments. So God invites us into obedience. He invites us into relationship. He has this holy pursuit of us and He's waiting on us to respond to him. Like in my mind that is just so backwards because we have this Holy God who literally deserves everything that we have and yet we're acting like, oh, maybe I don't want God, maybe I should, you know, choose my own thing, going on my own path, but God is holy. Who are we to tell God, "No, I don't want you today."

Who are we to think that we have a right to choose other than God. God being holy but God is full of grace and God is full of mercy. So when we do make those decisions and when we do make those choices and when we do choose those things, they are other God when we do take what God has given us and take our lives and commit ourselves to idols and commit ourselves to sin. When we do that, God gives us an opportunity for redemption. He sent Jesus so that we do not have to stay in that place. We don't have to stay stuck in our sin. We are no longer slaves to sin because Jesus has set us free and He now gives us this invitation. Come and follow me. Take up your cross and follow me. That may we remember God's holiness and may we respond in worship and may we respond in dedication and serving our lives to him. May we remember that before we were even born, he knew us and he called us by name and he set us apart for His glory and for His service.

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May we respond in worship, may we respond in complete and full surrender as a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Holy Spirit for a reason. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in a place that is not clean and not pure. So if your heart is not clean and it's not pure, praise God again for the blood of Jesus that has been shed, that washes as white as snow that we don't have to

be stuck. We don't have to be stuck at a distance. There is no more gap.

You know as I'm reading through Exodus and as I'm seeing even with the Tabernacle even with God providing this place to dwell among the Israelites, even with God inviting them to build this place to dwell among them, there is still the curtain that is separating the holy of holies where God is going to come and dwell to the rest of the Tabernacle whether other people can't even come past that curtain. But Jesus tore the veil with His death on the cross. He tore the veil so that we can come close. We have this God who is so holy yet so pursuing our hearts. He is so dedicated to pursuing us and all He wants to responses as to be dedicated unto him.

So I want you to listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit today. When the people brought the free will offering, it says that they moved according to the prompting of their spirits. So listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit today. Respond to God's love, respond to his holiness. Dedicate your life to Him. Dedicate your heart to Him. He's not going to force you but He desires you. He doesn't need you but He wants you.

That is an invitation. That is the holy pursuit of our God. So, thank you so much God. Thank you so much for the way that You pursue us, for the way that You love us God. God we do not deserve Your love, but we thank you because You pour it out anyway. God I thank you that You made a way for us to be able to come close. God I thank you that You are holy yet You come after us God. When we should really be coming after You Father, so right now God, I repent Lord Jesus on behalf of myself and on behalf of everyone listening God. I repent for the idols in our lives. I repent for the sin that we have committed ourselves to, that we have dedicated ourselves to God and I ask for Jesus that You would wash us clean, that You would set us free, that You would remind us of Your holiness and remind us of Your perfect love and give us hearts that desire You yet again Lord God, bring fresh revelation of Your holiness into our lives Lord Jesus, and help us to respond in obedience and to respond in dedication to you Jesus.

We love you so much and we thank you. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

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