

Faith Talk - April 12, 2026

Series: The Utter Relief of Holiness

Sermon: The Utter Relief of Holiness

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:15; John 14:15; 1 John 4:19; Psalm 46:10; 1 John 4:16; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; John 14:17; Matthew 11:28-30

Psalm 46:10

Stop striving and know that I am God.

Sermon Summary

This sermon introduces a transformative perspective on holiness, not as exhausting self-effort but as the experience of God's goodness that naturally and spiritually sanctifies us.

The message challenges the common approach of "trying harder to be holy" by revealing that holiness comes from walking with Jesus, not working toward Him. Using several Scripture passages, the sermon explains that Jesus invites us to rest in His finished work rather than carry the burden of proving our love through obedience.

The key reframe: We don't work on our sin to get closer to Jesus; we walk with Jesus to overcome our sin. Like a young ox yoked to a mature ox who carries the load, we simply learn to walk alongside Christ, who does the heavy lifting.

True holiness is God sharing His goodness with us. When we stop striving and embrace who God is (love), we remain in Him, and He remains in us, producing genuine transformation that leads to holiness and obedience. What a relief!

What do you do? For today, you change your perspective and refocus your practice. Redirect your striving from being holy to focusing on the One who is holy. He will sanctify who you are to be more like Him. What a relief!

- **Stop striving** and know that He is God. You are already loved.
- **Stop working** on your sin with self-effort. Die to this pride.
- **Start resting** in the finished work of Jesus Christ. He is all your holiness.
- **Start embracing** the goodness of God. Embracing Him will sanctify you, change your desires, empower you over temptation, and satisfy your soul.
- **Start walking** *with* Jesus rather than working toward Jesus. Experience the utter relief of His holiness.

Discussion Questions

Conversation with Adults

1. The sermon says we often approach holiness in "wrong order," trying to obey commands to prove we love God instead of falling more in love with God, which then produces obedience. Which order describes your current spiritual life?
2. "You don't work on your sin to get closer to Jesus; you walk with Jesus to overcome your sin." What's the practical difference between these two approaches in dealing with a specific sin you struggle with?
3. The sermon defines holiness as "God sharing His goodness with you" rather than your effort to be good. How does this definition change your approach to spiritual growth and dealing with repeated failure?

Conversation with Students

1. Think about when you've tried really hard to stop doing something wrong or start doing something right. How did that feel? What would it look like to "walk with Jesus" to overcome that struggle instead?
2. Jesus said His yoke is "easy" and His burden is "light." Why doesn't Christianity feel that way to many people? What makes it feel heavy?
3. The sermon says, "Everything good in me is Christ in me." How is this different from trying to be a good person on your own? Which approach sounds more appealing and why?

Conversation with Kids

1. Jesus said He wants to give us "rest" instead of making us work really hard. What does it mean to rest in Jesus?
2. A yoke connects a baby ox to a grown-up ox (bull or steer), so the grown-up does most of the work. How is walking with Jesus like that?
3. When you do something wrong, do you think Jesus is mad at you or wants to help you? How does knowing that change how you feel about following Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the invitation to rest rather than strive, to walk with Jesus rather than work toward Him. We're grateful that holiness is not about our human effort but about You sharing Your goodness with us.

We ask for help in changing our perspective, to stop trying to prove our love through obedience, and instead to fall more deeply in love with You, knowing that love will naturally produce obedience. Help us to believe that You already love us completely and that Christ's righteousness is fully ours.

We commit to redirecting our energy from working on our sin to walking with Jesus. May we experience the utter relief that comes when we stop striving and simply embrace who You are. Yoke us to Christ so He carries the load, and we simply learn His way. In Jesus' name, Amen.