

Introduction

- Up until now in Leviticus the "action" has all happened in or around the sanctuary:
 - we had the "manual of sacrifice" in chapters 1-7; God taking the initiative (He had to; He's holy and we're not!) and inviting our human response, all the sacrifices taking place in the sanctuary (later the Temple)
 - last week we had the priests: their week long ordination service, the danger of holiness and the beauty of holiness that their presence pointed too - and we were reminded that, in Christ, we have a priest who represents us in God's presence
- All in the sanctuary, the place formally marked out as God's presence
- But now the attention shifts, away from the outwardly religious to the, at turns, most sensitive, most mundane, most routine aspects of daily life!
 - food - chapter 11 - what animals can and can't be eaten; this is where the "no pork" thing comes from; there are also regulations about how "unclean" foods contaminate everything they touch
 - childbirth - chapter 12 - what effect giving birth has on a woman
 - skin diseases - chapter 13 & 14 - not just how they make a personal "unclean", but also how to go about cleansing from these diseases
 - mildew - chapter 13 & 14 - likewise!
 - bodily discharges - chapter 15 - not your normal sermon topic!

Do this, do that!

- Remember the children's game, "Simon Says"?
 - if the leader said "Simon says do" then you do it
 - if they just said "do", then you are meant to ignore them!
- The content of the instructions is completely arbitrary - typically putting finger on nose, head, elbow, etc!!
 - and they could equally easily tell you to do one thing, and then a moment later - by not saying "Simon says..." - tell you not to the very same thing!
- Do these chapter strike you as completely arbitrary?
 - legalism gone mad!!
 - not a moment of your life when God isn't looking over your shoulder saying, "Do this... do that..."
 - there is nothing you can do, no moment of your life, when there isn't some regulation covering it!
- Surely, we say, faith isn't about that?
 - and we'd be right
 - which is good, since I had a lovely pork dinner last night!!
 - "[God] forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)
 - that written code could do nothing to win our salvation - all it did was point out how far short of giving our whole lives to God we really are!

It all matters!

- But these regulations also point to something else, something more positive and something often forgotten:
 - what we do matters!
 - indeed, every moment of every day, every thought, every bite to eat, every illness, everything that goes wrong in our house - everything has an eternal significance and may be used by God to make us more like Christ!
- These regulations touch on everything in life - even the "unmentionable" - precisely because it matters!
 - food - maybe now we are free of concerns about what animals we eat, but we

can eat with righteousness, without greed, with hospitality, with a care for the bodies He has given us; we can give to God our eating that He may be glorified in and through it

- **childbirth** - now we are free from a spiritual cutting off from God because of childbirth, but how we raise our children matters; there is an **eternal** significance in the example we set, in the priorities, in the way we discipline, in the way we teach them about God
- **skin diseases** - leprosy and many other "dread" diseases are often now treat-able; but how we bear the suffering that might come our way, our turning to God in that pain, can transform it for God's glory
- **mildew** - living in a tent, with little clothing and few animals to draw on for replacements, mildew was a real problem; our homes and possessions are equally there that God might use them
- **bodily discharges** - well... even our bodies are given to us by God, Temples of the Holy Spirit, to be kept pure and holy as His dwelling place
- **It all matters!**

Conclusion

- The Law, the regulations, do two things:
 - they point out how far short of giving our whole lives to God we fall
 - but they also remind us that **every moment of our lives has eternal significance**; sure, God has provided for our salvation once for all in Christ's sacrifice on the Cross - but His desire for us is that we be like Christ, through and through, in every aspect of our daily living!
- So?
 - so, first, we are called into the presence of the Holy God
 - second, we have a priest who represents us in His presence (Jesus)
 - and yet third, as we go out into the world, we find that that world also belongs to him, and how we live there matters!