

## Chat with the Children

- Introduce the crossword, hand out sheets - try and do it without looking up in a Bible...
  - how are you getting on?
- OK, can try lookin up your Bibles...
  - any more answers?
- *HARD!*
  - show complete thing
- Getting some things right may be possible
  - but getting everything right was next to impossible!
  - God calls us to put him in charge of **everything** in our lives
  - not just some things!
  - its an impossible task, this side of heaven, though God does help us...
  - the bible passages from Leviticus will help us think more about that - and about why that shouldn't make us despair - in a while...

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## 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)
  - then 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 really enjoy roast pork and crackling!!
  - "[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!