



IN PURSUIT OF GODLINESS

SERMON OUTLINE

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE TWO: THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

SUGGESTED PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 6:3-11 (NASB)

³If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message on **The Mystery of Godliness** is to compare the Law of the Old Testament or covenant with the grace brought to us by Jesus Christ in the New Testament or covenant, and to contrast how people attained godliness under the Old with how we can attain godliness today under the New.

INTRODUCTION:

Mere external religion without true godliness is like having a well-done-looking hamburger on the outside that is raw on the inside. It looks like it's ready, but nothing is cooked inside. God's goal for His people is to pursue godliness. We have defined godliness as a lifestyle that is consistent with the character of God. It is the opposite of worldliness, which is a lifestyle that's inconsistent with the character of God.

Paul told Timothy, the pastor of the church in Ephesus, to teach his people how believers are to conduct themselves as part of the household, the family, of God. Paul also said he

wanted Timothy to explain "the mystery of godliness," which was a doctrine that everyone should agree with because it is the truth of God. This truth is common, meaning it belongs to every Christian and is shared among all Christians. Paul also called this mystery "great," which lets us know this is not some minor, inconsequential matter.

In the Bible, a mystery refers to something concealed in the Old Testament that's revealed in the New Testament. Paul says there is a mystery about godliness that was unclear in the Old Testament that now has been made clear in the New Testament. This is the case with many truths that are revealed only in the New Testament, because in the Old Testament we didn't get the whole story. The Old Testament is critical and foundational to our faith, but it was incomplete in terms of God's full redemptive plan. That's called progressive revelation.

We see this because the Bible was not written as one book at one time by one person to cover all things. It was written by about forty different authors over about fifteen hundred years to tell the whole story. When it comes to the mystery of how people can be made right with God and live godly lives, the Old Testament told only the first part of the story. So this mystery of godliness that was a shadow in the Old Testament came to full light in the New when Jesus Christ came as God in the flesh.

In order to understand this mystery, you have to understand that a shift occurred when God moved from the Old Testament to the New Testament. If you do not understand the shift, you won't understand the mystery.

The book of Hebrews (8:13) says that when God introduced His New Covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, He made the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses, obsolete. This means if you're living in the Old Testament, that is, trying to please God by what you do and don't do, you're living under something that has been made obsolete because of something better that has come along.

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is not solely our *government's* problem.
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SERMON POINTS:

1. JESUS CHRIST IS THE EMBODIMENT OF GRACE.

When Jesus appeared, grace appeared.

- John 1:17: "The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."
- It's not that grace didn't exist in the Old Testament, but when Jesus came, He revealed God's grace to all men (Titus 2:11).

Since the grace of God has appeared to us, we are no longer under law.

- According to Romans 6:14, law could never save anyone.
- What we needed was a sinless Savior, who came in the person of Christ.

2. THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

True godliness is no longer found in a written code like the Mosaic Law.

- Godliness is forever linked to the person of Jesus Christ.
- The mystery of godliness is Christ indwelling you.

Since godliness is linked to Jesus Christ, our assignment is to become more like Him.

- This is possible because God's command to us is to be holy because He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).
- The job of the Holy Spirit is to make the indwelling Christ expand within us so that we are becoming more godly.

3. GOD MADE A NEW COVENANT WITH US IN JESUS CHRIST.

As we saw above, this New Covenant of grace makes the Old Covenant of law obsolete.

- The mystery of the New Covenant is that we are rightly related to God by grace (Hebrews 8:6,10).
- This is in stark contrast to the strict performance

standards of the Mosaic Law.

The Old Covenant said, "Do, do." The New Covenant says, "Done!" in Jesus Christ.

- Jesus is alone in His uniqueness.
- Therefore, He alone is qualified to be our Savior.
- When Jesus appeared, God appeared (Titus 2:11).
- We are not to frustrate grace by going back to law (Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:21).
- Jesus paid it all (John 19:30)!
- Our calling is to grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18).

SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

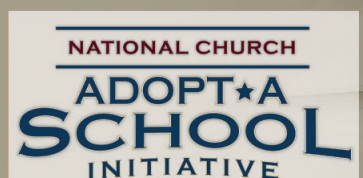
THE FOOTBALL: In football, the ball runs the entire multibillion-dollar show. Everything that happens on the field is tied to this ball. The players are paid millions of dollars to fight over the possession of the ball. People by the hundreds of thousands pile into the stadiums or watch television to see these players fight over the football. It's all about the ball. Take the ball out of the football game, and there is no game. Take Jesus out of the mystery of godliness, and there is no godliness.

WASHING MACHINES: Many years ago, our ancestors washed their clothes on a wooden washboard. Every time they did it, they had to roll up their sleeves and apply "elbow grease," scrubbing hard because they were trying to make something clean that was dirty. Then along came washing machines. They have the same goal as the washboard, but something is different because now there is a new power at work making clean what was dirty.

The Old Covenant was elbow grease in terms of trying to make sinners clean before God. It was people trying to clean up their mess by their own effort. The New Covenant is the washing machine that does the same thing by a new power that is apart from our own effort.

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**our mission field is not merely across the sea.
it is across the street.**





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THE AUCTION: There was once a father who lost his beloved son, and then later the father himself died. He was very wealthy and had stipulated in his will that all of his expensive possessions were to be auctioned off. The auctioneer came and the sale began. "The first piece we're going to bring out is a picture of the man's son," the auctioneer said, showing an old picture of the man's son who had died. "Do I have a bid?"

Well, nobody bid on it because the buyers didn't come for that. They came for some of the expensive art pieces and artifacts, so nobody was bidding on the picture. But then from the back of the room an old man stepped forward and said, "Sir, I was the servant of the man who died, and if nobody will take the picture of the boy, I want to know if I can have it." The auctioneer said, "One more time. Is there anyone who will bid on the picture of the son?" Nobody bid on it. He then said, "Sir, you may have the picture." To everyone's shock, the auctioneer then picked up his gavel, banged it down, and said, "The auction is over."

Everybody looked around and said, "What?! You haven't brought out any of the expensive pieces that are supposed to be sold. How can the auction be over?" The auctioneer replied, "The father's will says that the auction was to begin with the picture of his son, and whoever took that got everything else in his estate. He valued his son so highly that he stipulated that whoever took his son's picture would inherit his entire estate."

Sometimes we are like those buyers at the estate auction. We're going around looking for everything else to buy, but God is there saying, "I have come to give you life and to give it to you more abundantly in My Son. If you have My Son, you have eternal life and all the riches that go with it."

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND HISTORY AND CULTURE:

MYSTERY: The Bible's definition of a mystery is far different than its meaning in everyday language. We think of a mystery as a puzzle to be put together, a riddle to be solved or a knot to be untied. But a biblical mystery is none of these; instead, it is a truth that was previously hidden or not understood that God has now revealed and explained. Jesus called the truths of His kingdom a mystery because the full

understanding of the kingdom had not been made known to God's people before Jesus came and explained it.

CHRIST'S TWO NATURES: Jesus Christ is the revelation of God in human form. In theology, we call it the hypostatic union which means two natures in one person, unmixed forever.

OLD TESTAMENT LAW: The Bible says that by the works of the law nobody is justified before God (Romans 6:14). The Old Testament Law was the obsolete covenant. It can only tell you the problem, it could not fix it. There were 613, and to break one was to break all of them.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: This is the biblical doctrine that accounts for the way God revealed Himself and gave His people His truth through the Bible in stages instead of all at once. God gave people the information He wanted them to have for the period in which they were living. That information was sufficient for them then, but He didn't reveal the whole story at once as they weren't ready for the whole story yet.

SERMON LINES:

This message explains the wonderful truth of the mystery of godliness that is embodied uniquely in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"Reading the Old Testament is like reading the first part of a book. You get some good information and part of the plot, but you don't know how the story ends or where the plot is going because you haven't heard the whole story yet."

"God has taken only one 'selfie' to show the world, and it is Jesus Christ."

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