

# Sermon Study Guide – September 28, 2025

Greetings!

We're continuing our series about the church. In the past few weeks I've proposed a definition of the church based on taking the whole of the Bible into consideration:

The Church is

- The people of God
- On the mission of God
- Becoming the image of God in Christ
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit

This week we have a challenging conversation about the holiness of God's people. We're used to thinking of holiness as good morals or values. But holiness means to be set apart, to have a different identity, to live by a different story. Of course that has moral outcomes. This week we consider the shortcut Jesus was tempted by, and the one we are constantly also tempted by... to exchange holiness for influence, to trade the kingdom of God for authority in the kingdoms of the world.

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## Church is a Holy People

**OT: Leviticus 20:26**

You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

**NT: John 17:14-19**

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate [make holy] myself, that they also may be sanctified [made holy] in truth.

## Outline

**Introduction:** The Shortcut

**Definition:** The Church is the People of God on the Mission of God, Becoming the Image of God in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit

**Foundation 1:** Not from the World

**Foundation 2:** Holiness is not Morality but it has behavioral outcomes

**Foundation 3:** The enemy is the evil one, not the world or its warring parties

**Implication (So what?):** The shortcut is to try to fix the world for Jesus by human methods. The shortcut is to avoid holiness by keeping the morality. The shortcut is to join sides, to make this side good and that side evil.

**Application (Now What?):** Are we tempted by the shortcut? Tempted to exchange a version of morality for holiness? To trade the vision of the kingdom for a vision of Christian values? Jesus has given us his word, are we taking our cues from the world?

## Study Questions

**Foundations: What?**

1. What is the shortcut Satan offered to Jesus?
2. What is holiness? How have you understood it previously? What's the danger in confusing holiness and morality or values?
3. What does "not of this world" mean? How does that relate to "the evil one?"

**Implications: So What?**

4. What are some shortcuts you could identify that trade holiness for moral victories in the wider church or in your own life?

**Applications: Now What?**

5. What might the call to holiness look like for you?

## Prayer

God is holy, meaning God does not have his origins in this world or human culture. That is why we pray. Prayer is meant to unite us to God in thought and will so that we are holy, that our values, motives, and desires are not world-shaped but kingdom-shaped. So we pray as Jesus did, that God would "sanctify us" or make us separate from the world in truth.