

This weeks revival was good. here is my Sat. sermon. Sunday of our revival we have missionaries reporting on their missions. Sunday Lea Miller gave a report on what her husbands grandfather did in 1966 when he and some others took some jersey cows to India. It was a good report. Thank you Lea.

You can find all of our revival sermons on our web site www.pricescreekcob.com

God bless you!

Pastor Don

Isaiah 1:1-20 “Repent, Return, Renew” Oct. 5, 2013

A truly stingy painter was contracted to paint the local Church a beautiful white on the outside. The Deacons negotiated a price with the painter and he set to work. He thought to himself, "I can make a little higher profit on this job." So he thinned down his paint, so that the paint to do one side, ended up painting the whole building. As he finished and was admiring his work, it began to rain. And it rained. And rained. And Rained. And the white paint ran down the sides of the church, and ran off into the sewer. The painter fell to his knees and cried, "Why me, God?" And suddenly, a voice was heard from heaven, "Repaint, and thin no more!"

A soap manufacturer and a pastor were walking together down a street in a large city. The soap manufacturer casually said, "The gospel you preach hasn't done much good has it? Just observe. There is still a lot of wickedness in the world, and a lot of wicked people, too!" The pastor made no reply until they passed a dirty little child making mud pies in the gutter. Seizing the opportunity, the pastor said, "I see that soap hasn't done much good in the world either; for there is much dirt, and many dirty people around." The soap man said, "Oh, well, soap only works when it is applied." And the pastor said, "Exactly, so it is with the gospel."

From A. B. Earle's 1888 publication "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," comes the following story: God told a man that if he would bring up to the gate of heaven the most precious thing that could be found in this world, it would gain his admittance into heaven. "Then I am sure of heaven," the man said, "because I know what the most precious thing in the world is." He went to a mint where the best specimens of gold could be found, and obtaining the purest piece possible, flew up to the gates of pearl, sure that heaven would be opened to him, but found the gates closed and bolted against him. He was told that gold was not the most precious thing; that their streets are paved with gold.

He came again. This time he obtained the most exquisitely beautiful specimen of jewelry; nothing more beautiful on earth of its kind. He carried this up, but found the door still shut against him. He was told that no one used jewelry there. It was really of no value in heaven. He must go again.

This time he was walking on the beach, thinking over what that most precious thing could be, when his attention was attracted to a beautiful little child lying on the grass under the shade of a tree, with its innocent face upturned towards heaven, in a sweet sleep. Just then a robber came to this little child, and stood over it for a moment, apparently in deep thoughtfulness, gazing on its innocent face, the child unconscious of any danger. The robber, reviewing his own life in his guilt and wickedness, and contrasting it with the innocence of that little child, drew a deep sigh of regret and sorrow over his life of sin, when a tear of penitence dropped from his eye. The man in search of earth's most precious thing, caught this tear, and flew up to heaven's gate with it, when he found the gates thrown wide open to him, with a hearty welcome from the heavenly ones, saying: "Yes, you have brought the most precious thing that can be found on earth the Tear of Repentance." So, dear friend, if your bosom sighs over a life of sin, and the tear of penitence moistens your cheeks do not wipe it away, or hide it, but let it dry on your face, for no earthly jewelry could so adorn your person.

Are our cheeks wet with the tears of repentance? Repent, Return, Renew; that is what God is calling us to do today. Are we willing to obey our Heavenly Fathers voice? [pray]

[Vs.1] Isaiah was a man with a mission. God had called him to be His prophet and he had accepted. Isaiah prophesized from approximately 740 BC until his death in 681 BC. Isaiah means "the Lord saves." He had a simple message; repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Sound familiar? That is the same message John the Baptist had, that Jesus had and that we have. Isaiah warned Israel to repent of their sin, return to God and renew their relationship with Him; this is the same message we have today.

In Isaiah's day, Israel was a divided country. Judah was the southern half. It included Jerusalem. Israel was the northern kingdom. Assyria carried them into captivity in 722 BC. God punished His rebellious children. After Israel was captured, Judah did straighten up some; but they went in to Babylonian captivity in 586BC. Have we repented of our sins? Have we returned to God? Do we renew our relationship with Him everyday?

[Read 2-4] Our God is a personal God. Jesus is a personal savior. Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship with a living savior. Israel is God's chosen people, his children if you will. He was mad at them. They had forgotten who He is. They have rebelled continually. They are rebellious children. God says the ox and the mule know and honor their master, but His children do not love and honor Him. They had become a brood of evil doers, a sin filled nation; a people laden with iniquity.

God had intended Israel to lead all people to Him. Genesis 12:3 “I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” But His rebellious children had failed to honor and obey Him, let alone lead others to Him. Now He is putting them on trial. He has indicted them for disobedience and forsaking Him. He has summoned all the world to see their shame. They had rebelled against their God. Rebellion means to refuse to submit to someone else’s authority and rule. The Israelites had refused to be what God wanted them to be.

Are we being what God has called us to be? Or are we rebelling against God?

Isaiah said this sinful nation of Israel had provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel. This is Isaiah’s favorite term for God. He used it 25 times in his book. The Lord is Holy; He is the Creator, exalted in heaven, without sin or corruption; He alone is the judge of the world and the protector of the faithful. Are we living a life that provokes the Holy one of Israel to anger? Have we forsaken the Lord and turned away from Him?

[vs.5-9] Israel and Judah were already suffering from the effects of their ongoing rebellion against God. Isaiah compares the nation’s afflictions to a badly wounded soldier

He describes the land as being devastated by war. To the Israelites, being defeated and plundered by an invading army was the worst kind of judgment. From head to foot was a phrase that meant everyone and everything had been impacted by Israel’s sin. Their wounds could not heal because they continued in their sin. More preaching just made their hearts harder. Only repentance could heal them and their land.

The daughter of Zion means the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah speaks of a time when Jerusalem would be lost. It would be like a booth in a vineyard or a hut in the garden; abandoned after the harvest is completed. But God saves a remnant of his faithful people.

[10-15] God compares His rebellious children with the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah are the epitome of sinfulness. Genesis 13:13 “But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.” To say that the Israelites were as bad as those who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah showed just how bad their sinful state had become. They had hit rock bottom. They went through the motions of religion, but their hearts were far from God. Are we just going thru the motions or do we truly love God? They did not worship God with their whole heart.

They offered their sacrifices, but it was out of obligation and not love. They went to worship service out of habit and not a desire to worship God. God wants a love offering from a cheerful giver; not an obligated one. They offered their best, but their heart was not in it. 1Samuel 15:22 says it is better to obey than to sacrifice. God judges not only our outward acts, be they pious or sinful; but our motives as well. Why do we do what we do? God reads our minds and knows our thoughts. Attitude and motive are everything to Him. What motivated us to come here this morning? Do we give our offerings with love and joy? Do we willingly, with that same love & joy, obey God's call upon our lives?

God condemns the peoples sacred worship times; The New Moon, Sabbaths and various festivals and holy days. Why? Not because they weren't keeping them, but because their heart was not in them. It was all just lip service, not reverence and love. They went to church for all the wrong reasons. God said He would not hear their prayers.

Gifts and sacrifices mean nothing to God if they mean nothing to us; if our heart is not in them. Gifts and sacrifices are an outward expression of inward faith. They bring God no pleasure if they aren't given them out of love for Him. God was calling for sincere faith and devotion. God wants us to love, serve and obey Him out of love for Him. Are our actions for God motivated by our love for Him? God wants everyone to turn from their sin. That is what repentance is; turning around and going the other way. When we turn from our sin, we need to turn to God; to return to Him, to renew our relationship with Him. That is what Isaiah told the Israelites next [16-20].

All sinners are invited to wash themselves and stop doing evil; to learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend and help the widows and orphans. James 1:27 tells us the same thing; "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit orphans & widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." James

gives us a way to test our love for God; does it produce good fruit? The Israelites should have been able to tell that their religion was empty because they had no good fruit, and evil works were present. What about us; do we have good fruit? Do we have good works? Are we washed in the blood of Jesus? Do we seek Justice? Do we rebuke the oppressor? Do we help out the widows and the orphans?

"Let us reason together" means to come to a legal decision. This does not mean compromise but reach an agreement with God concerning their sin. God was and is willing to forgive sin if people are willing to confess and repent of it. Without the admittance that we have sinned, we can never repent, and if we don't repent, we can never receive forgiveness. Sin must be punished. Jesus came to render this punishment. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." When we repent and ask God for forgiveness, we get it because Jesus paid our sin debt. His blood & His blood alone, washes away all and every sin.

Isaiah 53:5 “he was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And by His stripes we are healed.” Through Jesus Christ anyone and everyone can find true forgiveness. And we all need it. Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Through Christ & only through Christ can anyone and everyone receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Now this repent, return and renew offer has another side; if one refuses and rebels they shall be devoured by the sword. God’s sword is that of justice. If we won’t submit to His Lordship and let Him govern us, then we will face His wrath in Judgment. Both the promise of eternal life and the threat of eternal separation from God are real because God has said they are. Which do we want? Which have we chosen?

By warning God’s people of impending doom if they did not repent, Isaiah brought a message of hope. Today Christians have the same message. As long as the children of Israel continued in their sin, they cut themselves off from God. The same is true today; our sin separates us from God. So if God seems far away who moved? If we want to feel God close to us again we too must repent, return and renew. 1John1:9 “if we confess our sins, He is faithful& just to forgive us our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Today America needs to repent, return to God and renew our obedience to Him.

2 Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” America needs a revival today; we need to repent, return and renew. There are too many things that we allow in this country that are not right. Far too often we Christians sit and keep silent when we should speak up. The only way to turn America around is one soul at a time. With each person who makes a commitment to Christ, America begins its long road back to God. Are we praying for our country? Are we leading by example? Are we telling others about Jesus? How does our speech compare with our deeds? Does our walk match our talk?

Dr. J. Edwin Orr answered his students question of what can we do to bring revival about other than prayer; Dr. Orr said let it begin with you. In his book “The Secrets of Christian Joy” Vance Havner writes these words; “The greatest need of America is an old-fashioned, heaven-born, God-sent revival. Throughout the history of the church, when clouds have hung lowest, when sin has seemed blackest and faith has been weakest, there have always been a faithful few who have not sold out to the devil or bowed their knee to Baal, who have feared the Lord and thought upon his Name and have not forsaken the assembling of themselves together. These have besought the Lord to revive his work in the midst of the years, and in the midst of the fears and tears, and in wrath to remember mercy. God has always answered such supplication, filling each heart with his love, rekindling each soul with fire from above.”

In John 6:37 Jesus said “The one who comes to me I will by no means cast out.” Charlotte Elliot claimed this verse and gave her heart to Christ. Then she wrote a song that explains it to us. Jesus will accept us just as we are; He will change us. All we have to do is repent, return, and renew our souls in Christ. If we repent and return, Jesus will renew us. He will accept us just as we are. Are we willing to do that? Are we willing to let the revival start with us? Are we willing to lead by example? Are we rebellious children or forgiven, loving, obedient servants of the Lord?

Amen, let's pray.