

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Isaiah: A Godly Man in a Nation in Crisis

Scripture: Isaiah 5-6

Code: 1383

Because the subject on my heart is of great importance, I want us to get right at our text and I'd like you to turn in your Bible to Isaiah Chapter 5. Before the days of the fall when all our church family is back, I was asking the Lord to give me a word from Him. I didn't really know where in the Scripture he'd want me to go but so many things were laid upon my heart, that the other day I found myself reading Isaiah Chapter 5 to see if what I knew of that Chapter did not, in some way, parallel the scene as I view it even in our world and our country and our church today. And through that reading the Lord impressed on my heart that that was the message He wanted me to share with you tonight.

And so I'd like us to look tonight at Isaiah Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. We're going to do an overview of the two of them and yet I want to give you enough detail so you'll understand what's going on. We could well entitle this message Isaiah, A Godly Man in a Nation in Crisis, because that basically is the theme of these chapters.

Someone has well said if men have learned anything from history it is that men never learn anything from history. And so history inexorably repeats itself. The cynicism of the preacher in Ecclesiastes is somewhat justified when he said "there is nothing new under the sun." History becomes for him an endless cycle of repetition. And so he says "that which hath been is now and that which is to be hath already been."

Men and nations seem to go in the same endless cycles of repetition. From glory to destruction, their beginnings are usually bright and hopeful and filled with promise and somewhere along the line they fall into sinfulness and end in destruction. That's the story of man in Eden, and that's the story of every man in every nation since.

In fact, every baby born becomes a living illustration of the inevitable course of men in nations. The little life begins and the loveliness and innocence of infancy moves to the sinfulness of maturity and ultimately ends in death. I see the same path in people today and I see the same thing in our own nation, the United States of America. I really believe in my heart that America is trapped in a doomsday cycle.

That America is simply in larger measure what the individual lives that make it up are. Manifestations of the power of sin to destroy a good beginning and turn it into a fearful ending. As I look at our

country I reminded of the greatness of the primitive beginnings of America, that pristine beauty that we knew when people first arrived in this country because they sought to worship God in liberty and freedom.

They wanted to establish in the name of Jesus Christ a community of brotherhood. The Bible was held high as the source of all truth and the authority for life. God was the center of thinking and God was the center of feeling. And God was the center of doing and churches were the center of the community. And in our early history there were great revivals and great awakenings and great preachers and wonderful schools for teaching the Scripture and preparing men and women for ministry. There was a standard. There was a norm. There was an absolute for living. It was the word of God.

But that was the time of America's infancy. As maturity came upon America, the drift that so inevitably comes came. It comes to individuals. It comes to institutions. It comes to schools. It comes to churches and it came. The drift into a degraded adulthood was evident. God raised up His Jonathan Edwards, His George Whitfields, His Charles Finneys, His Billy Sundays, His D. L. Moodys and His Billy Grahams, and many others, but the drift never seemed to be subsided.

The schools went bad. The churches followed suit because the pulpits no longer held up the word of God. The government abandoned the Scripture and the schools followed suit and so we're in the dooms day cycle and the inevitability of it all is that we face a very, very bleak ending. What has happened? And how do we react to it? I want us to look back in history for some answers. I don't think that all of the answers are to be found in analyzation of the present tense. I think the best lessons are to be found in a look at history.

Because everything that we're experiencing has already been done and if we look to the word of God we'll find out such similarities exist as maybe will shock us. Both in terms of problem and solution. In fact, in 1 Corinthians Chapter 10, I'd like to just draw your attention some verses. You don't need to look them up. Just listen as I read them to you. But in 1 Corinthians Chapter 10 beginning at verse 6, Paul says "Now these things," and he has reference to events in the history of Israel, "these things were our examples or our models to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them. Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed and fell in one day twenty-three thousand. Neither let us put Christ to the test as some of them also tested him and were destroyed by serpents. Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed by the destroyer."

Now, all these things happened unto them for examples and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. In other words, God has recorded the history of Israel, and its devastation and its degradation and its dissolution and its destruction for the purpose of setting a pattern that we can look to, to see what's wrong with our own society and come to some conclusions

about a remedy. The best thing is not to appoint some kind of social committee to analyze on the basis of economics or political theory or social theory, what's wrong with us, the best thing is to look to the word of God.

Biblical history gives the truest picture of all. And I really feel that if you read the Old Testament, the Old Testament presents to the history of today a series of billboards all along the path of mankind warning about the inevitability of destruction when sin enters the society.

For our lesson tonight, we want to look at one of those billboards and there are many. One erected by the prophet Isaiah. It is a clear insight. It is a very lucid lesson of the deadly sins that destroyed Israel readily applicable to our own society and how a Godly man reacted to that very crisis. And it sets up for us a form in which we too should react.

First of all, look at Chapter 5 and I want you to notice the parable of the Lord. For in this drama, the main character is the Lord Himself. The parable of the Lord, verse 1. "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he dug it and gathered out the stones and planted it with the choicest vine and build a tower in the midst of it and also made a wine press in it. And he looked for it to bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now oh inhabitance of Jerusalem and men of Judah judge I pray you between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why when I looked for it to bring forth grapes brought it forth wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge and it shall be eaten up and break down its wall and it shall be trampled down and I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned nor digged but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it."

Now stop right there. This is a parable. In fact, it is an exquisite elegy. It is a parable in the form of a plaintive weeping song concerning my beloved end is vineyard. Any many Bible scholars feel that my beloved is a statement by God regarding Christ. The vineyard belongs to the trinity. And it is a weeping song over what happened to that vineyard. Now, in the days of Isaiah, the stony hills of Judah were beautifully terraced and planted with choice and fruitful vineyards. And every citizen of Judah would have understood the meaning of this parable.

He was familiar and she was familiar with the beautiful vineyards which produced very, very luscious grapes. The people themselves knew well how to bring it out of that hard ground in so many cases there had to be a great amount of love and toil and care to make the vineyard productive. They knew how hard the husbandman would labor and work and have in his heart such great hope for a return for all of his effort. And every Judean would understand easily the frustration, the agony, the sorrow, the disappointment when the husbandman found that instead of all of his effort producing the luscious grapes that he wanted there was only the buoshemeas they Hebrew says. Little tiny berries hard and sour called wild grapes, useless.

And so the song is parabolic and what does it mean? Verse 7 tells us, "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. And the men of Judah his pleasant plant. And he looked for justice, but behold oppression for righteousness but behold a cry." Now the vineyard is Israel and God is the husbandman. In the 80th Psalm, Israel is likened again to a vine. Owned, protected, cared for, nurtured, loved, by Jehovah. Brought out of Egypt, planted in Canaan, cherished by the Lord's constant providential goodness. The vine says the Psalmist takes deep root and it begins to crawl and it fills the land. And he says the mountains are literally covered by its shadow. Its bows are like the massive cedars. It sends out branches westward to the great sea and it shoots go eastward to the Euphrates. And the great vine of the Lord is firmly rooted in the land.

In like manner, our Lord Jesus in the 21st Chapter of Matthew says here another parable. There was a certain house holder who digged the vineyard and hedged it round about and digged the wine press in it and built a tower and let it out to husbandman and went into a far country and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandman that they might receive the fruits of it. Then having set forth in His parable the persecution meaded out by the husbands of the prophets of God and to God's own Son, the Lord concludes with these words. "Therefore I say unto you the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

In other words, Jesus says the same thing. Israel was my vineyard, but when I examined it there was no fruit. Psalm 80, it all had a wonderful beginning, but when the examination came at harvest there was nothing but buosheme, sour little berries. Anybody who knew Psalm 80, anybody who knows Matthew 21 understands the meaning of Isaiah 5. A great heartbreak for God.

God did everything. Look back at Chapter 5 again, verse 2. "He duggeth," what it means there is that he fenced it around by digging what is really a kind of a hedge in a sense. You dig down deeply and provide a barrier to keep out wild animals or anything that might enter in to harm it. He's separated them from all other nations is what He means. He isolated Israel. He gave them every opportunity to flourish by cutting them off from intercourse with pagans that would have corrupted them.

Then he says in verse 2, He gathered out the stones in order to make that vineyard grow and to keep the soil loose and productive he took out all the stones. What are the stones? I believe he has reference to the Canaanites in the land. God cleaned out the Canaanites. He removed them and gave them the land. And then it says He planted the very choicest vine. A noble people and He built a tower in the midst of it. I think that's a reference to Jerusalem. The capital where He would place His name and where He would appoint prophets and priests to watch against the spiritual foes.

And He made a wine press or a wine vat and I really believe that speaks of the sacrificial system with its offerings and its worship and its praise poured out. And in verse 4, look at it, "what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it." God did everything to set Israel up for a

blessed history, not unlike our own country. The beginnings were magnificent.

And now he says in verse 3, "After all that you judge inhabitation of Jerusalem. You judge men of Judah. You judge between me and my vineyard. If something has gone wrong whose fault is it? Could I have done anymore than I did?" And then he says in verses 5 and 6, "Divine retribution is inevitable and pending." I'll tell you what I'll do to my vineyard. I'll take away its head.

They won't have a protection anymore and the nations will overrun it. It'll be eaten up. I'll break down its wall. It'll be trampled. I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned nor digged. No more care for it, no more concern for it. Briars and thorns will come up and I'll even command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

What a terrible disappointment this was to God. That followed it...that following it came a terrible judgment. Verse 7 really sums it up. Look at the end of the verse, God looked for justice. "But behold oppression for righteousness behold a cry." That's a play on words in the Hebrew. He says I looked for mishpath and I saw mispach. I looked for sedakah and I found setakah. I looked for righteousness and it wasn't there. And I looked for justice and it wasn't there. In fact, something else was there oppression and the cry of anguish from the oppressed.

You failed. Israel upon whom God had lavished so much love and so much labor and now there was nothing left but to tear down the fences and let the vineyard be trampled and destroyed until the purging was complete. What a heartbreak. Israel who was blessed says Paul chiefly because was committed unto you the oracles of God. Romans 3. Israel, Romans 9, to whom pertains the adoption and the covenants and the promises.

All of these things. What more could God have done? In Jeremiah Chapter 2, verse 29, Jeremiah says "Why will you plead with me. Ye all have transgressed against me saith the Lord. In vain have I smitten your children." Even my correction he means you don't receive. They received no correction. Your own sword hath devoured your profits like a destroying lion. You've killed your own prophets. Oh generation see the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? A land of darkness?

In other words, have I done nothing for you? Have I made it hard for you? No. But in spite of that, you turned your back. I hear the plaintive cry of Jesus to that self same people. He said you will not. "You will not come to me that you might have," what, "life." And we in this country have had a great heritage. No question about it. Not a covenantal one as Israel's, but nonetheless a great heritage. A vineyard blessed of God. In its infancy uniquely blessed. What more could God have done than found this nation on faith in God through Christ? What more could He have done than establish the Bible as the basis of life? And yet people mark it in America is inevitably to be trampled in the judgment of God because we have departed from those things.

There are no good grapes here, only wild ones. Isaiah probably seemed foolish when he made this prophecy as I may to you. Somebody may have said now wait a minute Isaiah, our king Uzziah is a strong capable king. Has not God helped Uzziah to win many battles and establish firmly the power of Israel? Has not this man reigned for 52 years? Has not he been blessed of God? Has not he set the defenses in Judah and Jerusalem in order?

According to 2 Chronicles 26 he established a formidable, well-disciplined army that had the most up-to-date weapons imaginable. Yes, all that's true. All that's true. We've been through those days in America. When we dominated the world in a cold war because we had the weapons, we had the army, we had the sophistication, we had the leadership. But just as in Israel's time the cancer of departure from God was eating at the life of the nation. And the grapes of Sodom grew in the vineyard of God. And so says God there is coming a judgment.

Now listen, it's never the way of God's prophets to speak of judgments in general alone. But always to add specifics. I want you to move with me then from the parable to the Lord to the penetration of the Lord beginning in verse 8. Now here the Lord penetrates to the very core of the problem. And I want you to see this. Six specific sins have led to the ruin of the nation. Six woes and the woe, why that's a word used by John and by Jesus in Revelation. Used by the Lord in the gospels. A woe simply is this, an impassioned denunciation of some evil observed by the penetrating eyes of God.

An impassioned denunciation of some evil observed by the penetrating eyes of God. And God penetrates the situation and marks out six sins. Now beloved it is frightening to notice these six, because they are so true of our nation and may I hasten to add this sadly, they are even true of the church, the so-called church of Jesus Christ. You make application as we go.

Number one, first Isaiah says as God penetrates their sin, verse sin, you are guilty of a grasping materialism, verse 8. Woe unto them who join house to house, who lay field to field. Till there's no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth. Now here you have the sin of Abbarus. It isn't enough to have one house. It isn't enough to one piece of land. They had house to house and land to land until they have consumed the goods and stand alone isolated from everyone. The insatiable greed of the landowners of Isaiah's time cause a great amount of poverty, because what it did was it kept putting all of the resources in the hands of the few making the gap between the very rich and the very poor, wider and eliminating almost altogether anybody in the middle.

Amos speaks of it, Hosea speaks of it, Micah speaks of it and they were all Isaiah's contemporaries. Wealthy men ruthlessly acquiring property amassing fortunes squeezing out the poor and the helpless and making them buy at inflated prices to fill their own coffers. You have to think of 1 Kings 21 don't you and Ahab?

Ahab who had everything, Ahab who was the king and yet there was one man, Naboth, who just had one vineyard and Ahab wanted that vineyard, and he took it, greed. I don't believe God ever intended people to stockpile like that. I believe that's why in God's plan and the book of Leviticus there was a jubilee year when everything reverted back to its original owner. All the slaves were set free. It just washed out the whole economy and everybody started from scratch.

God never intended people to amass those kinds of fortunes out of greed. In Micah Chapter 2, in verse 2, Micah writes they covet fields, they take them by violence and houses. They take them away. They oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage, a grasping materialism. Verse 9, he says "In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, of a truth many houses shall be desolate even great and fair without inhabitant."

You know what he says? There's going to come a time when all those great houses are going to be empty. Nobody home, desolate, and it happened you know. For example, in one invasion in Judah in the days of Ahaz, recorded in 2 Chronicles 28 in one day when the nation invaded Pekah was the king and the country was Samaria, in one day they killed, get this, 120,000 men who were soldiers and 200,000 men, women, and children were carried off into captivity. In one day a third of a million people.

Now God can move in judgment when He wants to. The great houses that are being amassed will be swept away. There are people in our country who have contributed to the demise of this country by grasping materialism. Verse 2, he says, "there's going to come a day when I bring famine in the land. Your houses are not only going to be empty but your fields aren't going to produce."

"Ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah." What it means is ten acres will produce about four gallons of wine. That's famine folks. Four gallons of wine out of ten acres. A homer of seed is about 48 gallons of seed. And he says 48 gallons of seed will produce 4.8 gallons of result, one-tenth, famine.

What a picture of America. Time Magazine says America is like an unloved child with an ice cream child, fat, full of pimples and screaming for more. You know what causes inflation in a country? One simple thing. I can explain it to you, all the economists notwithstanding, inflation is caused by greed. Just plain greed. Everybody wants more and that's what begins the spiral, grasping materialists. We're materialistic, we're indulgent. We're possessive. I even saw a book written by a Christian who's on television. The name of it is Jesus Wants You Rich.

We worship the gold cow. We seek worldly status. The church is prostituted for gain. There are people floating around who will give their testimony for \$1,500.00 or \$2,000.00 a night. The nation has gone into materialism and let me tell you something, the church is riding the crest. It's a sad thing

to see Christians caught up in that grasping materialism. Secondly, Isaiah says Israel is characterized by a drunken pleasure seeking, verse 11.

"Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink who continue until night till wine and enflames them. And the harp and the lute, the tumbrel and flute and wine are in their feast, but they regard not the work of the Lord neither consider the operation of His hands."

Listen, they don't have any time for God. They're too busy getting drunk and having entertainment. Let me tell you something people. I can't think of anything that's more characteristic of our society than a drunken entertained characteristic. People blindly migrate from one rock festival to another, from one night club to another, from one disco to another, pouring records into their cars and their stereos and tapes and blasting away at their brains with the music of the world. All the time concocting drinks, all variations of mixtures to dull their senses, and the end of it all is a life reeling and rocking with insensibility to the very God who upholds the universe. That's what Isaiah's saying.

We live in a stupor in our society. It's not just drugs, PCP, and sniffing, snorting coke and heroin and all of this, it's alcohol. We are a drunken society and we are a society gone mad on music. No wonder in Revelation 18 God says "I'm going to wipe out music." Read it. The music of the world.

And what he says at the end of verse 12 is that men are practical atheists. They don't regard the work of the Lord. They don't give any thought to God. Our country knows about God. Every Christmas and Easter they throw a little bone to Him. But basically our world is drunk and lustful. Do you know what happens when you drink wine and listen to the world's music? Pretty soon it leads to sex, sin. And that's the way it is in our world. Sad thing about is it's even tolerated by Christians. We have a Christian disco in California. I read about a Christian cocktail party. I'd hate to tell you all the Christians that I know who are in the ministry who are living in sexual immorality.

This week alone a well known Christian musician in our own community, I confronted him about the fact that he's living in immorality. And evangelist well known in our country living in immorality and has been doing it for five years, at least. A well known Bible teacher whose name all of you would know who has lived in immorality for years. All the time trading on the name of Jesus.

It's not just in our society, but the church has fallen prey to it. Verse 13 says, "Therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge and they're honorable men are famished and their multitude dried up with thirst." Why? You abandoned the word of God and there's no resource. The church long ago gave away to entertainment, social comment. There is not word from God. So verse 14, "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure." What a vivid image.

Here is the picture of the grave literally opening its mouth wide, and "all their glory," the glory of the world, "and all their multitude and all their pomp, and he that rejoices," all the good-time Charlies, "shall descend into the grave and the common man shall be brought down and the mighty man shall be humbled and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled, but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in justice and God who is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness."

God isn't going to tolerate it. I'm telling you people, as someone once said if God doesn't destroy America, He'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorra. And verse 17 says, "Then shall the lambs feed after their manner and the waste places of the fat ones shall sojourners eat." What it means roaming the once beautiful land ravaged will be an uncultivated heap where stray lambs will graze and roaming strangers scavenge.

It's coming and for centuries in Israel Arabs fulfilled this and still do and some of the land originally given to God's people. Third sin, a defiant sinfulness. A grasping materialism, a drunken pleasure seeking and a defiant sinfulness. Verse 18 says, "Woe unto them who draw iniquity with cords of vanity." In other words, they're proud about it. They're like oxen pulling a cart. They rope themselves up and they drag their iniquity. In other words, they work hard hauling it around.

You know, being really gross is hard work. Hard work. The figure is of a beast, a stupid, dumb beast roped to a wagon and dragging around the burden of iniquity in the vain delusion that this is really living. In verse 19 they say, "let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it and let the counsel or the holy one of Israel draw near and come that we may know of it. If there is a God let Him say something here. Let Him do something. Come on, if there's a God do your thing.

In other words, they mock God. They taunt God. I think the most common swear word in America is either God or Jesus or Jesus Christ, don't you? That's a taunt at God. That's a mockery of His holy name, open, flagrant, defiant, mocking, sinfulness. The world is so blatant about it's sin, filthy television programs, filthy movies, dirty music, rotten magazines and books, it's blatant on the sign boards, it's blatant in the nightclubs, it's blatant everywhere.

And they mock the name of God. They don't even think God can respond. They're like the fools in 2 Peter who said well, all things continue as they were from the beginning. God's never gotten upset about this in the past. Certainly He won't in the future. In fact, in Psalm 10:11 it says, "He says in his heart God has forgotten." He's hiding His face. He'll never see me. God's not looking.

In Psalm 14, verse 1 "The fool has said in his heart," what, "there is no God." Now listen, that is not a philosophical statement. That is saying this, I'm going to do what I'm going to do. God could care less. There's no God checking on me. That is not a logical conclusion of study. That is a way to justify evil. And our society mocks God. I always think about Ernest Hemmingway. A series of articles written about Ernest Hemmingway said that Hemmingway had proven you could cheat sin

and that anybody whoever held onto the Victorian viewpoint that sin had consequences was a fool. Hemmingway had blasphemed God, blasted Jesus Christ, tumbled women, fought in revolutions and he had proven that a man is a man and he stands alone apart from any God.

Ten years later to the day the article came out, he put a gun to his brain and blew his head off. Sinclair Lewis who wrote that terrible blight on Christianity called Elmer Gantry in which he blasted revivalism in America. Not long after that ended up a drunken slobbering alcoholic in a third rate clinic in Rome where he died, destitute.

You can't do that and get away with it. Grasping materialism, drunken pleasure seeking, defiant sinfulness, fourthly, immoral perversion. Isaiah's time and even you could...it's hard to imagine that Israel was doing this. This is God's covenant people. Verse 20, "Woe unto them who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." Woe to those people who have totally reversed morality. Who have perverted right and wrong. Who say adultery is okay, fornication is okay, marriage is prudish, abstinence is prudish, drunkenness is the way to go, homosexuality is just an alternate lifestyle. Those who have twisted, inverted, and perverted what is right and what is wrong. Malachi says your sin is this, you have lifted up evil people who are the people we pay \$100,000.00 a word to sing yeah, yeah, yeah.

Who are the movie stars we fill their coffers with our money? They live an amoral Godless life. A subversion of moral principles. Oh I tell you people I see that in our society. Everything has become perverted and twisted and dirty. And even in the church. There are people who preach and sing songs and play instruments and they're living vial lives. I'm not just talking generalities. I'm about one step from starting to give names. Then you'll come.

I'll tell you something, I identify with Psalm 69, the reproaches that fall on the Lord have fallen on me. I can't stand this stuff, and I don't know whether the...why the Lord gets me so excited about this and nobody else, because it seems like I'm out there sometimes fighting this deal all alone. But I've gotten to the place where I started confronting some of these people because I can't let the name of Jesus Christ be profane when I know it or I stand in the point of chastening from the Lord as one who is called to speak His truth. We can't tolerate that. We can't tolerate a generation given over to a reprobate mind, a twisted, perverted since of morality.

A fifth sin, and this one is inevitable, to the others grasping materialism, drunken pleasure seeking, defiant sinfulness, moral perversion, add an arrogant conceit. Verse 21, "Woe unto them who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." You know another characteristic of our society, they have all the answers. They got it all. Never has their been so much stupid talk. We never had so much media capacity, but it just goes on all the time. You turn on the radio, talk, talk, talk, talk. Turn on the television, blah, blah, blah, blah. Conversations, analyzations, viewpoints, theories, books I'm telling you add infinite adnozium.

Everybody's got the answer. Paul said every learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. You want to know something inevitable? When men live vial, rotten lives and abandon God, they'll put themselves on His throne. The greatest sin of man is that he...he really worships himself. He's the ultimate idolater. We have "In God We Trust" on our coins and me first in our hearts.

Isaiah Chapter 29 similarly says in verse 14, "Therefore behold I will proceed to do a marvelous work among these people, even a marvelous work and a wonder for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish. The understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden. Woe unto those who seek deeply to hide their counsel from the Lord and their works are in the dark and they say who sees us and who knows us." He says I'll unmask them and I'll turn their foolishness aside.

It's been interesting to me lately to notice that in dealing with psychiatrist as we have once in a while people who have problems and they're involved with psychiatrists, it used to be that they...all the psychiatrists were in a euphoric state thinking that Freud had all the answers and boy you'd go to the psychiatrist and they'd laid out this whole thing about your sexual problems with your mother and somebody stuffed you in a closet with a pile bananas for eight weeks. No wonder your nuts. And they had all of these things. Now all of these answers and Freud was the great God who had all the solutions. And then Freud was out and Carl Rogers was in and then Rogers was out and Glasser was in, and everybody was trying a reality therapy and everybody was trying all these angles and its amazing to me now that in the last several times that I've confronted a psychiatrist, the guy goes in, they keep him long enough to get him straightened out and then they start pouring pills in him and they keep him that way.

Why I don't have any answers. Every road to the solution was a cul-de-sac going nowhere. But man worships his ego and his mind and men go around with a smirk of self-congratulation about themselves. They're conceited fools. Finally, this kind of a society was characterized by corrupt leadership, verse 22. "Woe unto them who are mighty to drink wine, men of strength to drink and mix strong drink who justify the wicked for reward." In other words, they're bribed. And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.

Now what this is talking about is drunkenness and unbridled luxury. But more than that, it is directed at the leaders of the country, the rulers and the judges who were perverting justice two ways, one by their drunkenness, two by taking bribes. They could be bought. I can't ever remember a time in American history, at least in my lifetime when there was many drunk people in leadership as there are now. Do you notice that? Not only ex-President's wives and the President's brother being dried out in alcohol centers, but even our Senators found drunk belly up in some pond in Washington, D.C. with a stripper and on and on it goes. I mean, the whole thing of leadership is a revelry, a drunkenness. There are parties you read about cocaine and you read about these things, the leadership is

corrupted. How can these people make sensible moral judgments? How can these people lead a right a nation?

The word mighty there in verse 22 means men of renown, famous leaders. We see it on a local level. I'll tell you the scandals never end on a state level and national level. And your heart just aches. You cry out for somebody with some sense, somebody with a trust in God, somebody with some standards to lead this people. And what do we get in our society? Just what Israel gave a grasping materialism, a drunken pleasure seeking a defiant sinfulness, a moral perversion, an arrogant conceit and the main thrust of it all just comes down from a corrupted leadership.

What's the result? Verse 24, "Therefore," therefore, now you know it's a result. "As the fire devours the stubble and the flame consumes the chaff so their root shall be as rottenness and their blossoms shall go up as dust." Now listen, he says it looks really good, but the roots are rotten and the blossom looks beautiful, but its fragile and when the wind blows it'll blow as dust. We talk about the great heritage of America, the roots go down great Christian heritage. They're rotten folks. Just like as Israel's.

We talk about the flower of American beauty. We talk about the wonderful country we live in with its glories. That with one puff of the breath of God will blow itself away like the most fragile dandelion. It's an illusion. Superficial prosperity, superficial strength, but it's fragile and about to disintegrate. So the parable and the penetration leads to the punishment of the Lord. Verse 24, I'm just going to read it. At the end it says, "because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, because they have despised the word of the holy one of Israel." Now there it is people, there's the heart of the matter. When any people or any nation abandoned the word of God that's the touchstone. That's the end. That's the disaster. You abandon the absolute standard of the word of God and all hell breaks loose.

Verse 25, "Therefore, is the anger of the Lord kindled against His people. He stretched forth His hand against them and has smitten them. The hills did tremble and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still." In other words, even when all that happens, God still reaches out, and He will lift up an ensign to the nations. In other words, He's going to stick up a standard in the air, and it's going to be like it says come to judge the nation. He's calling for the nations to come. He will whistle unto them, and I wish I could do that. I'd let out a whistle. God's going to stick both fingers in the sides of His mouth and whistle. He says to Israel and the nations are going to come from the ends of the earth and they're going to come swiftly.

Verse 27, "They're not going to be wearied, they're not going to stumble, they're not going to sleep. They're not going to loose their loins. They're not going to stop to tie their shoes. Their feet are going to be completely covered. Their arrows will be sharp. Their bows will be bent. Their horses' hooves will be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind. They're going to roar like a lion. They're

going to roar like young lions ye they'll roar and lay hold of the prey and carry it away safely and none shall deliver it. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea. And if one looked to the land behold darkness and sorrow and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."

Now listen, just imagine that you're there that day and you're with those people basking in the prosperity of Uzziah's reign and everything looks great and all of a sudden this weather-beaten woe be-gone, angered prophet stands up pronounces damnation on the whole society, we'd laugh at him. And when he says God's going to whistle and immense army like they've never dreamed of is going to come with Jehovah as the commander and chief. You'd say it can't happen. Killing and carrying away the prey. He was predicting the captivity, you see? And it happened the Assyrian bee came and then the caldeonlion and later on the Roman eagle flapped his wings and all of the ran amuck over the land.

You say what does that have to do with us? Listen, I think just as much God is going to bring judgment on our land, because we're guilty of the same things and I honestly believe that if we don't call our land to repentance we're going to see the same thing happen. You know then the 1st Chapter Isaiah says another characteristic of your society is that your dishonest in your business dealings and you have rebellions in your families. Would that be true of our society? Of course it would.

We have played the harlot. We've gone after the world, even the church is a mockery in so many cases. I thank God for here and there a pure church, a remnant. So the parable and the penetration and the punishment. I believe with all my heart people there's doom on our society. No way out. Doom. People say oh we're in a great revival. Church membership is going steadily down, statistically, steadily down.

Lots of people call on themselves as Christians. Lots of people talk about Jesus. Lots of people talk about heaven ain't going there. I believe there's judgment impending. So what do we do about that? Can I take you to a fourth point? We've seen the parable of the Lord, the penetration of the Lord, the punishment of the Lord, how about the presence of the Lord.

Verse 1 of Chapter 6, oh this is great. "In the year that king Uzziah died," stop right there. You know what year that was? About 740 B.C., after he had reigned 52 years. Oh in many ways he was a good king. He was a good king in many ways. He subdued the enemies of Israel. He fortified Jerusalem. He developed agriculture. He developed commerce. Under him Judah prospered. Read 2 Chronicles 26, he did many good things. But you know what happened, Chapter 26, verse 16 of 2 Chronicles says it all went to his head, but when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction for he transgressed against the Lord his God and went into the temple to burn incense on the altar. Usurp the place of a priest and God at that very moment reach out and touched him with a divine hand of judgment and he became a leper until the day he died.

He crawled away from society and he spent the rest of his life crying unclean, unclean. Listen, in the year that king Uzziah died, Israel reached the apex of its disaster. He had died a tragic leper. But listen it was in the saddest hour of Israel's history that Isaiah had his greatest vision of God. Look at the rest of the verse. In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord. Is that a great statement?

Listen people that's the presence of the Lord. There's always a faithful prophet. There's always a remnant. If ever there was a vision of God needed it was then. And I believe that today in a decadent, diluted society where religion is watered down and emasculated and if ever there is a reason to set aside the meaningless trappings of an external religion and really have a vision of God it is now. You know where he saw God? "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up and his train filled the temple. And above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings with two he covered his face." That's humility. "With two he covered his feet." That's reverence. "With two he did fly." That's availability to serve. "And one cried unto another and said holy, holy, holy great Trinitarian cry is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory and the post of the door moved at the voice of him who cried and the house was filled with smoke."

You know where he saw Him? He saw Him in the temple, the sample temple where acuminous tells us writing in the antiquities of Josephus how some soldiers had gone in there and taken down their britches and desecrated the very altar of God, that same place where Pompi entered into the court of the Gentiles, pass through to the court of Israel proceeded through, entered the court of the priests, stood before the very door of the sanctuary and Pompi that Roman general eager to enter the holy place and then the holy of holies and the Jewish people in 70 A.D. fell on their feet when the temple was to be desecrated again and pleaded that it not be so.

That same temple which was desecrated again and again, not...not only by Pompi, not only by Titus, in this passing, not only by the Roman soldiers, but by Antiakistepiphanies. That same temple was desecrated by Uzziah when he went in and tried to play the role of the priest. That's the very place he saw God. The same temple of whom Ezekiel writes all on the walls were pictures of idols and there were snakes and creeping things and men worshiping the sun. But it ever and always remained the place of God for those who saw him there.

It's interesting to me that when Pompi entered the holy place, he seized the veil history tells us and ripped it apart. And then he came back out of the holy of holies and he said this. "It is empty. There's nothing there but darkness." Pompi was a fool. And the very place where Pompi saw nothing, Isaiah saw God. That's how it is, you know? Who sees God but he who has eyes to see? Who hears God, but he who has ears to hear? Who experiences the presence of God, but he who knows God, the rest of the world can desecrate presence and not even know he's there.

And so does Isaiah see God. Beloved, we need a fresh vision of God in corrupt society. I'll tell you I get so upset in my life when I see the superficiality and the smallness and the stupidity of our Christian gimmicks and our admin and our methods. John White has written the Jesus pencil, bumper sticker, t-shirt thing belongs to a different order of spiritual obscenity. It is a desecration of a fowler kind. It has to do with the greed that fills one's wallet from the fears, the joys and the tenderness that brings God and man together. It is the desecration.

Now that's pretty strong stuff and I don't want to make you go out and throw away your t-shirt. Now, I've had so much of pictures of Jesus and gimmicks and Jesus rocking entertainment and commercialism. And nobody seems to really know what it is to be in the presence of God. Now the presence of the Lord resulted in a fifth principle here. The purification of the Lord, verse 5.

"Then said I woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips. Not only is Uzziah unclean, but I am unclean." Say Isaiah, you're God's man, you're God's prophet. Where'd you ever get that idea. Well, I have seen the Lord. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Why mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. Listen, let me tell you something, when you really see God, you don't come out advertising yourself as a new Christian celebrity.

When you really see God, you don't come out patting yourself on the back and telling everybody what a great boom you will be to the cause. All of these charismatics who keep having visions of God instead of wanting to go on the road with their act would be found in a corner somewhere with a broken heart full of humility contrition, conviction, and unworthiness that would shake this nation into a true revival if they'd really seen God.

And I tell you with all of the superficiality of Christianity and all of the quasi religion that names the name of Christ, there are few people who know what it is to walk out of the presence of God and touch this world. And when they do they say "woe is me and when they say that then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongues from the altar and he laid it on my mouth and said lo this hath touch thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged when you really see God your heart is filled with conviction and the moment of conviction God comes with His cleansing."

And so I say the presence of the Lord is inevitably followed by the purification of the Lord. Any true vision of the Lord does this. Smug, semi-committed, self-satisfied, content Christians have never been face to face with God. Habakkuk that very dear and special prophet said when I heard my belly trembled, my lips quivered, rottenness entered my bones and I trembled in myself. When God spoke I fell apart. Daniel the same Chapter 10, verse 6, "His body was like the barrel, his face like the appearance of lightening. His eyes like lamps of fire. His arms and his feet in color like polished bronze. The voice of his words like a voice of a multitude and I Daniel alone saw the vision. Therefore, I was left alone and saw this great vision and there remained no strength in me for my

comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength. I felt rotten he said."

Peter said "depart from me oh Lord for I'm a sinful man." Job said, "I have heard of thee with a hearing of mine ear, but now I see thee face to face. I behold thee and I abhor myself in dust and ashes." When Manoah was visited by an angel to tell him of the birth of his son Samson. That angel appeared in a blaze of glory and Manoah cried, "we shall surely die for we've seen God." You see to see God is to have a sense of unworthiness that's overwhelming.

It's at that point that when you gaze in the glory of God that He touches you with a purification. And when He's purified you, you stand apart from that vial society and that's where Isaiah was. And now God could use him and so we come to the proclamation of the Lord. Our sixth point, only one more and I'll be done. The proclamation of the Lord, I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us. Then said I hear my sin in me and he said go and tell this people." Listen when you come from the presence of the Lord and you've be purified by the Lord then the Lord uses to proclaim him.

And what was to be His message, a message of judgment, you cause them to hear but not understand to see but not perceive make their heart fat, their ears heavy, their eyes shut. How long Lord? How long do I do that until the cities be wasted without inhabitation and the houses without man and the land be utterly desolate and the Lord of removed men far away and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

He says listen, Isaiah, you preach judgment until its all over with. Want to know something people? I believe that's what God's calling us to preach today. I believe God's asking us to confront people. I believe it's time to quit the padded the stuff, the saccharine watered down Jesusism that avoids the reality of sin and judgment and hell. It's time to forget the polished, glamorized vagaries of soft mouthed preachers who tickle people's ears. It's time to speak God's judgment.

You say what will be the reaction? Most won't believe. Don't be shocked. The reason we evangelize is not because people believe, but because commanded right? You say will anybody believe? Did anybody believe Isaiah? Yes, verse 13, and I want to just tell you what that verse says and I'll read it in the New International because it's very clear. "As the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they're cut down so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

In other words, God says when I hit that land with judgment I'll wipe it out, but just like an oak tree leaves a stump there'll be a stump of a remnant and out of the remnant will grow a new tree. Some people would believe. "But narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life everlasting and," what, "few there be that find it."

We have to preach judgment to our world and to our nation. And as we preach the gospel which includes judgment there will be a remnant that believes the stump of the holy seed are the hope for the future. And that's the final point. The promise of the Lord. The promise of the Lord. You say oh John where does it end?

Chapter 7, verse 14, just this verse, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name," said it, "Emmanuel." That's the promise that in the midst of the judgment there is Emmanuel and Emmanuel means God with us.

Listen people, our nation is doomed, I know it. But there's a stump there and while we preach judgment there will be some who believe and those some who believe will be redeemed in the hope of Emmanuel. That's the message of a Godly man in a nation in crisis.

Listen, what is Isaiah saying to us? He's saying there was a great beginning, but it all went bad. The land is corrupt, the religion is apostate. We are people facing severe punishment and in the midst of it all the righteous can have an audience with God. And out of that audience can come a purification that leads to a proclamation. The proclamation that it includes doom, but yes, it includes hope. Hope in Emmanuel. Listen, we're not fatalists. God has many people out there, and I don't care how rotten America gets, I'm going to preach the message because I want that holy seed to here.

I close with this. An unknown Christian wrote it. "You have builded temples in His name of mortar and brick and stone with windows of glass most beautifully stained with steeple inspire and dome. But what do we of the bi-ways care for structure in line and trim. Out in the dust of the lonely road, we only ask for Him. You've robed your choirs and trained them well in proper and intricate song. You have bought fine organs to edify and lull the weary throng. But what do we care for your well-robed choir or your organs deep, Amen. We want you to walk beside us here and point us the way to Him. Oh the roads of the world are a crooked maze and we are woefully lost. But the road to Him and the paths of men is faint and hidden and crossed. What do we care for the trappings of art when our hearts high hope is dim. We seek the touch of His healing hand, oh show us the way to Him."

Let's pray together. And Father, that's really the issue, isn't it? In the midst of the chaos of this nation there's a remnant out there and we who have come into your presence whose lips have been touched with the coal off the altar who have been purified in the blood of Christ. Who have been given the ministry of proclamation. We are to preach not only judgment on the lost, but the good word of the promise of Emmanuel to those who believe. God save us from thinking the testimony of brick and mortar is all that's needed. And may we be ever busy coming out of your presence purified to proclaim a message that shows people the way to Him. In Christ's name. Amen.

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