

Sermon 1: Confronted With God's Righteousness: Isaiah 1:1-21

Text: Isaiah 1:1-21 "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats..."

Introduction:

- **Structure:** Isaiah has three major sections
 - **Section 1:** Prophecies of Judgment: **1-35**
 - **Section 2:** Historic parenthesis: **36-39**
 - **Section 3:** Prophecies of Comfort: **40-66**
- **Theme:** Salvation is of the LORD which is the meaning Isaiah's name
 - The first section demonstrates why humanity needs salvation.
 - The final section promises salvation will come through the Messiah.
- **Timing:** Written during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Azaz, and Hezekiah
 - **Historical significance:**
 - Isaiah's prophetic ministry spanned around 60 years.
 - At the beginning of his ministry, Judah was at the height of its strength.
 - By the reign of Ahaz, Judah was experiencing a massive decline.

- Hezekiah led substantial reforms and the nation experienced a resurgence, that countered the trend, but within 100 years, the nation would be completely devastated by the Babylonians.
- **Prophetic significance:**
 - He is prophesying nearly 100 years before Judah's ultimate demise.
 - He is prophesying nearly 700 years before the Messianic prophesies come to fulfillment.
- **Opening:** God's courtroom

Part 1: God's righteousness: 1:2-15

- **God established a covenant with Judah:**
 - They had the law, prophets, and a rich history.
 - The gentiles had far less access to God's word.
- **He called witnesses against them: 1:2** "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken..."
- **This "courtroom" takes us back to Deuteronomy 4:23-26** "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day..."
- **He brought seven charges against the people:**
 - **First: They were ungrateful: 1:2** "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me..."
 - **Second: They were unreasonable: 1:3** "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider..."
 - **Third: They were corrupt: 1:4-6** "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment..."

- **Fourth: They were proud: 1:7** "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city..."
- **Fifth: They were unfaithful: 1:9** "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah..."
- **Sixth: They were hypocrites: 1:11-12** "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"
- **Seventh: They were self-righteous: 1:13-15** "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood..."
- **This is a universal human problem: Romans 3:10-12** "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one..."
 - **Matthew 19:16-17** "One came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God..."
 - **Luke 18:9** "He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others..."
- **We need God to regularly interrupt our lives with truth.**

Part 2: God's call: 1:16-17 "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow..."

- **Two commands: John 16:8** "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..."
 - **Be cleansed:** "Wash you make you clean..."

- **Do right:** "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow..."
- **Our problem:**
 - **We cannot meet this standard: Romans 8:7-8** "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God..."
 - **Our attempts always fall short: Romans 3:19-20** "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin..."
 - We cannot cleanse ourselves.
 - We cannot remove our former guilt.
 - We cannot change our nature.
- **The solution:**
 - **God did it for us: Romans 8:3-4** "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit..."
 - **Christ has redeemed us to God: Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Part 3: God's Grace: 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool..."

- **Our sins are a stain that we cannot remove:** "Your sins be as scarlet... they be red like crimson..."
- **But He can do it for us:** "They shall be as white as snow....they shall be as wool..."
 - **Psalms 103:12** "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us..."
 - **Hebrews 10:17** "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more..."
- **The way He will do this will be revealed fully later in the book: Isaiah 53**
 - **53:3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

- **53:5** "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed..."
- **53:10-11** "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities..."
- **In the New Testament:**
 - **Hebrews 1:3** "Christ being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..."
 - **Hebrews 9:26-28** "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation..."

Conclusion: We must see ourselves as God sees us and glory in the cross.

- Do you realize the depths of your sin's offense before His holy nature?
- Have you been gripped by your brokenness and unworthiness?
- Do you see your total inability to earn His favor, appease the demands of His justice, or remove your sin debt?
- Do you realize the infinite depths of His love for you?
- Do you realize why the incarnation and the cross were so necessary?
- Have you placed your faith in His work for you?
- Are you actively delighting in Him and living in the light of His rich grace?