

There Are None So...

Part 4, Sad



March 22, 2024

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This month we are playing off the theme of “There are none so...”. For example, “There are none so blind as those who will not see!” “There are none so deaf as those who will not hear!” And last week, “There are none so confused as those who will not think.” This week, we’ll consider, “There are none so sad... as those who will not **RESPOND**.”

We all know the adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink”. It might be best if the horse drank, or even critical that the horse drinks, but regardless of what is healthy or even life-sustaining, it’s the half-ton animal that must make up its mind to do so. We apply this parable to all kinds of human behavior and misbehavior. Regarding the adolescent diet, “You can lead a child to broccoli, but you can’t make him eat!” Regarding the teenage student, you can legally force a boy to attend school. Still, you can’t make him learn!” And regarding our human society, “You can convince a man of his evil, but you can’t make him **repent**. This is because repentance is an act of the human “heart” and “will”. True repentance convinces us of our sin, repudiates it, turns FROM it, and then turns TO God for forgiveness and empowerment! True repentance is pictured by the repentant publican (in Jesus’ parable of the Praying Pharisee and Publican) who in deep contrition cried out, *God be merciful to me a sinner* (Luke 18:13). Consequently, many know they ought to eat their broccoli, to study their math, or to seek the forgiveness of God for their sinfulness... but sadly, they will not respond because of their stubborn will and pride. They don’t want to, and they often have the attitude, “And no one can make me; not even God!”

Our world has always been messed up, but it seems that today everyone competes to see just how messed up they can be! Of course, everyone has their definition of “messed up”! Everyone does what is right in their own eyes. So, we need an Ultimate Standard. And the only objective standard that exists is the standard that our Creator—Jehovah God—has provided in His written revelation to humanity: the Bible. God’s definition of “messed up” is the only one that counts because by it He will ultimately judge every soul that has rejected His grace!

The problem, according to God’s standard, is not that you are just a little messed up and I’m a lot messed

up. No, God says we are ALL totally messed up. And because we are messed up, we are separated and alienated from Him. And worse yet, in and of ourselves, we don't have a fix! We can't pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. God says, *...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23), and that the *wages* or payment for this sin nature is death (Romans 6:23a)! We see the consequence of sin manifested all around us in physical death. But the most terrifying consequence of sin is unseen to the natural eye! It is spiritual death!

And so, what will you and I do about it? We can respond wisely like that proverbial publican who in deep anguish of soul, smote his breast, and cried out, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. Or we can, like the proud Pharisee, stiffen our necks in religious self-righteousness and feel content NOT to respond. But I want to ask just one question: How good do you have to be to EARN your way to Heaven? God's answer is, "You can't earn my forgiveness... by works OR religion!" Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8, 9, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*, and in Titus 3:5 we read,

Titus 3:3-7 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 NOT by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

How ultimately sad—and dangerous—it is to recognize our dire spiritual need, and yet not respond.

God bless and consider!