

Isaiah 30:1-33

"Repentance Renews & Removes"

* The result of *rebellion* is *condemnation*. The result of *repentance* is *transformation*. Rebellion piles on *detriment*. Repentance unleashes *benefits*. Unfortunately for some of us, it doesn't seem to matter how often the way of wisdom is shared w/us & shown to us, there's a prideful, rebellious element *in* us that's always got to learn the hard way. We don't like being told what to do, we'd prefer to figure things out on our own. But I would save you years, a lifetime of trouble & regret & encourage you to abandon your own ways, your own wisdom. Submit yourself to *God's ways, God's word, God's wisdom & the only thing you'll regret is that you didn't take heed & learn that lesson earlier...* *

Vs1-2

What an incredible passage to ponder this morning. It's what we might even refer to as "low hanging fruit". This powerful principle quickly comes into focus for us & practically leaps off the page & puts itself right up in our face!

But as for the historical context, let's remember that the nation of Israel was divided into 2 kingdoms at this time. The northern kingdom of Israel & the southern kingdom of Judah. As Isaiah was penning this passage, the Assyrian army was coming down from the north & had already completely devastated & decimated the northern kingdom of Israel. Simply put, it no longer existed. Assyria had wiped them out.

Now they were sweeping through Judah like they came to chew gum & conquer nations, but gum hadn't been invented yet... So they were simply conquering nations! 😊 & They were quickly approaching the capital city of Jerusalem & if Jerusalem fell, the nation of Judah would be gone as well!

So what we have here is a situation that (honestly) wouldn't be much different from a similar scenario today. If there's a larger nation w/a stronger military making its way through your country & approaching your capital city, you may have a little (or a lot of) panic in your bones & you're scrambling for what to do! That's where they were! & They did what most nations do. They sought the aid, the assistance of another nation who was larger & could make them stronger than they could be alone. In this case they sent a delegation down into the nation of Egypt to seek political alignment & military aid.

On the surface it would seem like a smart thing to do. The problem *isn't* that they sought counsel, we even *commend* the nation of Judah for recognizing that they needed help & a source outside of themselves to come to their aid if they were to survive. That's not the problem.

The problem is where their counsel *came from* & to whom they *turned to* & *trusted in* for help in their time of need. They sought counsel, but not from the word of God, they devised plans, but not through prayer & seeking God's heart, God's advice, God's direction & would be course of action. So... understand what's being said here. #1 They didn't trust (look to or inquire of) God (that's sin in & of itself). #2 They sought to strengthen themselves through Egypt & trust in the shadow of Egypt. They're adding sin to sin... *Won't trust God, will trust Pharaoh...*

Now, if you're anything like me (& I trust that you are), when we read through that, there's a bit of a check that surfaces in your own heart/mind. * "When I'm looking for counsel or seeking advice, where do I go & what are my sources? Am I one who takes counsel, but not of the Lord? Do I devise plans but not of God's Spirit?"

& I trust you're able to pick up on the irony of the situation here. Who was it that the Lord delivered the children of Israel from all those yrs earlier? He delivered them out of... *Egypt!* Now who are they looking *to*, turning *toward* & trusting *in* for help? ... They're actually turning *away* from the strong arm of their Deliverer, & trying to find strength in the place that enslaved them & only held them in bondage!

Don't miss it, connect the dots, do the math here. Egypt (in scripture) will often be represented as a type of the world. So here you are. God has delivered you from the chains & the bondage of this world. You're *in* the world, but you're not *of* the world because God has *saved* you, *delivered* you & by His strong arm has *called* you *out* of the world. But suddenly (or perhaps you can even see it coming), you've got a fight on your hands. How many of you have come to realize that there are very real battles we're confronted w/in this life? ... & Now that you're confronted w/a situation, where do you go? To whom do you turn for advice, for direction, for counsel?

Are you combing through Amazon or the bookstore on your phone looking for a self-help book by Dr. Phil? Are you retreating into the ways & the wisdom of this world? Or do you turn to the word of God? Trusting what Peter wrote when he said, "*...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*" ¹*

Now. We talked a little bit about this last week. The question that confronts us is this. Do you really want to know God's word, God's will, God's way? Simply put, some people don't. They don't really want to look into the word, or pray, or seek the heart of God.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Pe 1:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's easier just to retreat to worldly advice, or just do what seems right even if it isn't right... Judah wasn't interested in a spiritual fix, they needed a practical solution! So they turned to the world. Strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh.

Vs 3-5

Egypt wouldn't see the benefit in aiding Judah. Oh, they'd be glad to take their money, make false promises & all of that. But they wouldn't really help them at all! & Isn't that the way it is? Thinking we'll find strength in the things & the ways of the world; it only makes for our shame. Egypt has no real substance, it's just a shadow...

Listen, anytime we make a "treaty" or align ourselves w/the world, anytime we rely on the arm of flesh rather than the Spirit of God, it will only make for our shame & our humiliation.

Vs 6-7

Now admittedly this sounds a bit obscure, so allow me to expound. Judah is trying to make an ally out of Egypt. Question: do you think Egypt will be glad to do that for nothing? No way. It would cost Judah *dearly*. They took their treasures, their wealth & their riches through this treacherous terrain on the backs of donkeys & camels in a foolish effort to try & purchase protection against the Assyrians.

& We get the sense that though Isaiah has no problem rebuking their foolishness. He feels sorry for the animals that have to haul the weight of all those riches on their backs for an unprofitable fool's errand! It's like he's saying, "You're going to load down the backs of all those young poor donkeys, throw your riches on the humps of camels, force them to carry all that weight through treacherous terrain filled w/lions & serpents & who knows what kind of snares... for nothing. To a people who shall not profit. The Egyptians aren't going to do anything for you." It's a dangerous, difficult, expensive & futile effort.

That's why he calls the nation of Egypt, "Rahab (which was an emblematic name for Egypt) Hem- Shebeth." Which essentially means, "Rahab (or pride/arrogance) the do nothing." They would make promises upon which they would not deliver. They would sit idly by as the Assyrians ravished Judah.

& To make the obvious application, such is always the case when looking to the world for help, for strength, for counsel & advice. It's a direction filled w/snares, it'll cost you dearly & profit you nothing.

Vs 8-11

God tells Isaiah, "Go & write these things down on a tablet & note it on a scroll."

The idea being that God wanted it documented that He told them what would happen & *why it happened* before it happened. It would serve a couple of purposes. #1 It would serve as a reminder to them of how things work out when you don't seek the Lord, when you don't follow the clear-cut instruction of His word. #2 It would encourage them in the future to know that God knows our situation & we can trust Him to instruct us by His word & lead us in the way that we should go.

& Again, the application seems obvious, but I suppose I should state it nonetheless.

* God has given us His word. He has told us the way in which we're to lead our lives. That we should trust Him, obey Him, love Him & serve Him. (Because He loves us, has thoughts of peace toward us, He's holy, He's righteous, He's true, He's gracious & merciful). He's even told us how things work out when we *don't* trust Him or obey Him. But too often even though we *hear* God's word, we *know* what God has said, we choose to go a different direction. To align ourselves w/worldly rationale & reasoning. & How does it work out? To our shame & humiliation. What's the lesson? In the future, know that God understands our situation, He has our eternal best interest at heart & we can trust His word & allow Him to lead us in the way we should go... *

But look at the fallout of a person/people who "add sin to sin". When you don't trust God, but do trust the world, what's the result? You have to reject God on every level, don't you? Meaning, we either honor God, or we don't? We can't choose to reject His counsel & then pretend that we still somehow honor/love or hear His word... Look at how it stacks up, "This is a *rebellious* people." (Rebelling against His word & His way). "Lying children" Pretending to be spiritual, but in truth completely carnal. "Children who won't hear the law (or the word) of the Lord." "Who say to the seers (for sake of application let's just call them pastors/preachers) 'do not see' & to the prophets, 'do not prophesy to us right things, speak smooth things, prophesy deceits' cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Wow...

It circles back again. Yes, pastors & preachers have a responsibility to preach/teach the truth of God's word. But ladies & gentlemen, my question is, where are the people who really want to hear the *truth* of God's word? (& I'm obviously not speaking of you here specifically, & God has a remnant certainly but by & large, people aren't interested)!

& Paul the apostle, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit told us this day would come.

He told Timothy,* **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."**²

"I'm ok, you're ok, love is love... be seeker friendly. Don't say things that will offend people. Don't talk about 'sin', don't speak of the cross or speak of the blood of Jesus..." But family these things are at the very heart of the message of the gospel! And the gospel is the "power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." (Rom. 1:16). If you want to see transformation in people, you want to see salvation take place, you have to preach the gospel! **People need to understand that they're sinners. That every sin violates the holy & righteous nature of God, it places us in debt to Him. The problem is that we can never pay the fine. But Christ paid it on our behalf through the shedding of His blood, the giving of His life. That's why salvation is *in Him*. It's in Christ that God accredits our account w/perfect righteousness because He's the One who paid our debt.**

& We could talk about drunkenness, homosexuality, abortion, transgenderism or any # of sins that plague our society today. Or even things that people don't seem to major on like having sex before marriage, stealing, lying. At the end of the day all those things are symptoms (or the fruit) of the deeper issue & that is the *sin nature* that lies w/in every one of us. **But people don't like to hear that they're not ok, that they're not basically good. The Bible teaches that in me (that is in my flesh) *nothing good dwells*. That's offensive, "Preach smooth things, tell me lies, make me feel better about myself. Don't call out my sin! Soothe my conscience."** *

Vs 12-14

I'm telling you, it's like God speaking to our nation today! We despise His word, trust in oppression & perversity... God says, "This iniquity will be your undoing. You will collapse & crumble under the weight of it. & The brokenness will be so complete, so absolute that nothing of any, even remote value will remain." Like a potter's vessel that the shards aren't even big enough to scoop coals from a fire or water from a stream...

Listen, decisions carry consequences. & God's power is irresistible, His word is irrevocable, His wisdom incomparable & His justice inescapable... Is all hope lost? It doesn't have to be... turn your attention to Vs 15.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Ti 4:3-4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 15-17

The Lord allowed for a window of repentance. * But God's Spirit won't always strive w/man. The time comes when God says, "Fine, if this is what you want, you can have it."

But God calls out, "Repent, return, you'll find rest, you'll be saved." God doesn't need our ingenuity; He's not impressed w/our ability. He says, "Just come to Me."

He says, "In quietness & confidence shall be your strength." Simply trusting in the promises of the word of God... If we truly *trust* God's word, we won't *disobey* God's word. But in our disobedience, we *drift away* from God, in returning we *draw near* to God. When we trust in the Word, we're not stressing, we're not striving, we're resting. – & Somewhere in here we hear the words of Jesus saying, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"³ "But you would not..." What about you? Will you? Will you return *to* the Lord, find your rest, your confidence, your strength *in* the Lord? *

They said, "No". They were going to trust in political alliances, military might, their swift horses. God says, "Fine, you're going to need them... to flee." They could've experienced the salvation of God! But they wouldn't humble themselves *before* Him, submit the direction of their lives *to* Him... Therefore, destruction awaited them.

Back in Leviticus 26 & Deut 28 God had promised them that if they would seek His face & obey His word, then their enemies would flee from them. 1 would chase 1,000 & 2 would put 10,000 to flight. But also promised them that if they *didn't* obey Him or observe His word to do it, then just the opposite would happen. Here, God affirms for them that it's on its way

Vs 18

We've said it before, we'll say it again. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. Though *decimation* was before them, *restoration* would find them. * Here, the Lord addresses the issue of why He so often waits to do things in our lives. We (many times) feel like it's because He wants to *torture* us! ☺ More accurate to say, it's because He wants to be *gracious* to us.

What's the take away from this Vs? We're to be confident in the grace of God as it pertains to the *timing* of God. We think we have it all figured out, & we know exactly when God is supposed to move & in what way He's to do it. & We feel like God is "offbeat", missing His cues & all the rest. Truth be told it's exactly the opposite.

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Mt 11:28). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God knows *exactly* what He's doing, exactly *when* He's to do it & we don't know *anything* like we think we do. There is a loving purpose in the timing of God (even if we don't understand it). It's so that He might be *gracious* to you. *

& The Lord waits for you, even when you won't wait for Him. Even if we need discipline in our lives to bring us around to repentance, God patiently waits for us that He might be gracious to us. He is exalted when He shows *mercy* to us. * Ladies & gentlemen, let's not get this twisted. It's not that I'm so great that even *God* shows mercy to me. It's that God's so great that He shows mercy to *even me...* Mercy does nothing to exalt the person who receives it. In fact, mercy recognizes the guilt of the one who deserves the punishment. But mercy exalts the goodness of the one who gives it. It shows them to be loving, generous, and full of compassion. *

"For the Lord is a God of justice." That seems sorta contradictory, doesn't it? How can you be just & merciful at the same time? If someone is guilty, you can mete out justice or you can show mercy, but you can't do both. But this is the wisdom of God. As David wrote in Ps 85, "*Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.*"⁴ God can be both just & merciful through the cross of J.C. In bearing our guilt, God's justice was satisfied. Now He extends mercy to all who trust in Jesus. Only in the wisdom of God can mercy & justice be reconciled making Him both *just* & the *justifier* of the one who has faith in Jesus. – Trust in the timing of God. Blessed are all those who wait for Him.

Vs 19

This is where we need to be tuning in to what results from repentance. Look at what He says here, "You shall weep no more." God is in the business of healing hurting hearts. "He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry..." The 1st result of repentance (& I'm not saying that what we see is necessarily in any order of priority, w/the exception of maybe this one). #1 Repentance invokes God's grace. Again, as the Psalmist said, "*The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.*"⁵

Vs 20-21

Through comfort & prosperity the people wouldn't listen to God. But having given them the bread of adversity & the water of affliction, they came back to that place of seeking after & tuning in to the word of God once again. We might look at it like this #2 Repentance renews our *love for & obedience* to the word of God. It gives us a certain sensitivity to the *Spirit* of God.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 85:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 145:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 22

If Vs 19 is *salvation*, then Vs 22 is *sanctification*. #3 Repentance *removes* the unclean. We'll get rid of things in our lives that get between us & God. "You will say to them, 'Get away!'" They offend us, disgust us, we want them removed far *from* us.

Vs 23-26

#4 The fruit of Repentance brings forth fruit 😊. Fruit that remains. Here he speaks of the material blessings that will be poured out upon Judah. I'd refer you to the fruit of the Spirit found in Gal 5. The fruit of your lips, giving thanks to His name. The fruit of giving, of serving...

& #5 (Vs 26) Repentance opens the way for the healing hand of God, His tender care in our lives.

Vs 27-28

#6 In Repentance, *God* fights for us. No longer are we limited to our own means, our own strength, our own resources, God goes to war for us against our enemies. God was going to take care of the Assyrian army & greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (the enemy of your soul).

Vs 29

7 Repentance brings times of refreshing, times of rejoicing & renews our heart for worship. "You shall have a song, & gladness of heart."

Vs 30-33

Finally, #8 In Repentance we're reminded/reassured that God will be glorified in perfect judgment. That He will right every wrong & that vengeance belongs to Him alone.

"Tophet" was in ancient Israel what the valley of Hinnom was in Jesus' day. Originally it was the place where people would offer their babies in the outstretched red hot arms of Molech as a sacrifice. It eventually became a garbage dump where smoldering fires were continually burning. Bodies of criminals would be tossed there to be consumed. Whatever kind of disgusting rubbish would be there... So that it became for them a picture of hell (Gehenna). **Close**

God says, "For the king it is prepared." It's like He's saying, "There's a special place in hell prepared for the king of Assyria... It's deep & large, like a stream of brimstone kindles it..." Some take this on out to be a reference to the A.C. (one of his names being "The Assyrian") others look at it as a reference to Satan... All the above are true.

I suppose the way I'd draw all this to a close for us is like this...

Make sure it isn't true of you... Instead, invoke the grace of God, by crying out to God in repentance. Believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved... & If you know the Lord, continue to trust *in* the Lord. Resist the temptation to revert back to the ways/wisdom of the world. But trust in the Lord w/all your heart & lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, & He will direct your paths...

Prayer Points:

God we thank You (as always) for Your word. May we be a people who walk in repentance. That You might be renewing, refreshing our lives. That we might be growing in grace bringing glory to Your name.

The gospel demands humility. That we recognize our own inability & abandon ourselves completely to God's ability & trust in the promise of His word that if we would turn from our sin, trust in J.C. we'd never perish but have everlasting life. Trust in the Lord today & be saved.