

TONIGHT'S READING



THE NEED OF THE SINFUL (2)

Scripture Reading:

- John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.
- John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.
- John 8:36 If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.
- John 10:10b ...I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 12:47b ... for I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world.
- Romans 7:18-20 Now then it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not. For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice. But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me.
- John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
- Galatians 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

ALL PEOPLE BEING SLAVES OF SIN

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:34, “Truly, truly, I say to you, Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin”. All people are slaves of sin. If we sin, we are under the bondage of sin and have no freedom. What does it mean to be under the bondage of sin and to be without freedom? Man does not want to commit sins, but he cannot withstand the power of sin. This proves that those who are under the bondage of sin are not free.

The Bible reveals that sin is not only outward actions; sin is also a power dwelling in man. Sin is living and powerful, sin has authority over people, and sin can bind people. No one intentionally wants to sin, but there is a power within man that forces him to sin, to take the way of the fall. For example, the addiction to smoking or to drinking is related to power. A person may try to hide these habits, but the history of a bitter struggle remains in his heart. People repeatedly repent and reproach themselves and determine to quit, but they are subdued by the power of these addictions; they are powerless. This is what it means to be a slave of sin. No one in the world is free; everyone is a slave of sin under the power and authority of sin; everyone struggles and moans, having no way to escape.

THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD DYING IN THEIR SINS

People in the world die in their sins. The Lord Jesus seemed to be saying, “Because you sin, you will die in your sins. Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. You were born in sin, you grew up in sin, and you are living in sin; therefore, you will die in your sins.” If you do not repent and receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior who saves you from the result of sin, you will die in your sins and perish.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES BEING INCAPABLE OF SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND INSTEAD RESISTING THE LORD JESUS' SALVATION

Religion and religious ordinances cannot solve the problem of sin; instead, they resist the Lord Jesus' salvation for sinners. The Gospel of John shows that the Lord Jesus came as life in order to save every kind of person. The Gospel of John also describes the strong resistance that the Lord Jesus encountered from Judaism. In chapter 5 He met the impotent man on a Sabbath day and a feast day of the Jews. It should have been a day of rest and joy. But this man had been sick for thirty-eight years and had neither rest nor joy. He had no rest or joy until he was saved by the Lord Jesus. After he was saved, the Jewish religionists said, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to do this” (cf. v. 10). The Lord Jesus came to heal and save man, but Judaism opposed Him. The Lord Jesus came to be man's life in order to supply man's needs and to deliver man from his problems, but the strongest opposition that He encountered was from religion and its ordinances. Religion and its ordinances resist the life of the Lord Jesus.

Wherever there is religion or religious regulations and ordinances, the life of the Lord Jesus is resisted and restricted.

In John 8 the Lord Jesus was in the temple. At that time the temple represented Judaism. The temple in John 8 does not have a good connotation, because the people in the temple did not want God; they rejected Him. Hence, the temple represents God-rejecting Judaism. There was also the Judaic law; the scribes and Pharisees said that the Judaic law commanded them to stone the adulterous woman. This picture shows that Judaism and the law could not save the adulterous woman. Only the Savior could save this woman, but Judaism and its laws became a resistance to the Savior. Religion and religious ordinances cannot solve the problem of sin for man; rather, they resist the Lord Jesus' salvation.

Sinners are dead in sin. Religion and religious ordinances are also dead. Dead religion and dead religious ordinances cannot save or heal dead sinners. Dead religion and dead religious ordinances are of no help to dead sinners. Dead sinners need a living Savior, a Savior of life. Only the living Savior can save dead sinners and give them a sin-delivering life by enlivening them. The living Savior is the Lord Jesus. He is the living God, the Lord of life, who comes to the people in the world with His divine life so that He might heal and save sinners who are dead in sin. However, His healing and saving life encounters strong opposition and resistance from religion and religious ordinances. Religion and religious ordinances are dead and impotent, and they are incapable of saving people who are dead in sin. The only thing that they are capable of doing is to resist the salvation of the Lord Jesus, the living Savior.

We must bear in mind that religion and religious ordinances can only resist the Lord's salvation in man; they cannot solve man's problem of sin. A person who accepts a religion or keeps a religious ordinance has something in him that resists the life of the Lord Jesus. Religion and its ordinances are dead and cannot save man. Instead, they become a great hindrance to the practical salvation that the Lord Jesus wants to carry out in man. Therefore, a person should accept only the living Savior, not dead religion or dead religious ordinances.