

empty religiosity

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. JM11 workshops on web site.
- B. **Prayer:** First, tonight will you allow any *empty religion* to be confronted in your life? As a bird of prey circles in on its prey. I wonder in which area of your life is God circling in on? What **sin** lies at your core that He's trying to get to? Is it time to let God all the way into the center?

II. Slide2 **Intro:** *empty religiosity*

- A. The first psalm attributed to **Asaph**, son of Berechiah.
1. He was a leader of the *Levite temple musicians*, in David's time.
 2. He was a **worship leader** and was responsible for the **cymbals**, and he was **in charge of music** when *the ark of the cov* was brought into Jer.
 3. **Psalms 50 and 73-83** are affiliated with him, and his descendants were music leaders in the 1st and 2nd Jerusalem Temple.
- B. This describes a courtroom scene. God is *judge, witness, & injury*.
1. This is an indictment against 2 kinds of *religious sinners*.
Insincere worshipers (7-15) and **hypocritical worshipers** (16-21).
- C. Peter develops out this theme in 1 Pet.4:17 *NLT For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?*
- D. Have you ever watched a movie or a TV show of a court room, where the judge is sitting there on his/her bench, taking in all of the oral arguments, thinking, **pondering?** Then watching the judges facial expressions, you can tell they start getting irritated, they can't hold back anymore, and they **speak**.

III. SlideX **THE JUDGE BREAKS HIS SILENCE (1-6)** *Read 1-6*

- A. This psalm starts with the revelation of His glory!
- B. El, Elohim, yhwh - Taken together, the names emphasize *God's supremacy as Creator of the earth and God of Israel*.
- C. In the book of Amos he went from being a *Fig Picker* to *Big Preacher*.
1. His job was to confront their *empty religion, oppression of the poor, & total disregard for God's covenant commands*. This pronouncement of judgment made him *the Not-So-Famous Amos*.
 2. That's what Asaph does here also ... but actually *this Psalm* is mostly the **Father** speaking (starting in vs.5). **Hear Him! Worship Him**.
- D. (6) *The heavens declare his righteousness, for God Himself is judge!* - William Temple said, *"For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."*
1. Wait, believers being judged? Yes, our sins were judged at Calvary but our works will be judged at *the judgment seat of Christ* (bema).

IV. SlideX **INSINCERE WORSHIPERS (7-15)** *Read 7-15*

- A. God hates empty religiosity.
- B. Derek Kidner calls this group, the *nominally orthodox or mechanically pious*.
1. His first indictment comes against those who offer sacrifices insincerely. Their worship is just empty routine. *They hope to earn God's blessings*.
- C. (8-13) *The OT consistently maintains that God does not delight in sacrifices when they are only outward expressions of religion*.
1. Your sacrifices don't match your life's actions.
 2. Wow, you can recite scriptures ... so *what!* ...if you don't live them out.
- D. **God does not need the things we give Him**.
1. Remember in Acts 17 where Paul was walking in the Areopagus of Athens and something caught his attention, so he stopped to talk about it. **I found**

also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind **life and breath and everything**. Acts 17:23-25

2. (10-13) **Mine** - It's like me walking in your house, grabbing something on your shelf, and saying, *hey I wanted to give this to you!* ;(

E. **And yet in all good relationships they are built on the 2 legs of trust & need.** In marriage, in church, we need each other (one another vss.).

1. **Now** it is different with **God/human** connection. He is **all sufficient, thus** He doesn't **need** us, **but** we absolutely **need** Him & must **trust** Him.

2. **Need not needy.** Like Tim Keller says, *if you add 2 vacuums to each other, you only get a bigger stronger vacuum, a giant sucking sound!*).

3. **Adam & Eve** thru **sin** broke the perfect **connection** with God. This caused separation from **God**, from **self**, from **others**.

a) Can we restore this **connection** through **learning more** about God, **no!** Through being **moral enough**, **no!** Through **ritual?** **no**, through **relationship**. Through **pomp?** **no**, through **love**. Through feeling **entitled?** **no**, through **thankfulness**. Through memorizing scripture, doing my daily devotions, not cussing, sinning less? **no**, through **relation & connection**. [tethered to Christ, **and** on the wifi of the HS]

F. **A sacrifice of thanksgiving** (todah) - there is a specific type of *thanksgiving sacrifice* (Lev 7:12), **but** here it signifies that *God prefers an attitude of thanksgiving over sacrifice*. [an attitude of gratitude]

G. (14,15) **We need to give Him spiritual sacrifices of: Thanksgiving, obedience, and prayer.**

1. When you give online or drop \$ in the boxes in the back, are you giving God something that isn't already His? *Who gives you the strength to work? Who protects you to and from work? Who gives you the skills to work?*
2. God doesn't give us Thanksgiving and then say, *Give it back to Me.*
 - a) **Illust:** When Julian was 1st able to sit up, I would roll the ball to him, he rolled it back to me.
3. God wants us to give Him what He has not given us. Those sacrifices that originate in our hearts. **Thanking Him, obeying Him, praying to Him.**
 - a) When we bring these sacrifices, we glorify the Lord.
4. So often we receive from the Lord without returning thanks and praise.
 - a) **Thank Him** for what He's doing for you. **Obey His** word. Bring your **problems to Him.**
 - b) These are **all** opportunities He could use to bring glory to Himself.

V. SlideX **HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIPERS (16-21)** *Read 16-21*

A. Here they did not fulfill the covenant/promises they made with God.

1. You profess one thing and practice another. Or, as Paul said in Titus, *Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live.* 1:16 NLT

B. They are guilty of theft, adultery, deceit, and slander. (18-20)

C. (21) They thought that *God's silence* meant *escape from punishment*, but they were wrong.

1. Eccl.8:11NLT *When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong.*

VI. SlideX **WRAP UP FOR BOTH GROUPS (22,23)**

A. Posers heed the warning of vs.22. Repent or I'll tear you apart!

1. **Enemies** are often compared to **lions** in the psalms. **Like** lions, they wait eagerly for a chance to *attack and destroy* their prey.
2. Lions were considered one of the mightiest animals.
3. Psalm 7:1,2 *O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, 2 lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.*

B. **Religious w/o Relationship**, accept the admonition.

C. Remember, God could declare everyone guilty. **Instead**, He offers a *reprieve*.

1. *"We leave the world with God or with nothing."*

D. What **caricature** of God would you **draw** of Him here?

E. Do you **need** God today? **What** do you need Him for? Sure you agree you need Him for *salvation* ... **but** what about for your *sanctification*? For your every day? For your **whole** life? To be a **whole person**?

F. Heb.13:15,16 *nkjv* says, *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

1. May we be like **human sunflowers** always seeking to *face the light*.
2. Notice the expectation ... that it is to be *continually* practiced. **Constant spiritual activity.**
 - a) There is nothing **occasional** about the true-Christian life ... **it is continual.**
3. **The fruit of the lips** ought to be the **overflow of the full heart**.¹
 - a) The ancients argued that a **thank-offering** was *more acceptable* to God **than a sin-offering**. For when a man offered a sin-offering he was trying to *get something for himself*, **while** a thank-offering was **the unconditional offering of a grateful heart**.
4. A. W. Tozer said, **Gratitude** is an offering precious in the sight of God, **and it's 1** that the **poorest** of us can make & be not poorer, **but richer** for

¹ Wycliffe Bible Commentary; pg.1426

having made it.

G. Keywords: covenant, glory, God, Judgement, prayer, religion, salvation, sanctification, sin, thankfulness.