

Is Your Spiritual House in Order?

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Lord's Day Evening

Isaiah 3:12-15

Introduction: Open your Bibles to the book of Isaiah chapter 3. The title of tonight's message is "Is Your Spiritual House in Order?" Isaiah continues in this chapter with a message of God's judgment of his people. Here we see the vast decay of society. Our society is "slouching toward Gomorrah." "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

So the unmistakable message of this portion of Scripture is this: If you abandon God's ways, you can expect God's wrath. Basically what is taking place here is God's demolition of a society. If you want sin, God will give you what you want to punish you.

When you see these kinds of things in a society, you know the judgment of God is on that society. He gives that society over to its sin.

I. A Test of Leadership

12 As for my people, God is here calling great attention to the fact that He is talking to His people. The way the grammar is set up here, God is saying, This is not the world I'm talking to, I am talking to MY PEOPLE—you who have the law of God and the promises of God. You know the truth—but you are not living by the truth!

children are their oppressors, What he is saying is that the leadership was being oppressive to the people—getting their way, acting like children. Let's bring this down to earth—Dads, you are the leader. God has given you responsibility over your family. Are you acting like a child. God says to this society of Israel who had rejected God's ways—this is how it goes. The leaders are acting like children. Like a little child who must have his way and oppresses those around him to get his way. So one demise of the family and society is that men lose their maturity and start acting like little babies.

Application: Men, what do you do when you don't get your way? Do you suck your thumb. If things do not go right in the home, it is always the man's fault. He is the leader. If he starts going back to his old ways, he'll start acting like a child, and he will begin to oppress his family and those around him.

and women rule over them. Here God says that the rulers of Israel had forsaken God's way to such a degree that they were letting women have the way. Now these women would not have been in power. But these men had stopped thinking for themselves, and instead of the husband teaching the wife, the wife was manipulating the husband to get her way, no matter what it took. The queen was ruling through her husband.

Now we have clear revelation from the New Testament that this is wicked.

1 Corinthians 11:3

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

Men, are you the head of your home? Do you have the sway of godliness in your home? Do you have such a godly life before your wife, and if you have children, then your children, to the degree that they respect you? Do they follow you? How are you doing in your headship? God has delegated this authority to you. How are you doing in the stewardship of your wife and children?

O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, Here is Isaiah pleading. The way this is written is in a present tense participle though you don't see it here. He says, "Those who are leading you at this moment are right now causing you to go astray." It's happening before your very eyes. You call yourself by my name!

Luke 6:46

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

The principle in this verse is that at any time, the leader always has the God-given authority to turn the boat around. Fathers, are you leading the way right in your home? Mom, are you leading the way correctly with your children? Are you usurping your husbands authority? Fathers, are you allowing your wife to usurp authority? Are you going your own way? How is your home this evening? What do you watch on the television? What are you going to go home and watch tonight? You sir are the leader of your home. Your family will follow you. Are you causing your wife, your children, other church members to err by what you are doing?

and destroy the way of thy paths. God has laid down a clear path for you leaders. Husbands, you are leaders of your wife and children. You say, well my wife and children will not submit to me. You know what that shows? It shows you are a weak leader. If you act like a child with a temper tantrum, why should anyone follow you? How should you act? "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). You should act with self-control and dignity in all situations. You should uncompromisingly follow the map of your life and for your family.

Instead, what these people were doing, and what some of you are doing is you are destroying all the capital you have in the home. It's like a horse. He doesn't care about the path he's on. He tears up the path and hunks of the path go flying behind him. Before you know it the path is unrecognizable. He doesn't care how he gets there, he just wants to get from point A to point B as soon as possible. Perhaps you are like that, and your life is filled with fleshly living and compromise. You could care less what God thinks. You are blazing your own trail. You need to stop what you are doing before you destroy yourself and those around you!

Jeremiah, who had a similar ministry to that of Isaiah, says this about these leaders who forsake the paths of God for their lives:

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.

13 The LORD standeth up to plead,

We think God is far, far away, but this verse lets us know that not only is he not far away, but he is right here standing before you about to bring you what you have coming.

Again, Isaiah reverts to writing in the present tense to show that He is relevant to the situation here and now. It is as if Isaiah says "Taking His stand to plead is the Lord, and standing is He to judge the people." God is trying every moment of your life. But you make excuses. Don't you know you can't make excuses with God? You think you can take one part of your life, and the Lord can have the rest, right? No, God is standing up every moment carrying out a trial on your life. Why don't you open up His Word and obey it. Your excuses will stop. You may be sitting down in Zion enjoying your comfortable little sins. While you are sitting down, God is standing up, waiting for His own perfect timing, and looking at you all the while. He'll get your attention, and then he will plead the right ways to you. God is always there to reason together with you—standing up to plead and judge His people.

and standeth to judge the people. God not only judges His people, He will judge all people. He "standeth to judge the people, or the peoples. That is He says I'm not only going to judge my people, but the people of the entire world. There is a day coming very soon in which God will judge the world

Psalm 9:8

And he shall judge the world in righteousness,

Acts 17:31

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained;

14 The LORD will enter into judgment God will begin litigation against you. You don't want to enter into a court case with the Lord. If you are a believer, this means God's chastening hand. He will reveal your sins and He bring discipline to you. The best way to avert this is to confess your iniquity to the Lord. If you don't, there will come a day when you have to take full responsibility for your actions. Why don't you stand up and take responsibility for you life now? If not God will enter into judgement with you, and as David knew, that was one thing you didn't want to do, because you will have a guaranteed conviction from the Lord—look at Psalm 143:2.

Psalm 143:2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: Here again, God speaks not to the population at large in this passage, but to the leaders! Leaders have more God-given authority because of their position. But this also means that God holds leaders to a higher standard. So, when God enters into judgment, he goes to the leaders first. Husband, the buck stops with you. Don't complain that your wife is a problem. Most of the time, if the wife is rebellious; she is a reflection of her head, her husband. A loving and firm man will always command the respect of those under him. And remember, the Lord stands up to enter into judgment with you. You will give an account for how you've used your authority in your home. Wives and mothers, don't think you get out of this, you will give an account for how you have used your authority. Are you raising your children according to the world? Are you letting them do as their wicked hearts dictate? Are you shepherding them, or are you bullying the children? Are you gentle and kind? Moms, what are you

teaching your daughters? Are your daughters discreet? Are their words discreet, or do they talk crassly? Your daughters are a reflection of you. And what about your sons? Are they being raised to respect you and to treat ladies as ladies? Do your children know how to say yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am and no ma'am? God will rise up in judgment. And what about you young adults? You are leaders also. What are you teaching the children in this church? You are no longer children, but you are still in your parents' home. Are you loving God with all your heart, or are you a hypocrite? Are you just waiting to get out of your parents' authority and then you'll have your way? Surrender to the Lord now. Don't you know that God will have His way with you. If you have a tender heart, He will have His way with you, and you will delight in Him, and you will have joy. If you want to go your own way, He'll still have His way with you, but it will be in judgment. Which will it be?

Is your spiritual house in order? We have seen a test of leadership. How did you fare? Now let us look at a Test of Stewardship. Look at verse 14.

II. A Test of Stewardship.

14c for ye have eaten up the vineyard; Literally, you have stripped the vineyard bare. You've used what God has given you for yourself. The law was clear in Leviticus.

Leviticus 19:10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

the spoil of the poor is in your houses. Here is the indictment. Look in your houses today. Are you hoarding the Lord's resources? Now I do not look at the tithe records. I will not do it because then it would be very difficult for me to preach. But let me ask you—are you hoarding the Lord's resources? Are you tithing to the Lord? By the way, the tithe was mandatory from the Lord BEFORE the Law.

Look at Hebrews 7:1-4

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

So Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec as a type of Christ. So, there are two principles:

1. **The tithe is to God.** Abraham tithed to Melchisedec, a type of Christ. Your check may say Tabernacle Baptist Church, but you are tithing to Christ—to God.
2. Secondly, **the tithe reflect your faith and values.** Abraham tithed from his spoils as a testimony to the fact that God was the reason for all his blessing.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Are you being a faithful steward of all that God has given you? Are you giving cheerfully—and joyfully testifying through the tithe that God owns you? Stop making excuses.

What are you saying about God with your finances? Are you saying that God is the reason for all your blessing? Or are you in disobedience. Tithing is a mark of the Christian. The Christless churches have to RAISE funds through Bingo and fund raising and pledges. Christ's churches are supported by the humble tithes and offerings of God's people.

Now Look over at Malachi 3:8

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

III. Finally we see a Test of Servanthood.

Here in verse 15, we see Isaiah empowered by the strong words of the Holy Spirit rebuking the leaders for taking advantage of others.

15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, The idea here is that these leaders were just ignoring the poor. The word "beat" has the idea of "crush." It was as if the people just walked away and left the poor, and ignored the burdens that were crushing them. They thought it was no big deal. The fierceness of the Spirit inspired words that Isaiah gives are strong. You are crushing "my people" he says.

Do you realize that as a blood bought child of God, you have obligation to help your brethren. Are you so consumed with your life that you have forgotten the people of God? Les Ollila once said "He who dies with the dirtiest towel wins!" Are you a servant? Do you give your time and effort when you are asked? Or do you leave the burdens to others, even though it is at times crushing them? You know there are various people in this ministry that don't wait to be asked. They are just walking with the Lord and they do what needs to be done. What a blessing! Are you one of those people? Do you see a need, or do you ignore it all and focus on yourself? Are you leaving the burdens of your brethren to crush them to pieces? Notice God says jealously, "my people." Your ignoring God's prized possession. Do you have a heart for your brethren? Do you pray for them? Do you serve them? These are the Lord's people! You should love them as the Lord loves them!

And then Isaiah gets even more graphic.

He says...

and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts. Just as men grind grain between two heavy millstones, these people have been placed between the heavy millstone of your greed and the ground. Are you greedy? Are you willing to give of your best to the Master?

Give of your best to the Master;
Give Him first place in your heart.
Give Him first place in your service;
Consecrate every part.
Give, and to you will be given;
God His beloved Son gave.
Gratefully seeking to serve Him,
Give Him the best that you have.

Conclusion: How did you fare? Is your spiritual house in order? How is your leadership? Are you the leader God wants you to be? Men, are you leading your wife. Parents are you leading your children. Do they know more about trifling toys than of the Saviour? Are your children saved? Do you have a burden for them?

How about your stewardship? If God judged your devotion to Him based on the cheerfulness of your giving, how would you do?

And then, how about your service for Christ? Are you joyfully serving Him with abandon? Are you serving him in your family and at church? Are you going to die with a dirty towel?

Give of your best to the Master!

“Only one life `twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Closing Hymn: 443 He Hideth My Soul (verse 4)