

Isaiah 1:10-20

### Washed for Worship

Because the Father is seeking people to worship Him in Spirit and in truth, He calls you to repent of faithless worship and restores you to faithful worship.

Because God is holy, He rejects faithless worship (1:10-15).

- V. 10 – Faithless leaders foster faithless people; cf. rejection of Cain and his offering
- V. 11 – Quantity of forms of worship cannot substitute for the quality of true worship
- Vv.12-15 – God’s worship regulations require faith; ordained forms without faith are vain; abominable; hated by God; false piety is an obscenity which God will not tolerate
- Empty worship is devoid of faith and of the obedience of faith: iniquity; evil, injustice, oppression, refusal to listen, rebellion
- Beware of using worship to manipulate God. This attitude says, ‘I will placate God by going to church, so that He will give me a pass for my sin.’

Because God is gracious, He restores faithful worship (1:16-20).

- Vv.16-17 – The call to repentance involves 3 relations:
  - God—“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes.” (cf. Jer. 2:22 – human means will not cleanse)
    - “Wash” used 73X in OT, 52X of ceremonial cleansing (Motyer)—these ceremonies, done in faith, were God’s means of grace to His people
    - Even when the deeds are done, the evil/guilt remains unless removed.
    - Eph. 5:26 “washing of water with the word”; Titus 3:5 “washing of regeneration”
  - Self—“Cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek justice.”
    - “abandonment of the old life (cease), development of a new mind (learn), and setting new objectives and priorities (seek)” (Motyer)
    - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. **The old has passed away; behold the new has come.** All this is from God, who through Christ has reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . Working with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. . . . **Do not be unequally yoked** with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.” – 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 6:1, 14-16
  - Society—“Correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless; plead the widow’s cause.”

- Matt. 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”
  - Matt. 13:31-33 “He put another parable before them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’” He told them another parable. ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.’”
  - James 1:27 “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”
- V. 18a A Compassionate Plea to Reason
  - “Come” – imperative/command; “now” – particle of entreaty;
  - “Reason” – “The first step in genuine repentance would be to realize that one’s actions have not been in accord with reason (God’s commands). All sin, whether of thought, word, or deed, is unreasonable.” – E. J. Young
- V. 18b-19 A Gracious Promise to Restore
- V. 20 A Solemn Presage of Ruin
- The Servant of the Lord not only redeems the remnant of Israel for worship, He is “deeply despised, abhorred by the nation” so that all nations “shall prostrate themselves” in worship of the Lord (Isa. 49:6-7). Jesus came to gather true worshipers from the nations (John 4:21-26). The “hour” of His suffering and death was the hour of their redemption and presentation to the Father.
- Are you living and worshiping as though Christ died so that you could rightly worship?
- “Missions exists because worship doesn’t.” – John Piper