

A Polite Necessity or Urgent Conviction?
Isaiah 1:10-15

1543

Theme: Hope, judgment

Aim: to show that although Isaiah has a message of judgment, he also has a message of hope.

1. Isaiah is often called the Messianic Prophet, and so he is.
 2. Most often quoted prophet in the New Testament. Most familiar to Christians.
 3. But who is this man Isaiah? What message does he have for us today?
- I. Isaiah was one of what are often called the eighth century prophets.
- A. He lived during time of four kings of Judah.
 1. But there was much prophetic activity in his day. Hosea, Amos, Micah also prophesied during this time.
 2. But as we shall see, the situation in Judah was almost desperate.
 3. For Israel and Judah had forsaken the Holy one of Israel. Note word holy occurs 59 times in Isaiah, 25 in the phrase “Holy One of Israel.”
 - B. Isaiah watched as the Assyrians descended upon the northern nation of Israel and carry them away into captivity, never to return again.
 1. Why? Because of their idolatry.
 2. He saw the same fate in Judah’s future, and he was trying to bring them back to their God.
 3. But the situation was grim and desperate in Isaiah’s time.
 4. Isaiah brings to Judah a message of judgment because they, too, had forsaken the Holy One.
 5. As one speaker said, “God had become a polite necessity for them,” much has He has for us today.
- II. The situation of Israel and Isaiah’s message of judgment.
- A. The situation.
 1. They had rebelled against God, Isaiah 1:1-3.
 2. The whole nation was corrupt, 1:4-9.
 3. Even their sacrifices and attempts to worship were offensive to the Holy One, 1:10-15. But that is what happens when God becomes a polite necessity, a matter of convenience and not a matter of urgent conviction.
 4. What had brought them to such a low state? Isaiah 5:24-25, 30:8-11,
 5. As a result, they would face the wrath and judgment of the Holy One, 1:24-31.
 - B. But all is not hopeless.
 1. Just as there was a message of judgment, there is a message of hope.
 2. These are, after all, God’s people. The people to whom many promises were made through Abraham. The ones that God had brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The ones God had and still loved.
 3. Notice in 1:9, he introduces the notion of a remnant.
 4. God would not forsake Judah completely. In the last 27 chapters of Isaiah he gives them a message of hope, including that beautiful prophetic picture of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53.
 5. They had a future, as long as God was in it! Isaiah 42:1-6, 43:1-3.

III. The lesson for us today is clear.

A. Do we want God's judgment or hope?

1. When our relationship with God is no longer a matter of urgent conviction and becomes a polite necessity, when we do religion out of a sense of past obligation when it is not real to us, it is not real to God.
2. Just as the efforts to worship of those of ancient Judah became offensive to the Holy One of Israel, so ours can become an abomination.

B. What is the solution? Where is the hope to be found?

1. Isaiah 1:16-20.
2. Yes, sin separates us from God, Isaiah 59:1-2, but it is God who provides the means of reconciliation, Isaiah 61:1-3.
3. It is through that suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

1. Will you respond to the suffering servant today?
2. God wants to save, not to judge. He wants to save you.

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