

An Impenitent Heart

Book of Isaiah

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I would like to invite you to look with me in Isaiah chapter 57. And my text is going to be the same as what we looked at last time where we considered what it is to be a spiritual adulterer. But I did not want to move on until we looked at the root of all of this. What is the root of spiritual adultery or idolatry? Well, it is what takes place in the heart and it is being a son of Adam, born I sin. And it takes the work of the Spirit to show us who we are. If he ever shows you who you are, it is to show you who Christ is, because Christ came to save the worst of sinners.

But I am speaking on a topic today that I know all of us, if we are honest and truthful, can identify with and that is an impenitent heart. This matter of repentance is not just a one time act, like you hear so many say. You know, come forward and walk an aisle and pray this prayer and you have repented. No. I believe it is a cry that the Lord gives to his own day in and day out. This is that man that came to our Lord and said, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief." And if we don't see that desperate need, I have to say we have never seen him.

And so truly getting to the heart of the matter here, verse four of Isaiah 57.

"Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood."¹

That is what we are as we are born in this world, sons of Adam.

Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these? Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where

¹ Isaiah 57:4.

thou sawest it. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not? I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.²

Well, the first thing we need to do is to describe what is an impenitent heart. And everything I have read here with regard to these charges brought against the people of Israel was in the way that they worshipped, the false worship, coming in some other way than what God had ordained. That is important, because we need to deal with a society today where everywhere there are professing Christians who would tell you I have repented and I am believing God. And yet when you weigh their profession of faith and... against the Scriptures and you listen to them talk about what is their righteousness and their works, I have to conclude based on the Scriptures that we are dealing with an impenitent, religious generation. That is who Isaiah faced and that is who we face. There is nothing new under the sun.

Now we could go to a dictionary, a Bible dictionary if we want and so-called and look up what it is to be unrepentant or impenitent, but I believe the Scriptures themselves are their own best interpreter. And so I want to look at a couple of verses with regard to what is an impenitent heart. And we will begin, there is a lot we could cite, but we will begin in Proverbs chapter 27 and verse 22. I love the language of Scripture. It is picturesque. It is designed to give us a visual of some of these things. And God by his Spirit has so written this Word to give us these pictures. And here is one right here in verse 22 in Proverbs 27. We read:

“Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.”³

That word bray it means to literally pound or grind. How hardened is the heart of a sinner in its impenitence? Well, here it is describe as a fool that if you were to take and put that fool in a mortar along with wheat... of course, when you take wheat and put it in a mortar and beat it with a pestle, it is designed to separate the wheat from the chaff. But such is the hardness of the sinner’s heart that with all of the evidences, even with all of

² Isaiah 57:5-14.

³ Proverbs 27:22.

the warnings of God's providence and his Word, all the declarations of the gospel, left to himself that one will never change. That one will remain what he is in his blindness and ignorance and never sense the urgency of even the desperate state of their own soul. That describes an impenitent heart.

Look over in John chapter one and verse 11. Our Lord... you talk about impenitence. Here was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God whom the Scriptures say was the Word that came and dwelt among men. And it says in verse 10 of John one:

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”⁴

Now you take even simple men, inventors. If one should suddenly appear among men, maybe at first you didn't recognize him, but if we lived back in that day and suddenly they introduce themselves as Thomas Edison everybody would have been flocking. Oh, Thomas Edison. They are trying to get your autograph. Men are impressed by men. But if you want a picture of the hardness and blindness of men's hearts to such a degree that John said the light came into the world, but the darkness comprehended him not and this the condemnation of men that light has come into the world and they have not believed him. Here it says they knew him not. How blind and how hard must be the heart in its natural state? How deep the lostness of the heart to where when even Christ himself stood before these men the perceived him not. And it wasn't that they just didn't perceive him, but verse 11 says he came unto his own and his own received him not. That word received means to welcome. It means to associate with, identify with. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

Here is another description over in Acts chapter seven. This was Stephen's message to his generation. And such was their hatred and disdain for him in exalting Christ in his day that they, the Scriptures say in verse 54:

“...they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.”⁵

These were religious professors like many today. You know, they sit calmly in places of worship because they have never been confronted with the truth, but if there were ever a man that God would send to stand before them and the Spirit would just in any sense give them an understanding of what was being said, they would do the same thing today. They would run on that man and gnash on him with their teeth in anger. Look what they did to our Lord. They crucified him. But Stephen did not mince words. He did not hold back here in Acts seven and verse 51. He looks him right in the eye and he says:

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”⁶

⁴ John 1:10.

⁵ Acts 7:54.

⁶ Acts 7:51.

Now I think it is important here to bring out that this is to condoning that interpretation of men that says the spirit really wants to see people saved and he is trying, but, alas, men are resisting. I believe there is a convicting work of the Spirit that he does in natural men's hearts that is not necessarily a converting work. In other words, it is much like an attorney in a court room that... a prosecuting attorney that stands up and brings charges against the person that is before the bar, but none of those charges move that person. They remain unrepentant.

“...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”⁷

In other words, you do always stand against all that is revealed concerning Christ here in this work and persist in your false way of worship, will not bow. Such is your state of impenitence and unbelief. And, dear friends, such would be our state were it not that Christ had paid our debt and put away even that sin and that in time the Spirit of God was pleased to cause us to see our need and to cry unto him. But this is... these are examples of what it is to have an impenitent heart.

I will have you turn to one other portion. There are many more, but Romans chapter two. All of the Scriptures agree. To me this is the greatest evidence that this Word that we hold in our hand is the inspired Word of God, because all of these testimonies agree one with another, whether it be in the Old Testament or the New. And here in Romans two Paul is directed by the Spirit to write:

“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.”⁸

Men are quick to judge another man. One worm is quick to raise his head against another worm, but when that light is shined on them, all of the sudden now self justification. That is what men do when they read the Scriptures. They hold with a death grip their profession. They hold with a death grip their high opinion of themselves and will quickly and easily pit it against Christ, cause it to rival Christ when they are quick to look down their nose at somebody else. That is what Paul is saying.

...for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Romans 2:1.

⁹ Romans 2:2-4.

So in this one verse what is an impenitent heart? Despising, not just ignoring, but despising what God himself has declared to be the way that he will be just and justify sinners. And that is through his Son. To despise is to come in another way, much as Cain did. You know he didn't just flippantly throw some fruit from the ground together and bring it before the Lord. I am sure he brought the best works of his hand, but in so doing he was a rebel. He despised the goodness of God who had already established that it would be a blood sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

Men today who add to or take from the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished are despisers. They despise. They treat as a common thing that which is to God's honor and glory alone. And:

“...not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”¹⁰

Man will stay in his state of impenitence unless God in his goodness is pleased to draw them to himself. But notice verse five.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”¹¹

Men who think themselves wise in approaching unto God in another way than what God himself has determined and ordained and that is through his Son and his sacrifice alone. They heap to themselves wrath upon wrath. That wrath has never been removed. Christ never paid their debt. And in the end they will suffer eternally under that hand of wrath. And eternity in hell will not suffice to satisfy a holy God and his justice. Only the death that Christ paid, the death that he died has satisfied a holy God on behalf of those for whom he died.

And so this is what an impenitent heart is. There are millions of people sitting in places of worship with a Bible open on their laps who are yet in this state, because they come in another way. They are hearing another message. They are being taught a gospel, but not the gospel and when you meet them and question them according to this Word, you begin to see a little evidence of that impenitence coming out when they begin to react to you, get upset at you and just as soon see you be gone as to bow to Christ.

May it not be so with us.

Now does the mean, as we have read these that man can thwart God in his purpose and will? Is man stronger than God? I am so thankful, dear friends, that that is not the case. I like what one preacher said I heard some years ago, that God convinces us of ... to come to him to come to Christ willingly against our will. In other words, if he were to leave us, we would never have come. And he draws. It is like that net that is cast. He draws his own unto Christ. But I would be he first to have to tell you. Had he left it to me, I would

¹⁰ Romans 2:4.

¹¹ Romans 2:5.

never have come. Such is the impenitence of my heart. And I know that is the case for you as well, because I know my own heart. I know what kind of heart we have.

But coming back to our text I want to simply go down through here one more time and speak with you on what are the characteristics of an impenitent heart that we see here. And we are going to move through here in a rather quick way because I want to get through all seven of these characteristics, but if you want to note them and come back, my prayer is that you will see them already here in the Word. I am not telling you anything that is not here already. And may the Lord grant us repentance even as we listen, that these otherwise hardened hearts of ours would be, once again, drawn to Christ.

But the first characteristic in verse four of an impenitent heart is to make light of what is honorable to the glory of God. I have literally in preaching in certain congregations and in certain contexts in attempting to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and set forth his death literally seen people mock and grimace. I have even been interrupted. I have had men stand up during meetings and try to shout me down for doing what? Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ and giving him the glory alone.

Here notice how strong the charge is of impenitence. It is not against what do you sport yourselves. I mean, you can walk into a lot of congregations and see a lot wrong about what is wrong. Certain things already tip you off. But the real issue is against whom. That is an important word here. Impenitence of heart is against God and his anointed one. It is just that plain. And notice it is repeated.

“...against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?”¹²

That is in the sense of mockery.

“...are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood...”¹³

That is why Christ stood up and said of the Pharisees who, based on outward appearance, were a standard of righteousness to the people of their day and yet what did the Lord call them? A generation of adulterers. You are of your father the devil, because anybody that takes and promotes a righteousness that is other than the one obedience of Christ whereby he came and established that righteousness, worked it out and upon completion of his death God imputed it to his people, any person that pits their own righteousness or their works even in any subtle way, like you get some saying, “Well, I am not saying, you know, it is not by grace, but...” When you hear the but, I always say, {?}. When you hear the but you know that there is impenitence. There is an unrepentant heart. There is a compromise that you are seeking to bring in and leave some wiggle room for man, his will and his works. And it is against the Lord. And it is against his anointed. So to make light of what is honorable to the glory of God.

¹² Isaiah 57:4.

¹³ Ibid.

Remember that was the accusation brought against the children of Israel that they loathed the manna. They made light of it. They saw it as a light thing. You know, isn't there some other way?

Down here as we read in verse eight and we are going to get to this in a little bit, but it talks about:

“...thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them.”¹⁴

That is the broad way. People that find this too narrow a message to say that all of salvation was accomplished by a substitute, all of justification was finished there at the cross and upon completion of his death that God imputed that righteousness to his people. They say that is too narrow. We have got to look at all aspects. We hear people talking that way. Let's look at it from a different angle. I don't want to look at it from a different angle. I have seen all the angles. I have lived. I have slept in that large bed and I am thankful for a bed to rest in that is no larger, no smaller than what God himself has made and that is his Son in his death, making light of what is honorable to the glory of God.

Secondly, the second characteristic I see here of an impenitent heart is that burning lust for all that is self serving and abominable to the one way of worship, burning lust. Notice verse five.

“Enflaming yourselves with idols.”¹⁵

You know, anything that is not according to the one standard which God himself has given us here in his Word, which is Christ and him crucified, is idolatry. The world idol, idea. When someone says to you, “Well, I think that...” Ok, there is your problem. When you start off, “I think...” you are an idolater. It is not what I think. It is what God says. And we bow or we burn. That is the clear declaration of Scripture. But that word enflaming yourselves, see it? At the basis of this impenitent heart, I think a lot of times when I have heard preachers say, we are as dead as this piece of wood right here. We are not. There is a life, but it is a life of separation from God. There are actions. There are feelings. There are thoughts that are going through the heart, but it is contrary in every way to God and to his Son and to his way until such time as God is pleased to bring that sinner low. The enflaming, it is against. It is a lust that burns in the heart of man to serve anything or anyone but the true and living God. It shouldn't surprise us because we are talking about people that have the same Word as we do right here reading it just like we do. And we come away seeing how it exalts Christ and they come away following a preacher trying to come up with some new program, new project, new way of serving, no way of doing. That is all they see in the same book.

And you say, “How can that be?”

¹⁴ Isaiah 57:8.

¹⁵ Isaiah 57:5.

Well, one, in their impenitence and blindness of heart see what they want to see and they serve those gods.

Notice here there are four specific ways in which those whose lusts burn within them for self serving idolatry, there is four places it is manifest. One in verse five it says:

“...under every green tree.”¹⁶

The god of nature. And let's... let's... it is all about experiencing God. So let's find a place of worship among the groves. I would be wary of any church that has grove after it. The high groves. That is where they gave an impression of majesty. You know, there is no truth in it, but they see these places as places of worship. We have some here in town that are set off so that when you are driving back to them people feel like they are coming from church. And isn't it beautiful? You know, whatever is of the flesh is flesh. And they are drawn. There is a lust that draws them. I would say the majority of those people probably couldn't stay too long here because they drive by and there is really nothing appealing to the eye. In fact, how many have driven by and not even known that this is a church building. It doesn't fit that picture.

Put it off somewhere in a grove. Put it somewhere among the oaks and under the green trees. But you notice what went on there. Verse five says:

“...slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks?”¹⁷

There were practices among the Canaanites where they literally did. If you really believe God enough and trust him enough, he will take your first born and you will offer him up. Such as their dedication to their worship. You know, it was like Paul said they have a zeal for God, but to according to knowledge. It doesn't matter how pretty the place looks. But I dare say today with congregations they are numerous that are offering up their children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks with programs and things that are designed to draw those children in and I say it to my shame. I was part of those programs. Our way of being trained and taught back when I was in false religion was that if you can get the kids, you can eventually get the parents. So let's cater to the kids. Let's start a vacation Bible school. Let's start a children's program. Let's start something that will get the kids in. And once we have got the kids then we will be able to reel in the adults.

Well, if you get those kids in and teach them a lie about God which is what these programs do. You get a group of four and five year olds together and get them to bow their head. Wouldn't you like to accept Jesus today? You know, wouldn't you like to make Jesus happy? This is what is going on across this nation even as I speak to you and some people don't even see it as a crime, but it is. It is offering up those children to Moloch, to a false god, to one that unless the Lord is pleased to deliver them, they will die an eternal condemnation holding on to a false hope. And there is most people today you talk to in profession, when you ask them where it was that they first professed, they

¹⁶ Isaiah 57:5.

¹⁷ Ibid.

will go back to some program somewhere or some teacher, maybe well intended, tells them this is what you need to do. But well intending people... hell is full of well intending people. And, you know, that is what is described here.

Verse six.

“Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion....”¹⁸

Now what I want you to notice in each of these cases, Christ is the tree of life. Christ is the stone. Christ is the river of life. But men in an impenitent heart, rather than bow to Christ will take something else. And imitation can put that up as their way of worship. Among the smooth stones of the valley, those stones that were used to build their false altars. And you hear preachers today say, “Come down to the altar.” Christ is our altar. But they will take smooth stones to build monumental places of worship and call it ... put a sign out front that says, “God did this.” No, God is in his Son. Christ is the temple. But they will gather those stones to build an altar, to build a place of worship, but it is false worship.

In verse seven:

“Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.”¹⁹

Notice the common denominator. It all has to do with sacrifice. Some people look at that. they say, “Wow. There are a lot of churches. That is a good thing.”

No. It is a sepulcher. It is an open tomb unless Christ be preached. But, you know, people go up and offer their sacrifices.

And then verse eight:

“Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance.”²⁰

You walk into people’s homes and look around. It doesn't take long. It could be a family Bible sitting there on the coffee table with the names of all the people that got married way back when, baptismal certificates. I have sat in homes where they have flipped them open and these things fall out, little crosses up on the walls, pictures of the so called Jesus, symbols, emblems that people have been taught are a way of worship and yet it is nothing but idolatry. But at the bottom line it comes from verse five, that burning lust that is in every sinner and would be still in us had not the Lord by his Spirit taught us the difference that it was in Christ alone.

You say, “Where does it come from?”

¹⁸ Isaiah 57:6.

¹⁹ Isaiah 57:7.

²⁰ Isaiah 57:8.

Go back to the garden. Adam and Eve fell because they saw that fruit that God had said, “Thou shalt not eat thereof.” And they saw that it was good. And they partook and they fell. And every one is born in this world with that same burning lust for something other than Christ. It takes Christ turning these hearts. So that is the second way that we see characterized an impenitent heart.

Thirdly, down in verse nine and that is seeking the favor of men. This is such a subtle thing. But the fear of man here, friends, is a snare. I have had some preachers tell me. it is not that we don’t see what you are preaching in the Word, but we could never preach that in our congregations and get away with it.

Well, guess what? You have manifested by that an impenitent heart, then. And the bottom line of it is a fear of man.

Here in verse nine the accusation against this people through Isaiah is:

“And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.”²¹

In other words, trying to enter into league with men. Do you realize that as soon as you try to organize the work of God you have gone astray? There is this sense today that a congregation such as this can’t stand alone and exist. You know, I have heard all of the illustrations, you know, if you pull a log out of the fire and set it aside by itself, pretty soon it gets cold and hard and it dies. And that... their reason is you need to have fellowship with other churches. You need to have fellowship with other congregations. You need to reach out.

Well, these here in their day they went to the king with ointment. They looked for protection. They looked for a refuge in a man.

“...and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off.”²²

These were sent to negotiate terms of agreement with these otherwise enemies. And I will tell you, dear friend, we dare not. We dare not. Do I desire fellowship? I desire fellowship with any whom the Lord has taught, but not at the expense of the gospel, not at the expense of denying Christ and him crucified. It would be better to walk alone. And so we will until the Lord is pleased to grant a fellowship that is based upon entirely the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Notice the word, verse nine.

“...debase thyself even unto hell.”²³

²¹ Isaiah 57:9.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

You make alliances with me and organizations in thinking that by that you are going to strengthen your position. In reality what you are doing is hardening your position in you impenitence. And unless the Lord is pleased to deliver you, it will bring you into hell. It will bring you into condemnation.

Now this is the serious matter of everything that we are talking about. It has to do with the glory of God in Christ and Christ alone. So seeking the favor of men, trying to broaden the bed, make it wider. Let's not be too narrow here. All of these sending embassages out. I get invitations all the time. I have... you know, I call it junk mail from organizations that would like us to come in and join them and just be part of them and a growing number of people that are ... have this alliance together for whatever the cause. There is all kinds of causes. But do you know what? The best thing you can do is just rip it up and throw it out, because unless that alliance is based upon the truth as it is here in Scripture, it is a false alliance and it will most certainly lead to condemnation.

The fourth quality and characteristic of impenitence we see in verse 10. And that is that people are determined to continue in their way even though it is false. It is like a bad investment. You don't want to give it up. I have got too much in it. And so they persist in that way even though it is false. In spite of all the warnings, they persist in that way ever seeking peace and rest but without satisfaction. And see how it is put?

“Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way.”²⁴

I used to work with somebody that when they... when their congregation meets it is like it starts at 10 in the morning and it goes all the way to seven o'clock at Sunday night. And she used to always come in just bone tired on Monday, but she was involved in everything. And I would say, “Well, you get some rest this weekend?”

And she would say, “No.” She said, “Our Sundays are anything but rest. You know, we are there from...” She said, “I have got to get there early because I have got all the little kids and everything. And then by the time they let us go it is seven o'clock at night and I am worn out.”

That is what works religion does. You know, preachers that preach up works religion it is like the task masters in Egypt that they get to where they won't even provide the straw anymore to make the bricks. You go out and gather straw, too. If you are really zealous for God.

“Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way.”²⁵

That means you have a high opinion of your way. You have no knowledge of the way, but the greatness of thy way.

²⁴ Isaiah 57:10.

²⁵ Ibid.

“...yet saidst thou not, There is no hope.”²⁶

You know, you say, why do people continue in a false way when it is obvious it doesn't give them peace and rest and satisfaction? Well, that is that impenitence. An impenitent heart is a hard heart. We say it is a hard head, but it is a hard heart.

“...thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.”²⁷

In other words, such is your opinion of yourself and that life, even though it is not the life of God, but it is a life and you have got a lot of people willing to bolster you up in it. You continue in it even though there is no hope. And you will never be brought to say there is no hope until the Lord himself be pleased to show you. I know that was my case. In ignorance the Lord let me go on in my way for some time, through profession, through education out in so-called missionary service. But then when it pleased God to reveal Christ in me, all that went away. I wouldn't be standing here today preaching to you this message in such a distinctive way were it not for that work which the Spirit of grace has done in this heart and made the difference and drawn the line and pulled me out. And I can't tell you I am so thankful he did. I am so thankful he did.

So every seeking peace and rest without satisfaction.

Fifthly, in verse 11, we are about done here. There is no fear of God. An impenitent heart has no fear of God. Verse 11.

“And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart?”²⁸

People in false religion in that impenitence don't see it as false and therefore there is no fear. There is no fear of God.

“...have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?”²⁹

When he says held his peace it means he hasn't judged them. He hasn't called lightning to come out and destroy them. And so many people have a false sense of peace. You know, they think to themselves, “I have been doing this.... I have been worshipping this way for years. And now you are telling me it is false? Well, I can look back and see God's hand of blessing here, blessing there.” It is a false sense of peace. All that is is God withholding his hand of judgment until he has so determined. And I will tell you what. Unless Christ has paid your debt, that hand of judgment will fall and will fall heavily. And a person can live all their life in some measure of comfort in this world, with a false hope, no fear of God and when they die be cast into utter darkness having spent all their lifetime worshipping in a congregation to some measure of comfort, singing in the choir,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Isaiah 57:11.

²⁹ Ibid.

you know, holding some position in that congregation. None of that means anything unless it be Christ in whose... in their heart that has been revealed, in his work alone that has been sent forth.

But that is a sign of impenitence, no fear of God. I will tell you what. Every since the Spirit of God was pleased to reveal Christ in this heart through this Word that I am ... I have open before you today and point this sinner to his Son and his death and what he accomplished, I had no fear of God. I was presumptuous.

I go back... I started preaching when I was 17 years of age. And I was 30 when then Lord dealt mightily in my heart. So for 13 years I had no fear of God. I opened this Word and felt like I was capable of doing just as good a job as anybody out there. But I know when the Lord opened this heart, my mouth was stopped. For some time I trembled. I read this. I feared even to stand up and open my mouth once again lest it be in some way dishonoring to the Lord who had been so gracious to reveal himself in this heart. In fact, I remember telling one of the men in Africa. I needed to just come back to the States and get a job, that preaching was too heavy. And I didn't know how it is going to exalt Christ as he had been revealed in my heart. And the Lord used that man to say to me, "If the Lord has given you some light and you take it and leave us, who is going to teach us?"

And I went back and prayed and thought about it and determined to stay so long as the Lord would have me there. And he gave me another seven years in Africa before bringing me here. These are to things, dear friends, that I sit down during the week and try to come up with a message and think, ok, I have got people coming, so I have got to preach. If that were the case I would walk out of here right now. But I stand here as a sinner whom God has been pleased to reveal Christ in and pointed this needy sinner to the one work of obedience that he has accomplished. And I dare not declare anything else, but him and him crucified. And if people leave, they leave. If people stay, it will be because the Spirit of God himself has given you that very same burden, the same desire to know him and exalt him.

I have a fear of God. I have a fear not to declare his Son. I have a fear not to exalt his work alone. A fear to... I would rather do anything else other than deny him with regard to where his glory is and that is in his Son.

The sixth characteristic we see in verses 12 and 13. And that is trusting in a false righteousness, having a false refuge. The Lord said:

"I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works."³⁰

He is not talking about good righteousness there. He is talking about man's. And what does he say?

"...for they shall not profit thee."³¹

³⁰ Isaiah 57:12.

³¹ Ibid.

Many shall say in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not done many mighty works in thy name? And he will say, “Depart from me,” what? Ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”

That is his condemnation of man’s works. You know, Paul wrote to the Galatians if righteousness come by law, then Christ is dead in vain. If you establish any righteousness as being profitable for God of your own, what you are declaring in your impenitence is that Christ died in vain. Christ paid the debt. He worked that righteousness out. And upon completion of that debt God imputed that righteousness. That is God’s righteousness. We dare not trifle with it. Any other righteousness is a false hope.

“When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee.”³²

Didn’t you go to that congregation because there were lots of people? Let them deliver you. Didn’t you go there because you liked the preacher? Let him deliver you. That is what Isaiah is saying through the Spirit of God. Throws it right back in their face. Wherever your trust is, whatever you are looking to, you call on them. Go get them. But he says:

“...but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.”³³

His holy mountain is Calvary. In other words, through that it will be seen that it was for such that Christ died. And that is the last characteristic of impenitence, right there, at the last part of verse 13 and 14. Those who are impenitent are devoid of that special grace of God for his people. It is a grace. It is a grace. It says:

“...he that putteth his trust in me...”³⁴

Again, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“...shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.”³⁵

That is what the Lord did in his death. He took the stumbling block of his people out of the way. It was cast up, taken away. He made the rough places smooth. He dealt with the law, satisfied every jot and tittle, dealt with our sin in his death, defeated Satan.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”³⁶

³² Isaiah 57:13.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Isaiah 57:14.

³⁶ Romans 8:1.

But to the impenitent, unless the Lord is pleased to teach them of Christ, they will die the death that will never enter in. That privilege is only for those for whom Christ has paid the debt.

Can you see why I have asked the Lord every day, “Lord, give me a heart of repentance. Don’t leave me to myself”?

I pray he won’t leave you to yourself. May he grant us that spirit of worship to worship him in truth.