

When the Lord is near

Sunday, December 5, 2021

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Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

- I. Seek the Lord ...
 - A. It is OUR duty to seek after God – because the One who gave us life commands it.
 1. If we will incur the favor of God and his friendship we must seek it – He will not force himself upon us. We must show ourselves friendly to Him.
 - B. We are naturally ignorant of the ways of God, so He commands us to seek after Him.
 - C. Because God and his ways are so misrepresented in this crooked and perverse world, we must seek diligently to find Him through all the lies and confusion.
 - D. We MUST COME to God – He is not going to drag us into the Kingdom.
 1. We MUST STOP our apathy and our unconcern for our soul and set about trying to right what is wrong.
 2. We MUST separate from the world and its cares, its attractions, its amusements and focus our mind on God.
 - E. There is surely great reward and value in finding the Lord – that is why He urges us to seek Him.
- II. We should seek the Lord in every part of our life – not just for salvation.
 - A. In choosing a wife or a husband.
 1. This begins by seeking the Lord about who to be interested in and who to form any kind of relationship with.
 - B. In the church we belong to.
 - C. In where we choose to live.
 - D. In the job we choose, or the type of work we do.
 - E. In rearing children; their education, their discipline, in their real needs.
 - F. To seek the Lord in these matters is to be honest with ourselves and not allow our heart to deceive us.
 - G. If we seek the Lord and find Him in these matters of life it will be in the ways of righteousness and truth.
 1. It will not be by justifying what we want and claiming that God is on board with us.
 2. True critical thinking is about finding and conforming to truth – not denying it.
 3. Beware of the influence of the worldly view of critical thinking that seeks to find a way to justify self by denying moral truths.
 - H. Seeking the Lord is basically about being honest before God and believing his Word concerning truth and righteousness.
 1. It is about denying ourselves if we find in ourselves desires and thoughts that are contrary to God's truth as given in his Word.
- III. While He may be found ...
 - A. This implies plainly that He will not always be near enough for us to find Him.
 - B. It implies there is a time when we must seek Him or be lost.

- C. It implies that if we do not seek Him while He is near there will be a time when we will seek Him and not be able to find Him.

Jeremiah 14:11-12 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Ezek. 8:18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

Mic. 3:4 Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

Zech. 7:13 Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

- D. He may be found when our heart is tender:
1. The preaching of the Word of God is borne to our conscience with power.
 2. When death comes into our inner circle of family or friends and we are sobered to its reality, and to the fact that this life will end for us also.
 3. When your health is taken away and you are deprived of the ability to indulge yourself in this world's pleasures.
 4. A saved friend or loved one is pleading with you to be saved.

IV. Sometimes we may think we are staying near to God and we can call anytime we want.

- A. Most people think that they aren't so far from God, but we can be much farther from Him than we think.
- B. We may think He is just a prayer away and so we have no fear about the matter.
- C. We may think He will come in *our* own good time, and immediately when we beckon.
- D. We put space between God and ourselves gradually when we are in this careless state – until it becomes a great gulf.
1. Just like the child that becomes lost in the woods – it happens gradually.
- E. There will come a day when it will dark in your world and you will look back with deep regret on the time He was near and you refused to call upon Him.

V. When judgment time comes and the crop is in, how guilty will he be who fails to seek the Lord and call upon when he could be found!

- A. How foolish it is to let the moment of opportunity pass knowing that there might not be another!
- B. How foolish to yield to our own foolish heart and miss God to get what we want!
- C. God makes Himself known and you know the opportunity is available NOW, but you refuse it, to have your own way.
- D. God does not require anything of us that is impossible for us to comply with.
1. He only requires that we “call upon him, while He is near.” To seek him while he may be found.”
 2. That we forsake our own way and our own thoughts and return to the Lord.
 3. And He will have mercy on us and abundantly pardon us, and guide us into righteousness and a life that will honor and please our God.

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