

# Behaviour Radically Inappropriate

Isaiah 22:1-25

*Halifax: 1 November 2009*

## Introduction

You don't have to go very far to find examples of inappropriate behaviour.

- Once when I was flying, I saw a stewardess completely lose her temper and go into a rage with cursing and all. Her behaviour was inappropriate.
- At the grocery store, you sometimes see a child (whose name you know because the mother keeps calling it out) whose behaviour is completely inappropriate.
- It is inappropriate to get up and dance a jig at a funeral,
  - and it is inappropriate to enter into lamentation and fasting at a wedding service.

We read an account in the New Testament today in which the disciples of John the Baptist and of the Pharisees were engaged in inappropriate fasting.

- For many years, times of fasting had been observed by God's people as they cried out to Him to send the Messiah to redeem them...
  - But these disciples of John and the Pharisees were still carrying out the routine fasting after Jesus had come and they actually had the audacity to complain at Jesus because His disciples were not fasting at that time!
    - Jesus pointed out to them that the bridegroom had come—that it was therefore not the time for fasting.
    - Their fasting was inappropriate.
      - It was time to rejoice that he had come.

Today in Isaiah 22, we are going to see inappropriate behaviour in the opposite direction:

- In Isaiah 22, we have the example of persons **feasting** when they *should* have been **fasting**.
- As we have seen with several of the prophecies in this section,
  - it is not always easy to tell what particular events in history are spoken of.
    - which siege, which repair job, which enemy?
  - But the overall message is very clear...
    - God's covenant people were behaving in a manner that was quite inappropriate to their circumstances.
      - We will see first of all (in verses 1-13) that they were feasting when they should have been fasting.
      - Then we will see the dreadful consequences of this inappropriate behaviour in verse 14
      - And thirdly, we will see personal examples of inappropriate and appropriate behaviour in the remainder of the chapter.

So let me direct you first of all to Isaiah 22:1-13 where we have an example of:

### I. **God's people feasting when they should have been fasting.**

- If you scan over the first thirteen verses,
  - you can see that is the main idea.
  - This is especially clear in verses 12-13 where it says that the LORD had called for weeping and mourning, but they were filled with joy and feasting with gladness.
    - We will look at the inappropriate behaviour in detail in just a moment,
      - but first I want you to see that:

A. This oracle is addressed to God's covenant people!

1. They are referred to as the **Valley of Vision** in verse 1.
  - It is another enigmatic name like we found in chapter 21 where Babylon was called the **Sea of the Wilderness**...
    - This same title, **Valley of Vision**, is used again in verse 5.
  - And as you look in the rest of the passage, it is clear that the Valley of Vision refers to Judah and Jerusalem.
    - At the end of verse 4 Isaiah calls them *the daughter of my people*. He would not call some pagan nations *the daughter of my people*.
      - In verse 8, he refers to them as *Judah*
      - In verse 9 as *the City of David*
      - And in verse 10 as *Jerusalem*.

TRANS> So the *Valley of Vision* is Jerusalem.

2. This unique title for God's people is quite instructive to us who are God's people today.
  - a. Jerusalem was the one place in the world, above all others, where God had made Himself known.
    - As Paul says in Romans 2, the great benefit of being a Jew was that they had the very oracles of God revealed to them!
      - They had the prophets and the covenants and the service of the temple.
    - In Psalm 147, the uniqueness of Jerusalem is also described—like this...
      - Psalm 147:19-20 says of the LORD:
        - Ps 147:19-20: He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation.

- So you can see why they were called the Valley of *Vision*.
    - It was here that God revealed Himself in the world...
      - It was the place of *vision* while the rest of the world was the place of blindness and confusion.
      - Even when Isaiah looks to the future and speaks of the coming of Christ, for example, in Isaiah 2,
        - He describes the nations as coming up to Jerusalem to learn of Him.
        - It was in Jerusalem that our Lord was revealed.
          - Jerusalem is the place of *vision*.
- b. But why is it called the *Valley* of Vision, why a valley when Jerusalem was on a hill?
- This is not certain, but it could very well be that this is a rebuke...
    - This city which had the privilege of God's revelation and so should have been a Great Mountain had, by wickedness, become a Valley.
    - The light that was supposed to be set on a hill had been hidden in a valley of darkness.
    - The covenant people had lost their unique character as the people of God because they had rejected the Word.
- c. This seems all the more to be the case when you look at the juxtaposition of this prophecy in the book of Isaiah...
- at where it is placed with respect to the other nations.
  - It is here in this section in which Isaiah has been making prophecies about all the pagan nations of his day.
    - Just recently, he has spoken about the burden against Babylon, the burden against Dumah and the burden against Arabia...
    - And now in chapter 22, without missing a beat,
      - he talks about the burden against the Valley of Vision...
  - In other words, he treats them as if they are simply another one of the pagan nations that God is going to deal with!
    - He treats them this way because that is what they had become!
      - They had the oracles of God,
        - but they had sunk in the position of a valley because they did not let their light shine.
      - They had become a shameful misrepresentation of God when they were supposed to show forth His glory and truth!

3. Oh my brothers and sisters, has this not become the case with God's covenant people in North America?
  - Those who are into doing surveys tell us that there is very little difference in the conduct of those who are church members and those who are not!
    - There is a similar occurrence of sexual immorality, of lying, of abortion, of divorce.
    - We who are supposed to be the light of the world, a city set on a hill,
      - have become a valley of vision.
      - We have the word of God, even the very gospel of Jesus Christ,
        - but we do not benefit from it because we ourselves do not believe.

TRANS> And so Isaiah puts a very searching question to people:

B. He says, literally, "What to you?"

- The translation we have in the New King James, "What ails you?" is an over-translation.
    - There is nothing about being ailed...
      - The ESV has "What do you mean by going up...etc"
    - This is one of those questions that is aimed at searching you out...
      - What are you doing?
      - What is the meaning of your behaviour?
      - What is with you?
  - In the context, the idea is, "Why are you who have the oracles of God behaving in such an inappropriate way?"
    - And then Isaiah points to three specific inappropriate behaviours...
    - I am going to put them in the "what are you doing form..."
1. First, what are you doing celebrating when God is about to chasten you (v. 1-7)?
    - a. What were they doing, going up to the housetops, apparently, for a celebration...
      - Verse 2 says that they were full of noise, a tumultuous city, and a joyous city.
      - It is fine to be joyful people—in fact, we ought to be a joyful people before our gracious Lord.
        - The problem was not that they were joyful, but that they were joyful when God was chastening them!

- They were like a brazen child who laughs when his parents tell him they are going to have to chasten him—
    - full of disrespect and folly.
    - Showing contempt for the seriousness of God’s disfavour with them.
- b. You see here that Isaiah describes some of the calamities that have come upon them in the remainder of verse 2 and in verse 3.
- He describes the consequences of a siege in which many die, but not by the sword—
    - You not, in ancient warfare, the enemy would surround the city and even if they could not penetrate the walls,
      - they would eventually force you to surrender by starving you.
    - Isaiah also speaks of how many of their leaders try to run away but are captured.
  - This seems to fit best with the circumstances of the attack of Jerusalem in the time of Manasseh.
    - This is an event about which we don’t have an exact date,
      - but it occurred during the reign of Esarhaddon who reigned in Assyria from 681-689 BC.
    - So this would place it after the failed attempt to conquer Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 and a full century before the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586.
      - It may possibly refer to either of these events,
        - but in 701 no one was captured
        - and in 586, the inappropriate rejoicing would not have been a feature unless it occurred at a time when the enemy seemed to pull back before the final blow.
- c. But whatever specific event is that is described (if it is a specific event at all),
- Isaiah’s main concern is to show that the people’s response was entirely inappropriate for a people who being chastened by God.
- 1) He shows his response to be entirely different than that of the people.
- They seem to have shaken this off and to have given themselves to revelry...
  - But Isaiah describes himself as weeping bitterly and refusing to be comforted.

- Isa 22:4: Therefore I said, "Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; Do not labor to comfort me Because of the plundering of the daughter of my people."
  - He was not taking this lightly because he know that repentance was being called for...
    - and that a pulling back of the enemy was an opportunity to return to the Lord, not a time to frolic.
- 2) Isaiah explains that troubles have been sent by the hand of Lord.
- Look at verse 5. He says
    - Isa 22:5: For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts In the Valley of Vision—
  - You see those words, “by the Lord GOD of Hosts?
    - The God who is over all the armies and nations of the earth and sends these nations and armies to do His destructive work upon Jerusalem!
    - Yes, is a striking thing—God is the one who is destroying the city that He established to be His own dwelling place.
      - He is doing this because He is displeased with His people, and if there has been a reprieve, they need to be humble and repent.
  - The second part of verse 5 and verses 6 and 7 describe the enemy eventually coming right up to the gate.
    - The walls of the city are broken down,
    - There is an outcry that reaches to the surrounding mountains
    - There are men and chariots that come from the far reaches of the Assyrian empire and fill the valley around Jerusalem.
    - There are enemies who come up to the very gates of the city, gaining entrance to wreak havoc.
- 3) It is very difficult to know the order of events because the Hebrew tenses are ambiguous... and we are dealing with things that Isaiah is seeing in the future by prophetic vision...
- But clearly what is being challenged here is the spirit or revelry within the people in connection with God’s chastisement.
    - Troubles have been brought on them,
      - but they have not repented.
      - They are assuming that their troubles are over and things are going to get better!
    - They are positive thinkers who say peace peace when there is no peace.

- Brothers and sisters, revelry is not appropriate when God is chastening you!
  - Such behaviour is highly offensive to God and most disrespectful!
  - We need to humble ourselves when His hand of chastisement comes upon us.
    - We have had the September 11 attack,
    - We have are having economic troubles,
    - We have much social unrest,
    - We have division in the church,
    - We have false doctrine in the church...
      - None of these things happen randomly or by accident.
      - They are sent by the LORD of Hosts to humble us.
  - We are so far from the reality of the situation in our society that many of God's people suppose that God only **allows** troubles to come upon us and would never **send** them...
    - Some even say that He has nothing whatsoever to do with them.
      - But you can see that Isaiah has a very different theology!
    - You need to embrace this theology!
      - It is very hard to humble yourself before the LORD when you will not even admit that He is chastening you!

TRANS> So the first question is “What are you doing celebrating when God is chastening you?”

- The second question raised from our text could be phrased in this way:
  2. What are you doing fixing things up instead of praying to the living God?
    - This is the inappropriate behaviour Isaiah describes in verses 8-11.
      - a. God removed the protection or the covering of Judah, and you see what they are doing about that...
        - They are going to work!
      - 1) Verse 8 says they are looking to the armour of the house of the forest—this is armoury that Solomon built.
        - They are going to see what sort of supplies they have to ward off their enemies.
        - They are going to get their swords and their shields...

- 2) And verse 9 and verse 11 show that they are making their water supply sure to prepare for a siege.
  - They want to make sure that they have plenty of water in the event that their enemies surround them.
  - This was almost always a concern in times of war
- 3) And verse 10 shows them going to great effort to repair the walls of the city, even sacrificing some of the houses from which they are taking materials.

TRANS> It is evident from all these preparations—and laborious, costly ones at that,

- that they are perfectly mindful of the danger they are in.
- They knew they were in a perilous situation... and that measures needed to be taken.
  - And of course there is nothing wrong with preparing your city for a potential attack and with getting your armour out.
  - But there is something terribly wrong here—
    - a serious omission—
    - something indispensable that should have been done from the first and all along the way...but something they did not do at all...

b. They do not look the LORD for help!

- Look at verse 11. It says:
  - Isa 22:11: You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. **But** you did not look to its Maker, nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.
- Oh my brothers and sisters!
  - How easy it is to get busy—even with God’s work—even with defending His city—such that your prayers are neglected!
- In the busyness that I have had lately, I found myself starting to do this very thing!
  - I was devoting less attention to prayer because there was so much work to do!
    - I realised this a couple of weeks ago and I have been correcting it!
    - It was a very foolish thing for me to do.
- How could I expect God to bless my labour?
  - How could I expect to have grace to resist temptation?



- How could I expect to stand in the evil day without prayer?
- What fruit could I expect from the ministry of the Word without prayer?
- How could I expect my ministry to my family to accomplish anything good?
  
- Prayerlessness exposes a wicked trust in our own works instead of in the living God...
  - And I'm not talking about mere perfunctory prayers!
  - You need to get on your knees and plead earnestly with God to work.
    - It is the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much!
    - Do you see your life slipping? Do you see a lack of seriousness about your soul? Do you see your children slipping?
    - There is no place for trifling around with God!
      - If you believe in God, pour out your heart to Him!
      - Don't be like the people in Isaiah's day!
        - trying to make yourself secure without looking to the only one who can make you secure!

TRANS> What are you doing celebrating when God is chastening you?

- What are you doing working without praying?
- Those are the first two questions raised by our text...
  - And now for the third...
  
- 3. Christian, what are you doing feasting when you ought to have a broken and contrite heart before the LORD?
  - a. Verse 12 shows that God has actually called for fasting, per se!
    - He has called for them to humble themselves and afflict themselves.
      - It says:
        - Isa 22:12: And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, For baldness and for girding with sackcloth.
    - We may understand God to call for times of fasting in two ways:
      - 1) He calls for fasting through circumstances—through His providential arrangement of circumstances—
        - When we see that things are going wrong and that His hand is turned against us—that we are slipping spiritually or that our church is slipping—

- we need to humble ourselves with lamentation before Him.
- The circumstances He has sent demand it.

2) Secondly, He calls for fasting through godly authorities in our lives.

- The elders that God has placed over the local church, the regional church or the larger church can call for fasting and prayer in times of need.
  - A godly civil magistrate can also call upon the nation or the city over which they preside to fasting.
  - And a head of household can call his family to a time of humiliation before God.
- When those in authority over you call you in this way, you ought to submit to them, for God is calling you through them.
  - The early church fasted when they put a man into the ministry.
  - They realised what a serious thing it was.

TRANS> Isaiah's point here is that God had called Judah to afflict themselves before Him for their sins, but they had not done so!

b. Verse 13 shows that instead of weeping and mourning,

- they were feasting! Let me read verse 12 and 13 together:
  - Isa 22:12-13: And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts Called for weeping and for mourning, For baldness and for girding with sackcloth. But instead, joy and gladness, Slaughtering oxen and killing sheep, Eating meat and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"
- How inappropriate for God's covenant people to do the very opposite of what He has called for!
  - Even the Ninevites understood when Jonah had preached to them that their city would be overthrown in forty days that they should afflict themselves with fasting before the Lord...
    - Jonah did not tell them to do it—but they did it because they believed that God was going to do it.
    - And the LORD heard them and relented of the evil that He had pronounced against them!
      - It is not that fasting forces God into something,
        - fasting can be empty as it was the disciples of John in Luke 5,
        - but when it is expressive of a broken and contrite heart that fears the LORD, that will not be despised.
        - The Ninevites saw their danger and they fasted.

- But how sad it is to see God's own covenant people dull and dead to their situation...
  - Nothing is worse than to see children who have grown up in the church cold and dead and indifferent to their spiritual condition—
    - totally insensible of their desperate need of God's grace...
    - going on in their frivolous lives with total indifference about their souls.
  - It is like they have spent all those years under the ministry of God's word hardening themselves to it.
    - They have become totally immune the convicting power of sermons that would break the heart of a pagan.
      - They have become experts at pushing away that which ought to make them weep and lament before the face of God!
      - They have become experts at being indifferent to the very voice of God.
        - It is the worst thing that can ever happen to a soul!

TRANS> Yes my friends, it is no trivial matter to become insensible to the things of God so that you cannot respond to Him!

- You need to see what a serious matter it is!
  - The dreadful consequences of such dullness are described in verse 14.

## **II. God's Word declares plainly that there is no atonement for such sin!**

- Verse 14 says plainly:
  - Isaiah 22:14: Then it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts, "Surely for this iniquity there will be no atonement for you, even to your death," says the Lord GOD of hosts.
- A. No atonement for you!
  - Those are the most dire, desperate words that could be spoken!
    - Do you know what an atonement is?
      - Is it a covering for your sin so that your sin can be pardoned!
      - No atonement means no forgiveness—ever!
  - God is holy.
    - He is entirely pure and separate from sin, hating all that is corrupt.
    - That means that when sinners are brought into His presence,

- He breaks out upon them as a consuming fire, enveloping them in His holy wrath and vengeance so that they are miserable forever and ever.
- They, being found in sin, are totally incompatible with Him and fit only for torment.
  - This is not God's problem, it is His glory and beauty and perfection!
  - We are so familiar with sin that we do not understand the wonderful beauty and perfection of God in His holiness.
- To us sinners, God's holiness is a dreadful thing for us to even think about—much less to come before!
  - Yet, in His amazing love and mercy,
    - our gracious God has provided atonement for sinners through Jesus Christ who became man that He might be a sacrifice for man...
    - and who even allowed Himself to be enveloped in the eternal fire of God's wrath against sin in the place of guilty sinners.
      - He bore the penalty so that we might be pardoned forever who come to Him for salvation!

B. So you see that what we have looked at today is the unpardonable sin!

1. It is the sin of seeing the danger that you are in before God's holy wrath and ignoring it—
  - of being indifferent about it and of denying it!
  - of hearing God's call and refusing to come to Him when you know that He has called you.
2. Jesus accused some of the Jews of this—
  - Jews who knew the Messiah was coming.
    - Jews who saw the miracles that Jesus did and knew He was the one who was sent from heaven, but who wilfully denied Him.
    - They knew that He was the Messiah, but they declared the He did the very works of the Devil!
      - Jesus said that they blasphemed the Holy Spirit who had shown them the truth and that there was no forgiveness for this!
      - To knowing make a final rejection of God's salvation in Christ is to cut yourself off from the only way of pardon and to be left to die in your sin.
  - Once this is done,
    - There is nothing left, as it says in Hebrews 10:26-31

- Heb 10:26-31: For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
3. Don't you see, there is no atonement for those who refuse to turn to God for His grace!
- To see your danger and to hear God's call and to see God's provision in Christ and to deliberately reject it...
    - What is left after that?
      - What is there to save you if you do not avail yourself of His provision, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?
        - Are you going to provide an atonement?
        - Are you going to try to overcome God in the judgement?
        - Are you going to rest in your foolish lies and indifference as some kind of safety net?
    - I tell you, to be without atonement is to be without hope!
      - It is to be left to bear the wrath of God alone!
      - Intolerable!

TRANS> There are many who want to say that the atonement is for everyone...

C. They deny that there is no atonement at all for many people.

- But you see in verse 14 that this is exactly what Isaiah says.
1. The Scriptures consistently teach that Christ died for all the elect, but He did not atone for the sin of any one else.
- If He had, their sins would be fully pardoned.
  - It could not be that Christ should shed His blood to atone for their sins and that their sin should not be atoned!
2. It is true that the scriptures teach that He died for the whole world,
- but that is not say that He died for every person in the world.
    - It is rather to say that He died for people from every nation and tribe and tongue of the world.
    - And so the world will be saved—not every person in the world, but the world that would have otherwise perished.

- And it is also true that he died the church—the whole church—
  - but it is not true that He for every member of the visible church.
- If He had, then every member of the visible church would be saved,
  - but Jesus Himself tells us that there are many in the church who will not be saved...
    - just as Isaiah shows us here in verse 14—there is no atonement for them.
    - Only those members who seeing their need come to Him with true faith are saved.
      - Not those who are cold and indifferent and refuse His call.

TRANS> And now having shown that there is no atonement for those who go on as if they need no repentance—

- celebrating when they are being chastened
- making provision for themselves when they ought to be praying
- and filled with joy and gladness when they ought to be weeping and mourning because of their sin...

### III. Isaiah gives us an example of two individuals within the covenant...

- **Shebna whose behaviour is inappropriate...**
  - **And Eliakim whose behaviour is appropriate.**
- These examples are given to us to show us that there is indeed a distinction between one individual and another within the covenant people.

A. We will begin, as the text does, with Shebna—as an example of inappropriate behaviour in the covenant.

1. In verse 15, the LORD tells Isaiah to go to *this steward*...
  - there is a note of contempt with the word *this*—go to *this steward*...
    - It is like the man who accuses his wife of adultery and says, I found *this* woman...
- a. Shebna, *this steward*, is described as the one who is “over the house”
  - He is a high ranking official within the theocracy...
    - Probably his position as the steward over the house is something like the position that Joseph was given in Egypt when he was given authority to act in behalf of the king.
    - It appears that he may have been responsible for hiring and firing people within the royal house.

- b. Isaiah is told to go to him and ask him a question very much like the question Isaiah asked the covenant people in verse 1...
    - What of you? What's with you? What are you doing?
      - You see that there are two searching questions:
        - "What have you here (as in what is your business here or what are you doing here)?"
        - And "Whom have you here?" as in, who do you think you are?
    - We need to realise that the questions not only pertain to us as the corporate people of God,
      - but also as individuals when we are not serving God in an acceptable manner.
      - There are many leaders in the church and in the civil government to whom this question needs to be asked...
        - What are you doing here?
        - What are you doing in this office here?
  - c. Notice indeed how Isaiah keeps repeating the word *here*.
    - As if to say, "What are you doing in this high ranking position in my kingdom Shebna?
      - What are you doing in this office as a ruler over my people?
      - What are you doing here?
    - And you Christian--
      - What are you doing here as an elder?
      - What are you doing here as a minister in the church of Jesus Christ?
      - What are you doing here as a deacon?
      - What are you doing here as a head of a Christian family?
      - What are you doing here as a child of the covenant?
      - What are you doing here as a daughter of my people?
2. We look and we see that Shebna was not doing what he ought to have been doing.
- a. He was busy making a fancy tomb for himself.
    - a great big expensive monument...
      - and this at a time when the theocracy was in rebellion against God and needed to repent!
    - This man was supposed to be a steward—that is, one who serves—a minister of the people...
      - but he had very little concern for the true spiritual welfare of the people.

- He was only concerned about his own position and honour.
    - He was like the leaders among the Gentiles that we looked at several weeks ago in Luke 22 who are called benefactors,
      - but who are interested in benefiting nobody but themselves!
  - The nation had fallen under God's displeasure and this man is out building a big old tomb for himself!
- b. You see how the Lord declares that He will deal with this "mighty man" as He mockingly calls him...
- In verse 17-19 Isaiah says:
    - Isa 22:17-19: Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, And will surely seize you. He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; There you shall die, and there your glorious chariots Shall be the shame of your master's house. So I will drive you out of your office, And from your position he will pull you down.
- c. Do not suppose that you are secure just because you have a place among God's people.
- God's judgement will come...
    - And Jesus will say to many in that day, "Depart from me, for I never knew you."
    - If you are just messing around and you are not responding to the LORD with genuine faith...
      - If you are just here in body...
        - it doesn't matter what your position is...
        - you will be cast out of His kingdom...
  - He will come to you and He will say to you...
    - What are you doing here?
    - He will say it to ministers and he will say to elders and to fathers and mothers and children who are among His people,
      - but who do not live as His people...
        - who hear His call in their ears to come to Him for life, but who do not ever bother to come.
        - You can have the highest rank in the kingdom and it is no safeguard unless you have genuine faith...
          - You will be seized and tossed away like a ball.
          - Do not be deceived.

TRANS> Ah yes, but there is a better example here too!



B. There is the example of Eliakim!

- an example of a man who has life in God's kingdom.

1. God promises that He will give Shebna's office to Eliakim...

a. He will be given Shebna's place... as it says so graphically in verse 20-21:

- Isa 22:20-21: Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah; I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
- This is very similar to what happened with Judas and Matthias...
  - Judas was removed as a hypocrite from the office of apostle and Matthias took his place.

TRANS> But just having this office is nothing in itself as we have seen with Shebna.

- It is not the possession of the office, but the possession of genuine godliness in the office that matters!

b. And we are told that Eliakim is indeed a very different person in this office than Shebna!

1) Right off the bat, you see that the LORD calls him "my servant!"

- That pretty much says everything!
  - If you are God's servant, it doesn't matter if you are second in rank to the king or a little child in a covenant family...
    - You do what you do for God and His glory.
    - You are there by His grace to serve Him and to honour Him.
      - And that overshadows everything else!

2) You see that the LORD tells us at the end of verse 21 that Eliakim will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

- He will be there to care for the people—
  - to love them and provide for them and lead them into God's ways.
- He will use his office well and,
  - God will use Him in His kingdom to minister to His people.

3) In verse 22, we are told that the LORD will give him authority to receive and exclude people from the house of David.

- He will be responsible for hiring and firing those who serve in the court of the king's household.

- He will be responsible for selecting the king's cabinet and for appointing those who serve to their respective positions.
    - Perhaps it was because of Eliakim that the leaders of David's house were faithful in the time that King Sennacherib came against Jerusalem.
      - They would not surrender, nor would they look for help from another nation.
      - There was a man in charge who was concerned about doing things God's way.
2. And so God promises to make Eliakim secure.
- a. He tells him that he will establish him securely and that many people will depend on him.
    - You see that in verse 23-24:
      - Isa 22:23-24: I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house. They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers.
    - It is a wonderful thing to have a place in God's kingdom,
      - to be established by Him in a calling as a minister or an elder or a deacon or a head of a household...
      - or even as the most lowly servant in the kingdom.
      - To be there to serve Him and to do His business is an inestimable privilege.
  - b. But you must never forget that your place in the kingdom is not the most important thing.
    - In the day of Eliakim,
      - God was going to bring judgement upon His people as a whole and when that judgement fell,
        - even the faithful house of Eliakim would fail.
    - He and his house would be carried away into captivity with the rest of the people...
      - Both the godly and the ungodly would be taken.
      - Look at what it says in verse 25!
        - Isaiah 22:25: 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.'

- Yes, when God judges our land, I may lose my place as a minister and Dave and Kevin as elders and Andy as a Deacon in a particular congregation.
    - And some of you may have your families split up and separated.
      - We do not know all that may happen to us.
    - But you must always remember the thing that matters most is not the place you have in God's kingdom,
      - but rather that your name is written down in heaven.
      - That you are *here* for Jesus Christ—to serve Him.
        - that you are *here* to seek His grace and to live for Him.
        - that you are *here* as one who refuses to be without His grace.
3. So the question that God asked Shebna I ask all of you...
- What are you *here* for?
    - What are you doing *here* in this place—as numbered among God's people?
  - May you all prove to be *here* for Him at the last day!
    - *Here* to have the life that He gives to those who seek Him—
      - the life that responds humbly to His chastisement.
      - the life that prays fervently for His grace.
      - the life that comes to him with a broken and contrite heart.