

October 13, 2020

Today's words of challenge and encouragement!

Often during the course of our daily activities we forget the importance God has in our lives. Consequently, God is relegated to second place in our lives. When this happens we build up idols which become objects of our desire. These idols cause us to turn away from the Lord and come under judgment from God. Read with me now from Zephaniah 2:1-3.

1 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, 2 Before the decree takes effect-- The day passes like the chaff-- Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you,

Before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you. 3 Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger.

In times past when there was difficulty or trouble the alarm was sounded among the people and they would all gather together for mutual support, comfort, and encouragement. In today's scripture Zephaniah is calling us to gather together. We are called to gather together without shame or longing. We are to stand boldly together without fear or trepidation. We are not to be ashamed of who we are and what we are in Jesus Christ. Jesus bluntly tells us in Mark 8:38, "... whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels."

We are called to assemble, now, before it is too late, so that we may seek God with sincerity and with our whole heart. Isaiah the prophet encourages us to "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6). We should seek God before His anger is

manifest to us. John the Baptist said, “the one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on that person” (John 3:36). There will come a time when the call for repentance is past and at that time the misery in this world will be great. You do not have to share in that misery. Rather you can share in the blessings of God through Jesus. Simply believe and accept Jesus as your personal Savior.

Zephaniah asserts that “all the humble of the earth should seek the Lord.” Yet, this is not the end of it. There are many who outwardly appear to be very humble and filled with contrition. However, it is not merely the humble who must seek the Lord. It is all who are humble and have carried out God’s ordinances.

What are God’s ordinances anyway? Jesus summed them up when He said that “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). Every other ordinance and command of God is contained within these two. This is what we must be obedient to.

However, some of you might say, “My Bible doesn’t say to carry out God’s ordinances, Mine says to do justice.” This is even better since “God has told you what is good. God has required that you do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8).

It is when we are busy doing justice and loving kindness that we are able to truly live in humility. It is when we do justice that we are seeking righteousness. Moreover, when we are doing justice and loving kindness and walking humbly with God that our motivations will be

correct. That is we will be seeking God's glory and His righteousness. Our deeds will not be in vain, they will not be empty.

It is those people who do these things whom will find refuge in the Lord. David, the Psalmist writes, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who revere Him, and rescues them." (Psalm 34:7). "The Lord will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and a bulwark" (Psalm 91:4). When we are fully able to do what the Lord God requires of us we are under His Divine protection. Nothing or no one is able to take us out of the hand of Jesus. We are eternally His. Indeed Jesus tells us that when we are obedient that "... not a hair of our heads will perish, that through our endurance we will gain our lives" (Luke 21:18-19).

When we listen to the word of the Lord we shall live securely and we will be at ease from the dread of evil (Proverbs 1:33). We are truly a stubborn people. We prefer to seek our own righteousness and to live in our own arrogance rather than to seek God and His righteousness and to walk humbly with Him. We prefer the praise and flattery of other people over the praise of God. It is our own arrogance and idolatry which will permit the wrath of God to be poured out upon us.

However, it does not have to be this way. Let us seek the Lord and His righteousness and learn to walk humbly with God.

Listen to the warning which is being sounded for you. Our time on earth is growing short. The Lord God Almighty is preparing to send His only begotten Son to come in all His glory and to vanquish all that is evil. Will you be among the vanquished? Or will you be among those who find refuge under the wings of the Lord? Turn to Jesus now and accept the grace which He freely offers you. Let's pray together.

Sovereign Lord and Savior, we thank You for Your grace and mercy. We know that we create a variety of idols that come between us. Please remove the idols from our lives so that we may seek You. Let us find You, gracious God, through Jesus Christ, amen.

Remember, idols come in a variety of ways. Seek God's help to identify them so that you may remove them and be free to worship Jesus.

Until the nets are full