

12-5-2021 Weekly Message

Meditation of the Week: Psalm 91:1-16

Text: Isaiah 1:10-24

Sermon Title: **Worship and praise in vain, and worship service in vain**

God, through the prophet Isaiah, had a plan for God's people to be captivity to Babylon because of their sins and transgressions, so God rebuked them to repent.

" The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." (Isaiah 1:3-4).

The Lord God spoke to the rulers of Israel as the rulers of Sodom, and to the Israelites as the people of Gomorrah, rebuking them to listen to the law of the LORD God.

God gave the same message for them to repent when he rebuked the people of Israel through the prophet Ezekiel:

" Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezekiel 16:48-50)

Whenever they had committed countless sins, they had brought sacrifices to the temple to redeem their sins, but without knowing how to repent, they only treaded on the courts of the temple, thinking that they are pleasing to God, bringing offerings and burning incense in vain, but not knowing what their sins are. they didn't realize it.

They did not know that the gathering of new moons, sabbaths, and assemblies made God unbearable, nor did they realize how evil it is to hold solemn gatherings, the Lord said. They said that they reach out their hands while doing religious practices that God sees as evil, but God is disgusting and covers his eyes. Also, they prayed a lot to show God, but they didn't listen, and as to the reason, he said, "Your hands are full of blood."

Finally, God said to them to show how they are supposed to do:

" Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (Isaiah 1:16-20).

God urged them to repent not only through the prophet Isaiah but also through several prophets, but they did not listen to God, and the kings, priests, and people all together became one and rebelled against their LORD God.

Six hundred years later, God prepared the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ by sending John the Baptist to comfort His people through the prophet Isaiah. But their King, Jesus came to comfort them and restore his kingdom of heaven for them, but they were engrossed in ritual practices and did not receive the God of their Messiah, whom they should worship and serve.

When Jesus saw their ritual practices, he rebuked them saying:

" Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:7-9).

Jesus spoke to a woman in Samaria about worshipping God:

" Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24)

The Lord said that only those who can worship God are those who have received the Holy Ghost by believing in Him through the remission of sins. Also, because Christ who is the truth is with those who have been born again by the Holy Ghost, they can worship God in spirit and truth. But it is in vain for any religious people no matter how much they worship their gods. At the time when Jesus was on earth, no one could worship God. In the day of Pentecost, when God sent His Holy Ghost after He died for the sins of the world and rose on the third day, people were only able to worship God in spirit and in truth.

In the first church that received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, they were able to worship God in spirit and in truth:

" And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:42:47).

Looking at the appearance of the first church of God, only those who have received the Holy Ghost and became Christians could attend the Lord's Supper while breaking bread while worshiping and praising God.

Then, in this age, we need to seriously examine whether the people in the church are truly worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

It is important to know that the word " worship" is testified in the Bible, but the word "service" only appears once. Apostle Paul testified clearly of the reasonable service:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. " (Romans 11:33-12:2)

That's right! Service is not a ritual activity that is held in a certain place, but rather that we are not conformed to this world in our life, and that we present our body completely unto God for him to use us for him as he please. Therefore, gathering at the church building on the first day of the week is to prepare to worship God and serve him in obedience to the Word of God.

However, most churches used to say that this Sunday gathering is the worship service combining worship and service. In other words, worship and service are done together in the church building together. But worshiping God and service are clearly different each other biblically. Will God accept the religious act of sacramenting, singing, worshipping, and praying as we enter the church door after committing all kinds of sins conforming to this world for the whole week? Don't you know that the words of God that rebuked to the people of Israel through the prophet Isaiah are now being poured out on the pastors and members of the corrupted churches in this age? The gatherings of the early church were to worship God, learn the Word of God, fellowship, and serve each other, and they were not doing religious practices that ended with hymns and prayers and a blessing from the pastor like today's churches.

Almost Christian churches have been occupied by the Vatican, the Great Babylon to be one body with them. It is nothing strange for them to be part of WCC, WEA, and NCKK to be harmony with other gods of all other religions. How God can accept their worship and praise? No question about it!

One of the things that pastors often say these days is that their churches shall bring revival when the Sunday worship service is successfully done.. Modern churches believe that the gracious lead of the worship and praise team is the secret to the success of worship service, and preachers prepare sermons that move people's humanity by mixing leaven rather than the pure Word of God. In other words, if they succeed in religious activities, many people will come and they will become a MEGA church. They are even deceiving people by saying that they are supposed to manage two kinds of service that are traditional service and open service. It is the time for them remember that God rebuked the Israelites through prophet Isaiah:

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. " (Isaiah 1:15).

God wants to be worshipped by the children of God born again of the Holy Ghost. And God also wants the service from the Christians who deny themselves, and take up their own cross to follow the Lord.

Amen! Hallelujah!