

Clint Bechdolt sermon at Walla Walla convention June 2023

Jun 5

WINGS Note: It is positive to read of a worker publicly recognising the problems that need to be confronted and resolved. The fellowship is not OK right now.

Have you ever had a friend that you really, really wanted to help, but you couldn't? Sometimes there are just no words, nothing you can do. We know Jesus can help. I don't know how, I can't. My friend suffered horribly. One person gave my friend what I thought was good advice... "You've spent too much time pretending to be okay. You just need to be what you are."

It's possible to pretend that we're okay, when things aren't okay. We become like the Pharisees, like hypocrites. The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy. We need to be real. Be honest. Don't pretend like everything's okay when it's not.

Isaiah 1. There are times in the bible when individuals sinned and got off track. And there are times when God's people as a whole got off track. This was one of those times. It was very dark. I feel like we're in one of those times right now. We can't just pretend everything's okay. I'm going to read most of the chapter, starting in vs. 2 (read through to vs. 21)

vs. 14 Even their whole structure of worship and sacrifice became an abomination to God. I feel like this is the state of the kingdom right now. Pretending to be okay when we're not okay. Our prayers, our testimonies, our sacrifices could be an abomination to God. So what do you do about it? vs. 16 The evil has to be dealt with.

Judges 19. I apologize in advance that this isn't a positive message, or if I'm off base at all. We workers try to speak what's from the heart of God, but I'm sometimes not sure what percentage actually is. But we try.

In Judges 19, there was a Levite who had a concubine. I don't pretend to understand why God's people would ever have a concubine, but he did. His concubine ran away to her father's house. This Levite went to go get her back. The father plead that they'd stay another day, so they did. And then he asked if she could stay another day, and so they did. And then asked them to stay another day, and so on. I think it was the 6th day they finally left to go back home. I wonder if this father had some intuition that she wasn't safe, and he wanted to protect her by keeping her there. But finally he let them go. They travelled, and needed

to stop for the night, but they didn't want to stop in the city of the Jebusites (vs. 11), so they kept travelling until they got to Gibeah, which was a city of the tribe of Benjamin, their brethren. I think they didn't want to stop in the foreign land because they thought it wouldn't be safe... that's one thing, there's certain things we expect of the world, or are cautious about, because it's the world. But when we're with those we trust, we let our guard down. Because we expect to be able to trust them. Someone invited them to stay in their house, but then some men came and wanted to abuse him. I'm not sure why, but he gave them his concubine instead. And then they abused her all night. And then after all that, he said to her "get up, get up", as if she could after all of that. Is that what we say to a victim? "Get up, get up"? She died, and he cut up her body into twelve pieces and sent a piece to each of the tribes of Israel.

And then in vs. 30 it says "Consider it, take advice, and speak your minds". That's what we need to do... "consider it, take advice, and speak your minds". Then there was an uprising. Vs. 2 of the next chapter says there were 400,000 men that came up. It wasn't an uprising of rebellion, but an uprising of righteousness. They were hurting and sad. They were wanting to take action. They didn't go with a wicked motive, but with a good and righteous motive.

Going forward, we need to live in reality. This has been my reality the last little while, and my friend's reality. God lives in reality. It's not all blessing and rainbows and sunshine. God lives in reality and we want to be where He is. I wish I could skip to Isaiah 40 where he says "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people", but we're not there yet. We need to be honest about where we're at.