

CALLED TO THE COURT

Friday, April 13

Reading: Psalm 50

Psalm 50:3 *Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.*

4 *He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: 5 "Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." 6 And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. 7 "Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel: I am God, your God.*

There are many reality court shows on TV today. But I remember the original court TV program that started it all - The People's Court with Judge Wapner which began in 1981. The opening went like this:

"What you are witnessing is real. The participants are not actors. They are actual litigants with a case pending in a California municipal court. Both parties have agreed to dismiss their court cases and have their disputes settled here, in our forum: The People's Court."

In Psalm 50, God is bringing His people to court. And it is not Small Claims Court! The Lord stands as Witness, Judge, and Jury against them. He begins His case, not with a gavel, but with the revelation of His glory and the proclamation that He is the God of justice and righteousness (50:1-6).

His first charge against His people is concerning SUPERFICIAL WORSHIP (50:7-15). He has no issue with the sacrifices and offerings they are bringing. His problem is with their heart attitude. They are going through the outward motions but there is no inward devotion. They feel that in bringing sacrifices to God they are actually doing Him a favor. They believe that this outward show of worship somehow puts God in their debt so that He owes them a better life. God reminds them that the sacrifices they bring already belong to Him. He has no need of their offerings. Their purpose was to bring His people into a heart attitude of worship - thanking God for His blessings and calling on Him in their troubles. Worship that does not honor God from the inside out is not worship at all.

God's second charge is concerning HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP (50:16-22). Many were coming to worship, saying and doing all the right things, but there was no inward change. In their everyday life they "hate [God's] instruction and cast [God's] words behind [them]." They indulge in theft, adultery, gossip, and slander. They have a small view of God because "you thought I was exactly like you!" They think that God's silence means they are getting away with their "double lifestyle." God warns them that judgment is coming and there will be none to rescue them.

Christ took that terrible judgment for us! He was torn to pieces (50:22) - scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed, speared. Because of this, believers need to live by a higher standard - God's standard. We should respond with a life of gratitude that honors God and reveals His salvation to the world (50:23). No one who has been saved by grace can help but live a changed life full of love for God and others.

If God were to take you to court, would He have evidence to convict you or praise for your faithfulness?

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: Judges 17-19; John 7