

Friday, March 8, 2019

Trusting

Isaiah 2-3

Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?

Isaiah 2:22

The day of the LORD is coming. The LORD Almighty has a day in store (2:12). God is supreme over all things for all time. He is the Majestic Ruler of all there is. Yet mankind refuses to trust Him! Isaiah speaks of the Day that is coming and calls on the people of Israel to stop trusting in man and in the idols that man has formed and shaped. God brought His people out of Egypt so that they could worship Him and He brought them to the land of Canaan with the command to remove all false gods so they would not be led astray. But they were swept away by the worship of man and what man had made. Over and over in the Bible I see God speaking this same command. Stop trusting in that which is untrustworthy. Yet I see all too often that I trust what I physically see—even when I know it will fail—rather than to trust in God. It causes disappointment in my life and in others when I trust them to do that which only God can do.

Dear God, I trust You. I really do. Yet so many times I find myself swept away into placing my trust in other things. Then I get worried and frustrated and distanced from You. Please remind me often of Your trustworthiness. Wash over me with confidence in You alone. Amen.

March 4 - 9, 2019

Saturday, March 9, 2019

Bad Fruit

Isaiah 4-5

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. Isaiah 5:1-2

The prophet presents truth in a song. The song of the vineyard is a striking prophetic word against the sins that brought the judgment. These sins are the bad fruit that God sees and they are described in the six "woes" of the song. As I see this bad fruit, I need to carefully expose myself before the Lord, so that I can rid myself of any fruit that is displeasing to Him. I consider this passage alongside John 15:1-8. Is there any way in which I am yielding bad fruit? **Coveting** (5:8-10): Do I have a lust for more? **Addictions** (5:11-17): Are the actions and thoughts of my life controlled by anything other than the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:18)? **Lack of reverence** (5:18-19): Do I take a cavalier attitude in my understanding of God and His truth, using empty words? **Deception** (5:20): Is there any way in which I have convinced myself that known sin is actually acceptable to God? **Pride** (5:21): What are the ways in which I am totally impressed with myself? **Merciless** (5:22-25): Are there any ways in which I am self-focused and focused so much on my own entertainment that I do not even notice the cries of the hurting? Six woes have been pronounced on the nation for these actions and thoughts. If I am truthful, I see the areas in which I need to repent.

Dear God, these woes hit home. I long to abide in Jesus so that my fruit will be lush and good, but You know the bad fruit of my sinful nature. Prune me, please, so that I may rid myself of this bad fruit in my life. I long for others to see You in me. Amen.



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, March 4, 2019

Arouse

Song of Songs 2-3

Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

Song of Songs 2:7 and 3:5

The chapters read today describe the courtship of the lovers. The beloved does not yet realize that her lover is the king! The second chapter describes an encounter in which she does not go to her lover even though he beckons her to come. Her distress over that causes her to dream of searching for him as the third chapter opens. She is searching for her lover confident that they belong to each other. Eventually the third chapter ends with her discovering that her lover is Solomon. The shepherd is the king and the marriage will come. During the time of courting, the beloved is very careful to issue a charge to all who will hear. Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires. This is a charge to remain pure until marriage. Three times in this song about love, sex and marriage this charge will be given (see also 8:4). This is a clear statement against pre-marital sex. The beloved has great desire for her lover and yet she is open to say that she will wait and that all should follow that example. The gift of arousal belongs in the marriage bed alone. Even as the betrothal has been made, the gift should not be opened until the proper time. Am I as bold as the beloved? Am I bold to charge people to remain sexually pure? I realize that in the world in which I live, this is not a popular message and that can cause me to be less than courageous. Am I keeping myself sexually pure? Are there any ways that I am allowing sex that is not honoring to God to be entertainment for me? Movies? TV shows?

Dear God, I am not as courageous with this as I should be. I need Your help in this Lord. I also need Your help to keep my eyes and my heart from straying. Help me not arouse or awaken passions in my life inappropriately. I need Your help with that. The pull away from You is great. Amen.

Tuesday, March 5 2019

Aware

Song of Songs 4-5

*All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.
My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.*

Song of Songs 4:7
Song of Songs 5:10

The marriage is consummated and the song has reached a crescendo. These lovers come from a pastoral culture and so the song that Solomon records reflects that beauty in the metaphors that are used. While they may not exactly translate into my understanding today, there is no doubt that these chapters are recording something very special. The beloved again falls into a dream but during that dream reveals how she perceives her lover. Both the beloved and the lover are aware and celebrate the beauty of the other. The words spoken are uplifting and encouraging. I wonder what marriages would be like if men and women spoke these kinds of words over each other each day! Life gets busy and we do not take the time to speak these words of affirmation each day—and then we get to busy to even notice it is true of the one we love. I must look at this passage and ask God to keep me aware and to remind me to speak words like this over my wife each day because it is true of her.

Dear God, thank You for my amazing and beautiful wife. She is such an incredible gift from You. Forgive me for the times I have gotten busy and lost this awareness. Thank You for all the times I have not. Please do not let one day go by that I do not tell her how grateful I am for who she is and may not one day go by that I do not thank You for her. Amen.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Given Over

Song of Songs 6-7

I am my lover's and my lover is mine.

Song of Songs 6:3

Here is a statement of great power within a marriage relationship. I am given over to my spouse and she is given over to me. We are together as one in what we do and what we pursue. The following chapters will describe that both are significant. Of course, Solomon is king, but the beloved is considered formidable as well (6:4 literally, having an army). Within this I see that God brings people together not to battle each other, but rather brings a man and woman together to battle for Him. As the two unite together with the resources entrusted to them they can more effectively attack the evil one. Unfortunately, many times the battle comes against each other instead. There is another thought within this verse as it relates to Jesus and me. I am His and He is mine. This comes by His choice and my submitted will, as I give myself fully to Him. I abide in Him as He abides in me (John 15).

Dear God, how I long to be fully Yours. Help me to abide in You as You abide in me. Help me humbly realize what it means to be able to say that You are mine. It is not that I can somehow control You. Rather it is that I can be held by You. Thank You. Amen

Thursday, March 7, 2019

Rebellion, Religion, and Repentance

Song of Songs 8-Isaiah 1

Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah begins his prophecy with a bold declaration against the religious people of Israel. The name Isaiah means salvation of the Lord and the book which bears his name has salvation as its key theme. For one to grasp the power of salvation, one must be brought to understand the need for salvation. For example, if I do not realize I am drowning, I will not feel the need for a lifeguard to rescue me. The people Isaiah was prophesying to did not realize the ways that they were rebelling against God, so for Isaiah to compare them to Sodom and Gomorrah would be shocking. And if all Isaiah did was accuse, there would be no hope. But Isaiah is not merely a prophet. In many ways, as the book is read, it will be revealed that he is an evangelist. He will be used by God to declare the gospel. It is possible for the sins of men to be forgiven. There will come a suffering servant—Messiah. He will make it possible for my sins that are many and are like scarlet to become white as snow. It is possible through Christ for me to be pure before God. Not because of my pursuit of good works, but because of His sacrifice for me. I deserve the same fate as those in Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet, my God has called me to come and reason with Him. Amazing.

O LORD, I fall before You in repentance. I agree that many times my worship is in vain and my lips are speaking from a distant heart. I have rebellion in my heart and yet, I have a deep love for You as well. Wash me Lord! Cleanse me! Forgive me. Amen.