

“God Confronts” - Isaiah 1:10-20

Ask - “Have you ever tried to do something, but your heart wasn’t in it? Share your story.”

Background - Isaiah lived in and prophesied primarily to the southern kingdom of Judah. The book of Isaiah was written between 739 and 681 BC. For perspective, the northern kingdom of Israel officially fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC, during Isaiah’s lifetime and ministry. Isaiah tried to warn Judah that they would suffer the same fate if their behavior didn’t change.

“Empty Religion” - Isaiah 1:10-12

(v10) What was the reputation of those from Sodom and Gomorrah? Why would Isaiah liken the leaders and people of Judah to those of Sodom and Gomorrah?

(v11) Had the people of Judah abandoned their religious practices? Was the LORD satisfied with their religious activity? Read and discuss Matthew 15:8.

(v12) Stated another way... Who is requiring you to offer this insincere worship and make all of these meaningless sacrifices? Is it of God or man? Explain.

THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH WERE GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF RELIGION. THEY WERE PRACTICING THE SACRIFICES AND BURNT OFFERINGS, BUT THEIR HEARTS WERE FAR FROM GOD.

“Fed Up” - Isaiah 1:13-15

(v13) What did God tell the people of Judah to do as it pertained to their religious practices and traditions? How might religious activity erode spiritual authenticity?

(v14) How did God feel about the shallow religious practices of the people? In what sense had He grown weary, seeing that He is all-powerful?

(v15) What was the LORD’s disciplinary response to Judah’s lukewarm faith? What was His rationale for invoking this consequence?

INSINCERE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IS A BURDEN TO THE LORD. HE HATES IT. THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH WERE GUILTY AND UNREPENTANT, AND GOD REFUSED TO HEAR THEIR PRAYERS.

“Make a Change” - Isaiah 1:16-20

(v16-17) List and discuss each of the several things that God instructed the people of Judah to do in these 2 verses.

(v18) Has God ever asked you to stop and reflect for a moment on Him? What did the LORD have the power to do for the wayward people of Judah?

(v19-20) What did God predict would happen if they obeyed Him? What would happen if they continued to rebel?

THOUGH WHAT THEY WERE DOING UPSET HIM, GOD STILL LOVED THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH AND DESIRED THAT THEY CONSENT TO HIS WILL AND RETURN TO HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

Application - There is nothing inherently wrong with religious traditions, trappings, and rituals, so long as they are carried out with sincerity of heart and genuineness. But when they become nothing more than rote, disingenuous activities they dishonor and sicken the LORD. How would you evaluate your personal religious behaviors?