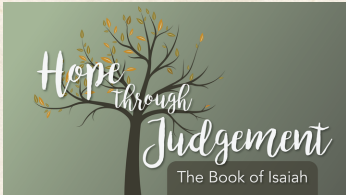


Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Quitting our Perennial Problems

Speaker:

Doug Plank

Date:

May 23, 2021

Scriptures:

Isaiah 46-47

Theme: Quit idolatry and worldliness and take your stand in God's righteous words.

Introduction: Due to our fallen condition, we have two perennial problems (not occasional or "once and done", but ongoing): idolatry and worldliness. In chapters 46 and 47, God again addresses these two evils and calls his people to a faithful and repentant response.

1. Quit Idolatry (46)

God addresses his people in chapter 46 by calling them to consider the outcome of the Babylonian false gods, Bel (Baal) and Nebo (Baal's son). They are stupid, lifeless things that need to be carried and become a burden, particularly as Babylon will face the invasion of Cyrus, the "bird of prey from the east" (46:11) and the Babylonians will need to load up their idols on livestock with all their other baggage as they flee their captured city. *Idols weigh down and make weary. The True God carries and saves (46:3-4).* One primary way that we can spot possible idolatry in our own lives is the presence of weight and weariness and the lack of joy in Christ. Due to idolatry being one of our perennial problems, we must always be engaged in warring against the tendencies of our nature, which John Calvin described as "idol factories".

2. Quit Worldliness (47)

In chapter 47, God addresses Babylon and promises that all that he said that he would do will indeed occur, and they would face judgment by the hand of Cyrus. The Babylonian way of thinking was full of pride and self-sufficiency (v. 8), but God would see to their pride and self-sufficiency backfiring. Babylon's judgment was not the only thing on God's agenda in these prophecies by Isaiah: Israel, exiled in Babylon had sadly taken on more Babylonian ways of thinking, values and priorities than anyone would want to admit. With God's thunderclap over Babylon and this world concerning judgment comes a wakeup call for God's people to address their own chumminess with the world and taking on too much of the world's values and priorities. Our perennial problem with worldliness is not OUT there (in the world, worldly things), but INSIDE of us in the sinful attraction to love the world and to put our hope in this world. Therefore, we need to constantly address our own ways of thinking and priorities. We need to sit under the scrutiny of God's Word so that we can have worldly/Babylonian ideals and desires dealt with and deserted.

Questions:

1. Why are idolatry and worldliness of such vital importance for us to address, constantly?
2. Have you ever experienced the sense of weight and weariness that Doug described as symptoms of idolatry, due to idols weighing down while the True God carries us?
3. Read 46:3-4. What hope and encouragement do these verses inspire as we take up arms against our idols?
4. What does it mean to be "worldly"? What are some symptoms that show worldliness?
5. How do we help one another assess whether our ways of thinking and approaches to life's problems are worldly?
6. How do we go about finding a change of heart and mind with idolatry and worldliness?