

Introduction: These words were written during the good and profitable reign of Josiah, the last of the good kings of Judah. Although Josiah was a good king and got rid of the most gross forms of idolatry and kept a notable passover, yet the hearts of the people were very far from the Lord and idolatry was everywhere. From the information gained from Jeremiah's words that we read from chapter three, we find that these sins were everywhere in Judah.

- a. Judah followed Israel in worshipping idols—spiritual fornication—under every green tree and upon every high mountain.
- b. Judah didn't take warning from the removal of Israel and the destruction of her cities.
- c. Judah pretended to repent—in falsehood. False tears and pretended reformation.
- d. A most gracious invitation is given to Israel: vs. 12-17 It is interesting that the Gospel first was preached in what had been the nation of Israel, by John the Baptist and Christ and his apostles.
- e. Judah would one day follow Israel and be united into one people vs. 18-21

I. Breaking of the Hard and Thorny Ground VS. 3. Jesus told of the folly of sowing on hard ground and among the thorns.

A. A hard heart and a worldly heart cannot bear the fruit of faith. The work of the spirit is to break up the hard heart and root out the worldly lusts, so we do not pant after them. As Paul wrote to the Colossians: 5 ¶ Mortify therefore your members which are upon

the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

- B. Idolatry is the root. It is called spiritual fornication and spiritual adultery for a reason, for idolatry removes our affections and love for God and fastens them on an idol.
- C. Idolatry also hardens the heart against the truth. It is lifted up with pride, for it follows the wickedness of the devil. It also shows hatred for the truth and those who speak the truth.
- D. Hardness, pride, hatred, idolatry. Worldly desires; This is the wickedness that brings down the wrath of God, for He does not see the love and affection for Him and His Son that they so rightly deserve.
- E. This is covered over with hypocrisy, or false pretenses and guile, as we saw last week, for we cover ourselves with fig leaves and hope they will be sufficient. Sin of the Pharisees: made white the outside of the cup; Sin of Ananias and Sapphira: pretended to be wholly committed.

II. The Purification of the Heart. The cure begins.

- A. For Israel, understanding circumcision. The purification of the heart. Vs. 1, 4
- B. For us, it means understanding baptism. 4:14 Washing of water by the word.
 - 1. Titus 2: 11 ¶ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and

godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15 ¶ These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

2. Also: Colossians 2: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 ¶ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

C. This is a purification, both in the Old and the New Testaments, that only Christ can do. Only Christ could circumcise the heart; and only Christ can baptize with the Holy Ghost.

III. Responding in the Spirit,

A. We not only seek purification, but we affirm the covenant: 4:2

1. Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God. God lives.
2. In truth. Lies are dead things for dead men in dead religions who take part in the second death.
3. In righteousness: There is no righteousness for you and for me except imputed righteousness
4. This shall be preached to the whole world, beginning at Pentecost, for the Spirit is the blessing of Abraham that was poured out because of the blood of the Cross of Christ.

B. This brings us to our Text, from which we get the title for our message:

1. 2 Corinthians 1: 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.
2. We have a sealing and an earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. So that we might respond to His call.
 - a. Both the flesh and the Spirit respond to the call.
 - b. Walk in the Spirit. He is given to you so you may respond to the call of God.
3. It is through this earnest and seal that we learn to lean on Him by faith.
4. And in leaning, we STAND.

Conclusion and Application. “But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.” (Jer 3:19 AV)

Ps 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

Ps 63:1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Amen and Amen.