

**Sermon Intro:** The god we like to entertain in our minds today is pliable. He's like a sleep-number mattress – all you have to do is adjust the dial and he becomes as soft or firm as you like. Or better yet, He's like a memory foam mattress – he conforms to your shape to make you more comfortable. And the god that comes naturally to the modern mind is also pretty happy to be worshipped in just about any way we like. In fact, He'd be glad to be acknowledged at all these days. After all, he can't afford to be too demanding in the age of modern science and progress...right? To change the metaphor, it's not really a god market anymore. It's a worshippers' market. God's stock seems to have plummeted in the modern era, and so modern man feels that he is in the driver's seat, and that God will accept any reasonable offer from us, even if it's far less than His asking price. We offer him as little commitment as we think he might accept, so that we can move in to a roomy, comfortable relationship with him where we can enjoy all the amenities with as little cost and maintenance as possible. And of course, he will have to pay all the closing costs. Sure, we'll make a semi-legitimate offer, but we're not going to give up too much of our sin. After all, if we're going to make an offer on a mansion in the sky, we don't want to break the bank. It's a bear market for spiritual stocks, and the savvy spiritual investor knows that God should be happy to get anything at all from us. In fact, we assume that He'd be a fool to refuse any offer of devotion.

But what if we're wrong? Would God really reject my worship, especially during what seems like a religious recession? Does God really expect our obedience so much that he'll reject our worship without it? And how much obedience does he expect? As we start our series in Isaiah this morning, we'll see that the true and living God expects our obedience to what He has revealed to us in His word. We'll see that He thinks we have rebelled against His authority, and our rebellion is tragic, hypocritical, and deserves God's judgment. The God preached by the prophets is not even close to being indifferent about His worship. Isaiah sees a bracing vision of God's holiness and sovereignty. And Isaiah sees that Israel has totally misread the signs of the religious economy. God's stock never goes down. He is never in a position of weakness. And we'll see that we ourselves have also misread the signs of today's spiritual economy. We're in no position to bargain with God. We are in the position of rebellious sons, and our rebellion is tragic, hypocritical, and culpable. Let's stand together to honor the public reading of God's word as I read Isa 1:1-31.

**Series Intro:** Isaiah says in verse 1 that he saw his vision in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. That means that he preached from around 740BC to as late as 680BC. He probably lived in Jerusalem, since king Hezekiah confides in him in chapter 37. On the world stage, Isaiah's early ministry coincided with a time of peace when the dominant world power was Assyria, located in modern day Iraq. In Uzziah's day, Assyria was preoccupied with threats from the kingdom of Urartu in the north, near eastern Turkey and Azerbaijan, and the Assyrian rulers of that period were unable to expand their geographic borders. That led to a 50 year reprieve that allowed Judah to flourish in prosperity, and the sin that comes with it. The money-makers were the trade routes that passed from Egypt through Judah and Israel and up into Assyria. But when Tiglath-Pileser took the throne in Assyria, Assyrian expansionism quickly resumed, and they were licking their chops to expand into Israel and Judah to control those lucrative trade routes. That's why, in Isa 7, Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel come and attack Judah. They want to force Judah into a multi-national alliance to resist Assyrian expansionism. And it's why, in Isa 36, in Hezekiah's time, Sennacherib king of Assyria sends his army to siege Jerusalem. They want the trade routes. And so a major theme in Isaiah is trusting obedience to God. Isaiah hates the fact that the Judean kings want to rely on political alliances, either with Egypt to resist Assyria, or with Assyria itself to get on Assyria's good side. And in Isaiah 1, it's clear that none of these alliances are pleasing God, and none of them are working. And it's not just that God opposed Judah's political pragmatism and trust in men. It's that God disapproved of the idolatry involved in those political alliances, because it was politically correct for a smaller nation to respect the gods of a greater nation that they relied on for protection. So that's the world we're entering in Isaiah 1, and it speaks just as clearly to our world today, as we think first now about the tragedy of our rebellion (J. Bright, *History of Israel*, 255-298).

## 1. THE TRAGEDY OF OUR REBELLION (ISA 1:1-9)

**Stupidity (vv.2-4).** This tragedy of our rebellion operates on multiple levels. One is the level of stupidity. Our rebellion is senseless. In vv.2-4, Heaven and earth are called as witnesses to the legal prosecution of Israel. God reared Israel as his sons, yet Israel rebelled against Him, totally contrary to not only to reason but to nature. A dumb ox knows its owner. An unreasoning donkey knows where his master wants him to sleep. Brute beasts know how to behave better than Israel. In v.4 God even calls Israel “offspring of evil doers” – it’s like God is disowning them. “*They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.*” It’s not just what they’re doing; it’s who they’re doing it to. It’d be bad enough if they were to forsake a good earthly father. But they’re despising the Holy One of Israel. And so in v.5 the question is “why?” What on earth could make you want to forsake such a powerful, redeeming, good, holy, saving God as this? And that question all the more urgent when you look at the stubbornness of their sin.

**Stubbornness (v.5a).** *Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel?* Israel is facing dire social and political consequences for her sin. Yet still, the text says, she continues. Why? Is your rebellion working for you? Look at what your rebellion against Me is doing to you, God says. And isn’t this true of us? It’s not just that we’re stupid in our sin. We’re stubborn. We keep doing it. And it makes us sick.

**Sickness (vv.5-6).** Our sin corrupts and ruins us, and it does this **holistically**. Look there in vv.5-6. “*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds.*” This is a snapshot of Israel’s spiritual state. The souls of the people were filled with open sores and raw wounds. This is what sin does to us. And sin is no caretaker. It wounds and cuts and bruises and diseases us, yet it never intends to treat its devastating effects. And apparently the leaders were doing nothing about the sin of the people. They weren’t applying the salve of gospel rebuke, correction, exhortation, and training (Jer 8:22). The leaders, of all people, should have been pointing out the sins, pointing out the sickness, and applying the gospel of repentance for forgiveness to the wound. They should have set the bone with the splint of gospel repentance. But as we’ll see, they were the ones leading the sin parade; at this time in the history of God’s people, the consequences were national.

**Ruin (vv.7-9).** Isaiah is telling Israel in vv.7-9 that they are enduring God’s covenant curses for rebellion. In **Dt 28:51** God had promised that if Israel disobeyed his law, God would send a great nation against them, a “*hard-faced nation [who would] eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it shall also not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your hearts or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land.*” And here they are, the Assyrians, coming as God’s instruments to make good on God’s threats. God is faithful to make good not only on his promises, but on His threats as well. In v.8, “*a lodge in a cucumber field*” is “a shaky structure for the night guard in a field.” It’d be like a little shanty, a shack to escape the rain or sun (cf 24:20) That’s what the people of Israel had become – a shaky little shack ready to blow over at the first strong wind. And what might be worse, they had become like a city under siege – eating and drinking unspeakable things, suffering unspeakable loss. It’s a total tragedy.

**Remnant (v.9).** But even in the tragedy, there’s mercy. The tragedy of Israel’s rebellion is that the judgment of Jerusalem’s siege by Assyria left only a remnant behind. The mercy is that there was any remnant at all. The Lord could have totally decimated Jerusalem and wiped out the entire population, just like He did at Sodom. But He didn’t do that in Jerusalem. He left a few survivors. Isaiah will come back to this idea of the remnant in chapters 10 and 11 (Isa 10:19-22; 11:11, 16; 17:3, 6; 37:31; 49:21). The Apostle Paul also comes back to it by quoting Isa 1:9 in Romans 9:27. Please turn with me to Romans 9. In Romans 9, Paul is making the case that not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel (9:6). It’s only the children of the promise, not the children of the flesh, who are heirs of the promise. So he mentions Isaac rather than Ishmael as the heir of the promise, even though Ishmael was in Abraham’s family. Paul then distinguishes further between Jacob and

Esau, drawing attention to God's sovereign election and gracious choice, even within the line of Isaac. Then Paul goes on in Rom 9:22 to say *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory – even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?*" The vessels of wrath, in context, are the unbelieving Jews – those represented by Ishmael, Esau, and the rest of ethnic Israel that was not spiritual Israel. The vessels of mercy, then, are those who are called in Christ both from the Jews and the Gentiles.

Paul then goes on in **Rom 9:25** to quote Hos 2 and 1. Now, the verses he quotes "*Those who were not my people I will call my people...*" were originally addressed to rejected Israel. But Paul uses them here to prove that God is taking vessels of mercy from among the GENTILES. Now that is significant, because it reveals Paul's assumption that the restoration of Israel happens in the church – that the Gentiles are part of true Israel (Moo, Romans, 613). It's not until **Rom 9:27** that Paul quotes Isa 10 and Isa 1:9 to prove that God has taken vessels of mercy from among the JEWS as well. But by quoting Isa 1:9, Paul is explaining why there is only a relatively small number of believing Jews at the present time. The number of Jews is small because that's what Isaiah predicted. There would have been no Jews at all, but because of God's mercy, there is a little remnant, a seed or an offspring. Then in Rom 9:30 Paul goes on to explain why this is. Even though the Gentiles didn't have the law, they attain righteousness because they pursue it by faith. Yet the Jews, who had the law, don't (by and large) attain righteousness because they pursued it by works. Paul then, uses Isa 1:9 to point out both the **tragedy** and **mercy** of God's judgment – severity in destruction, but mercy in leaving a remnant. What all this means is that God's promises in the OT were not for all Israel without exception, repentant or not. They were intended for the vessels of mercy, which God is now taking from both Jew and Gentile. And Paul wants his readers to go away wondering what is more amazing, that God has taken vessels of mercy from among the Gentiles, or that he has done so from among the Jews? because clearly, neither one of them had their foot in the door based on works. (Moo, 609-616; Murray, 41; Schrenk, *TDNT* IV, 210; cf. Acts 15:17).

## 2. THE HYPOCRISY OF OUR REBELLION (ISA 1:10-20)

**God rejects hypocritical worship (1:10-15).** Verse 9 ends with the reflection that Jerusalem barely avoided Sodom's fate. But in v.10 Isaiah says that with the way Jerusalem was acting, they might as well have been Sodomites, because he calls them Sodom and Gomorrah. They are just as bad as the Sodomites. Oh, they're impeccable at keeping up religious appearances. They bring all the right offerings. Public worship is thriving in Israel in Isaiah's day. The Temple is bustling; but God considers it irrelevant and meaningless. "*What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?*" What is this to me? This is nothing to me. I've had enough," God says in v.11. And in v.12, he tells them that this is not the kind of worship he commanded. Their sin is so putrid that it overpowers the incense of their worship. God would rather them just close it down altogether. Look there in v.13. "*Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates.*" It's like in **Mal 1:10** where God says "*Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain!*" Just shut it down. Now why does God hate this worship? Verse 15 "*your hands are full of blood.*" V.16 *their deeds are evil.* V.17 *They oppress the weak, they refuse justice to the fatherless and the widow.* Yet they're coming into his presence with their lip service, with their self-righteous sacrifices. God hates that kind of worship. He can't stand sin and the solemn assembly.

Now notice what this says about human nature. We rebel, but we don't want to be known by others as rebels, so we still come to church. We want to be known as religious and spiritual and moral; we just don't want to be that kind of person. God is not interested in it when we use church to simply keep up appearances. God hates it when we sin all week and then come to church singing his songs and hearing his word and acting like we're doing our good deed serving the church (cf. Ps 51:16; 1Sam 15:22; Ps 50:16). Maintaining public worship is important, and public worship thrives in America today. But if that public worship isn't happening in a context of personal obedience, then God considers it a trampling of His courts, no matter how moved you are

by the songs, no matter how much you like listening to sermons. And notice, God says these things even about formal worship that is done according to His command. They were bringing all the right sacrifices, they were celebrating all the right feasts at all the right times. But it was vain, God says in v.13. Church, we can sing all the right songs, and read all the right Scriptures, and pray all the right prayers, and preach all the right texts, and God could hate every minute of it if we act like we can sin with impunity during the week. And notice, many of the sins listed in these verses are sins of omission. They are not seeking justice. They are not correcting oppression. They're not bringing justice to the fatherless. They're not caring for the widow. Rebellion isn't just doing what we ought not do. It's not doing what we ought to do. We cannot rebel against God all week, think nothing of His word from Monday to Saturday, enjoy our private worlds of abundance, worship family and money and influence just like the rest of our culture, and then come to church thinking we're doing God a favor. Hypocritical worship nauseates God. You cannot have a small, self-centered heart and expect God to be pleased with your worship, because God does not have a small heart. God has a big heart for the weak. And we were the weak. We were the fatherless. We were the widow; and God rescued us, took us in, adopted us, fed us, healed us, clothed us. It's because God is that kind of God, to us, that He is not pleased if we try to worship Him without being that kind of people to others. So he calls us to repent of our hypocritical worship.

**God calls us to repent of our hypocritical worship (1:16-20).** I want you to notice the commands in vv.16-17. "*Wash...make...remove...cease...learn...seek...correct...bring justice...plead....*" Every one of those words is an imperative. Repentance is a requirement. God commands it. And look at the aspects of repentance. First, there's a washing or cleansing, a ceasing from sin. That's the negative part. We quit wallowing and we start washing. But that's just the beginning of repentance. We don't just stop sinning and then become morally inert or neutral. Nor do we stop sinning and then immediately know exactly what to do. We have to "*learn to do good.*" There's a learning curve when we repent. What seems right to us is not what's right to God, so we have to un-learn what we thought was good, and learn from Scripture what God wants from us. And once we've learned, we then replace our sin with righteousness and obedience. We seek justice and correct oppression and bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow's cause. In other words, we love our neighbor as ourselves. We treat others, especially weaker others, in ways we'd want to be treated if we were them.... Now notice how similar that pattern of repentance is to what we find in Eph 4:17-24. *Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.* That's repentance – not just behavior modification, but mind renewal and the reception of a whole new self, renewed in God's image from the inside out, by the work of Christ and the indwelling of His Spirit.

**God is Willing to Forgive.** Back in Isa 1, God has been saying some really hard things. He has compared his people, unfavorably, to brute beasts. He has accused them of rebellion against his love. He has called them Sodom. He has considered their worship irrelevant and repugnant. He's even said he won't listen to their prayers. So when we get to v.18, we're almost surprised to see God inviting them "*Come now, let us reason together, says the lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*" Whoa! Where did the judgmental God go, and when did the merciful God get here? Is this God schizophrenic? How can he just turn on a dime like that? Well, we should consider that it's not really a turn at all. He is being Himself all the way through, because He is, as Isaiah so often calls Him, not just the Holy One; He is *the Holy One of Israel*. God is holy – He brooks no rival, He excuses no sin, and He will not leave the guilty unpunished. Yet He has covenanted with His people to be their God, and to take us as His people. He has voluntarily attached and committed Himself to us. So when we sin, we can expect to hear it from Him, that our sin offends His holiness. Yet because God is good, He can and will reverse the stain of our sin and make it white as snow. And He is still, amazingly, willing to do it, even though we have all treated Him in just the ways that Israel has sinned. We've all been hypocritical in our worship. You have been, and I have been. And our responsibility is to repent together so that we might be restored together. But there is no forgiveness without repentance. So God motivates us to repent by offering us a reward, and warning us of ruin. "*If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword.*" That is still true

today. If you repent, you get the blessing of covenant relationship with God, mediated by His Son Jesus Christ. But if you rebel, the only expectation is judgment, which leads us to our third and final point.

### 3. THE JUDGMENT OF OUR REBELLION (ISA 1:21-30)

**The Reason for Judgment (1:21-23).** The city of Jerusalem was where God made Himself near to His people. It was where his togetherness with them was displayed, in the temple. It was where God married His people. But the city cheated on Him. Her infidelity was so reckless that God uses the language of prostitution to describe it. She compromised her fidelity to God by breaking His covenant with her. And the result was her own degradation. Her silver was not full of dross – it had become dross, totally worthless. Her rich wine was now totally diluted and watery, not even worth drinking. She had corrupted her purity and diluted her richness. How did she do this? She did this by the way she handled her business. She began in righteousness and justice, under the kind, clean, steady hand of David. Yet now her hands were red with blood. It's not clear whether there were literal murders happening, or if this is talking about the spiritual effects of official corruption in the courts and in society. Either way, the church of Isaiah's day was not honoring God in the way they treated one another. And it was the fault of the leaders. *"Your princes are rebels, and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them."*

Injustice has to do with how we treat others, especially the vulnerable. No one cares for the weak and helpless. They just watch out for number 1. It's a total lack of love, first for God, then for neighbor. Injustice forgets that God loved us and brought us justice when we were fatherless without Him. It forgets our own redemption from slavery to our own Egypt, our sin and its mastery and oppression over us. It treats others as means to self-gratification and self-exaltation. There is a right way for Christians to be concerned about justice, both in the church and in the world. It's not to act as if I'm clearly preaching the gospel when I work to alleviate suffering or to help the fatherless and the widow. It's that I'm illustrating the gospel that I preach in the life that I live. I'm illustrating salvation from sin and its effects through helping the helpless (By the way, this is why adoption is such a good idea for Christian couples). It is all too easy in the suburbs to slip into the lifestyle of the affluent suburbanite – enjoying songs and sermons on Sundays, yet the rest of the week, just looking out for me and mine, oblivious to the plight of others around me in the church or in the world. Isaiah warns us that that is precisely the attitude that brings God's judgment. But what kind of judgment is this? What does it look like when God judges, and are there multiple aspects to God's judgment?

**Judgment as Purification (1:24-26).** In v.24, the "therefore" moves the passage forward from the reason for the judgment to the judgment itself. And God says that judgment will look like purification. He says in v.24 "I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes." So there's a deadly seriousness, a blood-earnestness here. But look at how God explains that relief and vengeance in v.25. It's smelting away dross, removing alloy, restoring judges. And in v.26, there's an *"Afterwards,"* which indicates this judgment is not a final one yet. That final judgment will be described later in vv.28-31, but here, this judgment is a purifying, restoring judgment. It will feel to Israel as if God is treating her like an enemy. *"I will turn my hand against you,"* God says. But to what end? It's *"to smelt away your dross as with lye, and remove all your alloy."*

Christian, God will not separate your salvation from your sanctification. God saves us so that we will be holy. **Eph 1:4** *"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."* And he does the smelting, refining work both in our own hearts individually, and corporately in the church, in our relationships with each other. It feels like He is against us, and he even describes it that way himself. But He preserves us through the fire of judgment so that we would be pure on the other side. *"Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."* Verse 21 described Jerusalem as a faithful city, then a whore; but one day God will call His people the faithful city again. Church, this is not just about the city of Jerusalem. It's how God works among us as God's people. He saves us through a purifying fire. This judgment is not punitive or punishing. That judgment comes in a different form. This judgment is purifying, it smelts and purifies and burns away our indwelling sin. And there is no salvation without this

purifying judgment, because Hebrews says that there is a holiness without which no one will see the Lord. God saves by judging. “The flames will not hurt you, I only design, your dross to consume and your gold to refine.”

**Judgment as Redemption (1:27).** In v.27 we read that “*Zion will be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent by righteousness.*” But justice, in this case, would be punishment for Israel’s sin. How can there be a category of “redeeming justice” for Israel, when she is so clearly guilty and deserving of condemnation? For that matter, how can any guilty defendant ever be redeemed by justice in the court of The Righteous Judge? *And the repentant in Zion will be redeemed by righteousness.* What is this, salvation by works? Is it the quality of their repentance that will provide them with a saving righteousness? How can that be? Wouldn’t that require a repentance that is morally perfect in God’s eyes? And if so, isn’t this repentance out of our reach as those who still have a sin nature? And all of this is beginning to strike very close to home, because we are guilty! Our silver has become dross. Our wine is watered down. We’re the rebels who act like God’s law has no jurisdiction over us. We’re the thieves who steal God’s glory for ourselves. We’re the selfish ones who ignore the plight of the fatherless and the widow. If there is no redeeming righteousness for Israel, then there’s none for us either. So, is there any redeeming righteousness for us? Praise God there is! Though we have been the rebellious sons, there is a Son of God who never rebelled, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and the justice that redeems us is the justice of God that was meted out on Jesus at the cross. Our punishment fell on Him. And the righteousness that redeems us is an alien righteousness. It is not a righteousness that comes from the quality of our repentance, but a righteousness outside us, credited to us, that produces and drives our repentance. He who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. But notice who this redeeming righteousness is for: it’s for “*those in her who repent.*” There is Zion at large, and then there are those in her who repent. And only those who repent, who turn from their sin and self-justification, to God and the redeeming righteousness of Jesus, only those who turn and trust will be redeemed with this justice. Are you turning, friend?

**Judgment as Condemnation (1:28-31).** This requirement of repentance is borne out in vv.28-31, where rebels and sinners are the opposite of those who repent. And the fate of these rebels and sinners is clear from the verbs Isaiah uses here: they will be broken, consumed (v.28), ashamed (v.29), withered (v.30), and burned in an unquenchable fire (v.31). There is no salvation without repentance, only condemnation. The oaks of v.29 are the oak trees and groves of the fertility cults used to worship Baal and Ashtoreth. The background is Dt 12:2 *You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.* Hosea had said of Israel that *They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.* And Isaiah will say later in 57:5 “*you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys...*” (cf. Ezek 6:13; Motyer, 51; Oswalt 110). That’s idolatry language.

There is no neutrality here, is there? It’s either that you’re repentant and redeemed, or you are an idolater and you are condemned. And notice that with the idol worshippers, they share the fate of their idols. In v.29, they worshipped idols under oak trees; they may have even worshipped the trees themselves. And in v.30, “*you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden without water.*” Worship your idol, and you’ll share its fate. “*The strong shall become like tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.*” Now today we like to think that we’re too modern for all this idol talk. But there is still a fertility cult, an idolizing of the family, and it is flourishing in many churches. Family values are coming to replace Christian worship in many places today. They are not the same thing. And of course, there is still the worship of sex, wealth, power, influence, status, material security, even hearth and home. These are the idols of our own culture. Isaiah is warning us not to worship those things. Don’t trust in them. Don’t treat them as ultimate. Don’t enjoy them as your highest pleasure. Don’t rely on them to save you or give you significance. Those idols will only reduce you to a mirror image of themselves, and Isaiah says that in the end, you will not only become like them, but you will burn with them. Make sure you are repenting now.

## CONCLUSION

Believer, you are not out of the woods. You are to make your calling and election sure every day of your life. Don't be fooled into thinking that you can have your cake and eat it too. There is still a rebellious child inside your heart, and you are called to master that rebel impulse by the power of God's Spirit and the wisdom of His word. It's better to go through the judgment of purification now than to go through the judgment of condemnation forever. Consider the **tragedy** of your own rebellion. Consider how senseless it is, and how sick it's made you. Consider the **hypocrisy** of your own rebellion. God is not pleased with our public worship when our private worlds are filled with rebellion against Him. And consider the **judgment** of your own rebellion. Accept God's purifying discipline now. Trust in God's redeeming judgment of Jesus, and the righteousness of Christ that alone can redeem your soul. And if you're a non-Christian listening to this sermon, consider what's at stake here. God is not who you assume He is. He cares about His worship. He is offended by your rebellion. And He will judge it, either in your own person for all eternity, or in the person of Jesus on His cross. He invites you now – *Come, let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*” Take his offer now, before it's too late. Let's pray.