

Nominal Christians are Wicked People

Psalm 50:16–23

BBA High School Chapel Message: November 4th, 2011

Are you familiar with the word *nominal*? *Nominal* means to exist or be something in name or form only

Christian schools and colleges all over the world are packed with “Christians in name only.” This passage from Psalms addresses the descendants of Abraham who faced that exact issue 3000 years ago.

¹⁶But unto the wicked

In verses 1-15 God is speaking to “true Israel.” In verse 16 God switches his direction and speaks to the “alleged people of God.” The target audience is now the wicked in the congregation of Israel. These are not the “idolaters” of another people group. These are not the pagans of another culture. These are not the heathen. These are the people that look like they are converted but who are not saved! These are the nominal people of God.

The wicked are those who appear to be religious but who sin freely. The theological term is *antinomianism*.

God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

Why do you bother reciting the Word of God?

Why do you pretend to obey the law of God? The covenant is the agreement God made with his people.

Exodus 19:8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Mark 7:6 specifically addresses nominalism among the professing people of God.

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias (Isaiah 29.13) prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Students, these are the people of today who say you can have Jesus as your Savior but if refuse Him as your Lord you will be ok when you die. That form of Christianity is just like the wickedness that God is addressing through the Psalmist, who is acting as a prophet in these verses.

Lest we doubt the authority of these Psalms to speak harshly into our lives with judgment and rebuke, let us remind ourselves that Jesus Himself validated the authority of the Psalms in Luke 24.44.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

These people are going through the ritualistic behaviors of the people of God. They bow their heads. They read scripture. They take the communion. They have been baptized. But they are no more converted than Judas Iscariot.

¹⁷Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

An unsaved person does not like discipline. He or she hates instruction.

Casting the words of God is like treating the truths of Scripture like trash. Their actions, attitudes, and worldview was just like pitching the Bible in a dumpster.

¹⁸When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him,

This refers to the 8th commandment, Thou shalt not steal.

You approve of stealing. You know of someone stealing at work and say nothing. Petty cash is stolen. A candy bar is pocketed. You go into the changing room of a department store and put clothes on under the clothes you are wearing and walk out without paying.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

There are many ways of stealing.

and hast been partaker with adulterers.

This refers to the 7th commandment, which forbids adultery.

Jesus made it perfectly clear that to lust after a girl in this school is the same as committing adultery in your heart (Matt 5:28). Girls you are not exempt. When you flirt or text provocative pictures of yourself to another boy, are you not complicit in this same sin?

When you spend time with fellow students that you know are guilty of sexual sins, students who are crossing the line, are you not a partaker in their sin? Isn't your silence, in fact, a consent to their sin?

¹⁹Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. ²⁰Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

Notice the words "mouth," "tongue," "speakest," and "slanderest." The author uses four different words that all relate to speaking ill of someone else.

The 3rd commandment is now mentioned. "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Slander is the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation¹ If I accuse someone of being a homosexual, but they are NOT, isn't that slander?

Let's talk about **digital slander**. Digital slander is when I use Facebook or my iPhone to text slander someone's character. This is where I talk out of both sides of my mouth as I lie to one and lie to another and neither knows the difference.

It appears by the sheer volume of words devoted to this sin that lying is worse than either of the other two sins.

When I combine stealing and lying, it seems to me that I get cheating. Isn't cheating a form of stealing and lying combined? Do we have a problem with cheating here?

²¹These things hast thou done,

God is keeping a record.

Numbers 32:23 and be sure your sin will find you out.

and I kept silence;

You think that because God is silent, you are getting away with your sin.

You think that because no one knows what you are doing, you are getting by with it. You assume that because you are NOT experiencing God's present judgment that God is ok with your sin.

thou thoughtest that I [hayah] [I AM] was altogether such an one as thyself:

This group is guilty of the sin of making a god after their own likeness. This new god that you have created is a loving god. He doesn't mind that I am sinning like this. This new god thinks the way I think. This new god is like me. He likes me, and I like him. He is more human

¹ Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

than divine for “he” is a creation of my mind. He is not the God of the Bible who hates sin and reproves sinners.

What is most amazing about this verse is that the words “that I was altogether” are translated from the same Hebrew word—*hayah*—found in Exodus 3:14. *Hayah* is translated “I AM.” I AM that I AM is the name that God told Moses to tell Israel when he asked the question, “who sent you to lead us?” Moses was to tell them “I AM that I AM” sent me. The one true always existing God is the God that sent him.

but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

God promises to rebuke those who are sinning in this manner.

Others will be a witness of this correction and reproof; others will see these people receive the recompense of their sin for they have not been justified by faith—like father Abraham.

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke,** exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

²²**Now consider this, ye that forget God,**

What a statement! Consider this as an attention getter. Who should consider this? Those who forget God are the ones that must consider this—

How are they forgetting God? They recite his songs. They recite and write the memory verse of the week. They speak of the covenant. They attend worship services. They take the Holy Communion. They have entered the sacred waters of baptism. They are Christians in Name-ONLY! Their hearts are far from God.

lest I tear you in pieces,

lest I tear you in pieces. What a description! God, Himself, is the one who will tear you apart. **Is this limb by limb?** Does this bring any fear into your life? Does God saying that He is going to tear you apart cause you to examine yourself even one bit? Is there anything the Word of God could say to evoke fear in you? Are you so hardened in yourself that nothing could be said to create fear?

Hebrews 10:31 It is a **fearful** thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Jesus said:

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:

but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Proverbs 1:7 (AV) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

and there be none to deliver.

Listen to these words: “and there be none to deliver.” If God gets a hold of you, who will there be that can deliver you from His wrath? If the Sovereign God of the Universe decides that you need to be torn apart for your rebellion and sin, who will there be that you can call upon for deliverance? Who will save you from His wrath?

For now, you can call upon Jesus to be your Savior; but there is coming a day when that will not be a possibility. There will be day when salvation from the wrath of God is no longer available. What will you do then?

²³Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me:

This is sincere, authentic praise and thanksgiving; God knows your heart.

and to him that ordereth his conversation aright

Conversation means your way of life.

will I shew the salvation of God.

God is not showing these the salvation of God because they offered sincere, authentic praise or ordered their lives the right way.

This is evidence of conversion. The fruit of the Spirit is the indication that you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.