

The LORD Shall Purge His City

Isaiah 1:21-31

Halifax: 22 February 2009

Introduction

Last week, we began our new sermon series in the book of Isaiah.

- I mentioned to you that the first chapter is essentially an introduction to the whole book.
- In the first 20 verses, we saw how Isaiah charged the covenant people with their neglect of Christ...
 - The LORD had provided life and salvation for them in Christ who was then promised, He had even nourished them with Him,
 - and they had rebelled against Him...
 - He charged them for their extreme wickedness in this...
 - He charged them for incorrigibility in refusing to repent even under His chastisement...
 - He charged them for their vain worship... as they continued to go through the motions of worship even though they were not trusting in His promised redemption.
- I showed you how the particular message of Isaiah is so very relevant for the church today...
 - For we too have wickedly neglected the provision of Jesus Christ...
 - We too have not repented under God's chastening hand...
 - And we too have engaged in vain worship as if our mere appearance before God...
 - Redemption must come first, obedience and worship follow.
 - We must first be reconciled,
 - Only then can we serve Him acceptably.
 - And if we are indeed reconciled, we will obey and worship.
- Last week, we also saw how God graciously appeals to us to return to Him...
 - to come to Christ to be pardoned and to be transformed according to His faithful promise...
 - We cannot cleanse ourselves, but He is able to cleanse us—
 - He is God's provision for us—
 - and all we have to do is open our mouth and be filled.

- He promises us that He will bless us with all the blessings of His covenant if we will,
- but assures us that we will be destroyed if we continue to refuse and rebel.

In our sermon today, I intend to finish the rest of first chapter—verses 21-31.

- In verse 21-23, Isaiah takes up a lamentation because of the condition into which the covenant people have fallen...
 - a lamentation that we have reason to take up for the church today...
- And then in verse 24-26, he brings to them the fearful declaration of the LORD that they have become His enemies upon whom His vengeance will fall in order to purge them...
 - They have become as a body eaten up with cancer which must be cut away, just as the church is in our day.
 - There is more that needs to be cut away than kept!
 - The majority are apostate.
- And in verse 27-31, he shows the dual outcome of that purging...
 - for the penitent, redemption,
 - but for the impenitent, utter destruction!

Let's take a closer look at all this under three exhortations that I have derived from this prophecy that pertain to us:

- I. Lament because of the degeneracy of God's city
- II. Know that the LORD will purge His degenerate city
- III. Be sure that you are purified rather than cast out when the purging comes

As you can see, my method in preaching through Isaiah is not to give you a historical lecture about ancient Israel...

- No indeed!
- God's word tells us that these things were written for us—
 - I Cor 10:11 says:
 - 1 Cor 10:11: Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
 - It is God's Word given to us to admonish us.
 - And Romans 15:4 says:

- Rom 15:4: For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
- Preaching is truth applied...
 - It is not just information—it is the application of God’s word to us—His message to us.
 - That is why I present this to you as three exhortations—not for Israel but for you who are seated in this congregation today.

TRANS> So first of all, from the authority of this text, I exhort you to

I. Lament because of the degeneracy of God’s city

A. The form of verse 21-23 is that of a lamentation such as would be used in a funeral!

- As on commentator put it, it has the ominous rhythm of dirge.
- 1. Isaiah looks at the city of God—the city that has been nourished and brought up by Him—
 - that has been given living water to drink and the bread of life to eat...
 - and he sees them spurning this provision and he responds the only way he can...
 - *heykah!* That is the Hebrew word that begins a lament! *heykah!*
 - It is an expression of sorrow, of grief, of astonishment...
 - How could it be that the God’s chosen people should have sunk so low as this?
 - How could it be that those who have His love, His grace, His provision in Christ should be in the condition they are now in?
- 2. If it does not pain you to see the degeneration of the church today, it can only be that you are spiritually dead!
 - a. It must be that you have no appreciation of Jesus Christ and of what He is to His people!
 - That you have no sense of the loss that is ours in not partaking of Him and having life from Him.

TRANS> It ought to cause you grief and sorrow...

- and you are wise to express that grief and sorrow in a lamentation
- b. The scripture commends such expression...
 - We have many Psalms that are lamentations...these are meant to be sung from the heart by us today...

- We have a whole book of the Bible that is one great long lamentation... this is meant to read, not by the dead,
 - but by living feeling people who apply it to their own situation in whatever ways their situation is the same
- And we have many sections such as the one before us where lamentations are taken up by prophets and others...
 - Our Lord Jesus Himself frequently takes up lamentations as we see in the Gospels...
 - Here are three examples from Luke
 - Lu 9:41: O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you?
 - Lu 13:34: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...you who kill the prophets...
 - Lu 24:25: O foolish one and slow of heart to believe
- c. Do not bottle up your feelings—express them in words of lamentation!
 - Yes, it is for us to sing joyful songs of God’s deliverance,
 - but it is also for us to take up a lamentation!
 - You ought to be saddened when you see the condition of the church.
 - You are not to mope around as those who have no hope,
 - but you are to enter into the anguish of our Lord and Master for His people as those who possess His Spirit.

B. See how the reproach of God’s city is described in this lamentation...

1. It is the faithful city that has become a harlot!
 - The LORD has taken us to be His own bride, a pure, chaste, and holy virgin...
 - not because He found us as such, but because He redeems us to be such to Him—purifying us by washing us in His own blood shed on the cross!
 - He has made us to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood, his own special people—set apart and holy devoted to Him—purified for good works!
 - But we, who were raised to such privileges, are rather like a brazen harlot committing adultery right before the face of our LORD!
 - Instead of taking our delight in Him, we pursue other lovers—we put our trust in our riches, in our military, in worldly wisdom...
 - Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?
 - You cannot serve to masters!

- Don't misunderstand, God gives us many treasures in this world in order that we may return thanks to Him...
 - but we err when we devote ourselves to these treasures rather than to Him!
 - We give our love and service to these instead of to our Lord and husband!
- When we do service to idols, we trample over God's commandments in order to please our idols...
 - For example, if it is riches,
 - we cheat in business
 - we withhold a portion of our tithe
 - we refuse to give to the poor...
 - or we break the Sabbath to squeeze in a little more trade or to improve our house or to fill it with goods...
 - We make our life about riches rather than about pleasing our husband...
 - We turn our heart to them instead of to Him.

TRANS> God's whole city is said to have become a harlot.

- The rest of this lament describes what happens to us when we turn our hearts from the Lord our husband...
2. Instead of a paragon of virtue and justice, we become a habitation of murderers...
- At the end of verse 21, Isaiah says of the city,
 - Isa 1:21: It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.
 - We are supposed to be setting the example.
 - A Christian business man is supposed to be the most trustworthy...
 - A Christian society is supposed to be a place where their integrity and honesty and hard work
 - It is supposed to be a place where gracious words are heard instead of complaining, cursing, and abuse
 - It is supposed to be a place where forgiveness flows freely rather than bitterness and grudges...
 - Brothers and sisters, we are supposed to be the one society on the earth where people see justice—where they see us treating one another in love...
 - We are not, in a cavalier way, to say, "I'm no different, I'm just forgiven—He's still work'n on me!"

- No, I say, you need to lament!
 - Do you not have God's Spirit?
 - Do you not have a risen Saviour?
 - If we are not any different we need to repent—not make excuses!

TRANS> Don't you see?

- We are supposed to be different because God is at work in us!
 - No, we do not claim to be perfect at all, but we had better claim to be different and we had better be different!

3. We have lost our beauty and our taste as God's people!

- As verse 22 puts it, our silver has become dross and our wine is mixed with water!
- God's city is supposed to be lovely place...
 - There are times when this has been the case!
 - Many of the heathen marvelled at the love they saw in the early church.
 - In Geneva, Phillip Schaff has collected records from visitors over a 150 year period after the reformation, both friends and enemies, who had to admit that the virtue of the city was remarkable.
- We have lost our sheen—we have become watered down.
 - Our silver has become dross and our wine mixed with water.

4. This disease has reached even to our leaders!

a. Christian leaders in government and in the church are supposed to restrain wickedness...

- They are supposed to be chosen out for the virtue and to be an example among the people...
 - But Isaiah says that even they are rebellious and companions of thieves, loving bribes and following after rewards...
 - Instead of administering justice, they are only looking for what they can get.
 - Instead of being there to serve, they are only looking to be served.
 - Now you will say—leaders are always like that—and it is true!
 - But Christian leaders are supposed to be different!
 - And at times they have been different!

b. It is a very destructive thing to a society when the leaders are corrupt.

- Parents, you know what it is like for you in your parenting if you lose sight of Christ...
 - When you are not eagerly following Him, you are ineffective...
 - You either avoid correcting your children (excusing them the same way you excuse yourself)
 - or you start to deal with them in a harsh manner as one irritated with them...
 - After all, if you are not eagerly following Christ yourself,
 - you are obviously not really concerned if others do—no matter how much you may pretend otherwise.
- c. Isaiah does not mean that the leaders have become highway robbers... or assassins...
- Oh no! They are a much more sophisticated kind of robber!
 - They do their robbery under the guise of justice!
 - They do things like “stimulus packages” in which they print up lots of money to give out to stimulate the economy!
 - When they do that, they are actually taking money away from people.
 - They cannot create more wealth, they can only redistribute it...
 - Whatever wealth people hold is diminished (every dollar they have is worth less), and the difference is then given to others.
 - That is called stealing—
 - And when it is added to the deficit, it is stealing from those who are completely unable to defend themselves...
 - our own children!
 - We are running up a huge deficit to pass along to our children!
- d. Is it any wonder that a society that has no qualms against killing unborn children would have no qualms against stealing from them?
- We diminish their number and we increase their debt!
 - And brothers and sisters, this is not just a thing with money either!
 - Leaders in the church do the same thing with our spiritual treasures...
 - Instead of building on the foundation of God’s Word that we have been given...
 - learning how to live for Him...

- working through the hard questions...
- coming to understand Him and know Him...
 - we are lazy... we are indolent... we ignore the word...
 - and the result is that we have very little to pass along to the next generation.

TRANS> Yes, brothers and sisters, there is much room for lamentation...

- The faithful city has become a harlot!
 - It ought to make a difference that over 85% of our province are baptised as Christians!
 - How is it that there is so much gross injustice? so little faithfulness?
 - There is much reason to lament...
- And now I want to move along to the second exhortation from our text...
 - It is an exhortation for you to know something:

II. Christian, know that the LORD will purge His degenerate city

A. The LORD speaks here as one who wishes to rid Himself of us!

1. He describes His city as that which has become an intolerable burden to Him...
 - He calls us His adversaries...
 - He says that He will take vengeance on us, His enemies!
 - Look at verse 24—the LORD Himself is quoted here!
 - Isa 1:24: Therefore the Lord says, The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, "Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, And take vengeance on My enemies..."
 - I think John Calvin is right when he speaks of the "Ah" in this verse as an expression of pain and grief...
 - The LORD does not take delight in chastening His people—not at all...
 - It is His natural disposition to be gracious...
 - But when His city becomes a harlot,
 - He has no choice...
 - He is forced to punish them severely.
 - He will not allow us to go on trampling the blood of His Son under our feet and to count it an unclean thing.
 - And that is just what we, the whole visible church, is doing when we are not feeding upon Christ and His salvation.

- Understand that the Lord is speaking of the whole visible church here...
 - as a corporate entity...
 - Something like ninety percent of them were not receiving His salvation, promised, as it was in Christ...
 - so as a whole, the church was corrupt and ruined and was in truth God's enemy upon whom He was to take vengeance...

TRANS> The threat of His judgement here is a very terrifying one...

2. It is made all the more terrifying by the heaping up of His names that speak of His power and strength!

a. You see how this is done...

1) First He is called Lord, which translates Adon.

- The is the title that refers to him as the absolute Master, the Lord of lords who has final authority over all things in heaven and earth!
- He is the last Word in all things—the final court of appeal.
- No one can restrain Him when He acts or reverse His decision of judgement.
 - There is none worse to have against you!

2) Secondly, He is called The LORD of Hosts...

- Here the word LORD with all caps refers to His name Jehovah or Yahweh which mean "I am"
- It refers to Him as the One who is self-existing, who does not depend on anything else for support or strength—
 - He is the fountain or the source of all being—of all that is...
 - He is—all else is from Him.
- And when it calls Him the LORD of Hosts, it reminds us that He is supreme in might over all the hosts of beings—angels, men, galaxies—
 - He is the one who made them all and who had sovereign power over them all...
 - Everything is at His disposal and so if He wishes to be avenged of His enemies, He is not burdened with any limitations at all.

3) Thirdly, He is called The Mighty One of Israel—

- This is a rare title that refers to His bull-like strength...

- b. These names would be a great encouragement to us if He were being presented as on our side...
 - To know that all this strength was being used for us would be a huge encouragement indeed...
 - But here, the one who is the LORD of Hosts and the Mighty One of Israel is poised to bring His vengeance upon us!
 - These names lend great force to this announcement of judgement and ought to strike terror within us!

TRANS> But there is an encouragement mingled with this...

- We are told that

B. The outcome of His assault will be purgation—we will be purged!

1. I mentioned before that He regards His covenant people *as a whole* as His enemy.
 - And that is because, in times of apostasy, it is true—they are!
 - The majority of them are not even believers, so the character of the whole bunch of them is that of dross.
 - Look at our city today.
 - Most of us are baptised, but most of us are worshipping God in vain if at all.
 - We are His people by covenant, but we are strangers to His salvation...
 - God stretches His hand out to us, but we will not repent and receive His salvation...
 - We don't want His salvation.
 - The Word is near, but we will not believe.
 - As a mass, we are His enemies.
 - 2. But a work of purging is work in which all that is undesirable is cut away...
 - a. When metals are purged, the dross and alloy are separated from the gold and silver so that these are purified.
 - The refiner would put the lump of silver and dross into the fire and melt them...
 - Once they were liquefied, the gold or silver, being heavier, would go to the bottom and the other metals and dross rise to the top where they could be removed.

- b. When the Lord purges His people,
 - He brings things to test them—
 - often hardships or enemies who challenge their faith to see if it is true.
 - Those who are not committed will give up their faith when it becomes a hardship to go on professing him...
 - This happened to many of the Israelites in Babylon...
 - And it happened to the church when the Muslims invaded us about a thousand years ago...
 - The church was filled with idolaters who were not genuine, and many of them gave up their profession to follow Islam.
 - That was just what the Lord wanted.
 - He was purging out the rottenness from His church to refine it...
 - It did not look at grand in one way because there was left behind a small remnant...
 - but it was much more pure than what it was before and so much more pleasing to the Lord...
 - The Babylonian captivity had the very same effect...
 - Less people, less wealth, less display—but increased purity.
 - c. When God's purging occurs you ought to be saddened to see many depart from the faith...
 - It ought to cause you great sorrow and lamentation...
 - But you ought not to despair—
 - For the Lord wants them to be drawn away to purge His church.
3. And you see what the wonderful result is when the dross is removed...
- It is described in verse 26, and you see that it is a reversal of things to what they were in better days.
- a. He says,
 - v. 26: "I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning."
 - He is perhaps looking back at the time of the great reformation under King David when the monarchy that was now so corrupt had first begun...
 - When there was a King who was a man after God's own heart.

- In those times, justice was administered and people could obtain sound counsel from the LORD.
- b. And when purging occurs, not only will leaders be restored, but also the city's reputation...
- No longer will she be a harlot, but she will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.
 - God will restore the city back to Himself,
 - back to a full trust in Him that will bring about a complete obedience.
- c. But to what time does He look forward?
- When are these things supposed to happen?
 - Well brothers and sisters, I would encourage you not to get caught up in trying to pen down a particular time...
 - God did little purgings of His people again and again in the times of the judges...
 - and He had a great purging operation in the time of both the Assyrian and the Babylonian exile...
 - And there was a great purging that Jesus Christ brought when He came and only those who were genuine were separated out to serve Him...
 - (the sons of the kingdom were cast out).
 - And then another great purging by the Muslims, and yet another at the time of the reformation...
 - And there will be more until that great purging at the last day when He will raise all from the dead and will summon His angels to separate out of His kingdom all that offends.
 - This is a principle—
 - Whenever you see that the church has grown corrupt,
 - you can be sure that God is going to purge her!
 - The purging will be painful, but it will bring forth what is pure.
- d. You see that what remains after the purging is a city of righteousness, a faithful city...
- What is left, after purging, is what God wanted all along!
 - By His work of purging, He brings about the glorious kingdom that He delights in.

- So while you may and ought to grieve, you must not sorrow as those who have no hope.
- Know that God will accomplish His purpose concerning His church.

TRANS> But when you learn about this work of purging that God does—

- If you have any sense at all—
 - you will not be able to content yourself with a vague hope that you will be preserved with the silver rather than cast out with the dross!
 - You will want to be certain that you will be found among the silver!
- This is the concern of the third exhortation I want to bring to you from this passage today...

III. Be sure that you are purified rather than cast out when the purging comes

A. In verse 27, you are told who it is that will be redeemed when God's purging comes!

- It is Zion! the city as a whole that will be redeemed with justice...
 - But it also speaks of the particular individuals that will be redeemed...
 - her penitent ones!
1. What is a penitent one?
 - A penitent is a person in God's city who repents...
 - The Hebrew word is *shoob* and it means *those who return, or turn back*.
 - This is what God's elect people do...
 - Unlike those who are just inhabitants of the city—those who are just baptised nominal Christians...
 - they see the sin of the city and they also see their personal sin...
 - They see that they are not right before God.
 - And so they turn from their sin to God.
 2. And how do they come to Him?
 - They come to Him to be redeemed!
 - The two categories of persons that are separated by purging are not:
 - those who have a native purity and
 - those who don't...
 - It is rather
 - those who are redeemed and
 - those who continue in their sin...

- They do not redeem themselves...
 - You cannot redeem yourself!
 - How could you?
 - How could you wash your sin away—remember that it is the LORD who washes you and makes you white as snow!
 - The Son of God has to shed His blood for you!
 - The penitent ones are the ones who return to Him!
 - It says that they are redeemed in justice and righteousness...
 - That means that the LORD does not cut any corners when He redeems them.
 - He does not just wink at their sin and pretend it didn't happen...
 - Not at all—
 - He makes a full atonement for their sin through the death of His Son, and He requires His penitent ones to trust in that atonement.
 - They turn to the LORD Himself for their redemption.
- B. But in verse 28-31, we are told of the ones who are not redeemed but destroyed by the LORD's purging...
1. They are described as transgressors, sinners, and as those who forsake the LORD.
 - a. Now it will be very helpful for you to remember how the Bible uses these terms.
 - Transgressors are those who rebel, and sinners are those who come short of God's requirement...
 - But isn't it true that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?
 - Isn't it true that those who are redeemed are also transgressors and sinners?
 - Yes, that is true...
 - But often when the Bible speaks of sinners within the covenant people, it is referring to those who are in God's covenant,
 - but who have not looked to His promised provision of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - It is those in the church who are not relying on the Saviour.
 - b. That is what these transgressors and sinners are in verse 28...

- They are transgressors and sinners against God’s covenant of grace—
 - They are those who have not betaken themselves to His salvation by faith...
 - They are said to have forsaken Him because they are in the covenant community—
 - they numbered with the people who are in covenant with Christ for salvation...
 - they are among them, but rather than resting in Christ, they have forsaken Him.
 - They were brought to Him—brought into the community to whom He was given...
 - but they have forsaken Him.
 - And they will be destroyed because of it.
2. Verse 29 explains what they have forsaken Him for...
- trees and gardens (or groves)!
 - They are said to have *desired* these and to have *chosen* these,
 - and the presumption is that they have *desired* trees and gardens and *chosen* them instead of the LORD!
- a. The LORD tells them that the time will come when they will be ashamed and embarrassed for what they have chosen...
- The stupidity of their decision will be brought to full light when the Lord appears in His glory...
 - They will see that they have been extremely foolish!
- b. Now you will say—“trees? gardens? what are you talking about?”
- Isaiah is speaking of idolatry.
 - If you have read much in the Old Testament, you know how many times the Israelites are chided for worshipping God on “every high hill and under every green tree.”
 - You see, in the Canaanite religion, they assumed that because trees have life and grow leaves,
 - God must be especially present among trees...
 - They supposed that the numina—the presence of God—was there.
 - So for them, a grove of trees was a great place to meet with God and to offer sacrifices to Him.

- And if there was a terebinth tree—which probably is just any large notable tree—that was the place to burn incense.
- Because of this superstition,
 - the LORD God had strictly forbidden Israel to set up altars among trees or to plant trees near His altar!
 - He would meet with them in the *place* He appointed to meet with them and in the *way* that He had appointed to meet with them.
 - It was not supposed to be the place or the way of **their** choosing, but of **His** choosing!
- c. And this is exactly where covenant people first go wrong!
 - We begin to presume that **we** can decide how to worship God!
 - that **we** can chose how we will approach Him...
 - and we presume that He will surely accept what **we** bring to Him as long as **we** bring it with sincerity and earnestness...
 - But the LORD calls this desiring trees and gardens and choosing them instead of Him!
 - We have chosen how God is to be approached rather than submitting to the way that He has appointed.
 - I will perform my little song or my little dance or whatever it is and that is how I will meet with God.
 - We do this sort of thing when our heart is starting to drift from Him...
 - We want to change the terms of our approach.
- d. And to whatever degree we choose the terms of God’s acceptance of us instead of submitting to His, we depart from Christ.
 - When we sing songs that we have written instead of the ones He has given us, we are making some little adjustments in the way God wants to present Himself to us...
 - Perhaps they are just little ones—perhaps, at first, it’s just a change in emphasis...
 - But you see, however so subtly, we are making adjustments to the way we think about God.
 - And if in our doctrine, there are those things that do not appeal to us and we start to avoid them and ignore them,
 - or if there are those commandments that we do not care for,

- we begin ever so slowly to choose how God is to be presented to us... at the trees **we** have chosen!
 - And it will not be long until we have a religion that does not need a Saviour to atone for our sins...
 - We will have so adjusted God—reshaped Him into our choosing—that Jesus will just be a nice guy that shows us how to love...or comes to give us advice...
 - He may still be considered a guy who gave His life because of love,
 - but not a Saviour who was cursed in our place because we deserve to be cursed!
- e. This is what happened to Israel at the tree groves!
- Their choice of the tree groves as the place to worship God was their rejecting of the true God.
 - It changed affected their understanding of Him...
 - They stopped looking to Him as their redeemer because they felt that they were okay in His eyes without a redeemer!
 - The god they met at the trees wanted sacrifices,
 - but He did not require only the sacrifice that He was going to provide!
3. The LORD tells them that because they had forsaken Him, they will die just as every tree dies, and perish just as every garden perishes when it has no water.
- You see that in verse 30...
 - “You shall be a be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has not water...”
- a. And then He goes a step further and shows them that their work of idolatry will actually be the cause of their destruction...
- v. 31: “The strong (that is, those who fancy themselves as strong) shall be as tinder, and the work of it as a spark; both will burn together and no one will quench them!”
 - It is quite a picture!
 - You know, tinder is what you use to start a fire—something like a nice dry shaving of wood...
 - They who think they are so strong are like tinder and their work of idolatry is the spark that sets them on first to destroy them!
 - Their images by which they come so *reverently* and so *devotedly* before God stir up the wrath of God like a spark!

- Their destruction will be greater because they, forsaking Christ, have put their trust in false and deceitful things...
 - Destruction will come from the very place from which they sought safety!
- b. Do you see how huge this principle is?
- The very things that we trust in that are not what God has given us to trust in are the things that cause our destruction!
 - When Israel trusted in trees and groves as the place to meet God, they met with destruction instead from those trees and groves...
 - When they trusted in Egypt, that trust became the cause of their destruction...
 - When they trusted in Assyrian, Assyria destroyed them...
 - When you trust in riches, riches will destroy you...
 - When you trust in your learning—in worldly wisdom that is not subject to God's revelation—your learning will destroy you... you will come to believe in absurdities and call it science even though it is not science...
 - When you trust in the united effort of man, the unity itself will be the cause of your destruction as it was at Babel.
 - You will at last find yourself destroyed with the fire that you have set by your own choice and desire...
 - And as it says at the end of verse 31,
 - there will be no way to quench that fire.
 - Both you and your trees—whatever they may have been—will burn up together...
- c. My brothers and sisters...
- When you come before the true and living God as He is revealed in Scripture...
 - You see what you are before Him and you lament with Isaiah!
 - And you realise that what you are and what the city of God is altogether unacceptable in God's eyes...
 - And so you to look to Him for redemption!
 - You don't look to what you do or to what you choose...
 - You look to Him...

- You look to Christ whom He has provided and you follow Him.
- You don't set up your own way—
 - You bow humbly and thankfully to His way!
 - And He redeems you in justice.