

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – April 29, 2009

Could you imagine life without God? Imagine the poor choices you would make without His wisdom to guide you. Imagine the loneliness that would overwhelm you without His love to embrace you. In today's Templates of Truth, Isaiah reminds us that sin causes a separation between us and God.

The call of God upon the life of Isaiah was very clear: *Raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their transgression...their sin* (Isaiah 58:1). No preacher enjoys that task! No congregation enjoys those kinds of sermons. But we all need to hear that message, because *all of us have become like one who is unclean* (64:6). All believers are mandated by God to live holy, blameless and pure. When we choose to live in sinful disobedience against God, *we become like those over whom Thou hast never ruled, like those who were not called by Thy name* (63:19). Grasp the gravity of that truth – sinful rebellion so separates us from God that it causes us to experience life as if we were totally lost, without Christ again!

Isaiah provides us a few glimpses of this estranged relationship. For one thing, our prayer life is rendered ineffective: *the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear* (59:1-2). Can you imagine the possibility of the prayers you offer for your children's safety not being heard? Can you imagine the prayer of healing for your sick mother never reaching God's ears? God never hearing your prayer for a job? Help with your financial struggles? Isaiah's revelation staggers us with a sobering reality as to just how serious our sin before God really can be.

Life is hard and filled with struggles. Success often eludes us. Failure and loss characterize our lives more than want or need. But has it ever occurred to any of us that these experiences may be ours because of sinful estrangement from God? Listen to these revealing words from the prophet: *Because...you did evil in My sight, and chose that in which I did not delight, therefore, thus says the Lord God, "Behold...you shall be hungry...you shall be thirsty...you shall be put to shame...you shall cry with a heavy heart and you shall wail with a broken spirit* (65:12-14). Isaiah says that God brings into the lives of His sinful people *bronze, iron, wood, & stone*, symbols of hardships and suffering (60:17). He teaches that sinful believers will lose their *grain as food for their enemies* and *foreigners (will) drink your new wine for which you have labored* (62:8); these are references to financial & economic judgment. It is a staggering thought, but we must understand that in response to our sinful disobedience, God will *choose (our) punishments, and will bring on (us) what (we) dread* (66:4). It is a side of God we never like to admit, but we cannot ignore the clear teachings of Scripture: *they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, and He fought against them* (63:10). We always want God to fight for us and with us, never against us! Our sinful rebellion or our faithful obedience is the deciding factor.

That is not the entire message, however. Because God is holy, just and righteous, He cannot tolerate our sinful rebellion. He will respond to our sinful behavior. But because God is also

compassionate and full of grace, love & mercy, He offers this appeal through the prophet: *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him...for He will abundantly pardon* (55:7). God promises, *I dwell on a high and holy place...in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite (repentant)...I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; and I will lead him and restore comfort to him* (57:15, 18). To what extent does God restore? Grasp the wonder of this truth: *Instead of your shame, you will have double portion, and instead of humiliation, they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs* (61:7). I don't know about you today, but I want the double portion!

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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