

Intro: RC Sproul class; extending deadlines and students taking advantage of it.

1. From Pretense to Presumption

- a. The people use presumptive words that they believe will turn God's anger away from them
 - i. Return
 1. To the Healer of our Woes
 2. To the Lifter of Our Souls
 3. That We Might Live Before Him
 - ii. Know
 1. press on to know the LORD
 2. New day, life
- b. But there is not genuine repentance!
 - i. There is NO acknowledgment of guilt
 1. no sin is mentioned
 2. particularly no particular sins
 - ii. only harm that the LORD has done to them
 1. He has torn us (note 5:14)
 2. He has struck us down
- c. Move from Pretense to Presumption
 - i. Treats God mechanistically
 1. "God forgives. It's His job" (Voltaire)
 2. "If we bring our sacrifices of proper words and Bible reading then God will give us freedom from this oppression"
 - ii. emphasis is on God as the restorer of our pains, not the healer of our hearts
 1. affliction of body, not affliction of sin
 - a. He will heal us (not the Assyrian King, cf. 5:13)
 - b. He will bind us up
 2. "Fix our circumstances!"
 - a. Not realizing that the greatest oppression was their lovelessness toward God
 - b. Their greatest desperation was not knowing Him, not having Him, not finding their rest and surety in His incredible grace
- d. Presumption: The Cheapening of Grace
 - i. An expectation of God's goodness without a heart for God Himself or the desire to please Him out of love
 - ii. There is no turning away from idols or from the sin that accompanies them, but rather a desire to avoid God's discipline without having to give up all control or the pleasures of sin

2. God Rejects Presumption (vv4-6)

- a. He acknowledges the words of Israel
 - i. But He also notes their emptiness
 - ii. He contrasts the words with the actions and sees hollow words
- b. Frustration?
 - i. They do not love HIM
 1. Israel's "chesed" quickly fades

- a. like dew
- 2. It cannot even properly be called love, for it does not desire Him
 - a. Without turning against sin (not perfectionism, but turning away)
 - b. Trying to buy Him off with sacrifices and burnt offerings rather than seeking Him personally
- 3. This is a knowledge defined by them, rather than defined by Him
 - a. Remaking Him into their image: controllable by their rituals and words rather than coming before Him humbly desiring to know Him as He is and responding in a way honorable to Him
 - b. Amos 5:21-24 – “I hate your religious feasts...let justice roll on like a river...”
 - c. True love for God means that we seek Him for Himself and live in a way that brings honor to Him
 - i. Marriage imitates this
 - ii. Our love for others seeks to honor them, not use them
- c. He revealed Himself to them
 - i. I have given you prophets
 - 1. you have heard my desire for steadfast love
 - 2. you know my desire is not in empty ritual
 - 3. "to obey is better than sacrifice..."
 - ii. The LORD has worked to "carve" Israel by the prophets
 - 1. "Slain" - HIS WORD slays, kills and brings life
 - 2. Always shining forth to see, but they are blinded

3. Four Images of Presumption

- a. Oven
 - i. Heat of proud passion to sin
 - 1. Anger, intrigue, drunkenness, carousing, prostitution, lies (chap 7)
 - ii. Gathered together like coals in their sin (7:5-6) as mockers
 - 1. “Mocker” or “scoffer” is an extremely arrogant man, who loves to scorn others, is incapable of correction or discipline, reproof, or rebuke, therefore cannot find wisdom (Proverbs 1:22; 13:1; 15:12; 21:24)
 - 2. These types of people are to be avoided as companions (Psalm 1:1)
 - 3. Proverbs 3:34 – “[God] is scornful toward the scornful, but gives grace to the humble”
 - iii. Sin not only deceives us into thinking that we can hide it, but it builds up and abounds to greater and greater sin like a spreading fire
 - 1. Gilead is tracked with bloody footprints (6:8) full of wicked men
 - 2. The priests plot to murder together, united in evil
 - 3. In their pride, they believe that God accepts them anyway, showing that they do not desire Him, but only what He can give them: they are users
- b. Half-baked cake
 - i. A half-baked cake is a useless cake
 - 1. One part of us dedicated to the Lord is also useless
 - 2. It’s also disgusting, inedible, to be spat out
 - ii. We cannot be half-heartedly the Lord’s and know Him truly
 - 1. In our trust, it’s all or nothing
 - 2. Idolatry is not to be accepted, but rejected and fought against

- a. This does not imply perfection, but rather earnest pursuit (5:15)
 - iii. a cake without one side cooked is not a cake, so is faith without works dead
 - c. Silly dove
 - i. Senseless and foolish
 - ii. Sin deceives us into believing that other things are more beautiful, more valuable, more glorious than God
 - d. Faulty Bow
 - i. Not only useless and foolish, but simply dangerous
 - 1. A bow that breaks when pulled shows its fault quickly, explosively, disastrously
 - 2. Under the stress of pressure, Israel's weakness would be her downfall
 - ii. A bow that breaks means its owner falls in the battle to his enemies
 - 1. They will devour her without her even recognizing that her strength is gone (v9)
 - 2. Slowly they drift away from the Lord and do not notice He is against them

4. Where, Then, is Our Hope?

- a. Hosea 14
 - i. There is a true repentance, a true love for the LORD
 - ii. Return to the LORD with words of true repentance
 - iii. "Take away all iniquity, receive us graciously"
 - 1. Trust in the LORD for the forgiveness of sin (v2)
 - 2. Turn away from trusting in other things (v3)
 - 3. Remember God's mercy towards the one who relies on none other than Him (the orphan can become a son) (v3)
 - iv. Then the LORD will heal our apostasy and love us freely
- b. Remember the entire redemptive story
 - i. JESUS HAS COME TO REDEEM!!
 - ii. God's anger is real toward sin...very real!!
 - 1. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God
 - 2. God hates sin so much that He comes in real wrath against it, even if delayed wrath (which only shows His patience, cf. Rom 2:4ff)
 - iii. God's grace is real toward His people...very real!
 - 1. He has brought the dead hearts to live through His Spirit (John 3)
 - 2. He has renewed the soul that was rebellious to desire Him wholeheartedly (Rom 5:10)
 - 3. God sent Jesus to redeem us from our sins, and therefore from His just and righteous wrath (Rom 5:8)
 - a. He did this while we were still sinners!!
 - b. It was not due to our righteousness or the perfection of our repentance, but solely to the depths of His grace
 - iv. The Good News of Jesus Christ of Nazareth is that there is hope for a rebellious and idolatrous people
 - 1. God hates sin so much that Jesus had to bear the Father's wrath in His death
 - 2. God loves us so much that Jesus did die to bear up His wrath to redeem us

...For the essence of sin is us substituting ourselves for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for us. We assert ourselves against God and put ourselves where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for us and puts himself where only we deserve to be. We claim prerogatives which belong

to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to us alone. (J. Stott, The Cross of Christ)

3. We are now sons and daughters of God, beloved and accepted through Christ's atoning substitutionary sacrifice
 - a. We are heirs with Christ, no longer mere slaves or servants or orphans
 - b. What God begins, He finishes!
4. He loves us freely, for His anger has turned away from us, He has healed our apostasy!
 - a. Zephaniah 3:17 – He dances over us with joy!!
- c. God still desires trusting obedience, justice, and righteous living from us
 - i. Though we are not condemned in Christ, the LORD still desires our obedience to His desires and has even given us a new heart with His Spirit within us to form us into the image of the obedient, submissive, and always pleasing Christ.
 - ii. John 14:15- "If you love Me [Jesus], you will keep my commandments"
 - iii. Matt 5:29-30 – Give sin no quarter!!
 - iv. Matt 25 – "whatever you have done for your brother, you have done for me"
 - v. Let the immense electrifying love of God capture your heart to true heart-felt, fully impassioned God-praising whole-hearted pursuit of Christ alone and obey Him:
 1. Let Justice Flow Like the River so that our Gracious God is honored!!
 2. Let us seek to obey Him whole-heartedly to please the One who redeems our lives from the pit
 3. As our Beloved, let us seek to honor Him with all of our lives

Conclusion:

True repentance is an acknowledgment of guilt, a rejection of our sinful pursuits, passions, and practices. Let us truly repent today, for today is the day of salvation. And we repent of these things because we believe that God is gracious, forgiving, merciful, and that HE is the TREASURE for which we long. He is more glorious than anything that our hearts could ever desire. He is lovelier than any fortune on this earth. He is more magnificent than all the heavenly pearls that drape the galaxies or the most splendid feast ever laid out before men. He is our glorious King, our Faithful covenantal God, who has poured Himself out in Jesus as God substituting Himself for us, that you and I would know Him, truly know Him. He is our Father who loves us, let us not treat that lightly.

Let us turn from the weak counterfeit gods of approval, power, comfort, and control. Let us turn away from the man-centered promises that boost our ego instead of crucify it. Let us turn to the God who actually loves us with tears, power, and blood. O, God, we run to you today in true repentance and full of hope in your gracious promise!