

Spiritual Sickness

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

When we have a cough or sneeze we know that we have a cold or another sickness. The cough is not the disease but is only a symptom of it. In spiritual matters it is much the same. We see those who lie, steal, or do some other wicked act and think that is the problem. It is not, but is only symptoms of the real problem. This is shown in **Psalms 78:35-37**, “And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer: Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.”

Why did they lie to God and flatter Him with their lips while they meant none of it? The same as those who lie and do wrong to people today. Their heart is not right with God. If a person has his heart right in the sight of God they will not lie and do wrong to anyone. Anyone who has come to the Lord and been truly saved does not want to do anything that would displease the Lord.

We can go back to the book of Genesis and see the story of Cain killing his brother Able and see the same principle at work. Able by faith offered a better sacrifice than Cain. His heart was right in relation to God. We do not see where he did anything wrong to Cain or anyone else. Cain on the other hand, was not right with God or man. It was because his heart was full of hate, bitterness, and pride, that he was not right toward God. As a result he killed his brother after having paid no attention to the advice that God had given him.

Someone said once that our relationship to God is mirrored in our relationship to man. If we love the Lord we will love people too. Those who don't believe in, or obey, God, have little regard for man either. I believe that this is true. A person cannot praise God and curse his brother at the same time, the same as we could not love God and hate our neighbor. If a man is doing this he should realize that the Bible is God's Word and tells us that it is a sin.

The Bible is really plain on so many of the issues of life. Many times people want to make it sound like it is hard to understand. The truth is we are directed to love one another, forgive one another, and to help where there is

a need that we can help with. If we love God and realize that we are all His children, then we want to help as we are able. If we can look at someone and not be touched by their suffering, then we are not right in the sight of God.

Yes, a person can care only for himself and his friends and family. He can hate those that he doesn't like, but he can't do it if he has a heart that is right with God. **1 John 3:17**, “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

As you read the Bible, Old Testament, or New, have you ever seen anyone who walked with God and was full of hate and the things of this world? There was one who appeared to but he was a hypocrite. His name was Judas and in **John 12:4-6** we read, “Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.” Could anybody say that his heart was right in the sight of God? Well it wasn't. If so he would not have been a traitor, a thief, a liar, and hard hearted toward the poor.”

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TO MAKE A LIVING — PICK UP STICKS!

AS IN EVERY PERIOD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD'S HISTORY, THE POOR AND NEEDY OUTNUMBERED THE WEALTHY AND MIDDLECLASS IN BIBLICAL TIMES—ESPECIALLY IN THE CITIES! THOSE WITHOUT A FAMILY BUSINESS, OR SOME SMALL PLOT OF LAND ON WHICH TO GROW FOOD, WERE HARD PUT TO EKE OUT AN EXISTENCE! ONE MEAGER METHOD BY WHICH A POOR MAN COULD MANAGE TO SUBSIST, WAS GATHERING TWIGS FOR FIREWOOD. IN A PLACE LIKE JERUSALEM, IT WAS AT A PREMIUM FOR NONE COULD BE FOUND, IN THE CITY, AND THE OUTLYING AREAS BOASTED OF VERY LITTLE MORE! EVERY STICK AND TWIG THAT LAY ON THE FLOOR OF THE KIDRON VALLEY, EVERY FALLEN BRANCH FROM THE OLIVE TREES ON THE MOUNT ABOVE, WAS POUNCED UPON. THE WOOD-GATHERERS SPENT LONG, BACK-BREAKING HOURS AT THIS TASK, FINALLY TO CARRY THEIR HEAVY BUNDLES IN A WEARY CLIMB UP THE HILL TO THE CITY, DURING THE DIM TWILIGHT AT THE END OF DAY—THERE, TO BARGAIN WITH SOME ANXIOUS HOUSEWIFE NEEDFULL OF WOOD TO COOK THE EVENING MEAL OR TO WARM THE HOUSE AGAINST A CHILLY NIGHT!

PERHAPS THE OLIVE GROVES WERE THE BEST PLACES FOR WOOD GATHERING, ALTHOUGH IT DID MEAN A LONG TRUDGE DOWN INTO THE KIDRON VALLEY AND A HARD CLIMB UP THE MOUNT OF OLIVES TO GET THERE! BUT, WHEN THE TREES WERE PRUNED, ALL FALLEN TIMBER BELONGED TO THE WOOD-GATHERERS, FOR THIS CAME UNDER THE MOSAIC LAW OF GLEANING, AS STATED IN DEUT. 24:19-21. LIFE WAS HARD FOR THE POOR BUT AT LEAST THESE LAWS GAVE THEM SOME HELP!

NEXT WEEK: THE KING WHO CAUSED AN EARTHQUAKE!

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