



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

06-01-2015 @ 0900

**"Where Has Respect Gone?"**

Isaiah 3:1-5

### OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord! Open the eyes of my heart!  
I want to see You! I want to see You... 2X's  
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your Glory!  
Pour out Your Power and Love as we sing, "Holy! Holy! Holy!"

#### Isaiah 3:1-5

"Now the **LORD**, the Almighty Lord, is about to take away from Jerusalem and Judah everything and everyone that the people depend on. He is going to take away their food and their water, their heroes and their soldiers, their judges and their prophets, their fortunetellers and their statesmen, their military and civilian leaders, their politicians and everyone who uses magic to control events. The LORD will let the people be governed by immature boys. Everyone will take advantage of everyone else. **Young people will not respect their elders, and worthless people will not respect their superiors.**"

#### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Do you sometimes find yourself amazed and dismayed by the lack of respect so many people in our world show each other these days? Where have courtesy and manners gone?
- Can you think of young who mock their elders? Do you know elders who disparage youth? Are we respectful of people in law and politics? How often do our jokes & songs vilify them?
- Have you noticed how "slackers" seem to show the least respect to their supervisors, or the way "poor supervisors" downgrade and demean *their* bosses?

Respect is electric! When it's flowing well, both up and down the channels of a culture, such society flourishes in a "golden age". Block the flow, or channel it in just one direction, and that social order faces serious decline. The other day, an elderly lady with a walker approached a door at a local mall when a group of teenagers nearly knocked her down as they rushed for the door. As they passed her on both sides to go through the door, none of them held the door for her, but went on their way as if she didn't even exist. Sad to say, this happens far too often in our "warp-drive world". We rush on through our hours and speed through our days, loving things and using people. Respect for those who have worked hard, and paved the way for us to enjoy all we have, grows less and less as we seek to acquire more and more. Possibly due to some "bad press" generated by "the lower 1%" of their profession, many who hold positions of authority are no longer respected, but are mocked and ridiculed at every turn by those who contribute little or nothing of worth to the rest of society. We may consider this dismal situation with disapproval and frustration, wondering, "What has gone wrong with our world?" Through the Prophet Isaiah, God speaks rather clearly here, to inform us exactly where the problem lies. Once we "turn our backs" to God, the Lord allows us to "reap what we have sown!" Self-will, and self-centered pride lead to sin, anarchy, and death of reverence for God, others, and even self in the long run. Personal arrogance and social anarchy repudiate good leadership and reject respect for anyone or anything else. Instead, they replace healthy individuality with haughty individualism. Enjoyment of legitimate delights to share with others gives way to thoughtless pleasure-seeking hedonism. Self-discipline, industry, and thrift are replaced by self-indulgence, laziness, and materialism. At this point, God allows every vestige of good leadership, authority, protection, or even good examples to be taken away. God, grant us the Grace of Wise Repentance! We find our only Hope in You! Let the Word You spoke through Your Prophet Isaiah sink deep roots in our hearts, so we recognize the warning he gave ancient Israel finds ready listeners today. Enable us to return to You with our whole hearts, souls, minds, and strengths. Teach us to humble ourselves, and seek You in prayerful lives marked by willing sacrifice of self and generous service to others.



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

06-02-2015 @ 0900

**“Symptoms of Moral Decay and Spiritual Void”**

Isaiah 3:8-12

### OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART!

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord! Open the eyes of my heart!  
I want to see You! I want to see You... 2X's  
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your Glory!  
Pour out Your Power and Love as we sing, “Holy! Holy! Holy!”

### Isaiah 3:8-12

“Yes, Jerusalem is doomed! Judah is collapsing! Everything they say and do is against the LORD; they openly insult God himself! Their prejudices will be held against them. They sin as openly as the people of Sodom did. They are doomed, and they have brought it on themselves. The righteous will be happy, and things will go well for them. They will get to enjoy what they have worked for. But evil people are doomed; what they have done to others will now be done to them. Moneylenders oppress My people, and their creditors cheat them. My people, your leaders are misleading you, so that you do not know which way to turn!”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Do you sometimes feel intimidated enough in today’s world to keep silent about your faith in the public forums like schools, government facilities, or anywhere cameras might be?
- Did you ever imagine there would be a day in America, “Land of the Free and Home of the Brave”, when you could be fired for displaying a simple Bible verse at your desk?
- By contrast, can you think of people who “dare the demons” of deceit, denial, and decay to take a stand for God, regardless of the risk, reproach, or repercussion?

Illness and disease “take a bite out of life”! Bodily illness is bad enough, but soul-sickness is a much worse condition. We have physical materials to address physical disease, but what do we do when the “inner ailment” poisons minds and hearts? Some years ago, a popular song lamented, “Look What They’ve Done to My Song”; today, many concerned “believers” and “patriots” lament, “Look what they’ve done to our faith...our country!” Remember when we prided ourselves on our “freedom of speech”? Now we hear “persecution stories” on the news: a young Marine facing court martial for refusing to remove a Bible verse taped to a “government property” desk, some pastors having their sermons “vetted for hate speech”, or popular entertainers “taking heat” for voicing “Biblical teaching” on “hot button” issues. As any good medical doctor knows, symptoms indicate possible bigger, even major breakdowns of health. So the doctor begins to track those symptoms to see whether they get worse, or disappear. Not so many years ago, the entertainment industry couldn’t show a man and woman in bed together; they were always filmed in separate single beds. Then it was allowed to show them in the same bed, fully clothed in pajamas, but not touching. After some time, the censors allowed the actors to touch, with hands in appropriate areas, and only a brief kiss. As the culture demanded “artistic freedom” and “realistic portrayal”, the censors found themselves on a slippery slope. Today, there appears to be no censoring whatsoever. Isaiah’s warning to the people of God centuries ago speaks to our age much the same as it did to his. If we continue to “turn from God” in the name of “artistic realism” and “creative freedom”, our nation faces doom, and will collapse around us. God, wake us up! Let us see “moral compromise” and “spiritual surrender” for the dangers they truly are. Rather than “going along to get along”, grant us a “prophetic spirit” that calls our culture back to the spiritual values and moral principles on which our nation was founded. Teach us to draw close to You in fervent repentance, humble renewal, and willing obedience. Begin in us a new “War of Independence” that proclaims Freedom only You establish “throughout the Land”!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

06-03-2015 @ 0900

**"With Sin, There Is Never Enough!"**

Isaiah 3:13-15

### OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART!

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord! Open the eyes of my heart!  
I want to see You! I want to see You... 2X's  
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your Glory!  
Pour out Your Power and Love as we sing, "Holy! Holy! Holy!"

### Isaiah 3:13-15

"The LORD is ready to state His case; He is ready to judge His people. The LORD is bringing the elders and leaders of His people to judgment. He makes this accusation: 'You have plundered vineyards, and your houses are full of what you have taken from the poor. You have no right to crush My people and take advantage of the poor. I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, have spoken!'"

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever wondered why so many political "leaders" seem to become wealthier, while the "average people" they serve do not, and in fact, many appear *worse off* under their leadership?
- How might any of *us* be said to "plunder the wealth of our world"? Are we good stewards of our air, water, and land? Do we use electricity, fuel, and time wisely?
- How do we care responsibly for one another? Are we likely to share the goods and services we enjoy, or do we "hoard and hide" the things we acquire?

It is interesting to note just how much standards of perceived needs have changed in only 50 years. What was considered a "nice home" then will not even serve as a "starter place" in today's thinking. The closets for a family in those "homes of yesterday" can't possibly hold the amount of clothes for a couple today. As for the garage, well, if you don't have at least a two-to-three-car garage, someone's car will have to stay outside. Can you remember when a family was "lucky" to have one car, and not the three to four many do now? Our culture has convinced us that these are not mere luxuries, but *necessities*, and we must do all we can to attain *all* of these necessities! Soon we are ready and willing to "step on the competition", using all means required to obtain our precious "necessities"! Many of our houses are "storehouses", literally filled with "stuff" we called "necessities", to the point there's barely room for us! No wonder we have trouble taking care of one another. But we still insist on "keeping up with the competition"...needing more and more room for our "necessities". We are trying to fill a void that no amount of stuff will ever fill; only the Love of God can ever fill that "inner pit". But our busy environment can deafen us to the gentle, tender voice of the One who will pronounce a final thunderous Judgment we will NOT drown out. In the meantime, there are priorities we can set. If we have "turned our back" on God, now is a time we can 'repent"! (We can "re-think our priorities", or "re-set our course", to establish a new, more authentic way of life, in a new and more fruitful style.) Otherwise, we simply stay "stuck in self-gratification" that gets increasingly "addictive", because "enough" is NEVER *enough!* My "stuff" must always exceed your stuff in "quantity", "quality", or both! Stuff becomes far more important than people, and people become merely "tools" or "resources" to attain more goods, and get more services. When the Bible was still part of our school curriculum, we used to teach the golden rule in our schools: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." God, grant us the Grace to "live golden" love in imperfect times. Pure love, Your Love, is all about giving of our best to others as You give Your Best to us. True Love, Your LOVE, empowers us to do all our best to meet their need. With You alone, O God, are we enabled to go "all-in" for Pure Love! Free us of self-centered desire, so we embrace self-effacing service. Teach us authentic humanity in the example of "all-out" Love Your Word has revealed to believers through the ages!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

06-04-2015 @ 0900

**“Showy Pride and Arrogant Vanity are Un-Godly!”**

Isaiah 3:16-23

### OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART!

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord! Open the eyes of my heart!  
I want to see You! I want to see You... 2X's  
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your Glory!  
Pour out Your Power and Love as we sing, “Holy! Holy! Holy!”

#### Isaiah 3:16-23

“The LORD said, ‘Look how proud the women of Jerusalem are! They walk along with their noses in the air. They are always flirting. They take dainty little steps, and the bracelets on their ankles jingle. But I will punish them – I will shave their heads and leave them bald!’ A Day is coming when the LORD will take away from the women of Jerusalem everything they are so proud of – the ornaments they wear on their ankles, on their heads, on their necks, and on their wrists. He will take away....the rings they wear on their fingers and in their noses; ....their revealing garments, their linen handkerchiefs, and the scarves and long veils they wear on their heads.”

#### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Did you ever feel a “need to feed” your “shopping urge” because somebody else just showed off a new outfit, and you hadn’t bought a new one in at least a week or two?
- Have you ever “had to have” a new watch, even though you already had two or three at home, and one on your wrist, simply because it showed more “bling” and “flash” than your others?
- By contrast, do you know people who live much more humbly and simply, with an “attitude of gratitude”, quite content with modest home or serviceable vehicle they maintain and share?

Where in the world is the red carpet? The “latest fashions” in suits and dresses come rolling in, clearly showing off their “classy elegance” and/or “sassy style”. As they “sashay” down the aisles, one senses this must truly be a “high society event”, as different attendees clearly “stop in order to be seen”. Then you realize this is a special event...it’s a worship service. But if it is a worship service, then “who” or “what” is being worshiped? (How many of us have been guilty of walking around with our noses in the air? How many of us have clearly dressed to impress, or at least show off just a bit? Has sister so-and-so or brother such-and-such ever been the reason to buy that new outfit? Have we ever bought a new car for its “look” of power, prestige, or pleasure, rather than for its practical uses, fuel economy, or safety features?) Arrogance and pride are dangerous attitudes to allow into our souls and lives. They often arise from fear and lack of proper perspective. If we “fear” being “left out” or marginalized by the “right people”, and fail to see ourselves as “Children of the Living God”, it’s easy to be all about *us*, and *our* status, and *our* things. When *I* want to be seen...in all the “right” places...wearing all the “right” fashions...rubbing elbows with all the “right” people, this is pure vanity and useless effort if we are doing it for our advantage, and not for God’s Glory, as well as for the benefit of the “weak and bereft”...Notice Isaiah’s insistence that God has called us to service of the weak, poor, and downtrodden. Hear the Warning: God will take away all the things we treasure, because we use them to celebrate ourselves, instead of rejoicing in the Lord, and sharing that joy to rescue, encourage, and enable brothers and sisters in need. God, grant us the Grace of Pious Pride! Be for us the “Cause” of any boasting we may do, as we reflect on our unmerited blessings, and the countless signs of Divine Care on our behalf. Open our hearts and minds to Your Guidance and True Discernment. Empower us to appreciate You most of all, so we live each day with new and greater sense of Your Presence, obedient to Your Will, and delightful in Your Sight! Free us of excessive attachment to things, so we will use these gifts as You would...generously, graciously, and gladly!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

06-05-2015 @ 0900

*“Where Do We Find Genuine Hope?!”*

Isaiah 4:2-6

### OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART!

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord! Open the eyes of my heart!  
I want to see You! I want to see You... 2X's  
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your Glory!  
Pour out Your Power and Love as we sing, “Holy! Holy! Holy!”

#### Isaiah 4:2-6

“The time is coming when the **LORD** will make every plant and tree in the land grow large and beautiful. All the people of Israel who survive will take delight and pride in the crops that the land produces. Everyone who is left in Jerusalem, whom God has chosen for survival, will be called holy. By His Power, the **LORD** will judge and purify the nation, and wash away the guilt of Jerusalem, and the blood that has been shed there. Then over Mount Zion, and over all who are gathered there, the **LORD** will send a cloud in the daytime, and smoke and a bright flame at night. God’s Glory will shade the city from the heat of the day, and make it a place of safety, sheltered from the rain and storm!”

#### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Can you remember a moment a “situation of hopelessness” suddenly turned “hope-full” with absolutely no other answer but God’s Power-filled Grace and Favor?
- Have you known people who renewed your hope when the rest of the world seemed arrayed against you? What do you remember of their “encouraging words” and “helping hands”?
- How have you been a “voice of courage” to others you know? What was it like to see the “fire of hope” return to their eyes as the Grace of God flowed through your speech?

“**Holy One Prevails Eternally!**” That would make quite the headline, wouldn’t it? But God is the ultimate “Harbinger of Hope”! With spiritual sight fixed on the Lord, all things are possible. On the other hand, once we “lose sight of God”...even for a moment...it gets quite easy to see everything around us “going to Hell in a hand basket”! Loss of respect, loss of morality, loss of genuine praise, churches “selling out the Truth” to compromise for the sake of political correctness, and our own leadership on every level buying into every passing fashion and worldly whim that comes along can cause a case of severe depression. Such “negative vision” and “depressing viewpoint” assumes that God has gotten off the Throne of Grace, “fallen asleep at the Switch”, or has been somehow removed from “Control of the Cosmos” He made. Isaiah offers another perspective; God has revealed to him that He is strong enough and wise enough to work all things for our good according to His Purpose. Even when things look most desperate and bleak, God is still sovereign, working from on high. In His Time, and in His Way, God will “judge the nation”, and wash away its guilt. So when evil people and disastrous events work tragedy all around us, as “God’s children”, we may need to learn more patient endurance, employ persistent effort to recognize the Hand of God at work, and keep believing God is still in control. Not only is God “large and in charge”, but when God is done with what He is doing, our situation is always better than before. God’s Glory will shade the city, the land will produce as never before, and His people will be called “holy” as He restores them to Life in Grace. This time is coming; it may not be here at this moment, but God promised its arrival, and in this Promise, God’s people find all the hope they need to endure all the challenge and chaos they face at the moment. God, grant us the Grace of Vibrant Vision and Enduring Trust! You, as our loving Father, and “Lord of all”, are still “on the Throne and in charge”! Your Presence brings a joy that nothing earthly can conquer, and from that joy springs our hope for New Life as Your Children, O God! Empower us to trust in Your Wisdom serenely, follow Your Will obediently, and endure all that we must ‘til Your Glory dawns upon our lives. Be the Power in our peace, and the Heart of our Hope, ‘til all our world is new in You!