

## *Mt. Lebanon Church*

Adult Sunday School Lesson

11.19.2023

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Below please find my sharable thoughts, so please allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you that he would have you to see through the study of God's word to share.

A Rebuke from the Lord

### Amos 5: 14 – 15, 18 – 27

Religious practices that do not occur with Godly living are not pleasing unto God. Worship that is based upon manmade rules and rituals is not worship that is conducted in the spirit and the truth of God and his word. This means that even though there may be the sound of a true spiritual movement, there is not a love of God, which comes from true obedience, which is an obedience that brings into captivity every thought and decision into the loyalty of God. Within the body of Christ today there are those that have forgotten the true spiritual reasons behind their actions. Temptation makes it easy to maintain an outward appearance by following after manmade rules and regulations, without having any true relationship with God. Going through the motions does not help our faith to grow, nor does it help us to grow spiritually in our life in Christ. God wants to see his true righteousness shine forth from within us, he wants us to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, not with rituals of self-motivation, and worldly emotions.

**Hosea 6: 6,....**for I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings....

**Mark 7: 6 – 7,....**Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites....this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me....howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of all men....

How many commandments do we follow that does not actually come from God? These commandments are things that we do because someone else has suggested or even commanded that we do them. So, we see that it is possible to live lives that are characterized by outward forms of godliness and still have hearts that are far from God. This means that we can easily find ourselves caught up in a commitment of religious traditions, not realizing that we are being disobedient to the truth of God's word.

**Amos 5: 14 – 15,....**seek good, and not evil, that ye may live, and so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you....hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgement in the gate, it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph....

Instead of seeking God in hopes of escaping his judgement, he would rather that his people would obey him and walk in his ways. If we choose to allow God to be with us, and lead us, and guide us through his spirit, then will we succeed in our life in Christ. If we do not choose to walk in his ways, it may still seem that we have succeeded, and if we do succeed, it will be of no eternal value. As Christians we can have a false impression that God is with us, due to material prosperity, when in fact material prosperity often time can make it difficult for us to see our need for forgiveness, because we are constantly tempted to confuse material prosperity with Gods favor and mercy. So how do we make sure that we are hating the evil and doing that which is good in Gods sight? By continually seeking the goodness of God we will begin to see life's troubles as blessing. When we, as believers, allow the leadership of the spirit to change our values, it is then that those changed values will change our spiritual behavior.

**Romans 8: 5 – 6,....**for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit....for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace....

As Christians, we do not often realize that seeking after our own desires, no matter how religiously traditional that they are, will lead to an empty pursuit that can never satisfy our spiritual hunger. What does it mean to keep our mindset on spiritual things? It means, that in the midst of everything that is happening in our life, our primary concern should be in showing Gods love to others and helping others, and we do this by speaking the truth of God's word, and by loving God unconditionally while seeking and glorifying him. With our mindset on the spirit of God, then everything that we see, we will see from Gods point of view.

**Amos 5: 18 – 24,....**woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord....shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light? I hate, I despise....I will not smell....though ye offer me....offerings, I will not accept them....take thou away from me the noise of the songs....let judgement run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream....

As Christians, we cannot just assume that our life will be blessing after blessing from God, for if we do, we will find ourselves facing situations and circumstances in our life that we will end up running from. The problem with running from these circumstances, is that usually when we run from one, we run right into another one. When we do this, we are rejecting God, and rejecting God means that we will not be accepted by him. For this reason, instead of confessing our sins unto him, and asking for forgiveness, we turn to religious rituals and traditions in order to try to please God. These practices, which are falsely presented unto God, fail to accomplish anything in his sight, therefore, that which we thought would be pleasing unto God and bring his blessings upon us, only hinders our relationship with him. God is more interested in the condition of a man's heart, then he is in the falsely presented performances of religious practices. Instead of self-righteous actions, God wants to see the righteousness that we do through our actions of godly living.

**Ezekiel 33: 31,....**they come unto thee as people cometh....they sit before thee as my people....they hear the words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness....

**1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 3,....**though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal....

Our portrayal of even the most impressive spiritual gifts is pointless if we are exercising them without the love of God. No matter how impressive the display of religious practices may be, they are nothing but distasteful noises when they are practiced without glorifying God and showing his love for others. There are those in the body of Christ, who speak with knowledge, but their knowledge comes from a source not sanctioned by God. Yes, this means that it is possible to use the characteristics and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which God has given unto us, and yet not have the love of God in it. Achievements in our life are nothing without the love of God.

**Romans 9: 3,....**for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren..

What does it mean to have the genuine love of God within us? Even though it is not possible to be separated from the love of God, for nothing can separate from Gods love, we should feel so strongly about Gods love for others, that we would be willing to trade our own eternal place in Gods family for the chance to see all others trust in Christ and become permanently justified before God.

**Amos 5: 25 – 27,....**have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings....ye have borne your images....which ye have made to yourselves....therefore I will cause you to go into captivity....saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts....

So, are we truly offering praise and worship unto God through the actions of our salvation or are we just going through the motions of religious rituals and practices. Pretending to worship through the love of God never has and never will fool God. True faith has the works of God's love within it.

**James 2: 7,....**even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone....

Let us Pray.

If anyone has any questions, comments or would just like to discuss any of the scriptures, feel free to call, text or email me. Keep praying for each other and all the God lays upon your heart. Hope to see everyone soon. God Bless.

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