

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

Faking

It

Doesn't

Work

Isaiah 1:10-17

Lesson Three

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

Faking It Doesn't Work

Our verses for today tell us that God wants us to be honest in our worship and in doing good. Read Isaiah 1:10-17.

This oracle, or word from God, was probably given by Isaiah during one of the great religious celebrations in Jerusalem. It must have been when the Temple was full of people offering their sacrifices and praying their prayers. They were acting as if this was important to them and that they were coming to God with humility and honesty. But the prophet saw something else. God opened his eyes and Isaiah saw past the visible and saw the hearts of the people.

The people of Judah thought that all God wanted from them was to show up at the right time, with the right offering, saying the prayers that someone had taught them and they would be pleasing the God who brought them out of slavery and gave them the land in which they lived.

What they didn't understand, or didn't want to understand, was that the offering and prayers for forgiveness were just the beginning. They didn't try to live good moral lives or try to treat others with fairness, which is the next step.

In a similar prophecy, Jeremiah quoted God as saying, this is what I commanded your fathers, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be my people; and you will walk in all the ways which I command you, that it may be well with you." (Jeremiah 7:21, 22)

The oracle is addressed to the rulers and people of Sodom and Gomorrah. (verse 10) Now, we know that both cities had been destroyed by God, way back in Abraham's time. Isaiah is using the names of these cities; a lot of people did in those days. They were the symbol of evil. When you mentioned Sodom and Gomorrah, you were talking about places of sin and ignorance of God.

God then tells them that their offerings are of no value to Him. He has had enough. There were *burnt offerings* where the whole sacrifice was burned, nothing left over. Then there were the *peace offerings* where the people making the offering and the priests were allowed to eat the lean meat, and the fat and blood were burned for God. God said that He had enough.

It sounds like God saw the people bringing too many offerings expecting to overwhelm God with their sacrifices. They just assumed that if some offerings were good, many would be even

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better. So they were probably surprised to hear Isaiah tell them that God was insulted by their behavior...that He wanted no more.

God pointed out specifically what was bothering Him: too many sacrificial offerings, mob scenes at the Temple (trampling of my courts), incense, special days (New moons, Sabbaths, and grand celebrations (convocations, evil assemblies, festivals, appointed feasts). God said that He was just bored with it all. (verses 13, 14)

Then He said that when they prayed He was going to ignore them. He said that even if they prayed and prayed, piling prayer on top of prayer, He was not going to listen. He said that the hands they held up in prayer were covered with blood. Most of the people would not consider themselves to be murders, but God saw them as guilty of hurting others, as we shall see later.

So, in verses sixteen and seventeen, God lists seven things that Israel must do. Wash yourselves: something that was done mentally. It was being sorry for their sins. He said quit doing evil and be doing good. In describing what it means to do good, He said seek justice: be honest and fair. He said, encourage the oppressed: which might be better understood as scold those who mistreat people, especially the poor or helpless. He said defend those who are orphans, and He said take sides with those who are widows.

Now, this might seem to be a message for some people who lived a long time ago and in a far off place. People today don't offer burnt offerings. But, can we see some other things that do apply to us now?

We do go to church which could be considered equal to what they were doing when they offered sacrifices. We do pray. We do evil. We don't do good as much as we could. Do we seek fairness for everyone? Well, you get the point. There are some people who substitute going to church all the time for doing God's will all the time. Those seven things God listed for Israel apply right now...to us. If we do those things, we won't be faking it.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

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Scripture Memory: "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:17

Lesson Goal: To let students see that God doesn't approve of faking it.

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Student Worksheet

Faking It Doesn't Work, Isaiah 1:10-17

As the teacher goes through the lesson, look for answers to these:

1. What didn't the people of Israel understand about sacrifices and prayers?
2. What does Jeremiah 7:21, 22 say?
3. What are the seven things that God said Israel must do?

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How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.