

Crooked Road September 2020

Isaiah 59: 1-15

Let us pray, Dear Lord, may the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing to you. Amen

I'd like to highlight a few passages from this morning's lesson that Larry just read from the book of Isaiah.

And I'd like you to consider the following excerpts:

“ your iniquities have been barriers
between you and your God,”

“your lips have spoken lies,
your tongue mutters wickedness.”

“no one goes to law honestly;
they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies,”

“Their feet run to evil,
and they rush to shed innocent blood;”

“The way of peace they do not know,
and there is no justice in their paths.”

“Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not reach us;”

“We wait for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us.”

“truth stumbles in the public square,”

“Truth is lacking,”

The old maxim...truthfulness...the uncompromised truth.

Proverbs 23:23 tells us to “Buy truth and do not sell it”

One of the paths to peace.

But who’s interested in buying the truth?

It’s not a very popular item these days.

It’s not in great demand...few seem to be seeking it.

And what’s worse...(pause) no one seems to care.

Falsehood appears to be a way of life.

I’m not sure we even consider it wrong.

I not sure that we can recognize the truth today, or where to find it!

Truth is so distorted...it’s difficult to find in a pure state.

So we have degrees of truth.

All things seem to be polluted today...even the truth.

Isaiah says: “Truth is lacking”...

“We conceive lying words from the heart”

So, not only do we lie...but we lie with sincerity and conviction.

As with Isaiah’s people, we are surly and steadily,

slipping away from speaking the truth.

We continue to stray from truthfulness....telling the truth...

speaking the truth...knowing the truth...recognizing the truth...

respecting the truth.

We are so comfortable with falseness...we can't recognize the truth!

Perhaps, respect is the key thought here.

Truthfulness or being truthful is not in vogue,

it's not fashionable...it's not "in"...it's not popular.

"We have made all our roads crooked" verse 8

"The truth is lacking" verse 15

(Pause) NOBODY REALLY TALKS ABOUT TRUTH...

There's no hunger...no thirst for the truth.

I'm not sure our children are taught the values of truthfulness.

Are they taught it's wrong to tell lies?

Does anyone get their mouth washed out w soap?

Truthfulness seems to have lost its virtue...

its value...its importance...its respect.

We are not naturally inclined to speak truth.

Truthfulness is no longer the natural, automatic way.

We exist in a world of lies...a world of falseness...

a society of untruths or half-truths.

And when the masses cry out, (as a justification for lying)

"But everybody's doing it!!"

They're not kidding!

It's as if lying & injustice has become a way of life!

Isaiah says: “truth has stumbled in the public square and uprightness cannot enter.”

(Pause) Can anyone be taken at his word today?

Can we believe the politicians? Can we believe judges?

Businessmen? Tradesmen? Our neighbors?

Can we believe the media? I

Fox news & CNN describe the exact same story (2) different ways.

Who do we believe?

Can we believe social media?

Can we believe advertisements for products that will make wrinkles go away?

Can we trust the product?

Can we trust medicine? Packaged foods?

(pause) Can we believe anything we hear or read?

We are riddled with skepticism and doubts.

We don't take anyone at their word today.

We're not sure if we can believe anybody or anything.

Who can we trust? Who can we believe?

(Pause) this is the price we pay for lies.

A world filled with uncertainties. A world filled with questions.

No one knows where they stand.

(Pause) With the fall of truthfulness...comes the fall of society and all its institutions: Government...law & order...justice.

Marriage and the family can't survive without truthfulness.

Our justice system can't endure without truthfulness.

Business, science, education, medicine...

can't advance without truthfulness.

No institution can long endure based on lies, deceit and falseness.

(Pause) In this struggle...In this conflict between truth and falseness:

I'm not able to see truth winning.

Who can we trust today? Who or what can we believe?

Who can we take at their word? Will a hand shake do?

Show me a person who speaks only the truth...

Show me an honest upright profession.

Isaiah says: "Truth stumbles in the public square and uprightness cannot enter."

This is where we are...Truth is lost in the wilderness of lies.

Truth is unable to breakthrough into the light.

Truth has fallen and it can't get up.

There is no room at the Inn for truth!

Isaiah presents a true image of our situation:

“we look for light but there is darkness, we look for brightness, but we walk in gloom”

We look for truth, but behold lies!

This darkness seems to be ever increasing.

It’s difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Isaiah continues:

“we grope like the blind along a wall, groping like those who have no eyes.”

We grope for truth, but we have no eyes.

We no longer see truth.

We no longer understand truth.

We no longer recognize truth

We no longer speak the truth.

(Pause) the value, the importance of the truth is shrouded in darkness

& we stumble about: our political leaders...our marriages..

our businesses...our cities.

(Pause) things have gotten so out of hand, that the truthful person,

can end up being attacked or put down.

When it becomes unsafe to stand for the truth,

we have reached a very low and dangerous point!

At the end of our lesson,

Isaiah says: “Truth is lacking and whoever turns from evil is despoiled.”

So Isaiah is saying:

When you depart from evil...when you depart from falseness and lies-

You can be shot down...literally.

(pause) Somehow...sometime...someday...the value, the importance of the truth will be seen and people will “buy the truth”.

We need to sell the truth...especially to our youth.

Someday, we will work our way back to the light;

Our eyes will be opened & we'll see the basic need for truth, the value of truth.

(Pause) For without truth...there is no progress

Without truth there is no hope...no future. The end is chaos.

(pause) “ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, **full of grace and truth.**”

John 1:14

We need a family, a society, a people that are full of “grace & truth”!

We need to teach truth, expect truth...demand truth.

Proverbs 23 reminds us “Buy truth and never sell it”

Never compromise the truth...never be afraid of it.

Seek truth.

Teach the importance of truth.

Help to bring light into our darkness.

Help to straighten our crooked road.

Amen.

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