

Standing in the Gap

by Joshua Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the urgent need for individuals to stand in the gap through prayer and integrity in the face of societal abominations.

Scripture: Ezekiel 22:1-30

Topics: "Repentance And Prayer", "Moral Integrity"

Description

Joshua Daniel preaches on the importance of recognizing and repenting from our abominations as highlighted in Ezekiel 22:1-2. He emphasizes how God detests pride, shedding of innocent blood, idolatry, and mistreatment of the vulnerable. Daniel urges believers to stand in the gap through prayer and intercession, emphasizing the need for integrity, holiness, and unwavering commitment to God's standards in a world filled with moral decay and compromise.

Transcript

Dear friends, it is very important to absorb what we have received. I have got a very big text today. That is Ezekiel 22:1,2. God opened my heart to understand a little of this scripture. "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? Yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations." You see what did God say? "Declare unto her all her abominations." Everybody wants to know, "Where is the source of infection and what is the germ that is causing the infection?" - that is the question of doctors and medical specialists. But people do not like to know their abominations. God says a high look and a proud heart are an abomination to the Lord. It is amazing that so many of us do not realize what our abominations are. It took a prophet to point this out to the people of Israel. First of all God said, the city hath shed blood in the midst of it. Which city is there today where there is no abortion in a large scale! They have been trying to enforce a law, but I doubt they will be able to do it. Especially in some parts of India when they discover that it is going to be a girl baby they go in for abortion. In China you cannot enforce such a law. We see today murder has become a common place. Now that is only one way to shed blood.

We see the shedding of blood in the first family. That shows murder is very close to the heart of man. Bitterness, ill will, breaks out into hatred and murder. And the Lord says, "This city maketh idols against herself to defile herself." Idol making is a very big business in India and South East Asia also. And some of these foolish tourists take these idols and keep them in their mantle-piece. And then they get psychic diseases. They do not realise that there are evil spirits behind these idols. God says, "Thou hast become

guilty of the blood thou hast shed." Therefore God says, "I will make you a reproach amongst the heathen and a mocking to all the countries."

Many years ago, when our magazines were in their infancy, the Telegu "Christ is Victor" was being printed in a big commercial street. Looking at the title one of them said, "Where is Christ reigning? Where is He victorious?" As I pondered on these words, I felt a deep hurt. Yes, "Where is your Christ victorious? Is He the victorious one in your heart?" Of course, that is the first place where the victory of the Lord should be manifested--Victory in your thoughts! Victory in your prayer life! Then following that, victory should be manifested around you. God says, "You will become a reproach unto the heathen and a mocking to all the countries." Verse 7, "In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of these have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow." "In thee have they set light by father and mother." Amazing that God took note of it as an abomination. "You have made light your father and mother." God says, "Honour father and mother! But you made light of your father and mother." Today people feel when you are seventeen or eighteen, you do not have to listen to your father or mother. The house is reduced to a hotel. The son, the daughter come in when they please, go out when they like. They do not want to be asked. In our home we had to be in the family prayer which my mother took for us at 6:30 a.m. and at 9:30 p.m. my father used to take the family prayer. There was nothing formal about our family prayer. It was very meaningful. It spoke to our hearts. I cannot remember in anyway, despising the word of my father. I feared him as a "man of God" and when I went against his word, of course, I found the effect of it. "In thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger. In thee have they vexed the fatherless and widow. It is very easy to oppress a stranger. He does not know the roads, he does not know how things go on in that country. Taximen can take you round and round to hike the fare. In some places in the world they do not like strangers. They despise strangers.

"You have oppressed the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow." It is amazing what widows suffer! They are oppressed by their own children who take advantage of the absence of the father. Close relatives would like to grab their property. God says, "I am the God of the fatherless and the widow." And you and I, if we love God, we will help the widows. The fatherless should be treated very specially amongst us. Verse. 8, "Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths." How many people told me that the choir from behind drink the wine for communion. Holy things - holy vows, the vows you have made unto God! Today nothing is held holy. God attaches great importance to that one day, which He has fixed as a "Day of worship and rest." Amongst these abominations God says, "Look, you have profaned my sabbaths." We claim, "We are very busy." They have made God's day a day of pleasure. So on Monday they are very tired. How different are God's children! On Monday they are fresh, they are renewed, they are full of God's thoughts. How different, when you have spent one day for God. In the New Testament it is called the "The Lord's day." Verses 10-12, "Thou hast taken usury." People feel they can lend on interest because if they had borrowed from a bank they would have paid interest anyway. God does not want that kind of oppression. It is the oppression of a poor man. Verse 28, "Her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar." God is speaking about the prophets. Suppose there is a crack in one of these columns and the crack gets bigger and I take some mortar and just fill it up. What am I doing? I am just covering up. What is the work of a prophet? To reach out those things which destroys you which destroys your family and warn you. If one wants gain, if one wants to be popular, you just cover up. It is very dangerous to do so. That is what God says.

Verse 30, "... I sought for a man to stand in the gap before me, but I found none." Now, that is a very tragic state. Religion, religion, religion, everywhere we see religion. But when there is a gap, who will stand in

the gap? You have heard of a little Dutch boy on his way from school saw a little gap in the "dyke" in Holland. The little hole would soon grow large and bring the sea pouring in and flood the town. The boy put his little finger to stop the trickle till help came. Recently there was a great disaster in Chicago. They discovered a crack in the underground system of tunnels. It was a potential crack which could bring the river in. Tenders were called. An Engineer wanted \$10,000 and it was considered too much. Time was lost in settling the price. Suddenly the flood burst. Unimaginable! The city was nearly paralysed. The centre of the city, the commercial district of the city got covered up by the flood. Loss per day ran into millions. People could not go to work. Streets and even buildings were flooded too. It was a disaster, enormous disaster. Why? One man hesitated to stand in the gap. Immediately they removed that man in charge of that department. What does God say? Because of these abominations, there is a gap. I am looking for one man, one woman who will stand in the gap, and who will pray through, who will pay the price of victory.

"I looked for one man, but I saw none." I think it is very much the situation today. You say, "I am serving the Lord, I am working hard." But then, prayer life is neglected. And what are you doing? You cannot stand in the gap. Some people are surprised by our marriage vows. In Switzerland recently there was a marriage. Some people could not understand. What are these vows? "...of holiness, chastity and integrity." At a time like this when the flood is breaking in ready to destroy our families, ready to wash out our integrity, do you want your dyke to be strong, or do you want to water down the Fellowship and let it be just washed away? "I sought for a man." Today preachers have given up their standards, have let down their standards. People say, "Hey, this fellow is a fine preacher, but he does not live it." We do not want such Christian preachers. Whom does God want? God wants a man to stand in the gap. It may be hard, but just hold fast to the gap. You are endangering lives if you run away from that gap. 31st verse follows, "Therefore I have poured out my indignation on them..." Why? Because there is nobody to supplicate on their behalf. Daniel prayed, "Both I and my fathers have sinned. Confusion of face belongeth to us." What was the result of that prayer? They were delivered from Babylon and returned to their country. There should be this outcome to our prayer.

We see people bound by superstition. That is all the religion they know. They say those prayers, go through those rituals. They think they are sure of a place in heaven. We have to stand in the gap for such. We have not stood in the gap and won police officers and politicians. We have not succeeded in bringing ministers to hear the Word of God. When Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was out of office, I had two or three days in Delhi. I felt, I can go and see Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. But I never took that opportunity. Have I got a chance to see him now to tell him, "The vacuum in my life only the Lord Jesus could fill?" Recently I was travelling with a Singapore Minister's wife. I was able to talk with her the things of God. Look here friends, just because we do not have the zeal, the love, the enterprise, we are not standing in the gap. We do not have the prayer. Therefore we do not have the love. And because of that how many millions of people are without the light. They will also go eventually under the judgment of God. "I look for a man!"

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