

Study Notes - Seeking God

by Walter Beuttler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of actively seeking God and understanding the consequences of neglecting this pursuit.

Scripture: Psalm 9:10, Isaiah 55:6, Amos 5:5, Zephaniah 1:4, Luke 11:9, John 6:44, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

Topics: "Seeking God", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on God's complaint about those who turn back, do not seek, and do not inquire for Him, emphasizing the consequences of forsaking God and the failure to respond to His discipline. He highlights God's desire for man to seek Him, pointing out that man is dependent on God to have a desire for Him, and the promises God gives to those who seek Him. Beuttler also discusses man's need for God, the act of forsaking God through disobedience, and the guiding principles and prerequisites for a successful seeking of God.

Transcript

A. GOD'S COMPLAINT

1. In Zeph. 1:4-6 God complains about three classes of people. Point out these classes and suggest an illustrative example for each:

(1) "Them that are turned back from the Lord," e. g., such as those who:

a. Draw back from God, Heb. 10:38

b. Turn away from God, Heb. 12:25

c. Fall away from God, Heb. 6:6

(2) "Those that have not sought the Lord, e.g., such as those who:

a. Do not even miss him, Jer. 2:1-8

b. Have forgotten him, Jer. 2:32

c. Have other interests, Jer. 2:13

(3) "Those who have not enquired for him, e.g., such as those who:

- a. Became weary of God, Isa. 43:22, 24a
- b. Are glad to be away from God, Jer. 2:31
- c. Do not say "where is the Lord," Jer. 2:6

2. Note God's complaints in:

- (1) Amos 5:5-6 - Failure to seek the God of the house instead of the house of God
- (2) Isa. 31:1 - Failure to put confidence in God and seeking him instead of turning to the resources and methods of the world
- (3) Isa. 9:13 - Failure to respond to discipline by turning and seeking God
- (4) Hosea 7:10 - Failure to return and seek God notwithstanding the consequences of forsaking God
- (5) Psalms 10:4 - Failure of man to seek God through wilful refusal of the "pride of his countenance," i.e., a snobbish attitude
- (6) II Chron. 32:25 - Failure to render unto God according to the benefits bestowed by God
- (7) Isa. 30:15 - Failure to return to God notwithstanding the assurance of his promises
- (8) Isa. 64:7 - Failure of men to stir themselves to seek the Lord instead of remaining in a state of indifference and lethargy

B. GOD'S DESIRE FOR MAN

1. Note how God looks for man to seek him as seen in:

- (1) Psalms 53:2-3 - God looks down from heaven to see if any understand God's desire for man to seek him and give evidence of this seeking by acts of righteousness, Isa. 32:17; Acts 10:35
- (2) Hosea 5:15 - God waits for man to acknowledge his offense and seek his face
- (3) Amos 5:8 - God invites man to seek him and emphasizes his omnipotence as an incentive for man to respond to the invitation

2. What is apparent from:

- (1) John 6:44? That man is dependent upon God to give him

a desire to seek God showing that:

- a. Fallen man is by nature without any desire for God and has no ability to come to God without divine aid
- b. Any desire for God necessarily originates in God and constitutes a divine assurance of its fulfillment if there is an adequate response by man

(2) Isa. 44:3? That there is a relationship between the extent of God's response and the degree of man's awareness of his need

(3) II Chron. 15:2? That God's attitude toward man is determined by man's attitude toward God

(4) Ecc. 2:1-11? That there is no satisfactory substitute for God

(5) Ezra 8:22? That failure to seek God is equivalent to forsaking God, I Chron. 28:9

(6) Jer. 2:19? That the consequences of forsaking God are both evil and bitter

(7) Isa. 45:19? That God will not be sought in vain, for when he exhorts man to seek him he intends to let himself be found, Jer. 29:13-14

3. Note the promises of God to those who seek him in:

(1) Psa. 9:10 - He will not forsake them

(2) Lam. 3:25 - He will manifest his goodness to them

(3) Zeph. 2:3 - He will preserve them

(4) II Chron. 20:4 - He will give help (20:20-25)

(5) II Chron. 14:7 - He will give rest from the oppression of the enemy, II Chron. 15:3-15; Isa. 59:19

(6) Psa. 34:4 - He will give deliverance from all fears of every kind

(7) Deut. 4:29-31 - He will show mercy for past failings and be true to his covenant

(8) Prov. 28:5 - He will grant understanding in God's judgments

4. Of what is man assured in James 4:8? That if he will draw nigh to God with a true heart, God will assuredly draw nigh to him

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD

A. MAN'S NEED OF GOD

1. What is evident from:

(1) Isa. 55:0? That there is a time of opportunity to seek God, but this opportunity is limited (Luke 13:24-25)

(2) Jer. 29:13? God will be found by seeking man when God takes first place in his heart

(3) Prov. 1:23-27? Seeking God involves a response in deed as a necessary consequence of a response in heart

(4) Prov. 1:28-30? Refusal to respond to God in time of opportunity may bring a consequent silence of God in time of need

(5) Isa. 65:1-2? God might give to others the opportunity which we reject

2. Note David's desire for God in Psa. 27:8 as given in another rendering: "My heart said unto thee, let my face seek thy face."

B. FORSAKING GOD

1. How is man seen to be forsaking God in I Sam. 8:8? By his works, i.e., by the things he does contrary to the laws and ways of God

2. Point out from the following scriptures how man forsakes God:

(1) Psa. 89:30 - By forsaking the law of God

(2) II Kings 10:31 - By failure to walk in the law of the Lord

(3) Isa. 5:24 - By casting away God's law

(4) Amos 2:4 - By despising the law of the Lord

(5) Prov. 3:1 - By forgetting the law of the Lord

(6) Jer. 44:10 - By not fearing the law of God

3. Comment on II Chron. 16:12-13: Asa did not die simply because he sought to the physicians, but because he failed to repent for the sins which were the cause of his disease and refused to turn back to God whom he had forsaken

C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Point out the essence of the following passages:

(1) II Chron. 34:1-3 - A truly seeking heart will abandon its idolatries, i.e., those things which compete with God and relegate him into a secondary position

(2) Psa. 9:10 - Seeking God equates trust in God

(3) Psa. 63:1 - A* seeking heart gives God priority over other things, Prov. 8:17; Psa. 78:34

(4) Hosea 5:15c - There are those who will seek God only under the pressure of affliction

(5) Ex. 33:7 - Those, who really want to seek God will not permit inconveniences to stand in their way

(6) I Chron. 15:13 - The Lord must be sought in the due order of his ways, e.g., Zech. 7:1-7; Jas. 5:16; II Kings 5:1-14

(7) Isa. 58:2 - True seeking of God is not the mere formality of a religious procedure

(8) Jer. 3:10 - True seeking of God is not making a mere outward show without an inward change of heart, Isa. 29:13

2. What do the following show?

(1) II Chron. 12:14 - That failure to seek God constitutes evil doing in the sight of God

(2) Isa. 34:16 - Seeking God includes seeking him in "the book of the Lord" with understanding, Neh. 8:7-8, and compliance therewith, II Chron. 14:4; II Kings 22:8, 10-20

(3) S. S. 3:1-4 - That a successful seeking of God may require going beyond the efforts of others

(4) S. S. 5:2-7 - The unhappy results of failing to respond to his approach

D. PREREQUISITES

1. List the conditions necessary to a successful seeking of God as seen in:

(1) Heb. 11:6 - Faith which believes that God exists in fact and that he will reward the diligent seeker, Psa. 34:22

(2) I John 3:21 - Confidence of heart which necessitates a clean conscience, Heb. 10:22; a sanctified life, Heb. 10:22; and an obedient walk, I John 3:22

(3) II Chron. 19:3 - Preparation, by which the heart prepares itself through alignment with the ways and laws of God, II Chron. 20:33; 30:18-19; 27:6; Psa. 84:11; 50:23

(4) II Chron. 33:10-13 - Humiliation before God, II Chron. 36:12-13, 16

(5) Ezra 6:21 - Separation from worldly filthiness, II Cor. 7:1

(6) Jer. 29:13 - Wholeheartedness, II Chron. 15:15, which excludes the half-heartedness of divided interests, Psa. 119:2

(7) I Chron. 22:19 - Determination in which the heart maintains an unwavering posture toward God, II Chron. 11:16; 20:3

(8) Lam. 3:21-24 - Confidence in the unfailing mercies and compassions of God

(9) Lam. 3:25-26 - Patience, awaiting the response of God in quiet confidence and hopeful expectation, Psa. 62:5; Heb. 10:35-36

(10) Hosea 10:12 - Endurance, "till he come," i.e., until that for which he is sought be accomplished, Prov. 8:34; James 5:11

(11) Luke 11:9-10 - Importunity which petitions God for the thing desired, awaits the answer with confident expectancy and maintains this attitude with an insistent persistence that refuses to take a seeming "no" for an answer

2. What may be observed from:

(1) S. S. 3:4? That it is one thing to find him, but another thing to hold him

(2) II Chron. 26:3-5? That the seeking of God is not a temporary expediency, but a continuing necessity, II Chron. 26:7, 15; II Kings 18:5-7

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