

Series: Isaiah
Title: Set Thine House in Order
Text: Isaiah 38: 1
Date: December 28, 2014
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Isaiah 38: 1: In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

Two weeks ago, as I was flying back from Mexico, while in the Houston airport, I called my dad. I was calling just to talk like I have done so many times before. But this time, my dad told me that his doctor had just told him that he had colon cancer.

The news consumed me so much that I sat at the gate, watched my plane board and fly away, and did not even realize it was my plane. But if I was that shaken by news that did not even concern my own life, I thought how alarming it was for my dad to hear the doctor's report. We have brethren, family and friends, who have received this news. My grandfather said that when the doctors told him his cancer had come back, his hands began to tremble uncontrollably. You simply do not know how surprising and how shocking this kind of news is until you receive it.

Imagine this report coming to you, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live." Sinner, this is true of you right now. Now is the time to heed this word. Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.

YOU SHALL DIE AND NOT LIVE

None of us know when we may get this news from a physician. It does not matter how old or how young you may be. While in college my best friend was 20 years old when the doctors told him he had cancer. We had plans for that weekend. Instead, when the weekend came my friend was in surgery having his lymph nodes removed. For months, I sat by his bed and watched this young man, who was strong as an ox, become weaker and weaker till he couldn't even get out of bed. This news comes to the young, as well as the aged.

My house and your house is a dying house. Sin causes us to begin dying the moment we are born. It is uncontrollable. We can eat right, exercise and use every anti-aging product under the sun, still, the skin wrinkles, our hair begins to fall out, our minds become more and more forgetful, our bones become weaker. Why? It is all proof that sin is what we are. We live in a house of dust and to the dust it shall return. Try to deny you are a sinner—your very body proves you a liar.

GOD OWNS OUR HOUSE

My house and your house—our life and our body—belongs to God. God spoke us into existence. Our life and strength is given and held in store by God; our mind operates our members because God keeps our mind operating properly. God provides us food and God makes food nourish our bodies; God maintains our life and body.

The only thing God has to do is turn his hand from maintaining our mortal houses and we shall die. And God has set the hour when each one of us shall die, "**sinner, you shall die and not live.**" And to ignore God's warning and God's gospel is to rebel against God, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." (Is 1: 2)

Have you ever owned a dog that would not heed a single command you gave; instead, he tried to bite you as you fed him; he tore up your property; he could not be tamed? We get rid of such a crazy brute. The sinner who will not consider that we owe all to God, the sinner who curses God's name, the sinner who rejects God's gospel is worse than a crazed, wild, brute beast. God says, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Is 1: 3) "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed

times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.” (Jer 8: 7)

We have heard God use his preacher to declare repeatedly, “Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die and not live.” But isn’t it amazing that when God uses a physician to give us that news, we are so surprised and shocked? Sinner, thou shalt die and not live. We all know our house is mortal. So why would we ignore and put it out of our minds?

It is a dishonest man who would rent a house then leave it to the landlord in disrepair. An honest man will set the house in order. You and I are only renting this house. God owns it. How will we return our house to its rightful owner?

AFTER THIS LIFE IS ETERNITY

This life is not the end. We all will spend eternity somewhere glorifying God: either glorifying his grace for saving us or glorifying his justice for justly condemning us.

Some of you are already making plans for where you will spend your spring and summer break next year. Others have spent their lives preparing for how and where they will spend our retirement years. “Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” (Ja 4: 14)

Ye, we all know—thou shalt die and not live. But who is making plans for where they will spend eternity? Sons and daughters, if you found out your father or mother received news from physician that they had cancer and would soon die, would it comfort you to know that they had spent their time wisely, to know the Lord Jesus, to rest in him, so as to have a good hope? What about you? How have you spent your time? Oh, that God would “teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.” (Ps 90: 12)

SET THINE HOUSE IN ORDER

God says to you and me right now, “Set thine house in order.” The only way to set our house in order is to come to Christ in our hearts, believing on him. Christ is the great Physician. He put away the sin of his people and established us in righteousness; he makes his child the righteousness of God in him; he gives the new heart making his child willing in the day of his power.

He speaks in power into our new heart, saying, “diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God,..and do that which is right in his sight.” (Ex 15: 26) What is his will? What is right in his sight? Some men asked the Lord Jesus that question, “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (Jn 6: 29) “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (Jn 6: 40)

Has Christ made you willing? Has he commanded you, declaring that the will of God is for his people to rest in Christ? He says, “*I am* the LORD that healeth thee.” (Ex 15:26)

NOW IS THE TIME TO SET THINE HOUSE IN ORDER

Many young people have thought, oh, I will seek the Lord in my older years. But they never lived to see their older years. God says, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” (Ecc 12: 1) “Now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.” (Col 6: 2)

Our sins separated us from God that he would not hear. But God’s eternal election of grace has opened the door for a very great multitude. Christ has redeemed a number that no man can number. Are you one among that number?

This is the day of grace. Right now, the Lord is near. He is now sending forth this gospel; he is now calling out those that he has loved from everlasting. God says, “And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.” (Jer 24: 7)

Has God given you a new heart, a whole heart that desires him? Is he making this call effectual in your whole heart? He says, “ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” (Jer 29: 13) He says, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:” (Is 55: 6) If we love him and seek him, it is because he first loved us and sought us. And he says to all who seek him, “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.” (Pro 8: 17)

NO QUALIFICATION BUT TO BE A SINNER

Never imagine that Christ’s gospel is for you to wait for some qualification in you. There is nothing in us to qualify us. The Lord Jesus said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Ma 2: 17)

Christ says if you are sinner, with no hope, except Christ and his Righteousness then you are qualified. Come to him alone; come with faith in your heart; come empty handed, with no works of your own; and “Come now! seek me early and you shall find me.”

YOU MUST DO THE SETTING

Read the text carefully. “Set THINE HOUSE in order.” Do not be concerned with setting other people’s house in order—set YOUR house in order. You are to do it—it is your house to set in order. The preacher or a vain priest cannot and is not to do it. Mom and dad cannot do it and must not attempt to do so. Your friends cannot do it. You yourself must go to Christ who alone can set all in order for you. If you need oil for your lamp, you must go to him that has the oil; your fellow-virgins cannot give you their oil.

Our chief business for being in this earth is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by fleeing to him to set our house in order. Only Christ can put away our sins; only Christ can purge our conscience from dead works to serve him; only Christ can make us the righteousness of God; only Christ can present us spotless to holy God.

A DAY TOO LATE OR A DAY TOO ANTICIPATE?

There is coming a day when it will be too late. Christ is the Master of the house. He says,

Luke 13: 25: When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27: But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

But for those God makes to be wise in heart, to seek Christ while he may be found, he says,

2 Corinthians 5: 1: We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an *house* not made with hands, eternal in the heavens....5: Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6: Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8: We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9: Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done*

in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Friends, you do not want to labor to be accepted by your own works when you appear before the judgment seat of Christ? Then how do we labor to be accepted?

Philippians 3: 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12: Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ is the one we desire to be found in. Christ is mark we press toward. Sinner, set thine house in order—flee to Christ now, rest in Christ now—for concerning this earthly house, thou shalt die and not live. But if we be found in Christ in that day, we shall live forevermore. This is the best part, we shall live with the Lord Jesus himself, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together!” (Rom 8: 17) May God give you grace to heed this word!

Amen!