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Secular Vs. Godly Worship

Jeremiah 26: 1-17, 10-15

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“Thus saith the Lord; Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.”

How important is it for you to come to church? Are you a willing listener to the word of God? Do you have the willingness to hear the Almighty speaking to you through His Word brought to life in Jesus Christ? It's not always easy to sit in the pews nor is it always comfortable to stand before a congregation. God's word is for us all.

If we remember back, to the beginning of the book of Jeremiah, we will recall that Jeremiah wasn't overly excited to be chosen as a prophet of God. He doubted his ability to be a spokesman for God and the times were dangerous for any who would attempt to do so. The last time the people had heard from God was through the prophet Isaiah who had died 30 years prior. So by the time Jeremiah was born three decades had passed where God did not speak. And during this thirty-year period of time, false prophets were out in abundance, preaching peace to a wicked people who, instead, really needed to hear the stronger words of correction and judgment. The people loved to hear that they were okay and justified in their worldly lives. But these promises were only paths to destruction.

Jeremiah lived in the 7th century B.C. Battles were taking place regularly and the Jews were always struggling with their obedience to God as the chosen people. They constantly turned away from God and involved themselves in despicable acts of idol worship. It was a dangerous time to be a prophet and Jeremiah was called to speak a gloomy message against the actions of an unruly generation. In today's world it is no less the responsibility of the church than of Jeremiah in his day. The plea is still the same as we see today's church morph into a worldly

reproduction of days gone by, bent on changing the biblical message to accommodate secular society.

In the Old Testament we are able to hear and learn from several Godly Prophets speaking the Word of God to the Hebrew nation. And the common ground found in the prophets is the same call we need to hear today; a plea to repent and amend our lives to Almighty God. Humanity has always been easily led astray, enticed toward sin, caught up in worldly passions, and therefore has been in constant need of reminding, concerning how we are to live our lives and to what purpose.

It is God's intention to set us apart. And when reading Leviticus we find this is exactly what the Almighty did with Israel. God took a people and gave them ordinances and rules that would only apply to them so as to distinguish them as His own...a people chosen to be His example. It would be through this particular people, guided by the prophets, through which God would manifest Himself to the rest of the world.

Rules and regulations define who we are as a people, what we believe and value, and what is important to us while dictating our movements into the future. And it is in these movements that we must be mindful of whose rules and regulations we internalize as law. There are false prophets in our midst even today and some of them are even in the church. It is a difficult time with all the modern day heresies creating delusions among us. And combined with the latest technologies so many are easily swayed.

We have questions and are often confused by the Worldly answers that flood our ears. Intoxicating answers that tickle our pride and our selfish natures. We still prove to be a headstrong people in need of continued guidance in the form of reminders. And fortunately, the Spirit is unrelenting to those who have ears to hear. The answer to our modern day confusion in today's world is the same answer Jeremiah gave in his day; *"Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your god..."* That's it...Easy right? Well, if your not coming to church to hear the word of God it's not so easy. And even if you are...how do you know that you are getting the truth when you come and sit in the house of the Lord? Well praise the Lord!...if you are a God fearing Christian having been baptized and eaten at the table in genuine faith...you can,

with God's grace, seek and find by asking mindful questions and basing your evaluation on scripture.

But we have a strong adversary who has won the souls of many and is also trying to separate a people devoted to him. As God has given us rules to live by as His Sons and Daughters, so too has the world capitalized on this system in an overwhelming way. So many contradictory mandates that human kind has become unable to decipher the moral from the immoral.

With so many rules and regulations imposed upon us by the many levels of government and by the providential guidance of God, what are we to do as Christians when these ordinances conflict? Let's look at just a few examples from the Ten Commandments: (And I lead us here in the spirit that Solomon spoke unto us when he said *"There is nothing new under the sun."* For it is God's laws that were always breached and ignored in the face of modern societal views. The same today as nine centuries ago.

"I am the Lord thy God; Thou shalt have none other gods but me." What happens if you don't obey this law?...nothing by secular law. The law of the world says you don't have to abide by this. It's okay to worship whoever or whatever you want. From the worldly perspective this is encompassing and compassionate...equality for all to believe as they choose. But, don't you dare say that there is only one way to eternal life. Katherine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church,(until recently) went on and on in a sermon that included several non-Christian religions as 'other paths to eternal life' our 'other brethren in the world'. Was the Apostle Paul wrong!? Was the Apostle Peter wrong!? I guess that's now up for discussion.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them." Have you seen the current news today surrounding the Satanic Temple in Detroit? They revealed their 9ft. 2,000lb statue of a goat-headed occult idol that they hope to display at the Arkansas State Capitol next to the 10 Commandments. (And yet, in cities all over the country it is illegal to display the Nativity Scene on public grounds). In today's world

of 'anything goes', I am sure we will see this demonic statue stand tall as a representative of man's continued fallen state... a further separating of the wheat from the chaff.

How about "*Thou shalt not covet?*" It is easy to see God's perspective on this...we must learn to trust God in His leading and be content with what He has entrusted too us. Treasures in Heaven...not on earth. But this is definitely in opposition to what the world says. Commerce wants us to covet...to keep up with the 'Jones' to spend ourselves into debt...to become slave to the state. There is something wrong when we are so driven to have the latest and newest version of everything. Money is the root of all evil the Bible tells us...it leaves us to covet what God has not willed for us. If we continue on this path we will find ourselves in the slough of despond.

We are Christians and we fight temptation everyday. We are in this world but not OF this world. Our home is far from the wickedness of this wayward planet. And yet, we must put in our time...we must abide in cultural, political and religious diversity, **but even so**, we must adhere foremost to the Will of our Father in Heaven. Jeremiah, in the days when being a prophet and speaking the words of God Almighty resulted in death, spoke boldly to those who had one foot in the world and one in the Word of God when he said; "*The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend you ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God.*"

It is a difficult task to speak biblical truth in a world poised to pounce on any religious truth as discrimination. Many Christians fall prey. Many Christians weak in the faith fall victim to anti-Christian views. And for the sake of being 'an understanding heart' they concede to the 'call of the wild' conforming their biblical beliefs so that they may be more acceptable to the society that surrounds them. It's all in how you justify it right? It's okay to worship the devil...his statue is next to the Ten Commandments after all...see they're not so far apart.

Well, the words Jeremiah speaks concerning himself also apply to the church: "*But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon*

the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."

If the world tries to silence the church, to remove it's teachings, to replace morality with indiscrimination and remove the foundations of Christian principles ...guess what? Innocent blood will be spent, as were the blood of so many martyrs. And those not worthy of the Lamb...they shall experience the gnashing of teeth.

Let us all be as strong and confident in our Lord God, as was Jeremiah. Coming to church is not just something we do, nor is listening to the Word of God only a moral moment from days gone by... it is the way to eternal life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.