

NO REMEDY

By 2000 Mark Beaird

Text: II Chronicles 36:11-16

I saw a Peanuts cartoon with Lucy saying to Charlie Brown, "I hate everything. I hate everybody. I hate the whole wide world!"

Charlie says, "But I thought you had inner peace."

Lucy replies, "I do have inner peace. But I still have outer obnoxiousness" (from Barbara Brokhoff, *New and Improved Jesus? C.S.S.*, 1991, p. 53).

-- W. Frank Harrington, "When You Really Want to Quit," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 138.

The truth is that what is in our heart is very often what other people see. The outer is often a reflection of the inner. Human beings have always wanted to say that their actions, words and behavior are different than their heart, but God's Word tells us differently.

Many times we can look back and see that people have been led into rebellion by their hearts. They thought that it would not matter over time, but it does. Perhaps they felt that a God of grace would surely always overlook their acts of rebellion. They were wrong. And we would be wrong today if we believe that we can rebel and not pay the price for it.

The truth is that we can rebel for just so long and then God turns us over to spiritual captivity and exile. Yet, before we consider our text, allow me to point out that it is not a question of whether or not God would ever give us another chance to repent. The question is, can rebellion so harden our hearts that we will never ask for another chance?

Note the spiritual *truths* that are present in our text.

I. AN EVIL AND UNREPENTANT HEART SEPARATES US FROM GOD (vv. 11-14).

A. A lack of reverence turns away our heart.

2 Chronicles 36:11-12, "*Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the LORD.*"

B. Rebellion hardens the heart.

2 Chronicles 36:13 ***He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.***

C. Sacrilege degrades the heart.

2 Chronicles 36:14, ***“Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.***

II. AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT GOD’S MERCY BRINGS GOD’S WRATH (vv. 15-16).

A. God is willing to have mercy on anyone.

2 Chronicles 36:15, ***“The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place.”***

B. When the righteousness of God is provoked, there is no remedy.

2 Chronicles 36:16, ***“But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.”***

CONCLUSION

The story is told of a little girl whose mother planned to celebrate her fifth birthday by impressing all the relatives. The mother dressed her daughter in fine clothes and said, "Now, here's what I want you to do. You're going to sing a song."

When it was time for the little girl to sing, her mother says, "Honey, what are you going to do?"

The child says, "Nothing."

The mother finds a convenient spot to pinch her and says, "Weren't you going to sing?"

The child says, "No."

The angry mother takes the child upstairs and shuts her in a closet. About half an hour later, the mother goes up and says, "What are you doing up here?"

The child says, "I've been having a great time. I've been spitting on your clothes. I've been spitting in your shoes. I've been spitting on your walls. I've been spitting on the carpet. Now I'm waiting for some more spit."

That attitude of waiting for some more spit is what sin is all about. For man, sin is not just an act. Sin is an attitude. Man is not a sinner because he is a transgressor. He is a transgressor because he is already a sinner. The offense is not only in the transgression but in the intention. Sin is not merely the violation of law but in the disposition of the heart.

-- Ravi Zacharias, "The Lostness of Humankind," Preaching Today, Tape No. 118.