**“Take Away From Me The Noise Of Your Songs…”**

(Kevin Heaton)

Through the prophet Amos, God made known His feelings toward the worship that Israel had been offering up to Him: “*I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.* ***Take away from Me the noise of your songs****, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments*” (Amos 5:21-23). Why did God have this kind of reaction toward the worship that Israel had performed? Because that is exactly all their worship was; a performance. The Lord revealed His reasoning behind His rejection of Israel’s worship in the following verses: idolatry (Amos 5:25-27). God was angry with Israel and rejected their so-called “worship” because their hearts were not in it. They were not really devoted to God. They performed the proper acts of worship alright, but in their hearts they were neither praising God nor giving allegiance to Him. If the Lord rejected improper worship offered to Him from His own people in the days of Israel, then certainly it is to be understood that He will reject any worship today that is neither pleasing nor acceptable to Him. There are at least three ways in which our worship becomes unsavory to God:

“**When there is no ‘spirit’ God is not pleased**.” Jesus said in John 4:24 that those who worship God must worship Him in “spirit and truth.” If we are going to please God, then it is not enough to have all the right acts of worship that God has revealed through His word put in place and not put our hearts into the worship we are conducting. Israel performed all the scriptural acts of worship that they were to conduct, but God rejected their worship because in their hearts they were not worshipping Him. They were just going through the motions. If we are truly going to worship God then it is not enough to just fill a pew, sing the words of a couple of songs, eat the bread and drink the cup, point our noses to the ground when a prayer is being lead, or sit and listen to a lesson being presented from God’s word if we are not going to do it all from our hearts. The acts of worship do not praise God; it is our hearts that praise God in the acts of worship we perform. Jesus said, “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*” (Matthew 22:37). We are to give the Lord ***ALL*** of our heart.

“**When there is no ‘truth’ God is not pleased**.” Jesus made it clear that those who worship God should not only worship Him in spirit but also in truth. What is this truth? Jesus said in John 17:17 as He prayed to the Father in heaven, “*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth*.” God’s word, His revealed will, the Bible is the truth. Many today think that as long as you love God and are sincere in your faith in God then it does not matter how you go about worshipping God. Is that true? Is that what Jesus said in John 4:24? No. Jesus said “spirit **AND** truth.” Even if we are diligent and heartfelt in our worship to God, if we are worshipping Him in a way that is not in accordance with the truth of His word, then our worship will not be acceptable to Him. Listen to the words of Jesus as He quoted from Isaiah, “*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:8-9). There are a lot of people in this world that do love God, but unfortunately they are misguided in how they ought to worship Him. Too many people today are worshipping God in vain as they follow the teachings of men. Every denomination in existence today came about by the teachings and doctrines of men. Jesus condemned this kind of worship. If our conduct of worship is not in accordance with the truth of God’s word then God says He is not pleased.

“**When there is no ‘allegiance’ God is not pleased**.” What do you suppose God’s thoughts are like toward us when we only serve Him one day a week? Probably the same way we would smell if we only took a bath one day a week: stinky. Israel treated their relationship with God this way over and over again throughout their history. God was on the back burner of their hearts while they played the hypocrite with their worldly pleasures and idols. God showed His displeasure with them time and time again for their hypocrisy. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul condemned the hypocrisy of the Jewish Christians who claimed to know God’s will and serve Him while all along they were really in sin. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren and told them in Ephesians 5:1 to be imitators of God, do you think he only meant on Sunday? James said in James 1:21-22 to be doers of the word and not hearers only; did he just mean that for Sunday? In 1 Peter 1:15, when Peter told the Christians to be holy in all their conduct, was he only referring to conduct on Sundays? Of course not. If we come to worship services on the first day of the week and then live the other six days of the week how we want to, enjoying the pleasures of this world and sin, does it seem logical to assume that God is pleased with us? That is about as logical as assuming that if we only took a bath on Sunday and not any other day of the week, then by Saturday we would still smell like a basket of roses. If we come into God’s presence on the first day of the week to worship Him, we should remember as we walk out of the building that the rest of the week we will still be in the presence of the Lord. We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ whether we’ve done good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

We should all make it our aim to be pleasing to God and worship Him in an acceptable manner so that one day we can all hear those sweet and wonderful words, “*Well done My good and faithful servant*” (Matthew 25:21).