‘HIGH PLACES’ DEMOLITION

Anything that usurps our worship to God is a ‘high place’ that must be demolished and destroyed.

KEY POINTS

- There were a total of 42 kings that ruled in Judah and Israel for the monarchial period of approximately 464 years, with 33 of them being evil and the remaining nine being described as good.
- Of those 42 good kings, only two went all the way in their service to God by destroying the high places.
- What was it about these “high places” that caused even the good kings to leave them alone? They were nothing less than shrines for idolatrous worship to false gods!
- The main false gods they worshiped were Baal, Ashtoreth and Molech.
- Baal means: ‘owner, master, lord’. In the Israelite context, Baal worship was initiated by Aaron while Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law from God. They worshiped a lifeless metal animal and called it their deliverer and saviour; an utter insult to Jehovah!
- Anyone or anything we look to as a deliverer or saviour, other than our Lord Jesus Christ, is an idol on a high place that must be destroyed. Jobs, money, networking connections, political alliances, etc. that we trust in more than we trust in God are idols we must demolish.
- Many references are made in the Old Testament to Asherah or Ashtoreth (Baal’s consort/spouse), the main female deity of the Canaanites, Assyrians, Sidonians and Phoenicians. Worship of Asherah was noted for its sensuality and involved ritual prostitution.
- Sensuality and sexual immorality have become hallmarks of 21st century life and the church has not been immune to this onslaught. Immorality is a massive ‘high place’ that must be identified and destroyed in any Christian’s life.
- God warned Israel not to participate in the Canaanite practice of Molech worship (Leviticus 18:21), but even a king as wise as Solomon disobeyed and built a high place for him (1 Kings 11:7). Ritual prostitution was an important part of Molech worship, and worse yet, child sacrifice.
- Modern parents are often guilty of this sin and sacrifice the spiritual health and wellbeing of their children on the altars of sports, entertainment, fashion, education, music, and, yes, even religious activity. When all of these activities deprive a child of a normal upbringing and take (or send) them away from family, friends, home and church, spiritual disaster is the typical outcome.

KEY SCRIPTURES:
Deuteronomy 12:1-12; 1 Kings 22:43;
2 Kings 17:7-18, 18:4-8; 2 Chronicles 34:1-7;
2 Corinthians 10:4-5

- When Hezekiah came to the throne, he set to work destroying the high places in Judah. It is very significant to note that as he was doing this, Israel was being taken into captivity by the Assyrians.
- God allowed this to take place because of Israel’s idolatry and worship at the high places (2 Kings 17:7-18).
- God has no desire to send judgment upon His own people, whom He loves. No father takes pleasure in punishing his own children, but he will do so if the situation demands it.
- Likewise, God will not stand idly by as we live idolatrous lives. He will send judgment upon us. So, we need to tear down the high places, using the weapons God has given to us (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).
- These weapons are well known: the Word of God, prayer and fasting. Heart-worship of the one true and living God is crucial to our success in tearing down high places.
- Our hearts must be totally tuned to the will, word and voice of God, who alone deserves our trust, faith, love and loyalty.
- We must quickly identify and permanently destroy every high place that steals our praise, worship and service from our God.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

“The weapons we use are well known”:

1) *The Word of God.* Give examples of scriptures that can be used to
   – maintain a heart of worship, and
   – keep a right mind.
2) *Fasting.* Do you prioritize fasting? Why is it important to fast? Use Scripture to support your answer.
3) *Prayer.* Do you spend quality time in prayer? Why is this important? Use the prayer prompt below to begin a personal time of prayer right now.

Prayer Time

Lord, help me to identify any idols I may have set up in my life. Help me to draw close to You and cast down every high place. In Jesus’ name.

L.G. ice-Breaker: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” Do you believe this adage? Why or why not?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2018

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

! (Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS