"Before It is Too Late"
Isaiah 1:1-20

C.I.T.—The LORD calls on guilty sinners to reconcile with God through repentance before final judgment.
C.I.S.—Make sure you are reconciled with God through repentance before it is too late.
Purpose—I want our people to have a posture of confession and repentance, and for those who are separated from God to be reconciled to Him through Jesus.
Introduction—**Matthew 5:25**

I. ***Evil Rebellion*** vs. 1-4
   a. Call for witnesses—Heaven and Earth
   b. Rebellion Children
      i. He is talking about His people, not the pagan world.
      ii. Example of oxen and donkeys knowing and respecting their masters.
      iii. These children are worse than beasts.
   c. Sinful children
      i. They are declared to be sinners in rebellion against God.
      ii. Sinful, iniquity, evil, and depraved/corruption
      iii. They are this because of what they have done.
   d. Idolatrous Children
      i. Abandoned—leaving a wife/neglecting a relationship—used for idolatry—not simply leaving God, but going to another
      ii. Despised—spurn, reject, treat disrespectfully—also used of idolatry
      iii. Turned their backs—estranged—idolatry
      iv. All of these words reveal actions that reject the LORD and submit to idolatry.
   e. All sin stems from abandoning God and replacing Him with something else.
   f. Illus.—Cancer is a body cell or clump of cells that are in rebellion against the body.
   g. Application
      i. This is about the church.
      ii. The church is full of sin
         1. sexual perversion (lust, pornography, fornication, adultery, abortion, divorce)
         2. greed (gambling, cheating, cutting corners, evading taxes)
         3. Hedonism (drug usage, social/recreational beverage alcohol)
         4. Selfishness (apathy, neglecting gathering together, not utilizing spiritual gifts in service, withholding tithes, rejecting God's call to witness, not fulfilling the commitments that you make, picking and choosing which Bible verse to believe and follow)
      iii. This is nothing other than evil rebellion.

II. ***Eventual Ruin*** vs. 5-9
   a. They have been stricken.
      i. God's disciplines those he loves.
      ii. These are still in rebellion, despite the strikes.
      iii. He is talking about his children, and if we are they, then we should expect the discipline of God.

iv. In fact, if you are in sin and are not experiencing the discipline of God, that should worry you.

b. Metaphor for physical health deteriorating.
   i. Real description of what sin does to a body.
   ii. We see evidence in Scripture and in real life of the consequences of sin on a body.
c. Metaphor for political health deteriorating.
   i. Real description of Biblical occurrences.
   ii. The nation was destroyed, by God's discipline because of sin.
   iii. Like the empty shack in the field/vineyard—duck blind during the offseason.
d. They were destroyed by the discipline of God against their sin.
e. Illus.—Cancer left alone will destroy the body
f. Application
   i. An individual with sin will destroy his own life.
   ii. He will destroy the life of his family, his church, his community, and ultimately his nation.
   iii. Spiritual rot has run rampant in our nation, just spend ten minutes watching the news.
   iv. Spiritual rot has run rampant in our nation because it has run rampant in our churches.
   v. We cannot wonder why our churches are so anemic and weak and why people don't want to attend…it is because our churches are full of the fetid soul rot of sin.
   vi. It starts with sin in her people.
   vii. If we truly are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, then we cannot blame the sickness of our nation on anything else except the rot in our own midst.

III. ***Empty Religion*** vs. 10-15
a. Where do people run? Religion
b. Sacrificial system, temple worship, feasts, festivals, solemn assemblies of prayer
c. I cannot put up with religious activity and sinful disobedience.
d. Raise their hands to pray, and have blood on them, the guilt of sin.
e. Illus.—Eat healthy, work out, put on clothes, nothing will do if you don't treat the cancer
f. Application
   i. Too many times, we show up to church thinking that our religious activity will make up for our sin.
   ii. God looks on you with disdain, when you sing the songs of the faith and yet have unconfessed, unrepentant sin.
   iii. You have blood on your hands.
   iv. Religion without repentance is worthless.

IV. ***Effectual Repentance*** vs. 16-17

a. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of course.
b. In this case, there are two sides to the repentance coin.
c. Confession
    i. Wash and make clean
    ii. Remove sin and cease to do evil.
    iii. 1 John 1:9
d. Faith
    i. The true evidence of a repentant heart is an ongoing life of holiness.
    ii. A life of trusting the Lord through obedience.
e. Illus.—To treat cancer you must cut, chemo, radiate—have to get rid of it
f. Application
    i. Repentance and confession brings forgiveness and cleansing.
    ii. Change in action (simply stopping) without confession leaves sin's stain.
    iii. You must confess and repent.

V. ***Expected Response***—vs. 18-20
a. Let us reason—let's discuss and come to an agreement before it's too late.
    i. Typically, you don't warn someone that you want to destroy.
    ii. You warn someone you want to save.
    iii. Jesus wants to reason with you.
    iv. He does not want you to be destroyed.
b. If you will repent,
    i. then I will forgive.
    ii. Then you will eat from the good.
c. If you refuse—you will be eaten by the sword.
d. Illus.—You can accept the cancer treatment or deny it.
e. Application
    i. You will determine what happens next.
    ii. Will you humble yourself, confess your sin, and turn to obey Jesus?
    iii. He will forgive and heal you and your land.

Conclusion

- Get treatment before it is too late.

Matthew 5:25 Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you 're on the way with him to the court, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.