

The Broken Altar

Week 2 - The Altar (July 28th, 2021)

I. The Altar

- A. (Hebrew) Mizbeah = from a root word that means to slaughter, kill, offer sacrifice.
- B. (Greek) Thusiasterion = A place of sacrifice, from the root word “Thusia” meaning the act of sacrifice.
- C. The altar was a place of interaction between man and God. They were places of exchange (sacrifices for peace), communication (prayer/revelation), and influence (changed by the presence and nature of God).
 - 1. The altar is also called the Lord’s table on occasion in the old testament. (Ezekiel 41:22, Malachi 1:7)
 - a) Jesus was our peace offering and the meal that we share with God, but the altar is the table or the location that we share that fellowship meal at.
 - (1) Think of a peaceful family sharing fellowship and interaction at a table together over a meal.

II. How did the altar get broken?

A. Neglect

- 1. Unintended neglect - Because of distraction and not being intentional. Fail to see the need to approach the altar.
 - a) God designed us to need Him. We can’t function properly without the influence of His presence.
 - b) We need Him just as badly on our “good” days as we do on our “bad” days!
 - c) Judges 2:10-11 - “...and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served baalim.”
- 2. Intended neglect - I feel God has abandoned me or done me wrong in some way or I would rather pursue other means of fulfillment. He is not worthy of my fellowship.
 - a) 1 Kings 19:10 - “...for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword...”
- 3. In the old testament enemies could come in uninvited and destroy the altar, but in the new testament an enemy can only break our altars with our permission (our neglect to protect it.) Of course, in the old testament, the only time that enemies were able to take over Israel is when Israel had failed to maintain their fellowship with God.

B. Consider the condition of your altar.

- 1. Has it been neglected?
- 2. Is it just another piece of furniture in your heart or is it still sacred?
- 3. Is it well worn, or is it rotting from lack of use?

III. How do we fix it? (2 Chronicles 7:14)

- A. When we choose to repair (heal) our altar, we are essentially choosing life. Putting God to the test, and making Him number 1 in our life.
 - 1. This is what Elijah was doing on Mount Carmel
 - a) 1 Kings 18:21 - "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him..."
 - b) He was essentially drawing a line in the sand and saying, "make your choice!"
 - c) We need to go all in with God and allow Him to prove Himself in our lives.
 - (1) "The only part of God that we understand is the part we have obeyed." - Oswald Chambers
 - 2. We are literally choosing between life and death just by rebuilding the altar.
 - a) Duet. 30:19 "...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."
- B. Recognize that you are being called by God to commune and fellowship with God.
 - 1. John 6:44 - "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."
- C. Humble yourself
 - 1. James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - a) Humility is not weakness, it is recognizing that the power that is in me doesn't come from me. It comes from God.
 - b) Humility before God is being willing to give Him my cares knowing that He will take care of me.
 - (1) It's prideful to think that I can take care of everything in my life on my own. God hasn't designed me to be able to take care of everything on my own. He designed me to function under His power, not my own.
 - c) We recognize our need for Him.
- D. Pray/Seek His face (Not His hands)
 - 1. "I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me." - C. S. Lewis
 - a) Prayer doesn't necessarily change God, but it does change us.
 - (1) it exposes our heart to God
 - (2) Allows us to be influenced by the presence of God
 - (3) Gives us a look at the will of God
 - 2. God is not our "spare tire" His is our life! Seek His face, not His hands.
- E. Turn from your wicked ways
 - 1. Repentance - (Greek) Metanoeo = to change one's mind.
 - a) Change your mind concerning God's position compared to that sin in your life.
 - (1) Which is more important?
 - b) Change your mind about that sin defining who you are.
 - (1) We have been given the righteousness of Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - (2) Be transformed by the renewing of your mind - Romans 12:2