

Our Great God

4.18.10

"Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. The Revival continues. Similar to the Day of Atonement. This was an outward sign of inward sorrow for their sins.

"And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. Meaning their "foreign wives." Explanation below. Ezra had started this work. They confessed their own sins and those of their predecessors.

"And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the Lord their God. They continued their Scripture reading for 3 hours and confession for 3 hours.

P: One evidence that we have heard the Word is confession that results in thankful worship for forgiveness.

Could this be said of my spiritual life? If not, what needs to change? Am I applying the Gospel in the process?

P: God's people should "appropriately" separate themselves from the idolatry around them.

In this context: The problem was not one of geography but idolatry. Throughout the OT, any time the Israelites married women from other countries, the women invariably brought their foreign gods with them that led God's people away from the worship of the One, True God and into the worship of false gods. For this reason, these marriages had been expressly prohibited. This practice wreaked havoc in the lives of numerous key leaders throughout history: Solomon, David, Samson, the list goes on.

In our context:

1. What this doesn't mean: Retreat from the culture, hide in the basement, store up canned goods and wait for God to destroy the earth.
2. What this does mean: We have to engage the culture but there should be a *difference* between God's people and the world around them.
 - a. This happens both INHERENTLY and INTENTIONALLY.

Am I living out the Gospel in such a way that there is an apparent difference with the world around me? If not, what needs to change?

Is there anything or anyone that God is calling you to "appropriately" separate yourself from for the sake of your walk and your witness?

"On the stairs of the Levites stood...and they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God. Then the Levites... said, "Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You are the Lord, you alone." Strong words. Repetition.

P: Our God has a name that is above every name and He is the Lord!

We see this throughout Scripture: Ps. 8:1, Phil. 2:9, etc.

How to Make Jesus Lord:

1. In the Moment: Turn from sin and trust in Christ.
2. Moment by moment: Ask "God, what do you want to do in this situation?"

"You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas, all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

P: Our God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

If God had create and hold the entire universe together, he can hold our universe together well.

Does Creation remind you of the creating and sustaining power of our great God?

"You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous. Abram was essentially a rough pagan. He became the "father of many nations" and patriarch of God's people.

P: Our God chooses and changes people.

Do these doctrines comfort you? Are you allowing God to change you into all that He wants You to be?

P: Our God is righteous and keeps His promises.

"Righteous" : "Rightness" in every possible way. He has never been and never will be wrong. This aspect of his character is the basis for our trust in Him.

Am I resting in the fact that God is righteous and keeps His promises? If not, what needs to change?

"And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast the pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. Ref. to the Exodus events.

P: Our God is a Worker of Miracles, a Deliverer of His People, and a Destroyer of His Enemies.

Do I know that God works miracles, delivers His people and destroys His enemies? How have I experienced this?

"By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way, which they should go." You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them the right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments. You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them." Ref. to the Exodus events and beyond.

P: Our God leads and provides for His people.

Am I trusting God to lead and provide for me and my family?

All of these amazing attributes come together at the Cross.
