

The Inner Room Where We Live

The prophets of God had a heart-wrenching task. God revealed to them the abominable offenses of His people, then they had to illustrate the offense and the action God would take. In one of the most revealing passages of Scripture, God lets us know that He knows what we are thinking. He knows where we really live. Ezekiel 8:12 says, *“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.”* The term *chambers of his imagery* has what I can see as a dual interpretation that still says the same thing. God is telling the people, I see what you do in the room where you hide your image or idol. On the other hand, God seems to be saying, I see inside your mind, the innermost room where your imagination is; I see it all! With either interpretation, our Lord is saying He sees what we are thinking; He knows what we do in the dark. If you want to find out who you really are, picture yourself in a dark room where no one sees you. Ask yourself what you would do if you thought you would not get caught. This will disclose your true character. Your personal integrity rises no higher than who you are in the dark. In a positive sense, your integrity shines the brightest in the dark.

1. The chambers of our imagery locate the secret place.

The Bible says, *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”* (Psalm 91:1). When we have a private place to meet God, it is likened to a holy of holies where we pray, supplicate and meditate in sweet communion with the Lord. The secret place of the dedicated Christian is indeed a sacred place.

When one is lost or living the carnal life, the conscience becomes defiled. Then the secret place for this person becomes a sacrilegious place where wicked thoughts arise and evil action is contemplated. *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”* (Proverbs 23:7). The wicked conscience is thinking, *“...for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth”* (Ezekiel 8:12). Ignoring the fact that God is omniscient (all-knowing), these people act like God will not see and therefore not judge them. We are warned: *“...behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out”* (Numbers 32:23).

2. The chambers of our imagery is where idolatry is birthed.

“He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz” (Ezekiel 8:13,14). Tammuz (Syrian) corresponds to Adonis (Greek), lover of Aphrodite (Greek) or Astarte (Syrian). According to the myth, Tammuz is killed by a wild boar representing winter or midsummer when the earth is dead from cold and/or heat. The ancient Babylonian women would “mourn” for Tammuz with ungodly promiscuous behavior to invoke his resurrection in spring and/or late summer rains. Some of the Hebrew women had adopted this wicked practice. In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he wrote these lines in reference to this passage from Ezekiel:

"Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis, from his native rock,
Ran purple to the sea, suffused with blood
Of Thammuz, yearly wounded. The love tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat:
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch

Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah.”

Paradise Lost, b. 1:446.

Indeed God’s “eye surveyed the dark idolatries of alienated Judah.” One of the dark aspects of idol worship is the immoral lifestyle attached with it. Things have not radically changed. The western world has adopted its own idolatrous deities. The gods of materialism, sensuality and power hold society in a grip as strong as the mythological characters of long ago. The immoral lifestyle that accompanies this idolatry is not only embraced in much of our modern culture, but also promoted. The Apostle John said, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols*” Amen” (I John 5:21). It is in the imagination where our decisions are formulated. May we hear the clarion call from the Word: “*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*” (II Corinthians 6:17).

3. The chambers of our imagery are where we turn our faces toward God or our backs on God.

The Word says: “*And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east*” (Ezekiel 8:16). Here we see a group of men do the unthinkable - they turn their backs on God and His Temple where His presence was manifested on the earth. To turn your back on God is to turn your back on love, happiness, contentment and direction. It is the beginning of a spiral downwards into the deep abyss of lostness.

The next verse reads, “*Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose*” (Ezekiel 8:16,17). Here God says these men made the drastic mistake of thinking that turning their back to the Almighty is something to be taken lightly. This negligence fills the land with violence and provokes the Lord to anger as they who put “the branch to the nose,” which was an idiom comparable to depicting an obscene gesture. A wicked person gives an obscene gesture to another man and little or no repercussion comes from it. However, if we decide to dishonor God with insult, we risk stirring Him to anger. “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*” (Hebrews 10:31).

“*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek*” (Psalm 27:8). What a glorious contrast! “*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*” (I Peter 3:12). God desires to have His ears open to your prayers; He does not want to set His face against you. There is a beautiful wording in Deuteronomy 34:10 that says, “*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.*” I never cease to marvel that God desires intimacy with His servants. When we seek God’s face He turns toward us with favor and unlimited blessing. Hear the compassionate words of our Lord: “*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*” (Isaiah 55:6). A great truth is revealed in this passage - if the unrighteous man forsakes his thoughts and returns to the Lord, God will abundantly pardon. If we invite God into the room where we really live, He will give us the true life worth living!

-Pastor Pope-

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