

Why God Hates Empty Religion (7/9/23)

Main Verses: Isaiah 1:10-18

Key Verse: Isaiah 1:13

'Takeaway': God warns those who only pretend to be spiritual & do what's right. But he also invites them to be forgiven.

Getting Started: Do you ever like to play pretend? What's the important thing to remember when doing so?



READ: Isaiah 1:10-18 (or have older kids help read).

Some **QUESTIONS** to consider:

Toddler/PreK:

- What were the people doing that angered God?
- What does God tell them to do?
- What do they need to do?

Elementary:

- What were the people doing that angered God? Why do you think Sodom & Gomorrah are mentioned here? What's different about them & the Israelites here? What does it mean to be a **hypocrite**?
- What does God tell his people to do instead?
- What does "**Your hands are full of blood**" mean?
- What do they need to do?

Here are some **IMPORTANT IDEAS** we discover in these verses:

Toddler/PreK:

- God is gracious. He has not destroyed his people even though they have only pretended to worship & obey him.
- God is more concerned about the hearts of his people than what they do in front of other people.
- Even though the people have sinned greatly, God invites them to repent & receive his forgiveness & grace.
- He does the same for us. Through Jesus, we can know & please God by living for him each day..

Elementary:

- God is gracious. He has not destroyed his people even though they have only pretended to worship & obey him.
- God is more concerned about the **hearts** of his people than what they do in front of other people. The people's hands are "full of blood"--they sin & do not repent yet still participate in worship. God does not tolerate hypocritical behavior.
- Even though the people have sinned greatly, God invites them to repent & receive his forgiveness & grace.
- He does the same for us. Through Jesus, we can know & please God by living for him each day.

An **ENCOURAGEMENT** in light of God's word:

(Toddler/PreK) Talk to God & thank him for being so gracious & good. Even though we can be tempted to simply look like God's people on the outside, ask him to search your heart & help you to live the way he wants you to live thru faith in Jesus.

(Elementary) Talk to God & thank him for being a gracious & good God who invites us to repent & receive his forgiveness & grace thru Jesus. Ask God to search your heart & tell you where you might be more concerned about what other people think than what he thinks (& so, be tempted to 'play the part' of a godly person). Talk to God about your heart & your relationship to Jesus. Is your heart aligned to him? Have you surrendered to his loving leadership? **Admit** you are guilty of living a me-centered life instead of a God-centered one. **Believe** that Jesus is your only hope for forgiveness, freedom, & forever with God. With your whole heart & being, **commit** yourself to following Jesus' loving leadership. If you pray this, or have questions about what it means, talk to a trusted adult in your life about it.