

TAKING SPIRITUAL INVENTORY 1-22-23
EXAMINE YOURSELF

TEXT

I Corinthians 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

I Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup.

I Corinthians 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

I Corinthians 11:30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

I Corinthians 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

I Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Intro:

Each year about this time my accountant asks me for a record of my inventory that I had at the end of 2022. I hate doing inventory. Never could understand how it works in relationship to my taxes.

Let me suggest that is also unpleasant for us to do some spiritual inventory. Though we may not like it.. still it is important that we do it, and it is good for us to do it. The New Year is as good a time as any for us to examine ourselves.

New Year.. is a time naturally a time when many people are busy doing their end of the year book keeping.

It is a time where many companies.. even close to do inventory..

It is a time where many people do some serious evaluating.... and planning.. for their education, and goals. It is a natural time to set goals and examine ourselves!

It is a good time for us as Christians to take spiritual inventory of our lives...

This is the first month of the year.. and we just had our appreciation banquet where we handed out our 2023 calendars..

This year I put a down load link where you can download the 2023 church calendar to your phone. Also I put a link to a You tube video of our 2023 Musical ***The Shepherd Story***. I tried to make a DVD but for some reason I couldn't get the DVD to burn to a

disk. A spent hours last night trying to get it to work. So finally I gave up and put it on Youtube.

Now The first Sunday of each Month we partake of communion. An important part of communion is this commandment.

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Paul warned the saints at Corinth that they should **examine themselves**.. It is fitting that this the first month of the year.. I share principles on how you can do that.

This is actually what we are going to be sharing this morning in the morning message.. LET US EXAMINE OURSELVES.. Let us take spiritual inventory. Usually when we have our communion service I just quote that verse. But this morning I am going to park there for a while.

TAKING SPIRITUAL INVENTORY IN 2023.. EXAMINING OURSELVES IN 2023

Intro: If we are going to examine ourselves..
What standard are we going to use to do so..

My Cousin who was a science teacher.. Got a job in our area and one time he let me help him correct his classes final examines.. I was very young at the time. HE GAVE ME AN ANSWER SHEET.. He gave me a red pen and all I had to do was compare the papers with the answer sheet..

THERE WAS A STANDARD... and the exam was a multiple choice.. and was very easy to correct..

When the Bible says.. Examine yourself.. What standard are you going to use.. to examine ourselves? There needs to be a standard..

THE STANDARD IS SET UP BY GOD.. HIMSELF..

It is not left up in the air..

He did not leave us without a standard.. whereby we can judge ourselves.. It is not a subjective standard.. It needs to be an objective standard.

WE CAN DO A SELF EXAMINATION..

YOU DO NOT NEED SOMEONE ELSE TO HELP YOU... THOUGH IF YOU ARE NOT HONEST WITH YOURSELF.. THEN THE LORD.. WILL BRING OTHERS ALONG... TO HELP IN THE PROCESS THROUGH HIS CHASTENING HAND..

DON'T FOOL YOURSELF!!!!

Now most people when they read the Bible.. think that God's standards are too high and confusing..

Then there are others who advocate that because we are not saved by keeping the law there is no need to keep any standards...

For us Gentiles.. God made the standard very easy to understand.. He narrowed down all of God's commands to two commandments.

Matthew 22:35 Then one of them, [which was] a lawyer, asked [him a question], tempting him, and saying,

Matthew 22:36 Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law?

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22:39 And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Now if we are going to examine ourselves.. This is where we should start..

WE NEED TO START BY LOOKING AT THESE TWO AREAS OF OUR LIVES..

I. DO WE LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS

II. DO WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES

TAKING SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

I. DO WE LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS?

Now the Bible says to examine yourself..

How do we know if we love God with all our hearts?

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Just like when I was correcting those exam papers for my cousin ,... so to .. we can take our lives and see how much we love God by examining them next to the standard of his commandments..

What is the proof that we love.. God..

Ten commandments.. 1st 5 show our love for God...

1. THOU SHALT NOT HAVE ANY GODS BEFORE ME..

What is the proof that we love God...

The proof is that we put Him first..

Does God come first in our lives?

This is manifest in our priorities...

Just like correcting an exam.. your life can be examined..

You have a list of things to do... how do you decide in what order you do these things.

Think about it.. you have 7 days in the week. If you love God and you put God first then you should give him the first day of the week. Can you give him Sunday the first day of the week.

You write him the first check of the week .. that is your tithe..

You give him the first fruits, your first hours, your first service..

This is why we call our meetings a SERVICE.. You are doing God service by coming to your local church and serving him, and worshipping Him.. etc.

What ever you put first in your life is your god.. Whoever or whatever you serve is your god..

The command is simple to understand.. Thou shalt not have any other gods before me..

2. THOU SHALT NOT MAKE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE..

Essence of idolatry is to fabricate who God is in your own mind..

An idol is a God that you control..

A god that we fashion in our minds is as much an idol as the gods that people fashion with their hands..

Do you know most people fabricate a Jesus in their minds who is not the Biblical Jesus. We get these ideas about who God is. If those ideas are a fabrication of our minds than we have created a graven image in our minds.

3. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

To show God respect we ought to not be flippant about the way we speak of God..

His name is to be revered.. and honored..

God's name should not be used as an expression of speech.

God's name should not be used irreverently

God's name should not be used vainly

The word vain means to use his name without good purpose.. in a useless way

God's name is not to be used in an empty useless fashion ..

The Jews would not even use his name in casual conversation his name was reserved for Scripture reading, and worship. Not to be brought down and dragged through the mud of this world.

If we love someone we would not speak lightly of them

If we love someone we would not joke about them..

If we love someone we should no tolerate others mocking or maligning the one we love.. etc.

4. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY

If you love God you will want to meet with Him ..

Assembling ourselves together is the way we show our love for him

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

I tell the story of how my grandfather read me the riot act because I went right by his house and did not stop in to see him. He wanted to teach me to honor him and respect him.

The Christian sabbath is the first day of the week. It is the first day because Jesus rose on the first day. The truth is it would not hurt to keep the 7th day and the first day. That is what the early Christians did. They witnessed to the Jews in the Synagogue on the 7th day, and they gathered together with the NT church on the first day. For years because we were faithful to serve and worship Jesus the first day of the week .. GOD smiled down on our nation and gave us a two day weekend. He gave us Saturday to rest and Sunday to worship Jesus. Now since we abandoned Christ as a nation, we can't make ends meet working 7 days a week.

5. HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER

Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

THIS IS THE PROMISE... that God would bless us..

1st knowledge of God.. we have is reflected in our honour of our parents..

GOD IS CALLED OUR FATHER.....

We need to honor our parents. Parents you need to teach your children to honor you. This is good and right. When they honor you they will in turn get a blessing in this life.

II. DO WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES

What is the proof we love our neighbours...

1. Thou shalt not kill

Murder.. starts with Hate in your heart..

Matthew 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

2. Thou shalt not commit adultery

Sin of Adultery ..

God ordained one man for one woman.. one woman for one man..

Adultery is a sin against that monogamous relationship...

Adultery destroys homes and destroys children also..

3. *Thou shalt not steal*

Even the world is against stealing. They all want to pick and choose the commandments they like a dislike..

Yet the government is stealing.. by printing more money ... than it is worth.. causing inflation ..

4. *Thou shalt not lie*

To deceive a person is to do them harm..

Most of the time a person lies to someone because they want to gain something from them.. or fraud them.

People lie so much that when the truth would serve them better they still lie...

5. *Thou shalt not covet*

Ill feeling we have when others do better than we do...

We should be careful...

III. *THE BIBLE SAYS... EXAMINE YOURSELF.. Correct your own spiritual exam*

How did you fare..

What were the results...

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

On which of the commandments did you have you have to put a spiritual red mark..

The Bible says the commandments are our schoolmaster..

Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

There needs to be a standard. The law is the answer sheet. As we review the law we discover we are guilty before God. Jesus fulfilled all the righteous demands of the Law so we could be accepted in him.

The Bible says to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. When we don't know what righteousness is, what pleases God and displeases Him how can we love him. We love him because he first loved us.

Salvation comes as we realize we have fallen short of his law..
Salvation comes when we humble ourselves and receive Him.

How can we repent of sin.. if we do not know what sin is..

When we receive Christ he instils the law of God in our hearts..

II Corinthians 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

II Corinthians 3:3 [Forasmuch as ye are] manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

We need to examine our hearts and see if his law is indeed written in our hearts.

is law is the answer sheet the proof that we love him. If we love him we will keep his commandments.

Conclusion:

The book of Revelation opens with Christ examining the 7 churches of Asia. He examines each of the churches and gives commendations and rebukes based on their works. I believe in those commendations and rebukes we can find each of the churches and something to learn about each of our judgment days. The whole book of Revelation is prophetic. I believe there will be a judgment seat judgment of God's church just before the tribulation. We will all stand before the Lord at that judgment seat.

II Corinthians 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

II Corinthians 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

**SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE
OUR LORDS EXAMINATION DAY
A STUDY GUIDE**

7 Possible areas of deficiencies

Revelation 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Revelation 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

I. EPHESUS LOST THEIR FIRST LOVE...

Note.. God wants our love.. and devotion..

I Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become [as] sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

I Corinthians 13:2 And though I have [the gift of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

I Corinthians 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

What we do we need to do in a spirit of love.

This speaks against dead orthodoxy!

This is why you can be theologically correct but spiritually bankrupt..

This I saw at my own school at times. As if your theology will impress God. Criticizing certain preachers who were used of God.

II. SMYRNA WAS CALLED UPON TO BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Revelation 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and [I know] the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but [are] the synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Here we read about the church of Smyrna that has suffered greatly, through tribulation and poverty. Yet in the midst of this suffering the Lord tells them to endure and not fear what they will suffer. They are told to be faithful unto death.

There are many that have suffered greatly for their faith. The Lord expects us to be faithful unto death. So many are not.

Do we believe that our faith is worth dying for? I wonder how many Christians would be faithful unto death?

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"--Tertullian

In the first few centuries, Christianity grew quickly. By AD100, it had become mostly Gentile and had begun to break from its Jewish origins. By 200, the faith had permeated most regions of the Roman Empire, though Christians were mostly in the larger urban areas (Gaul, Lyons, Carthage, Rome). By 325, an estimated 7 million were Christians with as many as 2 million killed for the faith. This growth can be attributed to the new faith's meeting needs across cultural barriers, its giving general meaning to life for many, the overall transformation of those lives, the social concerns of Christians during the plagues for the sick and the poor, and the power of its doctrine. News of the resurrection of Christ produced great loyalty among followers. Christian martyrdom also, ironically, created vast interest in and respect for the Christians and increased their numbers.

It is estimated that millions gave their lives for their faith those early centuries.

The data, attributed to the late researcher David B Barrett, puts the number of Christians martyred since the time of Jesus at 70 million.

It puts the number of Christians systematically exterminated in Nazi Germany at a million, while the number of Orthodox Christians and others murdered in Russia between 1917 and 1950 at 15 million.

In China, at least 200,000 Christians and foreigners were killed in the Boxer Rebellion of 1898 to 1900. Another 700,000 were killed in communist China between 1950 and 1980.

Estimates of the number of Christians killed annually for their faith today differ massively. Todd Johnson, of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, puts the number of Christians martyred annually at 100,000. By stark contrast, Christof Saure, of the International Institute for Religious Freedom, puts the figure far lower at 8,000 to 9,000 a year.

But that's still too many for Michael Austin, a Christian commentator and contributor to the report.

"Is there a global war on Christians?" he says. "That question is asked in this issue and judging from the number of deaths and torture in recent years, my conclusion is, yes - and the casualties are staggering.

"Sadly, the names of Christ's heroes and their inspired stories go largely unspoken today and their cause goes unreported in the popular press."

Voice of the Martyrs's Rou Stults adds that there is not enough awareness in the Western Church: "Many Christians in the West either deny or are ignorant of it, but persecution is part of present reality."

The word Martyr means witness. A martyr is a person who suffers to be a witness of Christ in this world. The world is hostile to then christians witness for Christ.

III. PERGAMOS TOLERATED THOSE WHO HAD THE DOCTRINE OF BALLAM AND NICOLAITANS

Revelation 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Revelation 2:13 I know thy works and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Revelation 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

The Lord rebukes the church of Pergamos for compromising and permitting people to hold the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans in their midst. These two doctrines were hated of the Lord.

The Doctrine of Balaam

Balaam taught Israel to commit whoredom and went into wholesale immorality and adultery..

The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans..

Taught that liberty in Christ gave a license to commit sin. We can sin that grace may abound..

IV. THYATIRA ALLOWED JEZEBEL TO TEACH

Revelation 2:18 And unto the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass;

Revelation 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last [to be] more than the first.

Revelation 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Break down of men and women and make leadership in the church..

V. SARDIS WAS INDITED FOR JUST PLAYING CHURCH HAD A NAME ONLY BUT THEY WERE DEAD

Revelation 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Revelation 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Revelation 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Revelation 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

VI. CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA WAS THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR

Received only encouragement....

Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Revelation 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

VII. CHURCH OF LAODICEA, CHURCH THAT BECAME COMPLACENT AND LUKEWARM

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Revelation 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

There is nothing new under the sun..

II Corinthians 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

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