

(FALL OPENING)
OUR DISAPPOINTED GOD IN OLDEN TIMES.

" And I sought for a man among them, that should
build up the wall, and stand in the
gap before me for the land that
I should not destroy it; but
I FOUND NONE."

Ezk:22:30.

Lesson 22:23-31

We are delighted to be back again, and to see you with your smiling faces and looks of eagerness to go on in to the fall work to round out a great year. By this time most every one has had a vacation of a Sunday or so since this time last year. I deeply appreciate the work of the pulpit committee in providing services during August. The pastor and the whole church should thank Mr. Tanner for holding 75% of these services.

Vacation is a time of forgetting for the time being the things that have been labored. In fact it is a time when you forget all kinds of things. Even as you leave home you forget to carry many things needful and forget to do many things that need to be done. After much excitement a family going on vacation managed to catch a train. After getting quiet for a while they began to think if there was any thing left behind. Mrs. Smith gave a shriek, "I forgot to turn off the electric iron." "Don't worry darling" replied Harry the dutiful husband "Nothing will burn up for I forgot to turn off the shower bath." Now we are to forget all our forgetfulness and gather up the good that came from our vacation relaxation and buckle on our harness and bound forth with springing step to do all that lies out before us. *Ever remembering - faithful to the Lord - new work.*

In our text today God is talking through His prophet. He is talking about a man that will serve Him. He is talking about a wall, as one version puts it, a hedge. In either case it is a protection to a people. He is also talking about a gap in that wall where the enemy comes through.

God was seeking a man when things had gone wrong. He was not seeking just any kind of a man because God has never been able to do His work with just any kind of man. I do not hear Him saying, "I want a giant to do a piece of work among them. He did not say that things of quality come done up in small packages there fore give me a small man. A man may be big physically and have a very small heart in him. On the other hand he may be very small physically and have a big devil in him. I believe I knew what God wanted. He wanted a good man. Not merely a goody goody man. Not one just so good that he fears to move for fear he will displease some customer. Not some man just so good that he never disagrees with any one. My experience with Arnold. But He wanted a man when things had gone wrong. He wanted a good man when things had gone wrong. He wanted a man so good, so in love with the good that he would build up the protection around a people, that is build up their moral and spiritual life and then stand at the door to their moral and spiritual lives and fight back that which if entered would wreck and ruin. God said, "I sought for such a man but found none."

God said that He found none. There was a reason for His disappointment. It lies there in the chapter where the text is found.

1. The land was not cleansed. There had been no rain to wash out its filth. No land is clean that does not have the washing of the water of eternal life in the spirit of evangelism.
2. There was a conspiracy of the false prophets as to what they would teach.
3. The priests did violence to the law of God. HOW?
 - a. Profaned Holy things. Hands full of filth of world at same time handling the things of the church.
 - b. Made no distinction between Holy and common things. Any act is all right if I do it. I can do things the church stands against and the things it stands for. One gives as much pleasure as the other.

#2. (Fall open)

I see no difference in them so far as one being Holy the other unholy. People like that whether preacher or teacher. The pupils may come that they may make their credits but they go away starving for spiritual food. No preacher nor teacher should hold such a sacred duty in such a light fashion but should give up the one or the other.

- c. Did not cause men to discern between the clean and the unclean. Let them do just any way rather than cause any commotion.
- d. Hid their eyes from the Sabbath. Any peoples spiritual life will die when its leaders spiritually lead them in to disregard for the Sabbath.
- 4. Princes were like wolves.
 - a. Shedding blood.
 - b. Destroying souls for dishonest gain.
- 5. Prophets divined lies to suit the people.
- 6. The people used:
 - a. Oppression
 - b. Robbery
 - c. Vexation for poor and needy.

What are our hedges?

- 1. Civil law
- 2. School law.
- 3. Church (God in hearts of people)
- 4. Home

Observations

- 1. If our hedges are not being torn down then God has been finding people who have been building up the walls and standing in the gaps.
- 2. If our hedges are being broken down i.e. If family altars are fading out, if modesty ~~man~~ is disappearing, if Sabbath is being broken, if worldliness is entering the church, and if the marriage vow is being taken less seriously matters not what our optimism as to the future may be. And it matters not how much we brag on the progress of the Kingdom, we will have to admit that God in seeking for men and women to build up these walls and keep the gaps has failed to find enough of the kind that would really do the job. We must never become so optimistic as to the immediate present that we will say the devil is dead for you can not say he is dead and make him dead.
- 3. If the hedge is up and the gaps are guarded and if such a condition is to be kept up in the future then it is essential that recruits be prepared by the guards of to day to take our places as we die.

The Frenchman Mirabeau. He was given a bridge to guard. General watched him from afar. Column after column thrown back. Eventually the sprang across the bridge. He then closed field glasses and commented, "Mirabeau is dead."

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If you will reconsecrate your life to-day to guard the soul and of your own life and from any group that you are responsible for come give the power your hand.