

NO MAN LEAVES JUST AS HE ENTERED IN

Text: Ezekiel 46:9

INTRO: This text is in a context that I am persuaded is highly figurative language, describing the temple of God in this age of the world--the church of Jesus Christ.

The writers of the Pulpit Commentary suggest a spiritual or theological reason for these statements: "to signify that each should go out of the sanctuary another man than he came in." That is, no man leaves just as he came in.

I. THE ALIEN SINNER.

A. He is exposed to the gospel of Christ. Hopefully he will believe & obey

1. The eunuch did, Acts 8.
2. Cornelius did, Acts 10.
3. The jailer did, Acts 16.

B. Sometimes, the gospel becomes food for thought & a seed is sown that will produce results later in life.

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter" (Acts 17:32.)

NOTE: I once read of a man 116 years old, who decided to take a stand for his convictions--convictions that had their beginning 100 years earlier in a sermon he heard when he was 16 years old. This is unusual, but well within the realm of possibility. It is also a foolish & dangerous chance to take.

C. Some non-Christians go away more hardened & cynical & more determined to remain in their sins.

So the king of Israel [Ahab] said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings 22:8).

If I had not come & spoken to them, they would have no sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. (John 15:22).

II. THE ERRING CHURCH MEMBER.

- A. Hopefully the sermon, the association with godly minded people, the atmosphere of worship, will cause him to renew his desire to serve the Lord & he will repent & confess his wrong & be fully restored.
Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16.
- B. If not, perhaps he will depart more uncomfortable & miserable than before. It has been said that a good preacher will comfort the afflicted & afflict the comfortable, but sometimes those who are miserable in their sins need to be made even more miserable.
- C. If the gospel does not have one of these more desired effects on the heart of the erring brother, then it may become the occasion for him to further harden his heart against the Lord & His truth.

1 Tim. 4:2

NOTE: A few years ago I heard a man tell of his childhood, when in the summertime he & his brothers ran & worked & played bare-foot. By the time summer ended their feet had become so toughened they would sit & stick pins or needles into them, to see how far they could stick them before feeling the pain.

III. THE FAITHFUL CHILD OF GOD.

- A. Hopefully & usually, the faithful child of God will be edified by the sermon, the song service, the prayers. He will be built up & strengthened by his association with other Christians. He will find renewed strength & enthusasism with which to face life.

...Let all things be done for edification. (1 Cor. 14:26).

B. But at all times the devil is using every means at his disposal to try to distract you from the lesson, to attempt to cause you to lose interest in your brothers & sisters in Christ; to get you to leave without feeling that you've benefited in any way. He will use the babies. He will appeal to your prejudice against the O.T. He will remind you of the small & ugly things some brother or sister has done to you in the past. If he can dampen your enthusiasm, he will cripple your influence for good & perhaps even put you on the road to hell. He will tell you the sermon is too long, or too dry, or above your head or beneath your dignity. The song leader got the songs all pitched too high or too low, or you didn't like the ones he picked, etc. Don't you believe it. Your soul is at stake.

CONCLUSION: What effect will your presence & this sermon have on you? I don't know. But one thing I do know. You will never be quite the same as you were when you walked in. Either you have been up-lifted, or otherwise. Either your heart is a little softer or a little harder. And for this, you will be called into account. In view of this opportunity you must someday face judgment.

La Porte, TX, February 17, 1980

Exton, PA, April 7, 1985

Shiloh, Mexia, PA, December 29, 1996

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 22, 1998