



Sermon, Sunday February 13, 2022

“Lessons from the Fall of Northern Israel”

SCRIPTURE: 2 Kings 17:6-18 ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. ⁷ This occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had worshiped other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹ The people of Israel secretly did things that were not right against the LORD their God. They built for themselves high places at all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city; ¹⁰ they set up for themselves pillars and sacred poles on every high hill and under every green tree; ¹¹ there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. They did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger; ¹² they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this.” ¹³ Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law that I commanded your ancestors and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.” ¹⁴ They would not listen but were stubborn, as their ancestors had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their ancestors, and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false; they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do as they did. ¹⁶ They rejected all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves cast images of two calves; they made a sacred pole, worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. ¹⁷ They made their sons and their daughters pass through fire; they used divination and augury; and they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah alone.

Introduction: Fundamentals of Faith and Creative Power

The Beijing Winter Olympics started a few days ago. Through the news, I heard that athletes participating in the Olympics are having difficulties due to poor food in the Olympic village and poor ice quality at the skating rink.

If players are provided with the food they are accustomed to eating and an environment similar to where they train every day, they will be able to compete in the best condition and environment. However, this opportunity is not always given to players. In fact, most of the athletes who perform well in international competitions such as the Olympics are athletes with strong basic skills and adaptability to environmental changes.

Basic skills and adaptability are very important in our life of faith. In fact, those who continue to lead their religious lives well despite changes in the environment are those who are faithful to the basics of faith. Also, people who are faithful to the basics have the creative power to adapt well to change.

Therefore, strengthening the fundamentals of faith is one of the most important parts of our religious life. Today's text is the story of the people chosen by the Lord who perished because they were not faithful to the basics of faith. Through today's story, I hope that everyone will become stronger in their foundations of faith.



Body: Samaria Falls to Assyria

Today's text tells the reason for the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel. However, the reason for the destruction of northern Israel is not because of the mightiness of Assyria. Northern Israel was ruled by 20 kings for 209 years. Except for Jehu, all the kings worshiped idols.

Today's text talks about three reasons for the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel. First, the people of northern Israel forgot the purpose of being chosen by the Lord. Second, the northern Israelites worshiped idols. And finally, the northern Israeli repented and refused to return to the Lord.

Now, let's take a closer look at the reasons for the destruction of northern Israel through the text.

1. Because the people of Israel do not worship the Lord.

Look at 2 Kings 17:7. "This occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had worshiped other gods."

The purpose of God's exodus of Israel from Egypt is to live as a holy people and worship the Lord. But the people of Israel forgot the purpose of the Lord's saving the Israelites from slavery through grace.

It is the basis of a Christian life for Christians to come to church for Sunday worship. Sometimes people ask me: "**Pastor! Isn't our life itself more important than Sunday worship?**" I do not deny such a question. However, those who cannot set aside the time allotted for us to worship the Lord on Sunday are unlikely to glorify the Lord through their lives.

We must not forget that it is very precious for members of the Lord's spiritual community to gather together to worship the Lord. The basis of the Christian life of faith is to offer good public worship. Then we can glorify the Lord through our life. We should want to be a Christian faithful to the basics. Next let's look at the reasons for the second destruction of northern Israel.

2. It is because the northern people of Israel worshiped idols instead of the Lord.

The second reason for the destruction of northern Israel was that they worshiped idols instead of the Lord. **Look at 2 Kings 17:8. "And walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had introduced."**

The more our religious life maintains a deeper relationship with the Lord, the simpler our life becomes, and the less we want to be satisfied with the things of the world. In general, we want to own and enjoy a nice house, nice clothes, good food, and a good car. But the closer we get to the Lord, the freer we are from these things. Our desire for worldly status is similar. The closer we get to the Lord, the more free we are from the desire for worldly status.

What I am saying to you is not that I simply emphasize abstinence and that the enjoyment of everyday life is meaningless. Nor am I trying to devalue the effort to take on the world through a good vision.

In fact, the idol within us is revealed through selfishness and greed. However, a deep relationship with the Lord transforms our selfishness into altruism and leads us to empty our greed. Through the good conscience and the Holy Spirit within us, the Lord reveals to us what we dream of and hope for.

We need to examine whether our hearts are following idols or are we interested in the maturation of our relationship with the Lord. If we are more interested in a deeper relationship with the Lord, we should have a deeper fellowship of prayer and fellowship with the Lord. When we are in such a relationship, the Holy Spirit guides us on what to do next.



Then, let's look at the reasons for the last destruction of northern Israel.

3. The Northern Israelites Rejected the Opportunity of Repentance

Throughout the history of Israel, God always sent prophets to give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent. The reason God called prophets is to love the people of Israel and to restore them. However, the Israelites depended on foreign gods in times of trouble, and were proud of them in times of peace.

We seek the Lord when we are in trouble, but when the problem is solved, it is easy to forget the grace of the Lord. Also, we thank the Lord when we are at peace, but we believe that the results of that peace are due to our own efforts.

However, the Holy Spirit makes us aware of the spiritual condition in which we are located. And with the love of the cross of the Lord, He heals our fundamental problems. If our inner self is filled with pride, greed, and stubbornness, we must turn from there and respond to Christ's invitation.

Conclusion: Let's not forget the basics of our faith.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. **Jeremiah 17:8 says: "He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."**

Please do not forget that the root and foundation of our faith is worship, holiness not worshipping idols, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Let's not forget that we can bear the fruit of a rich life of faith when we are faithful to the worship of the Lord, strive for holiness, and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit within us.

