

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

People, no matter the era or location, are basically the same. The problems in many parts of the Church today, are no different than the problems of Old Testament Israel. The primary troublemakers in both ages were/are the religious establishments in power and in leadership. In old Israel, it was the corrupt kings, prophets and priests. In our day it is the corrupt bishops and national leaders of many Christian denominations.

Each group routinely recites the word of God, then disobeys it in nearly the same breath. Fortunately, God remains the same in all ages. His word is as true and relevant today as it was in the Old Testament days.

Psalm 50 focuses like a laser beam on this issue. The Lord told them "What right do you have to recite My statutes? You cast My words behind you!" These words are just as powerful today. The religious establishment will freely quote scriptures, which they neither believe nor obey. The Psalmist lists a variety of sins, these leaders commit or encourage others to commit. They do this, all the while going through very public religious motions.

God's mercy and patience in dealing with their hypocrisy caused them to wrongly assume that God's silence in dealing with them was a sign of His indifference toward their sin. They always tend to see God as a projection of themselves, not as the holy God that he really is. These leaders tend to paint a distorted picture of God, a caricature of the truth about God. Their version of God is just like them. He says many words, but doesn't really mean it. They are wrong and God tells them so.

"These things you have done, and I have been silent. You thought I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you." God says if you think He is just like you, He is not. He will no longer be a silent witness to the sin of Israel or the sin of the Church.

God's mercy, patience and silence, must not be misinterpreted as indifference or approval for sin. If God's plain written words fail to get our attention, His actions certainly will. The Lenten season approaches. Lent is forty days (not counting Sundays) of self-examination and reflection. Do we see God as he really is, as revealed in the Bible? Do we see ourselves as we really are, as revealed in the Bible? Or do we foolishly project ourselves onto a distorted picture of who we would prefer God to be? Examine yourself and decide.

See y'all Sunday
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader