



The Voice of Evangelism International Ministries Inc.

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THE PLAGUE OF YOUR HEART

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Today we want to take our Scripture text from **1st Kings 8:37-40**, **"If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers"**. While in prayer this morning, I was petitioning the Father to anoint me to preach with great compassion, coupled with grave conviction. Compassion will cause a man to go beyond the normal boundaries and out of his way to touch the hearts of men. We see in the New Testament that Jesus was often moved with compassion seeing the people having no Shepherd. As a minister, often times my heart is moved as I witness the lack of spiritual depth in professing Christians lives, coupled with a loss of Holy Ghost conviction. Needless to say, God cares about the personal needs of each believer. Solomon's prayer of dedication is a passage of scripture that especially supports the belief in a personal, loving God. I don't need to tell you today how much God loves you, if you are a true Christian. I'm reminded of the word

"The Lord hath appeared of old, unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". The love of God is older than anything that man could ever imagine. It is with his lovingkindness and profound affection that He has drawn us to Him as Lord and Savior. Solomon fully understood that the Temple in Jerusalem was a place of prayer, not only a place in which people would pray, but also a place toward which people would pray. If you will recall, Daniel faithfully opened his windows at his place of residence and would pray toward Jerusalem though the Medo-Persian Empire had made a decree that no man could petition his God without first getting permission from the King of Persia. So we see that it was a point in which men, though they may not be in close proximity to Jerusalem, would still turn and pray toward Jerusalem, because scripturally that's where God had placed His name. We witness this truth found in **2nd Chronicles 6:6**, **"But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel"**. The question must then be asked, when would people most likely lift up their prayers? Well, it would be when they experienced trouble, such as famine, pestilence, blight, along with other plagues and sicknesses. However: Solomon, understanding the gravity of all of these plights, understood the greatest plight of all would be the plague of the heart. The greatest

tragedy and calamity found within a person's life is the plague or sin-diseased heart. This blight and plague of the heart is the greatest sin and scourge upon anyone. The sin of one's own heart is filled with pain and sorrow which separates man from God. The greatest plague of all time is the plague of sin. One's stature, education, or mental knowledge is not what separates him from the Lord God of Abraham; but rather it is the sin and plague of one's own heart. We read here in **Isaiah 59:1**, **"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."** I am well aware that we are living in a time when men do not like to speak against sin in any capacity. If this nation, along with its ministers and ministries, do not start crying against sin and preaching repentance, then the plague and blight that is on the hearts of men will only grow and intensifying thus invoking the judgment of God upon us all. Needless to say, when famine, pestilences, mildew, blight, and a host of other calamities began to inundate this nation both the righteous and unrighteous will suffer together. My spirit is profusely grieved by the plethora of charlatans on both international television and radio who will not say anything

about any sin or sins that are growing so rampant in this generation. We no longer witness old fashion altar calls pleading for men and women to come to the altar in a spirit of brokenness and repent. No longer do men preach the shedding of His most holy and precious blood that brings redemption to mankind. It's as though the church has been deluged with a spirit of political correctness and we cannot preach the truth of His Word any longer. But I'm here to say today, God willing I will never compromise His Word, and I will stand faithfully and remain committed for what is just and holy. As ministers and ministries grow, it seems as though they compromise and they sell out seeking the endorsement and favor of men rather than God. As the old gospel song declares, "I'd Rather Have Jesus than Silver or Gold, I'd Rather Have Jesus than Riches Untold". Money, regretfully, has ruined many ministries, along with an unwillingness to remain faithful to preach an uncompromising message to this generation. What tremendous insight Solomon had in being able to see, as well as discern, the plague of one's heart. What is the plague of your heart today, my friend? What trouble binds your soul so that you have nowhere else to turn but toward God? Are you willing to repent and admit your guilt of sin? Or are you going to nonchalantly remain arrogant and self-confident thinking, there's no need for repentance in my life. When men humble themselves in prayer and the Spirit of the living God begins to brood over their hearts, they are soon brought into a spiritual awareness knowing they are in the presence of the living God and something is wrong on the inside of them. That awareness is not to demean, belittle, or condemn, but rather to make one

sober to the reality that all men have a divine appointment with God. Thus, through the blood of Jesus Christ we must purge our hearts from all sin and iniquity. The psalmist David understood the gravity of sin and sins ability to separate him from the Chief Shepherd. We read in **Psalms 51:10-14, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from by presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O Lord, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."** When David speaks of his blood guiltiness, he is speaking of the time when he had Uriah murdered. You see, the psalmist David was aware of the plague that had seized his heart. If we do not keep our hearts continually purged, then the plague of sin will somehow and someday find a place of residence within each of us. Thus, we endeavor to keep our cup full and running over never allowing sin to encroach our lives and seduce our hearts with this plague called sin. Are you willing to lift up your prayers to Him in true confession and repentance? Without a doubt His presence is abiding, and for that reason the Holy Ghost seeks to keep the people of God pure and undefiled. The Holy Ghost is the abiding presence of Christ, so that when we do sin or if we do err He leads us back to Christ with confession and repentance. We read in **Romans 2:4, "Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath**

against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"? It is a good thing for the Holy Ghost to lead all of us into a place and state of repentance so that we will not experience the wrath of God at the end of days. May your heart never become so hardened and callused that the plague of sin will destroy your heart in its totality. In closing, I am reminded of the words of Christ our Lord found in **Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"**. May you remain faithful until the end of your race and keep your heart undefiled in this present world. With sin and all of its trappings, Satan will seek to devour everyone he possibly can. If you abide in the Word of God and the Word of God abides in you faithfully, then you do not have to worry about failing God. I assure you He will never fail you neither will He ever forsake you, but He will be with you always even unto the end of this world. As always, my wife and I are very grateful and humbled by your love and support for The Voice of Evangelism International Ministries. Truly, you are helping us to go around the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Trust in the Lord with all your heart for He alone will keep and deliver you here in the time of the end. Do keep your lamps trimmed and burning ever so brightly, because I believe in the not too distant future this nation is going to face some very grave hardships because sin has plagued the hearts of its people.

Serving With You All,

Pastor David W. Lankford