

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, January 2, 2022

## **They Have Deeply Corrupted Themselves**

I would like to discuss two topics today; the first is the concept of a society that is “deeply corrupted”, and the second is the duty of parents (and anyone in authority) to “restrain” the behavior of their children (charges). While these are separate topics, they are strongly connected.

### **Deeply Corrupted**

The phrase “deeply corrupted” is found in Hosea chapter 9, describing the awful condition of the 10 northern tribes of Israel, and the resulting destruction that the Lord would shortly bring upon them. Although that is the specific application of these words, they are certainly applicable to any people that similarly depart from God. Further, they speak to a condition that is remarkably similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to the world before the flood – those landmark events that foreshadow the condition of things at the return of the Lord. Remember the words of Christ in Luke 17:26-30: [As it was in the days of Lot (Sodom), and in the days of Noah (antediluvian world),] “even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

**Hosea 9:1-17** *“1 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor. 2 The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. 3 They shall not dwell in the LORD’S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria. 4 They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD. 5 What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD? 6 For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles. 7 ¶ The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. 8 The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. 9 They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. 10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved. 11 ¶ As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. 12 Though they*

*bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them! 13 Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. 14 Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. 15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers. 16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. 17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.”*

### Deeply Corrupted

- “Deeply”: Hebrew – “amaq” - Deep and Profound
- “Corrupted”: Hebrew - “Shachath” – Corrupted, destroyed, ruined, spoiled, rotten
- Isolated corruption can be answered, amended, corrected, repaired, but once a society has become deeply corrupted, there is no turning back – it is irreversible; the judgment of God has already been ordered, and is on the way.
- **2Timothy 2:14-19** *“14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 19 ¶Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*
  - The Greek word for “subverting” is “Katastrophe”, Meaning “overthrow”, and “destruction”. These are serious matters! Messing with God’s plain standards brings catastrophe! Utter destruction of men’s lives, and more importantly, their souls!
  - The Greek word for Canker is “gangraina”, which is where we get our English word “Gangrene”. That’s when some part of the body – typically an extremity, like hands, feet, fingers, toes, are injured, and / or infected, and the tissue begins to die. Once it’s dead, that necrotic tissue starts destroying the living tissue next to it. Once Gangrene has progressed to a certain point, the only way to keep it from killing you, is to amputate the effected area. Once deep corruption has set in, the time for talking is DONE! CUT IT OFF! Understanding those two words ought to clearly paint the picture that when

you start to screw around with the plain, simple, commands of our Creator, there will be ONLY death and destruction to follow.

**John Calvin:** *“Hosea declares here, that the people were so sunk in their vices, that they could not be drawn out of them. He who has fallen can raise up himself when one extends a hand to him; and he who strives to emerge from the mire, finding a helper to assist him, can plant his foot again on solid ground: but when he is cast into a gulf, he has no hope of a recovery. I extend my hand in vain, when one sinks in a shipwreck, and is fallen into the deep. So now the Prophet says, that the people were unhealable, because they were deeply fixed; and further, because they were infected with corruptions. He therefore intimates that their diseases were incurable, that they had struck roots so deeply, that they could by no means be cleansed. They were then deeply fixed, and were corrupt as in the days of Gibeah. The Gibeonites, we know, were so fallen, that their city differed nothing from Sodom; for unbridled licentiousness in all kinds of vices prevailed there, and lusts so monstrous reigned among them, that there was no distinction between good and evil, no shame whatever. Hence it was, that they ravished the Levite’s wife, and killed her by their filthy obscenities: and this was the cause of that memorable slaughter which nearly demolished the whole tribe of Benjamin.”*

You may recall the sermon that I preached on 8/8/21 entitled “Every Man Did that Which Was Right in His Own Eyes”, wherein we looked at the awful condition of things in Gibeah, just after the Lord gave Israel the promised land. The corruption was so bad, that the only possible outcome was for the Lord to nearly destroy the entire tribe of Benjamin. 400 men remained of the entire tribe; all others were summarily dispatched to eternity by the hand of God. That was the only cure for the world before the flood; that was the only cure for Sodom; that was the only cure for Gibeah, and ultimately Israel and Judah. We are promised that it will be the only cure for this wicked world as a whole when our Lord Jesus Christ comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not His Gospel.

Let us consider the anatomy of the situation in Gibeah; what was happening there that gave evidence of this deep corruption?

- **Violence** – Society had come to such an awful place, that roving gangs of perverts brazenly went to a home and demanded access to rape its inhabitants. The context, and the response from God tell us that this was not an isolated incident. It’s safe to assume that Gibeah answered to the same description as the antediluvian world: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” (**Genesis 6:11,12**)

- **Extreme, proud sexual immorality** – Remember that the marauding, rapist thugs were sodomites; they wanted to rape the man, but they settled for the women. Again, we can safely assume that the actions of the wicked men were not isolated, just like the actions of the violent, raping throng in old Sodom were not isolated.
- **No rule of law** – Judgment had fallen in the streets, and wickedness was defended to the death. How had things devolved to the place where this kind of wickedness was commonplace? Remember, the old man that took in the Levite and his concubine made quite a fuss about getting them off of the street that night, because he knew the nature of the people in that city and tribe; he knew that they were in grave danger in that wicked city, and that there would be no help for them. Further, we see an incredible dedication to sin and lawlessness when the whole tribe was willing to go to bloody war with the other 11 tribes, to defend a gang of murdering sodomites! I can't even begin to fathom what vile, godless words were spoken in the councils of their leaders, in the streets, and in their homes, that would bring that tribe to one mind and one voice that they should fight to the death in defense of such behavior. What kind of twisting of scriptures, reality, and simple logic had to take place for this to be seen as good? It didn't happen in a day: event by event, month by month, year by year the course of godlessness and wickedness was established and maintained.
- **Pride** – See above – the only way to reach the place where God's law is completely subverted by the wicked desires of men, is for men to be lifted up in great swelling pride. Again, we see strong ties to Sodom: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (**Ezekiel 16:49**)
- **Abundance of idleness** – We have a very short narrative about the people of Gibeah and Benjamin, but contained within it is a detail that speaks to their pride and abundance of idleness. "*Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss.*" (**Judges 20:16**) Remember that this was a time when there were no standing armies among the Israelites, and yet these 700 men of Benjamin had become noteworthy as the Navy Seals of their day. This required serious dedication of time and effort, and it clearly wasn't done quietly, as Benjamin boasted of these men. Ambidextrous and precise in warcraft and violence.

Again, this is very much the same as the anatomy of Sodom and the antediluvian world. Now let us consider the similar words that the Lord gave to the prophet Isaiah, identifying this same deep corruption in the southern kingdom of Judah, and

prophesying their destruction, even as the northern kingdom was in the very process of being destroyed.

**Isaiah 3:9-26** *“9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. 10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. 11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. 13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. 14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. 15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts. 16 ¶ Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. 18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. 24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. 25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. 26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.”*

These are not new or unique events; this is a pattern of behavior, which is the natural result of the corruption of man; it is the process of depravity as defined in **Romans 1:19-32**. Without the restorative work of the Holy Spirit, the carnal mind rules, and is at enmity with God. There is no other possible outcome: deep corruption, followed by fitting destruction. My friends, do we not see these same things happening in front of our very eyes?

- **Violence** – violence of every form is on the rise in this nation. Murder, school shootings, theft, brawling in the streets, abortion, airline rage incidents, rioting, overthrowing police / authority, etc.
- **Extreme, proud sexual immorality** – Fornication, Divorce, Adultery, Sodomy, Transgenderism, etc. – these things are the rule of the day across the nation and

the world. These abominable behaviors strike at the very fabric and pattern of God's creation.

- **No rule of law** – It's hard to know where to begin with this. Judgment has truly fallen in the streets in this nation. Just like in ancient Gibeah, the offenders are regularly made out to be victims, and victims are made to be offenders as they try to cope and respond to criminal activity. I do want to focus on one particular issue: the systematic changing of the lexicon to accommodate, normalize, and glorify sin, in an effort to upend every law of God. Abortion (fetus); Sodomites (LGBTQIA+); Trannies (pronouns, "birthing persons", etc); Pedophiles (Minor Attracted Persons).
  - *Isaiah 5:20* "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"
- **Pride** – From one end of the political spectrum to the other, Pride is the word of the day. Whether it's the American Flag, or the Fag Pride Flag (Pride Month), the people of this nation are filled with Pride in themselves, and the human institutions that they identify with. No thought of God, no thankfulness, and no humility before Him.
- **Abundance of idleness** – This nation had already become lazy and entitled, wasting away the days of their strength on vanity ... and then COVID happened. It has been a breathtaking thing to watch as the people in this country have decided that they don't want to work. Just another way that the human heart believes that God can be overcome. Part of the curse that He laid upon the human race is that we must labor, bringing forth our sustenance by the sweat of our brow (Genesis 3:19) This entitled generation believes that they should be relieved of that burden, and be provided for by others. This is the mentality of an entire generation – we must fight against it, and insist that our children do not behave that way.

Beloved friends, I personally believe that the evidence shows that this nation is deeply corrupted, like the antediluvian world, Sodom, Gibeah, Israel, and Judah before her, and like those people, this nation will be similarly destroyed by the hand of God. I don't pretend to know when exactly that will happen, but the evidence is continually piling up. Tim recently preached a series of sermons called "Signs of Christ's Coming"; in the 4<sup>th</sup> part of that series, preached on 7/11/2021, he demonstrated from the scriptures that the second coming of Christ would be at a time marked by severe and pervasive world-wide conditions of betrayal, heresy, apostasy, hatred, violence, and affliction. His focus was more on the posture of the world toward God's elect in the earth in those dark days. As the general conditions in this world look more and more like the days of Noah and Lot, we can expect that the persecution of God's tiny elect remnant will ramp up as it did with those faithful brethren, such that the hand of God had to directly deliver them from

the howling mobs, at the moment that His wrath began to flow unmixed on those wicked people.

**Jeremiah 5:9** *“Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”*

There is no question about whether God will avenge himself; the only question is when. It is easy to feel impatient as we are surrounded by such darkness on a daily basis – our souls are truly vexed like Lot’s was. We must not intrude upon God’s prerogative, but rather Cleave to Christ with meekness and fear of God, knowing that we have not earned His favor, and that there is a purpose to His delaying. The entire earth is held in store to accomplish that purpose: to bring about the birth and salvation of each son and daughter of God – each of His chosen and redeemed sheep. If He were to destroy this earth before that job was done, then He would be losing one of His sheep. That longsuffering pity, mercy, and fidelity is the work of our righteous God, and it is the only hope that our sinful selves have. So – when you wonder why the Lord hasn’t yet returned to avenge himself, remember that there must yet be sheep for Him to save, and therefore we have work to do. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the basis of our hope of eternal life, and it is the primary purpose of our temporal life. So, when we feel vexed, let us stay focused on Christ and His Gospel. Love it, live it, preach it. After all, that’s exactly what Noah and Lot did in their day. Thank God for His patience with, and for, us worms.

**2Peter 3:3-18** *“3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 ¶ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 ¶ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 ¶ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14*

*Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*

### **Duty to “Restrain”**

**1Samuel 2:12-17; 22-36** *“12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13 And the priests’ custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest’s servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. ... 22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD’S people to transgress. 25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. 26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men. 27 ¶ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? 28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? 29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house,*

*and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. 33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. 36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

**1Samuel 3:1-21** *"11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."*

#### Lessons from Eli:

- Deep corruption comes upon a person or a people a little bit at a time, and it comes when those in authority – beginning with the parents – refuse to do their duty to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, which includes the duty to restrain that child's behavior for as long as they are able to execute that authority. Thus the critical importance of the command for a child to "honor thy father and thy mother", and the promise of earthly blessings that accompanies that commandment. (**Exodus 20:12**)
  - How do we "restrain" our children? First we must teach them what is required of them – beginning with practical lessons, and adding scriptural undergirding as their little minds can comprehend those things. Having established the standards of God in their life, we must keep pushing them to live within those guardrails. We cannot give them faith and salvation, but we absolutely can, and must, govern their behavior. As they get older – including into adulthood – that authority and responsibility is still there. That responsibility doesn't begin and end with moral absolutes, like

fornication. Clearly, we must restrain that behavior. Friends – as parents, we know our children very well. We know their frame, and therefore must help them when they are wandering into grey areas. When a parent puts constraints on behavior that is in a “grey” area, they are to be obeyed, as those that watch for our soul, and are trying to set straight paths for our feet.

- The sons of Eli acted in the office of the priests of God, while committing gross, open, notorious sin, which caused others to abhor the worship and service of God. In the face of that, Eli said some very right and true words, but that clearly wasn’t enough. Yes words must be said – from the cradle - but then parents must take action to require obedience. When a person refuses to submit to the instruction and restraint of their parents, then the parents must take further action to sanctify themselves, so as not to be partaker of that wicked child’s sin. Our current generation has moved heaven and earth to avoid any sort of restraint upon their children. Further, they violently oppose anyone that tries to restrain their own children!
- What should Eli have done?
  - They should never again have been allowed to don the ephod and present themselves as priests before the people. The removal of that authority should have been as widely known as the sin was.
  - In that society, directly governed by the laws of God, those men should have been taken before the judgment seat, where the death penalty should have been rendered and executed. Eli should have personally seen to it, and been the first to testify against them. **Deuteronomy 6 and 13** spell out the duty to instruct your children, restrain their behavior to that instruction, and sanctify yourself from children that come to years and depart from that instruction and restraint.

Clearly we do not live in ancient Israel, and are not governed by the laws of that society, and so we do not bring someone to the judgement seat for their wickedness. That was certainly the proper means of sanctification in that time and place. So how are we, as a part of a New Testament church, to sanctify ourselves from children who come to years and depart from God in pursuit of their lust and pride? We are to sanctify ourselves by making clear the sinfulness of their actions, and then withdrawing ourselves from that wicked person.

- **2Thessalonians 3:6** *“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”*

This is a “toughie” as Gramps used to say. When you bring a child into this world, and then spend your life-blood loving and caring for them, your heart desires to keep that connection. That is natural affection, and it is a good thing to have that natural affection.

However, that natural affection becomes sinful inordinate affection if it causes you to cleave to a person that declares themselves against Christ – by word or deed. For more on this topic, you can review the sermon from 9/13/2020 entitled “Train Up a Child”, and the sermon from 11/14/2021 entitled “They Went Out From Us, But They Were Not Of Us”.

My dear friends – consider the incredible cost of Eli’s refusal to sanctify himself from those wicked children. There was a personal cost, and a societal cost. Israel was thrust into war and bondage at the hands of the Philistines, with many dead and suffering; the Ark of the Covenant was taken from Israel; Eli, his two sons, and his daughter in law were all dead within days of each other; his lineage was cursed and lost their inheritance. This is deadly serious business with God. As I pointed out in my last sermon, it is something that Christ spoke to often – that kind of emphasis should be a hint to us that this is an issue that will be difficult for our flesh, and that we must treat with special attention and care, guarding against our deceitful flesh, and the snares of our Enemy. What confusion do we teach – to our children, and to others - if we refuse to restrain our children while we have opportunity? What treachery do we perpetrate if we move the ancient landmarks in order to accommodate a wicked child, including maintaining a relationship with one that has rejected Christ? This is how we have watched the “Christian” nation around us degenerate into a mockery of Christianity. The leaders of the churches, one by one, decided that they must begin to shift the commands of God to accommodate the particular satanic folly of their child. Churches have been ripped apart with internecine warfare that boils down to protecting sinful behavior. At the end of the process you are left with a smoldering pile of ash – the standards of God and the candlestick having completely left the building. It must not be so in the churches of God.

***Romans 15:13*** “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

I love you all. Amen.