

RUNNING FROM GOD

Matthew 26:56 Luke 14:16-24 John 6:66, 67

Introduction: All the disciples ran away and left Jesus alone when the soldiers came. They didn't try to hide their fear nor their flight. They ran away as fast as they could. We are quick to point out their cowardly act and condemn them for leaving the Lord alone but we are also guilty of doing the same thing. Everyone runs away from God. Remember Adam and Eve hiding in the Garden of Eden? Ever since then people have run away from God. Is there anyone innocent? Anyone not guilty? Are you sure?

I. PEOPLE RUN AWAY FROM GOD THROUGH THEIR WORK

1. Work was originally a curse by God upon Adam for his sin. Today the curse has been forgotten.
2. Work dominates us and our destinies are determined by our work.
3. Work has become the most popular way of running from God.
 - "I had to work" is the reason given for not attending worship.
4. We satisfy ourselves by our work and have a clear conscience, even praise from others.
5. We are like the Pharisees of Jesus' day.
 - Boast of our hard work, of our promotions.
 - Boast of our disciplined life, of our material gains.
 - We compare what we have, who we are with others.
6. Our "having to work" instead of serving God is but a false front.
 - It is really running from God.
 - It can be being ashamed of Jesus Christ.
 - We want God's blessings but not responsibilities He has for us.

II. PEOPLE RUN AWAY FROM GOD IN THEIR PURSUITS IN LIFE

1. There are a lot of "prodigal sons/daughters" today. Remember the prodigal son leaving home?
2. Countless want to live life to it's fullest with the excuse of "we only go around once..."
 - Outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, the lake, camping take God's place.
 - Entertainment such as movies, television, ball games, parties, cookouts take God's place.
 - Traveling such as visiting relatives, friends, vacations, seeing the world, take God's place.
3. Our various attempts to calm our restlessness cause us to run away from God.
4. What we are doing is really running from God and our responsibilities to Him and His Church.

III. PEOPLE RUN AWAY FROM GOD THROUGH DOUBT AND FAITHLESSNESS

1. Many are constantly anxious, always unsure about most things, never committing to anything.
2. Running from God is an expression of doubt about the Christian life and the Church.
3. It is also a visible doubt of unbelief that God is still in power and in charge.
4. Running away from God is an attempt to ease one's conscience from God's convicting power.

IV. PEOPLE RUN AWAY FROM GOD THROUGH RELIGION

1. How can one run away from God through religion? Jesus' most dangerous enemies were religious people.
2. Many religious people seem more active than even Jesus' disciples. Active in all the church activities. Why so much activity?
3. What keeps some so active in their church activities?
 - Is it love, devotion?
 - Is it emotional experiences?
 - Is it for recognition of accomplishments?
4. One can become saturated with things ABOUT God, but not God Himself.

CONCLUSION:

1. All the running away from God can be halted.
 - Work does not give meaning to/of life.
 - Work can help give meaning to life.
 - Only the right relationship with God brings abundant life.
2. Abundant life does not come by pursuing worldly things.
 - Earthly pursuits cannot bring meaningful life.
 - Only in Jesus Christ can life be full
3. Doubting and faithlessness cannot add anything to life.
 - Everyone doubts and loses faith at times.
 - Only despair can come from constant doubt and faithlessness.
 - Only complete, absolute trust in God, His Church and people can bring real meaning to live.
4. Religion alone is void of God but it can be a channel to find God.
5. Have you been running from God? Stop! Let God do His work in you.