

THE SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

The Reproach of the Solemn Assembly

By Paul M Hanssen

Last week, I shared a lesson from Joel 1:14

Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.

By now I am sure everyone is aware of the fast that God is requiring of us the beginning of 2024. The Spirit of God awakened me on Jan 31st with the words *Sanctify a fast and call a solemn assembly*. However, I feel the need to clarify what this fast is about. Of course, you can personally pray for whatever burden the Spirit of God lays upon your heart. But there is a reason for the *gathering of the solemn assembly*. This is not a personal fast or a place for you to bring your personal needs. This is a collective fast, it is a gathering, a solemn assembly of God's people. This is not just a typical fast, but a fast of gathering around a *cause, a purpose, a reason, and a goal*. I have had people write to me expressing gratitude for my leadership into this fast while at the same time informing me of what they will be focusing on during this season of prayer and fasting; such things as the government, coming elections, building projects, family issues, health issues, needs of the church etc. This fast is not about any of the aforementioned, at least not as the focus during the gathering together of the solemn assembly.

Last week, in my feeble way, I attempted to share on the meaning of fasting which has to do with putting the hand in front of the mouth. This is of course for the purpose of preventing food from entering the mouth, but it also from preventing words from proceeding from our mouths. One of the main focuses during this fast is the need for God's people to shut their mouths. If you have listened to anything I have taught this past year you will have learned how we create worlds of spinning orbits, worlds that are void and empty of the inspiration of the breath and Spirit of God through our words. These empty worlds attract demons. Your words become temples and dwelling places for spirits of witchcraft that impact you and everyone around you. Your mouth has great power, more power than you realize.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (Proverbs 18:21)

In Psalm 59, King David mentions “the sin of their mouths and the words of their lips”. We do not even begin to realize the sin that dwells in our mouths. This fast of the solemn assembly is partially about putting your hand in front of your mouth to prevent destructive words of sin from proceeding from our lips.

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips (Psalm 141:1-3).

Two things are David’s focus here: 1. Prayer and worship. 2. Keeping watch over the words proceeding from his mouth. Why was this so important to King David?

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction (Proverbs 13:3).

Pershitta Holy Bible translates this verse:

He that keeps his mouth takes care of his soul, and he that opens his lips works shipwreck to his soul.

David fought many great battles, he overcame fierce enemies, and yet he knew that destruction was the fate of those who did not guard their mouths, the words that proceeded from their lips.

The great prophet Isaiah was one of the three men in the Bible who were privileged to see the throne room of God: the other two were the Prophet Ezekiel and the Apostle John. Seeing the throne room of God’s presence, where His glory resides, is a life-changing experience. Our petty words and visions, wants and ideas, plans and goals, melt like butter in the sun when God’s throne is your focus. Something happens when you are faced with the presence of God. For Isaiah, he became aware of his unclean lips.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts (Isaiah 6:5).

Isaiah did not say, “oh, we are sinners in that we have departed from God”. He did not say, “we have not obeyed thy law”. No, his focus was on the words that proceeded from his mouth and the mouths of the nation of God’s people. You may act right, seemingly do right, look right, and be religiously correct on all fronts, and yet have an untamed mouth that is a reproach to God and His Kingdom.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged (Isaiah 6:7).

The seraphim called Isaiah’s unclean lips iniquity and sin. Iniquity means to pervert and to make crooked something that is straight. Iniquity is about twisting and perverting truth. The word sin means something that is habitual, an offence, and to miss the mark.

So much of our speaking is the twisting of reality to fit something, or someone into the framework of our own perverted way of thinking. We twist words to fit our own narrative and purpose. We even manipulate and twist the word of ~God to fit our own agenda. This is iniquity and it is also sin because it becomes habitual leading us to miss the mark of God’s purpose.

You may say, “Oh, I am not like that, I am going to use this fast to focus on something else because that isn’t my problem”. And my response to you is, “you need this more anyone!”

There is so much witchcraft and activity of demons in people’s lives, and moreover in our churches. The door that opens and allows this darkness to penetrate is first of all our mouths! Many of our gatherings are void of God’s presence and glory. Instead of worship many feel the need to war, war, and war some more. There is nothing wrong with warfare, we need to war, we face more demonic powers these days than ever before in history. However, what so many do not realize is that so much of the warfare are battles that we ourselves have created with the words of our mouths (and even the words of our minds).

We gather together in our assemblies and instead of praying we talk in the foyers of our churches, we talk politics, we talk about disgusting things, we talk about people, we talk our own lives – *but few talk about the throne of God; woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!*

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden (Zephaniah 3:18).

On this occasion Zephaniah the prophet speaks about God gathering His people, not all His people however, but they who grieve and are afflicted, they who are in anguish of spirit because of the solemn assembly that had been perverted and used for that which God had not purposed! The solemn assembly had become a reproach, meaning it had become a shame and a disgrace (like that of becoming stripped naked). The reproach of the solemn assembly became a burden to bear – the grief was heavy. What happened among God’s people to cause the solemn assembly to become such a reproach? What has happened to our churches that have lost the power in prayer and worship, lost the anointing, lost the vision, lost the shaking of God’s presence?

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law (Zephaniah 3:1-4).

Look at the words of God concerning Zion. There was filth and pollution among her, among the princes, judges, prophets, and priests. She was oppressed, she obeyed not the voice of God, she received not correction, she trusted not in the LORD, and she drew not near unto God. Many are taking their own way today, they are not listening to the voice of direction or receiving correction. There is a reproach in the solemn assembly and gathering of God’s people. How do the lions roar, the evening wolves gnaw on bones, the prophet’s prophecy treacherously, and the priests pollute the sanctuary – where does all that begin and flow from? THE MOUTH! Our assemblies have become like a social gathering and social gatherings are breeding grounds for spinning empty worlds that attract demon powers. (Take note: there is

nothing wrong with God's people loving each other, socializing, and spending time together, but this should never be the focus of the solemn assembly!)

This fast is not about the situations and crisis of the world round about us, it is not about the calamities that the world faces, it is rather about the situation and the crisis within you and within our spiritual family, a crisis created primarily by polluted mouths.

This solemn assembly is to be a gathering of those who grieve for what the gathering of God's people has become. This is a time to mourn, to feel the anguish of God's spirit. I know many people think I am too hardline and wound up tight. Some would say that I need to be more positive and talk about all the wonderful promises of God. Sure, we can do that, and all the while God's people are dying, full of iniquity and sin, missing the mark, and therefore forfeiting the destiny of God's purpose. I am not playing games neither am I interested in playing church.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3)

Jesus was a man of sorrows. This means He was a man who grieved and was in anguish. He was a man of sorrows not because He was sad, but because He was grieved over the condition of His own people who received Him not. Are you a man of sorrow? Will you join me on this fast to carry the reproach of the solemn assembly as we beg for God to clean us up, cleanse our lips, and prepare us for His mighty work of restoration?

DAILY SCRIPTURE DEVOTIONS DURING OUR 21 DAY FAST

SCRIPTURES RELATING TO OUR MOUTHS AND THE WORDS OF OUR MOUTHS

THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES ARE GIVEN AS DAILY DEVOTIONALS THROUGHOUT THE 21 DAY FAST. EVERY SCRIPTURE HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WORDS OF YOUR MOUTH.

I have left a small gap in between each scripture for you to write a note concerning the scripture of the day. Some days you will feel led to focus on two scriptures, therefore I have given you 32 scriptures to read. Read God's word daily concerning the words of your mouth and may we use this fast to grieve the solemn assembly and have our lips touched by the coals from the Golden Altar.

1. Psalm 19:14

2. Psalm 34:13

3. Psalm 141:3

4. Proverbs 10:19

5. Proverbs 10:31

6. Proverbs 12:14

7. Proverbs 12:18

8. Proverbs 13:3

9. Proverbs 15:1

10. Proverbs 15:2

11. Proverbs 15:4

12. Proverbs 15:28

13. Proverbs 16:24

14. Proverbs 17:27

15. Proverbs 18:21

16. Proverbs 21:23

17. Proverbs 25:11

18. Proverbs 25:25

19. Proverbs 29:20

20. Proverbs 31:26

21. Matthew 12:36

22. Matthew 12:37

23. Matthew 15:11

24. Matthew 15:18

25. Mark 11:23

26. Romans 10:10

27. Ephesians 4:29

28. James 1:26

29. James 3:3-6

30. James 3:10

31. 1 Peter 3:10

32. Zephaniah 3:13