

JEREMIAH 10:5 GET YOURSELF A REAL GOD!

“Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field,
and they cannot speak;
they have to be carried,
for they cannot walk.
Do not be afraid of them,
for they cannot do evil,
neither is it in them to do good.”¹

Churches in the western world are pathetic caricatures of the once radiant Bride of Christ. Denominations struggle to be relevant to the world. Sermons are crafted to appeal to the masses—truth is toned down and spiritual pabulum is spooned out so that no one is offended. Whereas the Faith once shaped public opinion, the modern pulpit frantically tries to see where the parade is heading. Throughout the last century, Christianity has been perceived as drag on important social “progress.” Biblical views are routinely dismissed as dated, irrelevant and powerless to shape public discourse. Instead, public life is now dominated by idolatry—man-made ideologies that have moved society further and further from God and His standards.

At the time Jeremiah prophesied, Judah also appeared to be on the wrong side of social change. A once powerful nation, she was now vulnerable to the military and cultural superiority of the Babylonian empire. Because of this, it was tempting for Judah to believe that God had failed her, to believe that the pagan gods of the nations really wielded the power in the world.

Into this seemingly hopeless situation, Jeremiah spoke a word of great comfort—it was the idols of the nations that were pathetic and powerless [VERSE FIVE]. Though the idols appeared strong and triumphant, in reality they were nothing but carved and decorated logs cut from the forest, secured to keep them from tottering in a stiff breeze [VERSES THREE AND FOUR]. VERSE FIVE of the text mocks the idols for their impotence. How could anything be called a “god” that could neither speak nor even move without being carried? “Do not be afraid them,” God concludes, for they are like comical scarecrows, unable to do anything at all, whether good or bad.

In this day, idolatry is just as rampant. It is not often in the West that one will find people bowing to carved statues as did these nations. Nevertheless, modern society nurtures or invents its own idolatries—man-made “religions” or “isms,” whether pluralism, socialism, Communism, egotism, postmodernism, relativism, nihilism, Buddhism, naturalism or materialism.

Even among the churches, idolatry raises its head as a gospel of pop-psychology and social wellbeing or in the reliance on management and marketing techniques over the truth of Scripture. These ideologies dominate public and ecclesiastical discourse today and by all accounts appear to be in the cultural ascendancy. Appearances, however, are often deceiving. The God of the Bible seems to take particular glory in allowing His rivals to reach full strength before He humiliates or destroys them. In the end, all these ideologies will prove impotent against the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The true Faith appears to be a feckless minority, soon to be vanquished from the world. The Lord Jesus, however, promises that He will build His church, and no power in hell can prevail against Him.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Christians should be emboldened by this truth to resist idolatry both in the church and in the world. The idolatries of the surrounding world may seem invincible, but the churches must proclaim that in the end, they are powerless before the speaking and living God of the Bible.²

MODERN IDOLS — I'm s political junky, I confess. I do pay attention to political events, for no other reason than knowledge that the spiritual inclinations of those who guide the affairs of state determine the strength of a nation. Mighty armies that do not keep a nation safe, though national defence must not be ignored. I am confident that the Psalmist was correct when he cautioned:

“The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.”

[PSALM 33:17]

Again, we ignore divine wisdom when we dismiss the Word of God that instructs:

“His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,
but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.”

[PSALM 147:10, 11]

I am unalterably convinced of the veracity of the benediction pronounced in **PSALM 33:12**,
“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”

Because of my interest in matters political, I watched with interest the conventions of the two major American political parties, which conventions concluded only recently. One of the conventions greeted those attending with a video announcing that all citizens belonged to the government. Subtly, virtually unnoticed by the populace, the producers of that film introduced the fiction that people are owned by government, rather than acknowledging that the people hold government responsible. In effect, the film elevates government to the position of an idol. The messages presented during the remainder of the week stressed the fiction that government exists to create dependency, rather than facilitating independence. The political powers strove mightily to introduce the concept that people could have free things from government; however, people must realise that they may have either free things, or they may have freedom, they cannot have both. Either government is a servant of the people, or government will become an idol.

Though few of our contemporaries, whether in the United States or in Canada, actually bow before idols, many are idolaters nevertheless. I am aware that some citizens who maintain idol shrines in their homes; some religions have idols in their houses of worship. I had a neighbour—a very good neighbour, I might add—who maintained a shrine in his home. The family bowed before that shrine, built to honour an image of their god. However, they were the exception, and not the rule in Canada. I know that some places of worship have statuary, some of which have been exalted in the minds of worshippers to the position of demigods if not actually gods. Such people are to be pitied rather than ridiculed; an idol is a vain thing that can do nothing either good or evil.

² See Kairos Journal, “Get Yourself a Real God!”

<http://www.kairosjournal.org/Document.aspx?QuadrantID=1&CategoryID=6&TopicID=23&DocumentID=6502&L=1>, accessed 7 June 2012

Modern idolatry is more subtle than the idolatry described in the Bible, but just as real. Idols of the heart are idols still. Speaking broadly, modern idolatry often takes the form of power, pleasure or possessions. These are aspects of life that drive us to supplant the True and Living God, to sacrifice relationship to acquire what promises so much, and delivers so little. The acquisition of power leaves the individual thirsting for more power. The pursuit of pleasure is a fool's errand, for that which we imagine will give us joy can never be achieved. As we accumulate possessions, we discover that what we have accumulated is never enough.

Let's focus more specifically on idols of the heart. Power has become an idol for many people. Even among the professed people of God are found a surprising number of individuals with an unholy lust for power. Though there are pastors who clearly are more concerned with acquiring and holding power over the congregation than with serving the heritage of God, by no means do they have a monopoly on the pursuit of power. Frankly, I have witnessed far more non-clergy grasping power. Some refer to themselves as elders or as deacons. They've jockeyed themselves into a position where they can call the shots in the church. Tragically, the lust for power is certain to lead to destruction the one possessed by that lust.

Perhaps the surest antidote to this unholy affection of lusting for power is looking to Jesus. Contemplating Him and His character will turn the individual from pursuit of power to seeking to serve. Remember that the Master declared, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" [MARK 10:42-45]. If one truly wishes to be great in the sight of God, let that one serve the people of God.

There is no question but that pleasure is an idol for many of our contemporaries. Our contemporary world affords opportunity to pursue our personal pleasures in a manner that could not even be imagined in an earlier day. Even two generations ago, the concept of extended holidays for personal pursuits was not experienced except by the very wealthy. Today, we say we have worked hard when we have put in a thirty-six hour week, and we are exhausted so that we simply must have recreational time each weekend. Of course, relaxing in bed or escaping to the great outdoors, precludes worship of the Lord. Perhaps we fling a hurried prayer heavenward before we eat the charred burger or crisp hotdog, but we are so busy pursuing our own pleasure that we haven't time to permit our minds to reflect on the goodness of God.

The Master told a parable about a sower. You may recall how He spoke of the seed falling in various places [see LUKE 8:4-15]. Some fell along the path where it was trampled underfoot and devoured by the birds. Some fell among the rocks where it withered away because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns, only to be choked out. Listen again to his explanation of the seed among the thorns. "As for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature" [LUKE 8:14]. I suggest that there are more than a few of the professed people of God worshipping at the shrine of pleasure.

Possessions define the god of many in our day. Of course, materialism defines our world. You have undoubtedly seen the bumper sticker that asserts, "He who dies with the most toys wins." I've often thought as I read that bumper sticker, "But, he is dead, nevertheless." Jesus warned, "Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" [LUKE 12:15]. We do well to heed the Master's warning.

Jesus continued by telling, as He so often did, a parable. “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” [LUKE 12:16-21].

Wealth did not condemn the man in Jesus’ parable; the love of wealth condemned him. This is the reason that Paul censured the love of money. He wrote, “Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” [1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10]. Such love is idolatry, supplanting love for the Master.

Almost any relationship can transmogrify into an idol. While it is true that many have transformed their family, or their education, or their political party into gods, I am especially disappointed at those who exalt their denomination or their church to the status of a god. A denomination or a church exists to encourage worship of God, not to supplant worship of God. Yet, it is a tragic truth that many Canadians are depending upon their religion, their church or their denomination to assure God’s pleasure and acceptance.

Let me share a statement the Jeremiah issued to Israel many years before this date. “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ‘Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD’”” [JEREMIAH 7:1-4].

Reliance upon the presence of God’s Temple would prove a snare, condemning the people. In the same way, depending upon your church or your denomination will condemn those who do so. Their resort to a building was not unlike the reliance upon the bronze serpent that Moses had made. There is this enigmatic statement in the history of Israel. “[Hezekiah] removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan)” [2 KINGS 18:4]. Nehushtan is Hebrew that is roughly translated, “A Piece of Brass.” In other words, the people weren’t even that enamoured of this serpent on a pole. However, it presented a time when the power of God was demonstrated, and therefore, they worshipped it. That which God had commanded to be used as a focus for His mercy on one occasion, became an idol.

Another instance of such idolatry is found in the waning days of the Judges. The Philistines had just defeated Israel in battle. The divine author writes of the confusion and doubt that marked the Hebrew camp. “When the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, ‘Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines?’” The leaders of the nation asserted that the LORD had defeated them, apparently understanding that He either gave His blessing on their endeavours or He withheld His blessing from their efforts. What is significant is that they did not accept that their sinful attitude could be the cause for defeat.

At this point, it is easy to miss a subtle, though significant statement recorded in the third verse. “Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies” [1 SAMUEL 4:3]. Take note of the rationale for bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the camp: “That it may come among us and save us.” The language implies that the people thought the presence of the Ark would serve to advance their agenda! Some scholars believe that they were saying they could coerce God to intervene on their behalf through bringing among them the accoutrements that were so intimately identified with Him; the Hebrew does allow such a translation into English. Whichever view is taken, it is apparent that the people imagined that they could compel God through appeal to that which He had used in the past. They were clearly relying on the Ark of the Covenant and not on Him who dwelt above the Ark.

The remainder of the story informs us that the people did indeed bring up the Ark and they did again engage the Philistines in battle, only to lose decisively. The Ark was captured and the army of Israel ran from battle. “The Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died” [1 SAMUEL 4:10, 11].

The situation really isn't all that different among many of the professed followers of Christ in this day. They love “Dear Ol' First Church,” or they just dote on the denomination, or they are confident that because they say prayers or perform certain rites and rituals, they will be safe and saved. Tragically, they have transmuted that which was blessed by God at one point into that which condemns them. There are even people who act as if having a Bible in the home spares them from judgement. May I say, it is not in owning a Bible that one is saved; it is in believing the God of the Bible that one is saved. It is not in belonging to a church that one is saved, it is through Faith in Him who purchased the church with His own blood that one is saved. We must be cautious not to transform that which is good into an idol; good *is* enemy of the best.

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLATRY — The prophets of God excoriated the concept of idolatry. Modern idolaters need to hear again the divine condemnation pronounced through God's spokesmen. “All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together” [ISAIAH 44:9-11].

Isaiah continued with devastating ridicule of idolatry. “The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, ‘Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!’ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, ‘Deliver me, for you are my god’” [ISAIAH 44:12-17]!

Earlier in his prophecy, Isaiah used similar sarcasm to demolish idolatry.

“To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?
An idol! A craftsman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and casts for it silver chains.
He who is too impoverished for an offering
chooses wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skillful craftsman
to set up an idol that will not move.”

[ISAIAH 40:18-20]

Paul confronted a subtle idolatry among the Galatian Christians. They had come to faith; there was no question of that. However, they had subtly been turned aside from the Faith to a form of idolatry. People identified as Judaisers—people attempting to combine Jewish religious practise with the Christian Faith—had sold the idea that the Galatians needed to be circumcised and then keep kosher. The message seemed reasonable. After all, Jesus was Jewish and the Apostles were Jewish. Surely there would be no harm to keep kosher or in being circumcised.

Actually, there was no sin in maintaining a kosher diet. Neither was there a problem should a man be circumcised. The problem comes when the people began to elevate the action to that of a necessary work, in the absence of which God is displeased. Frankly, there is no problem if one holds to Baptist doctrine—I’m a Baptist! However, there is something dreadfully wrong whenever an individual exalts that Baptist doctrine to the point of being a requirement to satisfy the just demands of Holy God! There is no particular benefit in being a Catholic, in being an Anglican, in being a Pentecostal, in belonging to any denomination; your denominational affiliation neither commends you nor condemns you before God.

I’ve stated the issue before, and it needs to be stated again. Salvation is through faith in the risen Son of God. The tenets necessary to bear the title of “Christian” is confidence that Jesus is very God, that He offered His life as a sacrifice because of man’s sinful condition, that He was buried and that He rose from the dead after three days, that He was seen by those to whom He revealed Himself for forty days after His resurrection and that He ascended into the heavens where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. Confident of these truths, the one who is redeemed will believe Him, looking for His return, just as He promised. Moreover, the child of God knows these truths to be so because of the written Word of God.

Having established these fundamental truths as essential to the Faith, it must be stated that idolatry is a spiritual dead-end street. Idolatry—whether worship of idols of stone or metal, or worship of relationship, identities or things destined for dust—leads only to death. Peter associates idolatry with what can be clearly recognised as dark and destructive. “the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry” [1 PETER 4:3]. In this, he is in agreement with Paul. “The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” [GALATIANS 5:19-21]. No one would argue that these attitudes and actions are godly; just so, idolatry is godless and futile before the Lord.

Paul strengthens that argument of spiritual futility when he writes in the Ephesian letter, “This I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ” [EPHESIANS 4:17-20]! Outsiders are walking in futility; their best thoughts are nothing but futility.

Again, that which Paul writes is emphasised by Peter when he writes the Diaspora, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” [1 PETER 1:14-21]. Did you notice that the ways inherited from the fathers was identified as “futile?” To seek to live as dictated by this world is to live in a manner that can only be said to be futile.

Both Paul and Peter warn against exalting pleasure or possessions or pride of place to the position of an idol. Paul counsels Christians, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” [COLOSSIANS 3:5]. This is nothing less than a plea for the child of God to review his or her life to assess the elements that may become idols. What is disturbing is the subtle way in which that which is good can assume the place of an idol.

I heard many times during the early days of my walk with the Master, “Good is enemy of the best.” As we have already seen, that which is good can become wicked when it occupies a place to which it has no right. Neutral things can assume an evil role. Let me give you an example from current events. We hold democracy to be good. Actually, we should hold it to be a neutral matter—neither good nor evil. Political watchers enthused as first the Palestinians, then Egypt and then Libya overthrew their governments to establish democratically elected governments. Western political leaders assured us that this was good, because it would bring stability and peace to those nations. Few people are speaking in that manner today as riots and attacks against western embassies are taking place in over a dozen countries. In effect, unthinking individuals exalted democracy to the position of an idol which would bring good to those who embraced the system.

It isn’t only in the political realm that such elevation of a system leads to futility; many churches and denominations have bought into the idea that democracy is blessed and honoured by the Lord. Fifty percent plus one does not make for what is right and good. Long years before this time, Moses cautioned, “You are not to follow the majority in doing wrong” [EXODUS 23:2].³ Just because the majority agree on a course of action does not make that action right. “Vox populi, vox Dei” is often quoted as though it justifies following the majority. In fact, the origin of the phrase may well have been a letter from Alcuin to Charlemagne in 798, in which he cautioned against following the people in their madness!⁴

³ **International Standard Version** (ISV Foundation, Yorba Linda, CA 2011)

⁴ Wikipedia, “Vox populi,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vox_populi, accessed 14 September 2012

At the end of days, what will you have if you have engaged in idolatry? If one bows before the acceptable gods of this dying age, for a moment she may have an absence of conflict with the denizens of this world. However, when the inevitable day comes that she must leave this life, what will she have? If she has lived for possessions, all her wealth will be left behind. No one takes her possessions into the life to come. “What did he leave?” one man asked another at the death of a wealthy man. “Everything,” was the reply.

If he has lived for popularity, soon after his death he will be forgotten by the vast majority and his fame will be meaningless. Sir Walter Raleigh, a few hours before his anticipated execution, wrote his wife these words, “It is therefore death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent, that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain, and repent; yea, even to hate their fore-passed happiness.

“He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing, but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

“O eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the farstretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet* [*Hic jacet*, translated means ‘I am but dust’].”⁵

All possessions will be left. The wealthy man of whom Jesus spoke [LUKE 12:16-21] left that which had brought him pleasure and comfort. God called the man a fool, and the Master warned, “So it is with the one who stores up riches for himself, but is not rich toward God.”⁶ Paul warned, “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh” [COLOSSIANS 2:20-23]. We are also taught, “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy” [1 TIMOTHY 6:17].

A PLEA TO TURN TO THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD — The world watched a spectacle that was unimaginable only a few years past. A major American political party met in convention actually booed God. They had not mentioned Him in their party platform, and when they were embarrassed by news reports, they sought to correct the absence, as though the mere mention of His Name would somehow mollify the citizenry. However, when the vote(s) were taken, the chair was shaken to note that at least as many voted against this inclusion as voted for it. When he announced, as obviously predetermined by convention organisers that two-thirds of the delegates had voted for the inclusion in their party platform, his announcement was met with boos. No one should have been surprised by this; I suppose that the sacrifice of God’s Son was not enough for the convention delegates. Maybe they though He hadn’t paid His fair share.

⁵ Sir Walter Raleigh, <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/raleghfarewell.htm>, accessed 15 September 2012

⁶ **NET Bible** (Biblical Studies Press, 2006)

Before Canadians become smug about the foibles of our neighbours to the south, it should be pointed out that few Canadian politicians bother to mention God at any point. And when a Prime Minister or Premier does mention God, usually invoking His blessing on the nation, that leader is disparaged by a press that is ever vigilant against any mention of religious matters. Give them credit that they at least broached the existence of God.

What is undoubtedly worse is that the sentiments expressed in that debacle as it played out before the eyes of the world are more commonplace than we imagine. Religion is to be confined to a brief time that we allot on a Sunday morning; we go to church, perform the familiar rituals, return home and conduct our lives as we have always done so. The Son of God is set aside much as we might secrete a candle in a drawer, out of sight and ignored until there is an emergency. We will call on Him if all else fails. Too much of modern Christendom consists of rituals designed to avoid confronting our own sinful condition, consoling us that God will be available when we need Him and He will not intervene in our lives or disturb us until we determine that we just must have His help.

As we near the moment when we must leave this place, let me read again the words of Jeremiah that we may ponder them.

“Declare this in the house of Jacob;
 proclaim it in Judah:
‘Hear this, O foolish and senseless people,
 who have eyes, but see not,
 who have ears, but hear not.
Do you not fear me? declares the LORD.
 Do you not tremble before me?
I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea,
 a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass;
though the waves toss, they cannot prevail;
 though they roar, they cannot pass over it.
But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;
 they have turned aside and gone away.
They do not say in their hearts,
 “Let us fear the LORD our God,
who gives the rain in its season,
 the autumn rain and the spring rain,
and keeps for us
 the weeks appointed for the harvest.”
Your iniquities have turned these away,
 and your sins have kept good from you.
For wicked men are found among my people;
 they lurk like fowlers lying in wait.
They set a trap;
 they catch men.
Like a cage full of birds,
 their houses are full of deceit;
therefore they have become great and rich;
 they have grown fat and sleek.

They know no bounds in deeds of evil;
they judge not with justice
the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper,
and they do not defend the rights of the needy.
Shall I not punish them for these things?
declares the LORD,
and shall I not avenge myself
on a nation such as this?"

[**JEREMIAH 5:20-29**]

May God give us wisdom to act in such a way that He is honoured and that we continue to receive His blessings, His undeserved blessings. Amen.