

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

God Acts Powerfully to Cure Spiritual Hypocrisy

Isaiah 29:1-24

You were created to worship God, each one of you. God fashioned you step by step, knitting you together in your mother's womb; He made you astonishingly complex... and nowhere is this more true than in the complexity of your HEART... your INNER BEING

Your heart is the very core of you... the part of you that thinks, that understands, that reasons, that delights in things, that desires, that plans, that chooses

The heart is EVERYTHING in the human experience...

God has deeply desired your heart from the moment He made you... He has been speaking to your heart, wooing it, persuading it, reasoning with it

He has studied your heart... seen what has flowed out of it; He knows that you, as a child of Adam, were conceived in sin and naturally your heart is desperately wicked

According to our Savior, from the heart flow evil thoughts, murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, slander... these are what make a person unclean

If you are a Christian this morning, by the sovereign grace of God, the Holy Spirit has focused His awesome, hidden and mysterious power on the complexity of your HEART... He has miraculously removed your heart of stone and given you a heart of flesh. He has made you a new creation. At the center of that is the delight you have had in Jesus Christ as your Savior... the delight you have had in the cross of Christ as the just punishment of your sins in the person of your substitute... you have believed in your heart that God raised Him from the dead

BUT that is not the end of the salvation process... God still wants your heart... and yet, your heart is assaulted day after day with temptations that draw it after worldly idols... these idols can harden your heart... sin is deceitful, and it has a mysterious power to HARDEN the heart of the most tender believer

And in that state, week after week, you come here to FBC to worship... with a divided heart; part of your heart delights in God, in Christ, in the word of God

BUT part of your heart is slightly or even greatly damaged by the hardening deceitfulness of sin

And now, it's time for corporate worship. To assemble with other sinners who are in the process of being saved by grace like you. And in the midst of this chapter comes the devastating diagnosis of your own worst moments in corporate worship:

Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

In that state, you forget the true center of worship, indeed the true center of your entire existence: WORSHIP GIVEN FROM A GRATEFUL HEART TO A LOVING GOD... to God the Father, who gave His only begotten Son, dead on a cross for you

If the worship style is to your liking, you may go through the motions of external worship... coldly mouthing the songs, while your heart is a million miles away.

If the worship style is not to your liking – if it's too fast or too loud or too slow or too soft, if it's too contemporary, or too traditional, or too Irish, or too ANYTHING... you can find a ready excuse for the real problem... you honor God with your EXTERNAL BODY, but your heart is truly FAR FROM HIM

Isaiah 29:13 is a mirror that God is holding up to us this morning... He is asking in the person of His Son: HAVE I NOT DONE ENOUGH TO CAPTIVATE YOUR HEART, my beloved bride?? Have I not loved you enough? Have I not poured out my blood for you? Have I not cherished you and protected you and fed you and warned you and restored you from sin time and time again?? What could there be in all creation more satisfying than ME????

Why then are you only going through the motions? Why is your HEART FAR FROM ME??

I consider Isaiah 29:13 one of the two most important passages on worship in the Bible

The other is John 4:23-24

John 4:23-24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

They are teaching the same thing, one NEGATIVELY and one POSITIVELY... and this passage comes to FBC at a very opportune moment in our history

At a time when many are struggling with external forms of worship and forgetting the state of their own hearts...

No worship style or execution of music can remedy a cold, distant heart

On the other hand, no worship style or execution of music can stop a healthy, happy heart from worshiping

This does not excuse worship leaders from playing skillfully, well, and wisely. This certainly does not excuse the elders of a church from earnestly seeking to craft a worship service that glorifies God and is properly conducive to worship in SPIRIT and TRUTH. We must!!!! Friends, we readily admit we have not always succeeded in the endeavor...

But in the end, Isaiah 29:13 points to the true issue... the treasure God SEEKS in every nation on earth... the HEART of His people, poured out in passion and based on truth

HEART SURGERY

Many therapies in medical world do their healing work by in some lesser way HURTING the body so that a greater danger can be HEALED

Every surgery involves wounding the body – cutting it open – so that a greater threat (a tumor, maybe) can be removed; Chemotherapy and radiation therapy seek to kill cancer cells, but the doctors know that the therapy will severely harm the bodies in other ways that they deem acceptable... the hair falls out, there is nausea, there are other side effects that the body can later recover from

Even the simple act of putting in an IV pierces a blood vessel; the removal of an embedded tick involves damaging the surrounding tissue; stitches pull together a gash in the body by making new small wounds that will later heal.

So, in Isaiah 29, God shows He is willing to heal the sickness of heart of His cold, formal, religious people by some very severe means... He is willing to HURT in order to HEAL

Introduction: Isaiah 28:21 spoke of God's "strange work" and "alien task"... there it referred to God's judgments on His own beloved people; so it is for us today, as we make our toilsome way through this sin-cursed world, we realize that the grace of God for us in Christ is a complex thing with many different layers to it. In Christ, God only means us GOOD not harm; but God's definition of what is "good" for us is frequently very different from our comfortable goals

for ourselves. In grace, God feeds your soul everything it needs to achieve His purpose – the ultimate salvation of your soul from the devastating disease of sin... so God wisely gives us everything we need for final salvation, and that includes some shocking adversities and times of great suffering.

Ray Ortlund: “You need encouragement. God gives it. You need confrontation. He gives it. At all levels of the multilayered complexity of your being, right down to the very roots of what you are, beyond your own self-understanding, God can see how you need VICTORY and how you need DEFEAT. And He enters into your subjectivity with mercies both severe and sweet.” [Isaiah: God Saves Sinners, p. 160]

God will measure out to your soul everything it needs for final salvation from sin. That will include some very severe humblings – right down to the dust! And some astonishing deliverances from those humblings as well!!

In Isaiah 29, God deals very severely with His people in Jerusalem... He humbles them to the dust by bringing a siege on them; then, suddenly, God turns and humbles their enemies ALSO to the very dust, by showing up with wrath and power. In Isaiah 29, God also exposes the root heart issues in His people that have brought all this on... and we find that WE STRUGGLE with the EXACT SAME SINS... complacency in our religion, spiritual blindness, hypocritical worship, worldly wisdom. Having the same disease doesn't mean that God will do the same things to us that He did to the Jews... but His activity in our lives will seek to achieve the same purpose... healing our hearts from coldness, complacency, dry religion, formalism, spiritual dullness and worldly wisdom

To achieve this, God must do some STRANGE WORK in our lives... He must hurt us in order to heal us

Isaiah 29 teaches us these lessons

I. God Humbles Both Complacent Jerusalem And Ruthless Enemies to the Dust (vs. 1-8)

A. Act I: God Humbles Complacent Jerusalem to the Dust... by a Siege (vs. 1-4)

Isaiah 29:1-4 Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled! Add year to year and let your cycle of festivals go on. ² Yet I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth. ³ I will encamp against you all around; I will encircle you with towers and set up my siege works against you. ⁴ Brought low, you will speak from the ground; your speech will mumble out of the dust. Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth; out of the dust your speech will whisper.

1. Ariel: Jerusalem (altar hearth)

2. The religious MACHINE... let the cycle go on year after year!

Isaiah 1:11-14 "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. ¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. ¹⁴ Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

3. Religious complacency... trusting in their "pure religion" and assuming God would NEVER let others stop it

4. The Judgments Predicted:

Isaiah 29:2-3 I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth. ³ I will encamp against you all around; I will encircle you with towers and set up my siege works against you.

5. Jerusalem will be HUMBLLED to the VERY DUST

Isaiah 29:4 Brought low, you will speak from the ground; your speech will mumble out of the dust. Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth; out of the dust your speech will whisper.

B. Act II: God humbles Jerusalem's Ruthless Enemies to the Dust... by His Sudden Appearance (vs. 5-8)

Isaiah 29:5-8 But your many enemies will become like fine dust, the ruthless hordes like blown chaff. Suddenly, in an instant, ⁶ the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. ⁷ Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night-- ⁸ as when a hungry man dreams that he is eating, but he awakens, and his hunger remains; as when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking, but he awakens faint, with his thirst unquenched. So will it be with the hordes of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.

1. The "Hordes" of enemies the focus here... God's sovereign power in humbling them even more

2. These HORDES will attack and besiege Jerusalem and fight against her

3. BUT SUDDENLY everything changes!!!! They will be humbled down to the dust themselves, made like worthless chaff (vs. 5)

4. The DREAM DIES

Isaiah 29:7-8 *Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night--⁸ as when a hungry man dreams that he is eating, but he awakens, and his hunger remains; as when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking, but he awakens faint, with his thirst unquenched. So will it be with the hordes of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.*

Isaiah 37:36-37 *Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning-- there were all the dead bodies!³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.*

C. The Enemies of the People of God Have Often “Licked their Chops” at the Imminent Demise of God, Only to Be Bitterly Disappointed

1. Acts 23: Paul’s enemies bound themselves with an oath not to eat
2. French philosopher and arrogant critic of Christianity, Voltaire, claimed that, by the early nineteenth century the Bible would have “passed into the limbo of forgotten literature.”
3. Communist thinkers like Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin, and Mao Zedong
4. In 1966, John Lennon of the Beatles made a famous statement: “Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn’t argue with that; I am right, and I will be proved right. We’re more popular than Jesus now. I don’t know which will go first, rock and roll or Christianity.” Since that time (over forty years ago), countless millions have come to faith in Jesus Christ!!

Dreams of God’s people vanishing end in total frustration!!

II. God Exposes the Root Issues: Spiritual Blindness, Cold-Hearted Worship, Worldly Wisdom (vs. 9-16)

A. These Judgments Came About for a Reason!!

B. Cause #1: Willful Spiritual Blindness (vs. 9-12)

Isaiah 29:9-12 *Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from beer.¹⁰ The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers).¹¹ ¶ For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I can't; it is sealed."¹² Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I don't know how to read."*

C. Cause #2: Cold-Hearted, Hypocritical Worship (vs. 13-14)

Isaiah 29:13-14 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. ¹⁴ Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."

Isaiah 58:2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

Jeremiah 3:4-5 Have you not just called to me: 'My Father, my friend from my youth, ⁵ will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever?' This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can.

1. Their "hearts were far from God": What does that mean?
 - a. The Lord weighs the HEART, the Lord yearns for people who love Him with all their HEARTS in genuineness; who yearn for God and long for Him, and desire to please Him in spirit and in truth
 - b. God is not at all interested in COLD RELIGIOUS FORMALISM... going through the motions
 - c. In Jesus' day, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were experts in religion, experts in rules and regulations about fasting, and tithing and animal sacrifices, and legal matters, and formal prayers... but their hearts were DEAD toward God; they actually were idolaters who lived for the praise of men and for devouring widows' homes and living comfortably in luxury and power... their hearts were far from God; so in Matthew 15, when the Pharisees confronted Jesus about why His disciples refused to follow the traditions of the elders in handwashing, Jesus nailed them with this EXACT QUOTE from Isaiah 29:

Matthew 15:7-9 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

- d. Jonathan Edwards, "Treatise on Religious Affections" said true religion consists very much in the affections; Edwards made this very plain:

"If we are not in good earnest in religion, if our wills and inclinations are not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, the responses of our hearts cannot be commensurate unless those responses are lively and powerful. In nothing is vigor in the actings of our inclinations so appropriate as in religion, and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True

religion is evermore a powerful thing; and its power appears primarily in its inward exercises in the heart, its principal and original seat."

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

2. God's promise:

Isaiah 29:14 Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.

D. Cause #3: Worldly Wisdom

Isaiah 29:15-16 Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"¹⁵ You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me"? Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing"?

1. This refers to the counselors of the King who were urging a military alliance with Egypt to protect themselves from the Assyrians

Isaiah 30:1-2 "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin;² who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh's protection, to Egypt's shade for refuge.

2. But the issue here is their trying to keep it all SECRET from the Lord!!
HAH!!!!

Psalm 94:9 Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?

3. These people are PERVERSE (Hebrew word) (NIV has "you turn things upsidedown")... they forget that it is God who made them; if God made them able to plan, God can plan better than they!! If God made their ears, He can hear their whispers! If God made their eyes, He can see in the darkness!!

4. God is the potter, we are the clay! God knows

III. God Transforms His People from All Effects of Sin (vs. 17-24)

A. Amazing Promises!! A Full Deliverance for the People of God

B. Image After Image of God's Lavish Work of Restoration

1. Vs. 17: The stripped forests of Lebanon returned to being a fertile field

Isaiah 29:17 In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest?

2. Vs. 18: the spiritually deaf and blind able to see God's scroll!!

Isaiah 29:18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

3. Vs. 19: the poor, downtrodden remnant rising up in joy-filled worship

Isaiah 29:19 Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

4. Vs. 20-21: the ruthless oppressors crushed and removed

Isaiah 29:20-21 The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down-- ²¹ those who with a word make a man out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.

5. Vs. 22-23: the children of Abraham redeemed and glorying in God's work

Isaiah 29:22-24 Therefore this is what the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the house of Jacob: "No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale. ²³ When they see among them their children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

6. Vs. 24 The Transformation of Rebels is at the Center of this Work

Isaiah 29:24 Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction.

IV. Applications: Seeing Jesus and the Gospel in Isaiah 29

A. We Have the Same Maladies... and Need the Same Physician to Heal Us

1. We can be very complacent in our religious lives, churning out the machinery of religion, adding week to week, year to year
2. We can show an appalling lack of knowledge or interest in God's word... for us, it is like a sealed book that we have no interest in reading
3. We can honor God with our lips but our hearts remain far from Him
4. We can seek worldly wisdom, seeking to solve our problems by making an alliance with Egypt... by seeking the world's ways of living, of loving, of entertaining ourselves, of facing medical crises, of facing financial crises, of understanding politics...

5. We have the same HEART CONDITION and need the same physician

Mark 2:17 Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

B. We Deeply Need God's Humbling Work in Our Lives

1. Two people get cast into the dust in this passage... God's beloved people and their oppressors
2. In one case, it's just for discipline and training; in the other case, it's for judgment and wrath
3. Key passage:

James 4:6-7 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God.

C. The Deadly Danger of Religious Formalism

1. How is your HEART after Christ? Is your heart as passionate and soft and yielded to Him as the day you first believed?
2. Do you feel FAR FROM HIM as the passage says?
3. Ask the physician of your soul to do a thorough examination
4. Don't be satisfied with religiosity... coming to FBC week after week, hearing sermons and good bible instruction at Bible for Life
5. Don't be satisfied with merely singing the songs, smiling, shaking a few hands, and then going home
6. Ask God to work reality in your heart
7. Edwards said that the things of God are worth IMMENSE PASSION in the heart

D. The Work of Christ Alone Can Achieve All This!!

1. Christ shed His blood on the cross for all of our sinfulness
2. Christ took our religious formalism and hypocrisy on Himself and died under the wrath of God
3. Christ fulfilled the animal sacrifices that these Jews were doing machine-like for centuries... He fulfilled the REAL PURPOSE of those sacrifices
4. By His death on the cross, we can be free

5. By the giving of His Holy Spirit, we can live lives of genuine passion and power for the glory of God
6. By the indwelling Spirit, the word of God can become an OPEN BOOK, no longer sealed in mystery... no longer will be like bible illiterates who can't read God's person and purposes

Closing Comments:

Metaphors for the church: bride of Christ, light shining in a dark place; city on a hill; building/temple made up of living stone offering spiritual sacrifices; holy nations... I want to zero in on FAMILY

We are a FAMILY: we have the same heavenly Father who adopted us; we have the same elder brother, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed to call us brothers; we have the same Spirit of adoption in our hearts who cries within us "Abba, Father"

As a FAMILY, we love each other, we are committed to each other... we carry each other's burdens... and when we don't agree, we strive to understand each other, listening without anger, loving each other... "As iron sharpens iron" when we disagree, we can sharpen each other, humbly realizing that each person needs to grow and be changed in some way... but as IRON is SHARPENING IRON, the coolant of LOVE keeps the heat down and keeps the process of sharpening from damaging either person

Last week, a number of you noticed that our corporate worship time was different than it's been over the last year... the music was a little louder and faster than we're used to hearing in corporate worship. Some of you were delighted by it

Some of you were surprised, but didn't really care one way or the other

But some of you didn't like it at all

I can tell you this—every brother and sister in Christ who has stood up here to lead in worship during the interim time after Eric Campbell left and before God brings us the next elder in charge of corporate worship... everyone of those brothers and sisters has done their leadership of worship out of a love for Jesus, and an earnest desire to serve this body—they have sacrificed their time and energy to lead in worship; they have stood in front of us by faith and sought to bless this church, even though they have full-time jobs and many other responsibilities.

They should be thanked and encouraged for that!! Whether you liked this or that particular song or not.

BUT it is also important for us as elders to lead this flock through changes sensitively, gently, patiently... we have a journey to travel, and we've not arrived yet. And last week, ultimately the elders could have done a better job in keeping this family together, united in one Spirit... and I am sorry for that.

But in a family, we act with grace toward one another. We cover each other's weakness and give and receive forgiveness when needed.

There have been many changes in the life and ministry of FBC in the fourteen years since I've been pastor – deep, profound, substantial changes. Everything the Lord's led FBC to do in those years have been geared toward making us fruitful for years to come in the biblical pattern: plurality of elders was the most significant

we've been trying to lead the body into it's next phase of growth. It was wise to spread the load of leadership out from the full-time pastoral staff to a group of elders. That was a big step towards fostering health and growth beyond the current generation. Insofar as the Lord wills, we're trying to ensure the church will be healthier for generations beyond our current, gifted staff and healthy church body. That's why we:

- > Changed BFL to be the equivalent of a 5-year degree program - go thru all tracks and you'll have a solid doctrinal foundation
- > Adding elders with term limits
- > Building a leadership development pipeline for future elders
- > Discipling our Directors to be excellent in their current roles while preparing them for future ministry positions elsewhere, if the Lord calls them
- > Developing an intern program
- > Investing in developing our deacons, etc.

There's a "prepare and send" motion to all of our changes, not simply a "build and enjoy" approach that can grow static and invite the idol of comfort into our culture. That's dangerous. So we need to grow more comfortable with change and flow in all areas of our lives because this is not our home.

In that vein, we've changed our worship style. And it may keep evolving within the bounds of our values in a way that's always seeking to honor the Lord.

When it comes to corporate worship, the elders are united that the PRIMARY SOUND of corporate worship should be the VOICES of the people, poured out-- united, heartfelt, joyful, passionate

The MUSIC should merely serve the people, helping to draw forth that sound

That's where Isaiah 29:13 comes in

Brothers and sisters, God wants your hearts... not just on Sunday morning, but throughout the week. He doesn't want you to be FAR FROM HIM but in intimate fellowship with Him

He wants you to put away any idols, to kill sin by the power of the Holy Spirit so that you CAN worship Him passionately

Don't let it be said of any of you: *These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.* Hand your hearts to the Lord... say "God I've allowed the busyness of life, and the desires for worldly things, even sin to crowd you out of my heart. PLEASE restore me, O Lord! Please draw me back, O Lord!!"

As we've seen, the true worship that the Father seeks from us is worship in SPIRIT and TRUTH

In truth = based on true doctrine

In spirit = coming from the genuine passions of the heart

In future weeks, months, years, the united desire of the elders in corporate worship is to steer a safe middle course between the deadly extremes of cold traditionalism and heartless formalism on the one side and worldliness on the other... traditionalism assumes that what was inherited from the past is perfect as it was and can NEVER be changed... it always leads to the dead formalism Isaiah cries out against and that God in this very passage says He hates. Worldliness turns to the world to find out what is moving people, what is "hot" and "trendy" in our culture and assumes it can be dropped into corporate worship without any assessment. We want to steer between these deadly extremes, and with God's help we will.

We want our true worship sound to be your HEARTS, singing, praising God, telling Him:

"Thank you for sending your only begotten Son for ME!!"

"Thank you for forgiving my sins because His blood was shed!"

"Thank you for bringing me to heaven!"

"Thank you for adopting me and settling me into this rich, varied family of other sinners, redeemed from a wide range of backgrounds, now made INCREASINGLY ONE by the Spirit."

So...

let's put away all anger... all self-righteousness... all factions/divisions... all selfishness...

all desire to twiddle the knobs of the church to get the temperature just right for your tastes, and the cushion under you just right for your tastes, and the lighting just right for your tastes, and the sounds just right for your tastes

NOT TILL HEAVEN will we all be perfectly satisfied with what's coming in through our eyes and ears!!

In the meantime, let's love each other and beg God to work on our hearts. Let it not be said of us,

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.