

Holland

You shut the door, and inside thought you were safe.
But when I knocked, you did not open the door to me.

Once your land was a beautiful flower, one of the joys of my life.
But inside, shut off from my love, your land has withered.

Your beauty has been taken away, and disgrace has become your burden.

When I call, you do not listen.
When I show you your poverty, you do not grieve.
As you are, you have nothing to give to my kingdom.

Repent.

Then I can break your chains, and open the way to you again - the way back to my heart, where you always belonged, until you left to go your own way.

Your beauty has been taken, but it can return.
I can give it back to you.

Repent!

Cry out to me.
I will hear you, and although the way of return is painful, yet I will lead, and I will heal you.

But if you stay behind your doors, confident in your pride, consumed by your guilt, burdened by your shame, then it will be worse for you that it was for Sodom.

Time is short. Repent.

WORD

**You shut the door, and inside thought you were safe.
But when I knocked, you did not open the door to me.**

BIBLE BASE

*Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence? (Ps 139:7).*

COMMENT

The Dutch people have been used to living “behind” the dykes for many years. Their dykes have been their hope and protection against a relentless enemy, who strives continually to overcome them and take their land. This may be alright in the physical world but it does not work in the spiritual world.

The essence of faith is that we trust in Jesus to be our strength and our song, our strong defence at our right hand and our left, our rock and our shield. Within his protection, we have to be completely open to the moving of the Spirit, completely willing to obey, whatever the cost.

Holland seems to have made a fundamental error. Having tamed the sea, it feels that it safe, safe in its own ability, safe in its own confidence. This has not brought spiritual freedom. On the contrary it has shut the nation off from the willing obedience to trust in Christ alone which is the heart and soul of the gospel.

WORD

**Once your land was a beautiful flower, one of the joys of my life.
But inside, shut off from my love, your land has withered.**

BIBLE BASE

*"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me.
They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.
It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize it was I who healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love;
I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them. (Hosea 11:1-4)*

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. (Matt 23:37)

COMMENT

Holland is very much the lost son of Luke chapter 15. The Father loved his son, and offered him the chance of life. But the son didn't want that form of life. The world dazzled him, and off he went, only to waste his life – becoming a withered plant.

God hoped for so much from his people in Holland, but has had to watch while the life drained away, while the beautiful plant withered and died.

WORD

Your beauty has been taken away, and disgrace has become your burden.

BIBLE BASE

*Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.*

They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. (Psalm 107:4)

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18)

COMMENT

The beauty of God's people is the beauty of reflected glory. We glow, we shine, we illuminate because we reflect the glory of the Lord. God's people in Holland have lost their reflective qualities. They have shut the glory out, and have exchanged it for disgrace. Disgrace means loss of honour, loss of respect and reputation. The church has lost the glory, and now is burdened with disgrace.

WORD

When I call, you do not listen.

When I show you your poverty, you do not grieve.

As you are, you have nothing to give to my kingdom.

BIBLE BASE

*But the more I called Israel,
the further they went from me. (Hosea 11:2)*

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. (Rev 3:14-17)

COMMENT

So we come to the heart of this word. Holland doesn't listen, doesn't know its poverty, and can offer nothing to the work of the kingdom in the world.

WORD

Repent

BIBLE BASE

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my

Name.' "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 4: 4-11)

if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chron 7:14)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

COMMENT

The Lord is always looking to offer us a way back to him. He only says hard things so that things can be put right. To his wayward Dutch church he offers the chance for a new beginning with him. "Repent!" This is not a word of doom, but a word of hope. Things can be put right, if we turn from our foolish ways, turn back to him, and ask for a new start. The blood of Jesus will cleanse us, individually and as a nation. God's people have, generally forgotten this truth. We know individual forgiveness, but forget that God can heal nations. What an opportunity he is offering to us.

WORD

Then I can break your chains, and open the way to you again - the way back to my heart, where you always belonged, until you left to go your own way. Your beauty has been taken, but it can return. I can give it back to you.

BIBLE BASE

"But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' " (Luke 15:32)

COMMENT

Repentance is a new beginning, a restoring of what has been lost, and an even closer walk with the Lord. This is God's desire for Holland. He wants to use this nation to bless - not just itself but other lands. God calls Holland not just back to himself, but back into his service.

WORD

Repent! Cry out to me.

I will hear you, and although the way of return is painful, yet I will lead, and I will heal you.

But if you stay behind your doors, confident in your pride, consumed by your guilt, burdened by your shame, then it will be worse for you that it was for Sodom.

Time is short.

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BIBLE BASE

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." (Mark 10:32-34)

COMMENT

At first, I wasn't going to include these lines, because they seemed to be a repetition. But perhaps they are more a warning. Perhaps the Dutch Church might hesitate to respond to God's call. So, being gracious, he underlines what he has already said. We also do well to remember that, even though he hesitates to judge, ultimately he will, for the sake of his name. That could be bad news for Holland, and for the rest of us in Europe.

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