

**Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

## **A Prophetic Message to an Ungodly Nation**

Scripture: Jeremiah

Code: 80-367

Now I told you a couple of weeks ago that we had finished the New Testament. It doesn't mean I'll never go back there again. I will. I have some plans to. But the natural assumption is that we're going to take a look at the Old Testament. And I do have some plans for that. I'm working on kind of putting together a sort of long series that could last the rest of our lives together, that you could...you could sort of call "The Road to Emmaus." You remember in Luke 24, Jesus on the road to Emmaus said to the disciples, it says that he said to them, "Beginning at Moses and the prophets and in all the holy writings, He spoke to them of the things concerning Himself." Well Moses, that's the Law; the prophets, the prophets; the holy writings, all the other books; those are the three categories of the Old Testament.

So Jesus went to the Old Testament and taught them the things from the Old Testament that were about Him. So I can't cover everything in the Old Testament, but I think we'll go on a road to Emmaus journey and we'll go through the Old Testament and find all the things that refer to Christ there. And there are many of them, and you might be surprised to know that Christ appears first in the Old Testament in Genesis 1:1. And last, in the last chapter of the Old Testament, in Malachi. So He is the beginning and the end of the Old Testament and whole lot of places in between. So that's one of the things I want to do, among several others. And I'm kind of working on that as I attempt to reinvent myself this summer.

Now I want to demonstrate to you that I do really know there is an Old Testament and I am actually willing to teach the Old Testament to you. So let's get a sample, all right? Open your Bible to Jeremiah...open your Bible to Jeremiah. The remarkable prophecy of the man known as the weeping prophet, he wrote this great prophecy of 52 chapters and in addition to that, of course, he is responsible for the wonderful, deep and insightful book of Lamentations. Jeremiah.

And I want to talk about Jeremiah because I think Jeremiah is a man for a time like our time. The Old Testament prophets were historical figures, real figures living in real events that are laid out for us in their prophecies and in their histories. But they are not unique in the sense that the times and the seasons and the issues that faced them were somehow never repeated. They are, in fact, the same cycles that are repeated through all of human history. Jeremiah lived in a time I a nation that is very instructive for us, living in the time and the nation in which we live today.

I think you are pretty much aware, if you are at all attuned to the character of our culture that naturalism dominates our society. You might say there was a time in America when supernaturalism dominated our thinking. In other words, we were a nation under God. And you know, they're deleting that from the Pledge of Allegiance, I understand even at a golf tournament, trying to figure out how to get it off our coins. But there was a time when we were happy to say we are a nation under God, we are super naturalists. We believe in a Creator. We believe in God as a sovereign ruler of the universe. But we have abandoned that and we are essentially now rapidly becoming a nation of naturalists. The most influential intellectuals, philosophers, scientists, educators, politicians, judges in America are mostly naturalists.

Naturalists assume that God exists only in the imagination of religious people. That the idea of God is frankly a superstition, an irrational superstition that is created out of a pre-scientific era to meet certain anxieties of the human heart.

The truth is, however, there is no God and everything is simply a consequence of natural effects. Naturalism is the idea that nature is all there is, that virtually everything that exists is simply the product of unplanned, uncontrolled accidents. Life is based on this assumption, that we have just randomly evolved into what we are today. Creation then is the result, as we know it, life as we know it is the result of unconscious forces randomly mutating. Man says evolutionary science is the purposeless end of a purposeless process that did not have him in mind. Oops, he just showed up.

This is what is taught in the universities and then this is what is learned by the students. Those students then become the next generation of educators, the next generation of politicians, the next generation of social architects, the next generation of judges who make their legal decisions. They become the next generation of journalists who interpret things that are going on in the world from a naturalist's perspective. It is a form of atheism.

And while not all of them would deny the existence of some God, they are almost all very anxious to deny the existence of the biblical God. Those who believe in God are seen as irrational. Those who believe in the biblical God are seen as dangerous and must be kept out of the public discourse. And in the name of separation of church and state, we cannot have people who believe the Bible and the biblical God to be the true God, have anything to say about public policy, public life, education, government, social order, law, courts or morality.

All this rejection of God is purported to be based on science. It is called for by intellectualism. It is demanded by freedom and tolerance and mutual respect. There's no place for anybody being an authority, anybody saying there is one God who is the absolute ruler who has written one book in which is contained all His will and all truth pertaining to Him and life in His world that is necessary. That is absolutely objectionable. There is this wholesale rejection of God. It is, however, not intellectual, it is the product of the love of iniquity. That's all it is. Not a love of freedom, not a love of

intellectualism, it's not a love for science, it is a love for sin that drives this. If you get rid of the God of the Bible, you get rid of the Bible. If you get rid of the Bible, you get rid of biblical morality. If you get rid of biblical morality, you can live any way you want with the assumption that there would be no consequences.

So all this supposed intellectual naturalists are nothing but Hedonists wanting to express their lust in an unbridled way. Anybody with half a brain knows that all of this didn't come from no one. Spurgeon said, "I can scarcely conceive a heart so callous that it feels no awe, or a human mind so dull and destitute of understanding as fairly to view the tokens of God's omnipotent power and then turn aside without some sense of wonder and obedience."

How can you look at what exists and not be in awe of the source of it? How can we sin against so great a reality by denying it and then sin against the will of the very God we deny against the greatness of the Almighty?

Well our instruction today is going to come from the prophet Jeremiah as to how we respond to a society like ours which is very much like his. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 5, Jeremiah chapter 5. In a 52 chapter book, obviously there's a lot more than we would attempt to cover but I think I can give you a feel for the man and his time that will relate to how we approach the time and the place where we find ourselves today.

Chapter 5 and verse 20 is one of the sermons of Jeremiah that comes from the Lord and it gives us a good insight into the way things were. Jeremiah is told by the Lord to say these things. "Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah saying...here is the message that God gives him... 'Now hear this, foolish and senseless people who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear. Do you not fear Me?' declares the Lord. 'Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, an eternal decree so that it cannot cross over it. Though the waters toss, yet they cannot prevail. Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it. But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart. They have turned aside and departed. They do not say in their heart, now let us fear the Lord our God who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain, who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned these away and your sins have withheld good from you.'"

Now what is this saying? It's a really a very, very clear statement. He is saying that the people of God, the men of Judah, the people of Jacob, the Jews have looked at the creation, they have seen the ocean and the land that bounds it, they have understood the rain at the appropriate season and the seasons and the rain that together produced the food that sustains life. They have seen the enduring consistency of all of this. They have seen the power of these provisions and the wonder of them. That is to say the majesty of God in creation is on display. The providence of God is manifest and it ought to stir up their hearts in worship. That's why he says in verse 22, "Do you not fear Me, or

worship Me? Do you not tremble in My presence?"

On the contrary. They say in their heart, "Let us," verse 24, "not really fear the Lord." It should say, "Let us fear the Lord now." But they don't. Their wills do not submit to Him. They don't even give Him honor as the Creator and the provider. The almighty power of Jehovah is manifest, it is visible in the works of His creation, that should constrain His covenant people, Israel, and any people in any era of history to fear His name, to be in awe of Him as the Creator. To reverence Him as the source of provision, the one who controls the sea, provides the land and the seasons and the food.

How can we contemplate this God and not worship Him and not give Him honor and not turn to Him and not obey Him? That is the question that God tells Jeremiah to pose to Judah, the southern kingdom, the remaining people in the land of Israel, the northern Kingdom already had been taken into captivity for their own apostasy.

But there's more here than fact. There is an analogy here and I want you to see the analogy. The analogy appears in verse 22, it is a fact that God places sand as a boundary for the sea. It is a fact that the waves toss and yet they cannot prevail, they roar yet they cannot cross over. It is a fact that God controls the oceans with the shore. The sea then...Jeremiah says...never breaks its boundary. It obeys Me in all its movements. It may toss and turn, there may be an occasional tidal wave, there may be an occasional tsunami but the sea will go back to its ordered place. However, on the contrary, verse 23, "This people has a stubborn and rebellious heart. They have turned aside and departed. They will not be bound. They will not stay within the confines of God's will and purpose. They are a revolting and rebellious people. They go astray. They break all the boundaries this pure, puny, sinful man, this little creature that God could crush like a moth under your shoe, this man will resist the restraints of God and overrun all his boundaries. Man in his fallenness cannot be held in check, either individually or collectively. The sea tosses and turns but it obeys. It is restrained by a little belt of sand. Its mighty powers are held back."

But people, says God, who have stronger restraints than sand are rebellious and overrun the borders that God has established. That's what the people of the nation Israel had done. The borders, the boundaries, His promises, His threats, His judgments, His commands, His Covenants, and they overran them all. Man is hell bent on revolt. It's just the way it is. That is how, God says, Jeremiah must see his people.

Now into this situation in the southern kingdom of Judah, God drops this prophet and he's a remarkable man. His message is the judgment that is coming and it is coming fast. In fact, the judgment came in his lifetime. About a century earlier there was another very familiar prophet, Isaiah, who said the same thing, "Judgment is coming, judgment is coming, judgment is coming," and he was referring to the Babylonian Captivity, the holocaust of the arrival of the Babylonian/Chaldean army to desecrate the temple, destroy the temple, conquer Jerusalem, massacre multiple thousands of

people and carry the rest off captive into a pagan culture. That particular holocaust, among many in the life of Israel, Isaiah said would come. About a century later, Jeremiah arrives and it's during his lifetime that it actually does come.

Jeremiah was a preacher for about the same length of time as I have been here, 42 years...42 years. He preached during the reign of five kings. The first king was a man named Josiah...Josiah. The end of the reign of Josiah was a time of reformation and a time of revival. The Law was recovered and Josiah sought to bring the Law to the people and it produced a revival.

However, a prophetess named Huldah showed up and said, "This is superficial. This is man-centered. This is not going to last. This will have no permanent reformation." That was true. The superficial revival under Josiah didn't last. What Josiah did was right, he did all the right things, but the people's response was surfeited and superficial.

Josiah's reign was followed by the second king during the ministry of Jeremiah, a man by the name of Jehoahaz. He only lasted three months. He was followed by Jehoiakim and he returned the people to corruption. He led them right back into idolatry and the worship of false gods.

He was followed by Jehoiachin who also lasted three months. And Jehoiachin was followed by the final king during the time of Jeremiah and the last king of the southern kingdom before the captivity, a man named Zedekiah who was a vacillating weakling, saw the nation more swiftly down the deep slide of depravity that led to absolute ruin and deportation. He had tough going.

The first king, superficial revival, the next four, rapid decline. And through 42 years of these five kings, Jeremiah's message never changed...never, ever changed. He was always the voice of God to that society as any faithful preacher must be. His preaching in no way deterred the idolatry. His preaching in no way stopped the slide. His preaching in no way eliminated the judgment. He never saw essentially any impact on a national level through forty years of his efforts. He was faithful and he was despised. And eventually they threw him in a pit to try to shut him up.

I see so many parallels between Jeremiah's time and Jeremiah and our time and faithful preachers today. We stand near the holocaust. We have to be on the brink of a devastating judgment in this nation. We have gone through some quasi revivals. There are people who would argue that we've had some revivals, that the gospel has spread, that Bibles have spread, that we're on television and radio, and through all kinds of media. The gospel is going out and yet we see no, no reversing of the direction of this nation. We see no lasting results. The church seems superficial and shallow and consumed with self-fulfillment and self-gratification.

So we come to a place in the life of Jeremiah that parallels our own time, and we ask this question, how do we approach a nation on the brink of judgment? Let's learn from Jeremiah. I'm going to show

you three elements.

Number one, Jeremiah understood that he had a divine mission...a divine mission. I'm sure there were people in those days who were calling for all kinds of social reform, all kinds of political action, all kinds of educational advancement. But none of those had anything to do with the calling of Jeremiah, nor did they have anything to do with our calling. Ours is a divine mission...a divine mission.

In other words, Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." That becomes clear to us in the commission of Jeremiah. Let's go back to chapter 1, it's one of the most fascinating callings that any man of God has ever had and here Jeremiah is informed of things about which he had no knowledge. Verse 4, "The Word of the Lord came to me," he says. "The Word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and before you were born I consecrated you, I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.'" Wow!

Here's the first thing to understand about a divine mission, your life is predestined by God...your life is predestined by God. Long before Jeremiah was ever conceived in the womb of his mother, long before Hilkiah, his father, and his mother came together to bring him life, long before that, sometime not only before the birth of Jeremiah, before the conception of Jeremiah, probably before the foundation of the world, Jeremiah was chosen and appointed as a prophet, not only to Judah but to the nations. His message extended beyond Judah and it's still extending even today across the globe wherever the prophet is read. Long before life ever was given to this man, God had determined to separate him, put him in a unique place at a unique time as a consecrated prophet of God to speak for God...predestination.

Here in this brief beginning with eleven short Hebrew words, God gives Jeremiah his own biography. Beginning in eternity past, the timeless eons of eternity, right on through until there are no more nations left for him to preach, God sums up his calling as predestined. He is an intensely human personality, this Jeremiah. And if you read the book and read it and read it and read it, you're going to learn to love this man. He is very human. And yet his humanity does not explain the power of his preaching and the relentless endurance of his faithfulness. He is a man who is mysteriously endowed with power from on high to survive the rejection that marked his entire life. He is so humanly weak that he can't stop crying, and yet he is so unassailably strong that he will not yield and compromise. He is a powerful personality. He is a lovable personality.

Now let me tell you something. When there is a crisis, people look for a program. But God looks for a man. When there is a crisis, people look for some system to fix it and God looks for a man, and God looks for a woman. When God wanted to deal with a crisis, He started with a baby. In this case, Jeremiah was that baby. And He designed him in the womb. And He put him together to have the human capabilities that he needed to do this. He also endowed him with the spiritual equipment to

fulfill his appointment by God.

Jeremiah knew this, and this was the bottom line, he was sovereignly ordained by God to do what he did. And it was never a matter of results. It was never a matter of his will. In fact, to show you that, look at verse 6, “Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord God,’” it sounds like Isaiah. “Woe is me.” Are you kidding? “Alas, Lord God, I don’t know how to speak, I’m no speaker and I’m just a youth. You’re looking at the wrong guy. I’m inadequate, I’m not qualified, I can’t do this.”

How did he overcome that sense of insufficiency, inadequacy? What took him beyond that was the clear indication that he had been predestined by God to this calling. By the way, whoever doesn’t have a sense of being predestined by God to service will never lead a spiritual revolution. Most people living in the church today have no sense of divine mission, they’re just bouncing from job to job and event to event, an engagement to engagement, and activity to activity. That’s the way they live, that’s the way they raise their kids. There’s no sense of an overarching divine mission. There’s no sense, and this is tragic, in the life of believers that the birth of every believer was ordained by God, the death of every believer was ordained by God, which means the middle was ordained by God and for purposes that advance the name of Christ and the glory of the Kingdom, and that’s the last thing on our priority list. If not Jeremiah, he knew that he had been called by God from before he was born, designed in the womb, separated from the womb, separated from the society, appointed to be a prophet and he had been called to fulfill his mission.

Not only was he predestined by God, but he was provided by God what he needed. He says, “I don’t know how to speak and I’m a youth.” So the Lord says to him, “Don’t say I’m a youth, because everywhere I send you, you shall go and all that I command you, you shall speak.”

Now the first thing you would say is, “What am I going to say? What am I going to say?” The educators say that the greatest fear that humans have is the fear of public speaking. Well the reason people have a fear of public speaking is very often related to the fact that they have no idea what to say, or they think that what they have to say isn’t important and most of the time they’re exactly right. In fact, some of the people who do most of the public speaking have the least to say and should be embarrassed about speaking. But when you have the most important message, that hesitancy has a way of disappearing, does it not? When you see the children on the brink of being consumed in the house fire, you really don’t stumble over the fact of whether you should publicly yell “fire, get out,” and grab somebody. It’s about the passion of it. You don’t have to worry about what you’re going to say because you’re not going to have to invent it...you’re not going to have to come up with it. I’m going to provide it. I’m going to give you the words to say. You’re going to speak for Me. You’re going to have divine wisdom. All that I command you, you shall speak and everywhere I send you, you shall go. That’s how any true minister, any true preacher that represents God has to approach ministry. I am predestined to this and I am provided the message. Jeremiah was resisted and hated and despised and abused.

And that leads to the third aspect of his calling, not only predestination and provision, but protection. Verse 8, "Don't be afraid of them, I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord. You have nothing to fear. You are called by Me. You are empowered by Me. You're going to face opposition. You're going to face antagonism and he certainly did, constantly.

Nobody listened to him. Nobody paid attention to him. The nation didn't turn. It was a very hard, discouraging 42 years and people hated what he said and hated him for saying it. If you want to do an interesting study some time in your Bible, find all the places where it says, "Fear not," and it's not said just to little widows who didn't know where their next meal was coming from, or orphaned children who didn't know who was going to care for them and protect them. "Fear not" is said by God to Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, and Mary, and Peter, and Paul because any human being, even the strongest leaders face the fear that comes with confronting people with the message they don't want to hear. But you'll have protection from God.

There's a fourth component here, verses 9 and 10, power. "The Lord stretched out His hand, touched my mouth and the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.'" Verse 10, "I have appointed you this day over the nations, over the kingdoms to pluck up, to break down, to destroy, to overthrow, to build and to plant."

That is amazing. Jeremiah feared that he was nobody. He was young, he wasn't affective as a communicator, he was unskilled in oratory. The divine answer is, "Don't worry about it, I am going to give you the words to speak. Don't worry about the reaction, I will protect you from the enemies of that truth. And know this, that the words that come out of your mouth will shatter and build. They will tear down and they will plant. Your words will be destruction to people and nations and construction to other people and nations."

This is the power that belongs to the one who proclaims the truth. The great power brokers in our world, the kings and potentates and the rulers have no power...they have no power. The power they do have is the weakness of human power, or even worse, the power of the kingdom of darkness, neither of which can even approach the power of God. Kings, nations, empires boast of their power, yet the power in the world belongs to the mouths of the messengers of heaven. God picks up this obscure young man of about thirty years of age, from a tiny, little, obscure country and says, "I will set you over nations, over kingdoms of the earth. Your word will destroy and your word will build."

So this was his calling. He was on a divine mission. And, people, we live in a nation in a dire crisis of abandonment of God, headed for a holocaust of judgment. We're already under the judgment of Romans 1, we've been turned over to our immorality, our homosexuality, and a reprobate mind. We're on the brink of divine judgment and what is needed is that the Kingdom of God and the representatives of that kingdom understand that our mission is divine. The reason for your birth, the



reason for your death and your conversion in the middle is so that you can speak the Word of God to this culture on the brink of a holocaust. It's a divine mission. That's why we live.

Secondly, what characterized Jeremiah was a direct message...a direct message. He didn't pull any punches, we would say. He didn't pamper, cajole, soft-soap, skirt issues. He didn't say, "Well, we don't really want to talk about sin," and he paid for it. Chapters 30 to 33 he wrote when he was in prison. He didn't spend his life trying to avoid controversy, trying to make everybody happy. If you read chapter 14 and verse 7, you will hear him say, "We have sinned against God as a nation." If you read chapter 17 and verse 9, you will hear him say, "Your hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." He preached against sin. He indicted the nation. He indicted the sinners for their sin categorically in chapter 3, chapter 9, chapter 11, chapter 19. He accused them of being involved in false religion...false religion. You have turned to idols from the true God.

In chapter 2 verse 12, "Be appalled, O heavens, at this. Shudder, be very desolate, declares the Lord, for My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hue for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water," that's false religion. They have turned away from the fountainhead of life, the Lord God, the one who made His Son the living water to quench the thirst of the soul of every penitent sinner. This wicked thing they have done, turning from the fountainhead and trying to fill up their broken buckets, concocted and created by themselves as if they could hold the water of life. Labor long, do they, in false religion, hueing out cisterns, man-made, collecting dirt and dead animals but holding no water. That's false religion.

First, if you are to be a faithful prophet in a nation in decline and crisis, you must expose false religion where it exists. This is not a time for tolerance, this is not a time from bracing everybody and saying, "It doesn't really matter what you believe as long as you follow your heart." Listen, this world is full of damning false religion. I have been accused through the years of being intolerant and I accept that as a compliment. Of course I'm intolerant, I am as intolerant as God is, as Christ is, as the Bible is, of anything that damns people's souls while promising them heaven. It is a direct message. We're not just talking about making people feel good. We confront lies.

In the seventh chapter of Jeremiah, Jeremiah indicts them for worshiping the Queen of Heaven, who is now cast under the name of Mary, the mother of Jesus. And so, we confront Roman Catholicism and Mormonism and every other ism, and spasm, and schism, and whatever it is, any of it, all of it, because we have no choice but to confront and expose false religion. That's what Jeremiah did. He did it all the way through to chapter 19 and beyond that.

He also confronted corrupt spiritual leadership. God to chapter 5, where we were, and we're just looking briefly at these, but chapter 5, verse 30, an appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. What is it? "The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests rule on their own authority." He confronted the false prophets. He confronted the deceivers and the liars who had infiltrated Judaism.

So on the one hand he attacked the idolatry of false religion. And then he attacked the corrupt infiltrators of the true religion. You cannot be the prophet of God, you cannot be the mouthpiece of God, you cannot be the representative of God unless you have a direct message that goes at false religion as it exists contrary to the truth, and as it exists inside the categories of the truth. Jeremiah 23 says the same thing. Jeremiah 25 says the same thing. These were false teachers who were saying whatever they wanted to say, whatever satisfied them. And the people loved it. Sure, they fill up those places where false teachers tell them what they want to hear, how good they are, how wise they are, how powerful their thoughts and their words are, and how they can create their own euphoria in this world. All those liars find people who love to hear that, but what will you do at the end of it? What's going to happen at the end when you face the judgment?

This is a direct message. He addressed wickedness in general, in chapter 3. Chapter 3 verse 24 and 25 will be a sufficient illustration. "A shameful thing has consumed the labor of our fathers since our youth, their flocks, their herds, their sons and their daughters." It's just...the whole society is immoral. Shame describes all conduct. Verse 25 talks about lying down in our shame. We have sinned against the Lord our God and our fathers from our youth even to this day have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. There's overtones of sexual deviation, sexual perversion, sexual immorality, all about the book of Jeremiah. Perversion of marriage in chapter 3, sexual perversion there and elsewhere as well, the sexual perversion coming physically as a part of the spiritual perversion of worshiping idols. They were a wicked, wicked people.

They were also dishonest, chapter 5. This is really an indictment that we can identify with. Aren't you weary of being lied to by people in power? Listen to what Jeremiah says in chapter 5 verse 1, "Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, go everywhere in Jerusalem. Look now and take notes, seek in her open squares, if you can find a man, if there's one who does justice, who seeks truth and I'll pardon her." Ha! I'll halt the judgment if you can find one guy who tells the truth, one person. Liars, deceivers, "O, Lord," verse 3...er, verse 2, although they say as the Lord lives, as the Lord lives...that's a way to swear. I swear I'm telling you the truth, God is my witness, as the Lord lives, I'm telling you the truth...they still lie, they still swear falsely. "O Lord, do not Your eyes look for truth."

It sounds so much like our society. Corrupt religion abounds everywhere. False prophets have been infiltrating Christianity everywhere. Moral corruption abounds on every front. Dishonesty is everywhere. There's a rejection of Scripture. Look at chapter 11 and we'll wrap this up in a minute. Chapter 11, verses 8 to 10, "They didn't obey or incline their ear, but walked each one in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought on them all the words of this covenant which I commanded them to do, they did not. The Lord said to me, 'A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah, among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned back to their iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel, the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.'" Pull one statement out, "They

refused to hear My words,” characteristically they rejected the Word of God. They rejected the Word of God. They deliberately abandoned the Word of God.

You know that’s characteristic of our culture. There’s no place in our society for the Word of God, the truth of God, the Scripture, the Bible. It’s an amazing thing. And then in chapter 13, just to kind of summarize this second point. God does a very interesting thing. It’s a visual aid. You don’t need to read it, I’m just going to tell you what happened.

He tells Jeremiah, “Go get a pair of shorts,” underwear, “and put it on and wear it but don’t wash it.” You’ve heard of wash and wear, this is wear and don’t wash. “Wear it and don’t wash it.” And then He comes to him and says, after he’s done that, “Go take that pair of shorts and go far away, go...according to chapter 13 verse 4...up to the Euphrates River and hide it. Bury it in the crevice of a rock.” What? That’s two hundred miles. And by the way, two hundred miles is a long trip when you’re walking. Go two hundred miles and bury dirty shorts.

What is this? Well he goes and does it. Then the Lord tells him later, “Go back and get it.” What? “Go back, get those dirty shorts.” And when he goes back, by the time he digs them out, they’re horrible, disintegrated. And He says, “That’s My people. I drew them to Myself as intimately as I could, and they became more foul, and more foul and more foul and I separated Myself from them and they corrupted and they’re under judgment.” God doesn’t change the rules, right? And we don’t have covenant protection. Jeremiah is a man who had a divine mission and a very direct message...very, very direct.

There’s a third thing, and I’ll close with this. He was characterized by a deep mourning. He’s known as the weeping prophet, chapter 13 verse 17, “If you will not listen, My soul will sob in secret for such pride. My eyes will bitterly weep and flow down with tears because a flock of the Lord has been taken captive.” This is God weeping and God wept through the eyes of Jeremiah. God wept through the eyes of Jeremiah. Jeremiah says, “O that my head were a fountain of waters, that my head were a spring that just kept gushing water so that My tears could continually flow for My people.”

We don’t ever want to get to a place where as we go to a nation on the brink of a holocaust of divine judgment we become indifferent or callous. We want to have the heart of Jesus who saw the city of Jerusalem that He was going to judge and wept over the city of Jerusalem. We want to have the heart of Jeremiah. I’ll read that to you, chapter 9, “O that My head were waters and My eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of My people.” I just wish My head was a fountain of unending tears. He even calls, in chapter 9, later in the chapter, for mourning women to come out and mourn with Him over the condition of His people.

So for 42 years he followed his divine mission. Preached his direct message and was characterized by a deep mourning. What was the result? What was the result? Chapter 7, quickly. The result, verse

23, I've already told you, "This is what I commanded them saying, 'Obey My voice and I'll be your God and you'll be My people and walk in all the ways I command you that it may be well with you.' Yet they did not obey or incline their ear but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart and went backward and not forward."

Wow! Discouraging...discouraging, why do you do this if nobody listens? I'm going to close with the twenty-fourth chapter...twenty-fourth chapter and the fourth verse. "Then the Word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, like these good figs that had been illustrated on a fig tree, like these good figs, I will regard as good the captives of Judah whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans. I will set My eyes on them for good, I will bring them again to this land. I will build them up and not overthrow them. I will plant them and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know Me for I am the Lord and they will be My people and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.'"

What is that saying? There is a remnant. There is a remnant. After the destruction and the devastation and the judgment and the purification of the captivity, there is a remnant that God will save. Why do we preach if nobody listens? Because the nobody is qualified. Within that vast number of rejecters, there is a remnant that God will save, that God will forgive, whose hearts He will change.

That's why we do what we do. You, dear ones, are that remnant, part of that remnant in the nation on the way to judgment.

Father, thank You for Your Word to us. We are so grateful for its richness, it's life giving to us. Thank You for this precious church. I pray for those here who have not come to Christ. O Lord, would You give them that new heart? Would You cleanse them? Would you love them and seek them and draw them to Yourself and save them? Thank You for all that You're doing here and will continue to do as we're faithful to You, and we'll thank You in Your Son's name. Amen.

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