

(Through the Bible) Jeremiah 11-15

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's laws and the severe consequences of disobeying them, highlighting the need for repentance and faithfulness.

Duration: 1:22:42

Scripture: Deuteronomy 27:9, Deuteronomy 28:13, Jeremiah 11:16-17, Jeremiah 12:5, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Perseverance In Faith", "Trust In God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about three men who find a genie and are granted three wishes each. The first man wishes to be back in London, the second wishes to be back in Italy, and the third wishes for his friends to be with him. The preacher uses this story to illustrate the power of wishes and the longing for familiar and comfortable places. He then transitions to a discussion about the challenges and difficulties that believers will face in life. The preacher references the book of Jeremiah and highlights how God acknowledges the struggles of His people but warns that things will get even tougher. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to persevere and trust in God, even in the midst of adversity.

Transcript

Shall we turn to Jeremiah, the 11th chapter, as we continue our study through the book of Jeremiah. Chapter 11 begins a new section of the book, not a whole new division, but it's a new message. And Jeremiah is divided into many messages that the Lord gave to him.

With chapter 10, we concluded the message of the Lord to Jeremiah that he was to give at the temple gate. Now he is to give a message to the people concerning their broken covenant with God. Now you remember when God brought the children of Israel into the land, it was on a conditional basis.

It was conditioned upon their obedience to God and to His commandments. So they were commanded, when you come into the country, you take it over, there in the valley where Shechem is, there are two hills, one is Gerizim, one is Mount Ebal. And a part of the tribes were to, some of the men from the tribes were to stand on Mount Gerizim, others were to stand on Mount Ebal.

And from Mount Ebal, they were to cry out the curses that would come upon the people if they disobeyed the covenant and the commandments of God. Cursed be He. And all the people down the valley, as these guys would yell out these various curses that would come upon those that turned from God, they would answer or respond, Amen, Amen.

And then from the other side, Gerizim, they pronounce the blessings. And of course these are found in Deuteronomy, as God laid forth for them the covenant and really the conditions by which you will inherit this land. Blessed are they that obey the law of the Lord, Amen, Amen.

Blessed are they that walk in His statutes, blessed are they. And so it must have been quite a scene as more than a million people gathered in the valley and these guys were calling down these curses and blessings, which were the basis, the covenant, the basis by which they were to inherit this land that God had promised unto Abraham. Now, God is officially declaring to them that they have broken that covenant.

So God is no longer bound by that covenant to give to them this land, for they have broken the covenant of God. And so this is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant and speak unto the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant.

Now, this is one of the curses that was cried from Mount Ebal. And so he is repeating the one cry from Ebal. When I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt from the iron furnace saying, Obey my voice and do them according to all which I command you.

So shall you be my people and I will be your God. That's the condition. If you will obey these commandments and do them.

Now, Paul speaks of one of the mistakes that the Jews had made in his epistle to the Romans. And that it was having the law just because they had the law. They felt they were all right.

But he said it isn't having the law, it's keeping the law that is important. Just because you have the law really doesn't mean anything. In fact, it could be greater condemnation if you're not keeping it.

James said, Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only because that's deceptive. So many times because we do hear the law of God, because we know the law of God, because God has given us his commandments. We feel that's enough.

No. With knowledge is responsibility and the greater the knowledge, the greater the responsibility. The responsibility to obey and to do what we know is right.

He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not. It's evil. So it isn't just having the law of God.

It isn't just having the covenant. It is keeping, it is obeying and the emphasis doing that which God has commanded. Now, God said the commandment that I gave to your fathers when I said, Obey my voice and do them according to all which I command you.

So shall you be my people on this basis. You will be my people. I will be your God.

This is the basis upon which I will claim you as my people upon which you can claim me as your God. That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers to give them a land that is flowing with milk and honey as it is this day. Now, I promise to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.

Look around. The land is flowing with milk and honey. I've kept my part of the covenant, God is saying.

I've kept my promise, the oath that I made to Abraham when I said, I will give to you and your seed this land. God said, I've kept my part of the covenant. But the people have broken their part.

Then answered I and said, Amen. O Lord, so be it means, or Amen means so be it and in Hebrew it is Amen. O Lord.

So he responded with the cry that the people cried out there in the valley at Shechem. When the guys were up on a mountain giving the curses and the blessings. He responded as the people did.

As God said to him, you know, this is the basis upon which I'll be your God and you'll be my people. And he says, Amen. So be it.

O Lord. Then the Lord said unto me, Proclaim all of these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant and do them. So it isn't enough to hear.

We must be doers. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, Even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor incline their ear, but walked every man or everyone in the imagination of their evil heart.

Therefore, I will bring upon them all of the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did them not. So God is speaking to the nation in an official sense concerning their having broken that covenant. And thus they can expect those curses that were pronounced upon them from Mount Ebal.

And the curses that would befall them for their breaking of that covenant of God. Now, if you go back into Deuteronomy, the 28th chapter. Here in, well, beginning with chapter 27, the verse 9, it tells you about this incident there at Mount Ebal.

And how that these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people. And then on verse 13, the tribes that were to stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce the curses. And so in verse 15, curse be the man that makes any graven image and abomination to the Lord.

Well, God is telling in the broken covenant here that as as many as are their cities, that's how many gods they have. That they've in Jerusalem on every corner have built an altar to some pagan deity. And so the very first thing that God pronounces a curse upon their guilty of these false gods that they were worshiping.

And so all of these curses, you notice each verse beginning with 16 on to the end of the chapter, begins with a curse upon them. If they would break the covenant and it tells the covenant and all. Now in chapter 28, God enumerates what the curses will be.

And in verse 16, cursed shall thou be in the city and in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store or their food supplies would run low. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, the fruit of the land, the increase of your cattle and flocks, sheep.

Cursed shall thou be when you come in, cursed shall thou be when you go out. And the Lord will send upon you the cursing vexation and so forth. He'll make the pestilence to cleave to you, he'll smite you with consumption.

Verse 22 and verse 25, he'll cause you to be smitten before your enemies. The Lord will smite you, verse 27, with a botch of Egypt, whatever that was. But it doesn't sound good, does it? And so he tells all of these things that are going to transpire if they break the covenant.

Now Jeremiah is pronouncing, you've done it. You've broken the covenant of God, therefore the curses are going to be coming upon you because they obeyed not nor inclined their ear, but they walked everyone in the imagination of their evil heart. Therefore, I will bring upon them words, the words of the covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did them not.

And the Lord said unto me, a conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refuse to hear my words. And they went after other gods to serve them.

The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape. And though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

What a tragic position for a person to get into where he has gone so far that God says, that's it. Even when they cry unto me, I'm not going to listen. They've gone too far.

They've taken that step over and it's gone too far. And even though they cry unto me, I will not listen. Very, very tragic indeed.

And we find God even telling Jeremiah, look, don't even pray for them anymore. Just that's it. They've had it.

I've had it. And I'm not going to handle anymore. Now, you remember this morning, we explained to you the historic background.

Josiah, the king, a good king who had reigned for 31 years, who had brought the spiritual reforms, had died in a battle against Pharaoh Necho there at Megiddo. And he was killed in that battle. And so Jehoiah has seized the throne.

Now, Jehoiah has was an extremely wicked man. And immediately reintroduced the worship of Bell and all of these other gods that Josiah had sort of cleansed out of the land. Now Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was the most wicked king of all.

He was the one that really started the whole downward trend into that never never land of oblivion away from God. But Josiah had instituted reforms. But now Jehoiah has plunges them right back in to the sins of your forefathers or the sins that were brought upon them by Manasseh.

And so God complains to them. They've broken the covenant which I made with your fathers because you've turned back to the iniquities of your forefathers. That would be during the time of Manasseh.

So God declares, then shall, verse 12, then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods. If they cry to me, I'm not going to hear. Let them cry unto their gods, unto whom they offer incense.

But they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. These little gods that they were worshiping had no power to help to hear. Actually, you remember how that so often in the Psalms and in the prophecy of Isaiah, God spoke out or the psalmist spoke out against the worship of these false gods and showed the idiocy of it all.

Because a man would take a stick and from the stick carve out a little idol. And with part of the stick, he would kindle his fire to bake his bread. And yet, to this part of the stick that he carved out as a little god, he says, that's my god.

But with the same stick, part of it is being burned in the fire, being consumed. And yet, the idiocy to say, hey, this little wood thing is a god. And to pray to it and to worship and so forth, it's a work of his hands.

He's created it himself. And he put eyes on it, the psalmist said, but they can't see. He put ears on it, but he can't hear.

He put feet on it, but they can't walk. How foolish. You've got a god that can't hear.

You've got a god that can't see. A god that can't talk. So they'll cry unto their gods, but they won't hear.

Why? Because they can't hear. They are not really gods. But that's when, of course, when the chips are down, when trouble comes, that's when you really want to call upon God.

But it's tragic if you've turned your back upon God so long that when you get to that place of desperation and you call upon God, you say, oh God, God help me. And he just shakes his head and said, I'm not your God. You haven't been worshipping me.

You've been living after your own pleasure. You've been walking after your own desires. You're not serving me.

Don't call unto me, I'm not your God. Don't call me God. I haven't been your God.

Oh, that would be tragic indeed. And yet God said, that's what's going to happen. They'll call unto me, but I say, hey, I'm not your God.

You call unto your gods that you've been worshipping. Because I'm not going to hear you. I'm not going to answer you.

For God said, according to the number of thy cities, were also thy gods, O Judah, according to the number of the streets in Jerusalem, have you set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense to Bell. Now isn't that horrible? Here in the city of God, glorious Jerusalem, on every corner an altar and incense burning unto the God Bell. Therefore, God said, don't pray to me for this people.

Jeremiah, just don't pray to me anymore about them. Neither lift up a cry or a prayer for them, for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me because of their trouble. So Jeremiah is commanded not to pray for them anymore.

I mean, a person is really out when God says, hey, don't pray for them anymore. Another place, God said, don't pray for their good. If you do, I'm not going to hear you.

How tragic when a God, when God says of a person, that's it, that's enough. Don't even pray for them anymore. They've gone too far.

You say, is it possible for a man to go that far? The scripture teaches it is. God said, my spirit will not always strive with man. Man can go so far in his rejection of Jesus Christ that God says, okay, that's it.

You want to live that way? You want to walk that way? Have at it, but never call unto me. For if you do, I won't even listen. Therefore, they could not believe, John says in 12.38 of his Gospel.

So, Israel had gone over the line from which there is no return. What hath my beloved to do in my house? God said. Seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many and the holy flesh is passed from thee.

When you do evil, you rejoice in it. The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit, and the noise of a great tumult. He's kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

For the Lord of hosts that planted thee hath pronounced evil against thee for the evil of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal. And the Lord hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it. Then thou showedest me their doings.

So, this is the message that Jeremiah had to take to the people. No wonder the people didn't like it. No wonder they were going to kill him.

Man, he was saying harsh things. So, Jeremiah now in verse 19 speaks of himself and the problems that he was running into. But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter.

And I knew that they had been devising devices against me saying let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof. Let us cut him off from the land of the living that his name will be no longer remembered. So, there were men that were conspiring to kill him.

But the Lord of hosts that judges righteously that tries the reins... Now the reins are that which guides and directs the animal. You use the reins for leading or guiding. And so, that is the guiding area of your life.

And a lot of people haven't given the reins over to the Lord. They're trying to guide their lives themselves. But God tries the reins in the heart.

Let me see thy vengeance. And now Jeremiah is praying, Oh God, let me see your vengeance on them. They're plotting to kill me Lord.

Now let me see your vengeance on them for unto thee have I revealed my cause. There is within the Christian circles today sort of a... I feel it's a phony kind of a... Oh, but we're to love everybody brother. And even the wicked and all.

And we're never to think any thoughts of vengeance or we're never to think any thoughts of God destroy the wicked kind of a thing. And there's almost a weakness in our position against wickedness and against sin because of this prevailing attitude. Oh well, we ought to be forgiving and all.

Yes, we ought to be forgiving. Yes, we ought to love. And I don't deny that.

And I'm not denying that. But there is also a time when we need to be calling for God's righteous judgment. And I think that a part of our whole moral laxity in the nation today has come from a very tolerant, soft attitude towards evil, towards wickedness.

And I think that that's a dangerous attitude. And so Jeremiah is saying, God, let me see your vengeance on them. For unto thee have I revealed my cause.

God, let me see you wipe them out. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, God answers Jeremiah, of the men of Anathoth that seek your life, saying, prophesy not in the name of the Lord that you die not by our hands. Quit prophesying in God's name, or we're going to kill you.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword. Their sons and their daughters shall die by a famine.

And there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth even the year of their visitation. So God promises He's going to bring judgment upon these who conspired to kill the prophet of God. Now, Jeremiah goes on and he is talking now about the situation, the wicked man Jehoiach has that is in power.

And he begins by saying, Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee. Starting from a base, from a foundation, that is very important. Know this, that God is righteous and God is fair.

Now, I will not always understand the righteousness of God or the justice or judgments of God. You see, as a Christian, we have problems. Because I believe that God is righteous, because I believe that God is love, I have difficulty understanding a lot of things that are happening in the world.

Because it seems that if God is the God of love, then why would He allow these things to take place? If God is a fair God, if He is just, then why is it that wicked people oftentimes prosper, have great prosperity? And so many times good, righteous people are hurting, suffering. Now, if I were God, I would bless all the righteous people and really put the thumb on the wicked, you know. But that would be because I'm stupid.

Because then, how would I really know that they loved me for me? They might just be, you know, mouthing words because they don't want the thumb to squash them out. If all righteous people were just blessed, had a great prosperity and everything else, then Satan could, as he did with Job, say, hey, does Job serve you for nothing? Look at the way you've blessed that fellow. Why, anybody would serve you if you bless them like that.

You don't know that Job really loves you. You don't know that Job is really faithful. He's a mercenary.

He's just got good sense. And the way you've blessed him, he's just worshiping and praising you because of the prosperity you've given to the guy. I was talking with a fellow the other day.

Very wealthy man. We were having lunch together and he was telling me of his difficulties. The difficulty lay in the fact that he was going with different young ladies, but he really didn't know if they really loved him or not.

He said he felt like he needed to go somewhere off somewhere and put on jeans to put aside his fancy cars and yachts and everything else because he was looking for a woman who loved him, not his checkbook. And he said, I really don't know. He said, they all know me.

They know who I am. They know what I've got. And so I don't know when they come smiling to me and making conversation if they're really interested in me or interested in my pocketbook, my checkbook.

Well, that would be a difficult problem. And it would be the same problem God would have if he cursed all the wicked and blessed all of the righteous. He wouldn't know if you really loved him or not.

But when here I'm seeking to live a good life and things go bad and I still love him, I don't turn on him and curse him because things are suddenly going downhill and I made a foolish mistake and all and I say, oh God, and I begin to curse God. Then, you see, he would know. So God lets me go through the fire.

And I still worship and praise the Lord. I say, oh right, I'm His. I still love you, Lord.

I don't love you because I've been blessed. I just love you because I love you. Because of you.

Not because of your blessings or whatever you've done. God, I just love you because you're you. And God knows that.

When we, in our adversities, continue in our devotion and love to him. So God allows us our adversity. God allows us problems.

God allows us suffering. And he allows the wicked to prosper because he doesn't want mercenaries. He doesn't want people just worshiping him because of the fringe benefits, but because of him himself.

So, Jeremiah is wrestling with this. God, I know you're righteous. It's not a question.

I'm not challenging. Now, the mistake that people often make is that they do challenge God. When they say, if God is a God of love, why does God? And that's challenging God.

If you come and say, now God, I know that you're a God of love, but I sure don't understand. You know, if you love me, why have you allowed this to happen to me? That's alright. God accepts that just as long as you're not challenging his love for you.

You can surely challenge the circumstances of your life. I mean, you can ask God why things are happening to you. God, I know you love me, but Lord, why is this happening in my life? Why are things going wrong? And it may be that God will show you something that is not quite right that he's trying to correct.

But it's wrong to challenge God. I don't think God loves me. You know, in Job, in all that transpired against him, it said he did not curse God or charge God foolishly.

Now, many times you may not curse God, but you may charge God foolishly. You may make foolish charges against God. And we've got to be careful about that.

We don't really charge God. Well, God doesn't love me. I know he doesn't love me because look what's happening.

So, God, I know you're righteous. No problem there. But I want to talk to you about your judgments.

God, why do wicked men prosper? Why are they so happy who deal so treacherously? For it seems that you have planted them. They've taken root. They grow.

They're bringing forth fruit. You're near to their mouth, but you're far from their reins. So Jehoiahaz comes in on the throne, a wicked man, and it seems that he's been planted on the throne.

God, I don't understand it. Here's a good righteous man. Josiah's wiped out.

And you let this wicked Jehoiahaz come up on the throne. He talks about God, but his life is not at all submitted. You're near in their mouth, but far from the control center of their life.

But Lord, you know me. You've seen me. You've tried my heart towards thee.

Now, that's something that we can all say. God, you know me. God, you've seen me.

You remember in the messages of Jesus to his churches there in Revelation 2 and 3. In each case, he said, I know thy works. God, you know me. God, you've seen me.

And God, you have tried my heart. And God does try our hearts. God does test the love.

Now, earlier, in verse 19, the previous chapter, Jeremiah said, I was like an ox or a lamb that is being brought to the slaughter. Here I am. I love you, Lord.

Serving you, Lord. Saying your word, Lord. And I've become like a lamb that they're ready to kill.

They've told me if I prophesy anymore in your name, they're going to kill me. Now, Lord, here's this wicked guy. Now, set him up for slaughter.

Not me. Prepare them for the day of slaughter. How long shall the land mourn and the vegetables of every field wither? For the wickedness of them that are dwelling therein, the beasts are consumed, the birds, because they said, He shall not see our last stand.

They've ignored God. They've shut God out of their lives. God responds to him.

You think it's tough now? It's only going to get tougher, man. And if you've run with a footman, if you've got in a race with a footman, and they have wearied you, how in the world are you going to race with horses? How are you going to... If you've been weary in these little things, what are you going to do when it really gets tough? I do believe, I do know, that things are going to get much, much tougher before they get better. I do think that our whole society has peaked as far as our standard of living, culture and all.

I think that we have peaked and are on the way down. We cannot continue to use up the energy resources as we have in the past. We're going to have to start making sacrifices as far as our energy consumption is concerned.

We are not producing enough food to feed the hungry world. And as more people get hungry, more demands are going to be made upon our food supplies. And we cannot ignore the third world and its tremendous needs.

And whether we like it or not, demands are going to be made upon us that are going to call for greater sacrifices. And the high standard that we've come to expect and to enjoy is over and we're on the way down. We're not going to be able to just go on forever.

Gobbling up 37% of the world's energy resources because we're only 6% of the people. And it's over. The holiday, the picnic is over.

Things are going to start getting tougher and they're going to get much tougher before they get better. Now, if you've run with a footman and they have wearied you, what are you going to do when you start racing against horses? If on the level ground you become tired, how are you going to run through the

marshes of Jordan? Now, God doesn't really answer the question, Lord, why do the wicked prosper? And here I am a righteous man and they're threatening to kill me. Lord, how come? God doesn't answer.

He just says, hey, it's not tough yet, Jeremiah. It's going to really get tough. What are you going to do then? Now, God acknowledged that Jeremiah had been running.

You've been running with a footman. You've been doing it. How have you been doing that? You've been doing it with the strength and the guidance of the Lord.

And that strength and guidance that you've had in the past is the same way that you're going to be contending with horses. You've got to trust in the Lord. Now, God has got all of us in training.

The Bible says you are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus under the good works that God has before ordained that you should fulfill. God has each of us in training as He is preparing us for the future. God always prepares His children for whatever they will be facing.

And God knows what you're going to be facing in the future. And thus God has been training you to prepare you for it because He'll never take you into anything by great shock and surprise. He'll never bring you to any place but what He hasn't already prepared you for that place.

But I'll go one further. He's also prepared that place for you. To the children of Israel after the wilderness experience, He said, everywhere you pitched your tent, I went before you and prepared the places for you to pitch your tent.

I love that. God's gone before me, prepared every place for me to pitch my tent. I never arrive at any place but what God has not preceded me there and fixed it all up just for me.

But He's also been working in me to prepare me for that place. So God is working in each of us, preparing us for the more difficult days that are to come, teaching us to rely on Him, teaching us to trust in Him, teaching us the lessons of faith, teaching us to know that God will not fail us. God will see us through.

No matter what may come, the Lord will be with me and will help me. And He's been teaching me and training me because one of these days I'm going to be running with the horses. But if I haven't been running with a footman, I'll never be able to run with the horses.

So God is working in your life. So these little trials and testings that you're going through, they're all a part of God's work in His preparation of your life for things in the future that will be yet even more difficult than what we have experienced in the past. So this is God's response to Jeremiah.

The nation is going downhill. Jeremiah can see that the nation is going downhill. And wicked men are in control and guiding it downhill.

God, why have you allowed the wicked to prosper? Why have you allowed the wicked to take over and to guide the people in this way of destruction? And God just says, Hey, fasten your seatbelt, man. It's going to really get tough. You've been running with a footman.

Hey, you're soon going to be racing with horses. Now you're going to just have to trust in me. You're just going to have to hold on.

I will see you through. I'll bring you through it. But you're going to have to have complete trust and reliance on me.

For Jeremiah, even your brothers from the house of your father, your own brothers, flesh and blood, even they have dealt treacherously with you. They have called a multitude of people after you. So don't believe them, though they speak fair words to you.

Though they come and say, Oh, Jeremiah, what a neat brother, you know. Don't believe them. They're conspiring against you.

God now declares concerning the nation Israel, I have forsaken my house. I have left my heritage. I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of their enemies.

Now notice how God still talks of Israel. The dearly beloved of my soul. God still loves them.

You remember the rich young ruler that came to Jesus and said, Hey, what do I have to do to inherit age-abiding life? Jesus said, keep the commandments. He says, which ones? And Jesus talked to him about the commandments that dealt with his relationship with his fellow men. And he said, I've kept all these from my youth.

What I lack yet. Jesus said, well, if you want to be perfect, go and take your goods and sell them and distribute among the poor. Your wealth.

And then come and follow me. And it said he went away sad because he had great riches. Now you thought that if you had great riches, you'd be very happy.

Here's a case where great riches made a man very sad. But it says Jesus looked upon him and loved him. This guy had a quality that was admirable.

It drew out love from Jesus as he saw the sincerity in the guy's heart. Jesus looked upon him and loved him. But the guy couldn't pay the price.

He went away sad. No sadder than Jesus. Because Jesus loved him.

And he speaks of the people, though they have forsaken, though they're going down the tubes, though they've turned their back on God, God still calls them the beloved of my soul. Oh, how great is God's love. My heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest.

It cries out against me. Therefore, have I hated it. My heritage is unto me as a speckled bird.

Now, as a, as a, you know, birds or hens are very, very mean. If you have a chick that is deformed in some way or looks different, they'll peck it to death. That's the term hen pecking came from.

Not from wise, but from chickens. That a bird that is odd, they'll peck the thing to death. And so, here, a speckled bird would be pecked by the other birds.

And God says Israel's become like a speckled bird. The birds round about are against her. Come and assemble all of the beasts of the field.

Come to devour. For many pastors have destroyed my vineyard. They have trodden my portion underfoot.

They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. The shepherds have destroyed. I think today of how many men who take the title of pastor who are really destroying the fields, the flock of God, leading them astray.

They have made it desolate. And being desolate, it mourns unto me. The whole land is made desolate because no man really lays it to heart.

I think that one of the greatest problems that we're facing today is that we are living in a desperate world. Things are really getting desperate. Look at the moral situation of our country.

Look at the moral climate. It's getting desperate. Look at the economic situation.

It's getting desperate. Look at the international situation. It's getting desperate.

Look at this tremendous arms race. Getting desperate. But God's people aren't desperate.

I think the time has come when we really need to take it to heart and get desperate before the Lord. When we need to really gather together more and more, assemble for prayer that God will send a revival that will really stir the nation at its very core, at its very heart. Because we're going down the tube fast, but no one's laying it to heart.

And God said this was the problem. Things are going down, but no one's really laying it to heart. We say, oh my, isn't that horrible? And that's it.

We're not really getting desperate before God over this situation. No man is really laying it to heart. The spoilers have come upon all the high places through the wilderness.

For the sword of the Lord shall devour from one end of the land even to the other end of the land, and no flesh shall have peace. They have sown wheat, but they're going to reap thorns. They have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit.

And they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord against all my evil neighbors that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit. Behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck them out of the house of Judah from among them.

And it shall come to pass after that I have plucked them out, I will return and have compassion on them and will bring them again, every man to his heritage and every man to his land. And it shall come to pass if they will diligently learn the ways of my people that swear by my name, saying the Lord liveth even as they have taught my people to swear by Bell, then shall they be built in the midst of my people. Now God promises He's going to take them out of the land.

They're going to be out. And further on in Jeremiah, He predicts that it will be for 70 years that they'll be out of the land. But God said if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation.

If they come back and obey me, then we'll set things up. But if not, then I'm going to destroy them. Thus saith the Lord unto me, go down and buy a linen girdle and put it on.

But don't wash it. So I got the girdle according to the word of the Lord and I put it on. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time saying, take the girdle that you have purchased, that you've been wearing and go to the river Euphrates and hide it there under a rock.

So I hid it by the river Euphrates as the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass after many days that the Lord said unto me, arise and go to the Euphrates and take the girdle from there, which I commanded you to hide. And I went to the river Euphrates and digged and I took the girdle from the place where I had hid it.

And behold, the girdle was marred. It was profitable for nothing. As you can imagine, if you take a linen girdle and put it under a rock and you know, the whole thing, when you go back later and get the thing, the bugs that have eaten holes in it and the thing is just, you know, good for nothing as he said.

Now God says put it on and wear it back through the streets again and preach to the people. Now they saw him when he first had this beautiful linen girdle. Oh, wow, look at that.

You know, one to draw attention. But now as he wears the thing again, yuck, what's he wearing that holy filthy thing for? But this was an illustrated sermon. Then the word of the Lord came into me saying, thus saith the Lord, after this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, the great pride of Jerusalem.

This evil people which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing. For as the girdle cleaves to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto me for a people and for a name and for a praise and for a glory, but they would not hear. Therefore thou shalt speak them this word, thus saith the Lord God of Israel.

And so he goes into the next thing. But the idea with the girdle was that the nation was once bound to God. And as it was bound to God, it was a beautiful thing.

A people worshiping God, serving God, bound to God. But when they have turned from God, that which was once beautiful and glorious has become ugly and repulsive. That same nation that once was the glory of the earth, as God's love and blessings were showered upon it, has now become the curse of the earth, as they have removed themselves from that place of nearness to God.

And they become good for nothing. There's an interesting book called *The Light and the Glory* in which they trace the historic roots of the United States and show how God had a very definite hand in the founding of this nation, even as he did in the founding of the nation of Israel. God's hand was upon the founding fathers.

And it's a beautiful book, *The Light and the Glory*, giving you historic insights to our nation that you don't find in the public textbooks in your school system. Because they don't want you to know the spiritual roots of the nation. They'd like to hide that from you.

But this nation was born of God as a light to the world. And God's blessing was upon it. They wrote the song, America, America, God shed his grace on thee.

And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea. And songs that reflected the nation's relationship to God. And men were conscious that it was God that had blessed and made our nation great.

But they're trying to hide that truth from the children today. And they're trying to hold up the God of capitalism. Free enterprise.

And they're saying, it's free enterprise that has made us strong. Now fight for free enterprise. Fight for the capitalistic system.

They can't inspire me to fight for free enterprise of the capitalistic system. I'll fight for the freedom that we have been given by God to worship Him, to serve Him. I love that.

But it's tragic that we have turned from the basic roots upon which the nation was founded. We were once beautiful before the world. God's blessing was upon our land.

But we, like the linen girdle, are becoming good for nothing in the eyes of the world. Even in... I was in Canada. I was on a radio talk show in Canada.

You'd be amazed at how many called in and were angry at me just because I was from the United States. All of the bitterness that they have towards the U.S. Over in England, we found a lot of bitterness just because I'm from the U.S. We were once the glory of the world, but now we are becoming hated throughout the world. We've traveled in some parts of the world where the people look at you and just spit at you.

They don't even know you. But they recognize you because of the way you dress. Nobody dresses like Americans.

And they can spot you a mile away. And when they get near you, they'll just spit at you, which is an oriental sign of disgust and disdain. Oh, it's sad when a nation turns from God to find its fulfillment and satisfaction in something other than God.

Once a beautiful garment. Now, in verse 12, the second thing... Speak this to them. The Proverbs, sort of.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Every bottle will be filled with wine. And they will say unto you, Don't we know that every bottle is going to be filled with wine? Because they were preaching a message of prosperity. You know, two cars in every garage.

Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of the land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness. And I will dash them one against another, even as the fathers the sons. Together, saith the Lord, I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy but destroy them.

Hear ye and give ear. Be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before He causes darkness, before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains while you look for light.

And He turns it into the shadow of death and make it gross darkness. But if you will not hear it, for my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and my eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears because the Lord's flock is carried away captive. Now, Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet, and this is one of his references to his weeping.

God is giving them a message of warning. If you won't hear it, then he said, in the secret place, my eye will weep sore and run down with tears. You know, this is an interesting thing.

We look at a minister and we're prone to just say, ah, he's just a hellfire damnation, you know, fire and brimstone preacher. And we're prone to just... If a man comes and pronounces the judgment of God that is coming, we're prone to just sort of say, ah, he's filled with hatred and everything else. Well, that may be

the case in some, you know.

But here with Jeremiah, here he's pronouncing the horrible judgment of God, but he's weeping. He's not, you know, smacking his lips and saying, boy, God's going to smack you, brother. Hardly wait.

But he's going and weeping over the condition of the people because they will not respond to the message of God. Say to the king and to the queen, humble yourselves, sit down, for your principality shall come down, even the crown of your glory. The cities of the south shall be shut up, none of them will be opened.

That is, they'll be shut up into a sieges. Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it shall be wholly carried away captive. Lift up your eyes and behold them that come from the north.

Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? What will you say when he will punish you? For you have taught them to be captains and as chief over thee shall not sorrows take thee as a woman who is in travail? And if you say in your heart, wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thy iniquity are thy skirts discovered and thy heels made bare. Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. No, a man cannot change his nature.

Only God can change a man's nature by the Holy Spirit. A leopard can't change his spots. You are what you are by nature.

And if you have not received Jesus Christ, you're a sinner by nature. You can't be righteous, even though you try. It's impossible.

You need a new nature. I don't care. You can take a pig out of the pigsty, give him a bath with deodorant soap, spray him with perfume, put a bow around his neck and let him go and he'll go right back to the mud and just roll over and wallow in it.

That's his environment. He loves it. That's his nature.

Loving to just wallow in the mud. And that's the nature of some people. You know, you can clean them up, give them a new act and, you know, you can say, oh, it's their environment, you know, let's bring them out of that environment and let's clean them up and all.

Hey, but it's their nature. Let them go and they'll go right back. You need a change of nature.

That's why Jesus said, hey, don't be surprised. And I say, don't marvel. And I say, you've got to be born again.

That's the answer. A change of nature. And that's what's accomplished by the Spirit of God.

He changes my nature. People say, well, I can never be a Christian. I don't want to be, you know, I don't want to be a hypocrite, but I can never do that by myself.

They don't accept the Lord because they say, well, I can never do it. Of course you can't do it. And no one expects you to do it.

You can't do it apart from the power and the work of the Holy Spirit in giving you a new nature. But God, that's what He does. He gives me a whole new nature.

A nature that is after Him. So, God speaks about the fact that a man is what he is by nature. He cannot change except by God's power.

Therefore will I scatter them as stubble that passes away by the wind of the wilderness. This is your lot. The portion of thy measure is from Me, saith the Lord, because you have forgotten Me.

This is what's going to happen, because you've forgotten Me and trusted in a lie. Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face that thy shame may appear. I have seen your adulteries, the names, the lewdness, thy whoredoms, the abominations in the hills and in the fields woven to thee, O Jerusalem.

Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Now the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought. For a drought filled the land. Judah mourns.

The gates languish. They are black upon the ground and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the water holes.

But they came to the water holes and found no water, so they returned with their vessels empty. They were ashamed and confounded and they covered their heads. Because the ground is chapped.

For there was no rain in the earth and the plowmen were ashamed. They covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, but it forsook the calf because there was no grass.

And the wild asses did stand in the high places. They snuffed up the wind like dragons. Their eyes did fail because there was no grass.

O Lord! Though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy name's sake. For our backslidings are many. We have sinned against Thee.

So the message that God gave to Jeremiah concerning the drought. And then he prays, O the hope of Israel! The saving thereof in the time of trouble. Why should you be as a stranger in the land and as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry for a night? Why should you be as a man that is astonished? As a mighty man that cannot save? Yet Thou, O Lord, are in the midst of us and we are called by Thy name.

Don't leave us. So Jeremiah continues to intercede, though God told him not to. Thus saith the Lord unto this people.

Thus have they loved to wonder. They have not refrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them.

He will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins. Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. Jeremiah had just prayed.

God said, Don't pray to me for their good. For when they fast, I will not hear their cry. When they offer burnt offerings and an oblation, I will not accept them, but I will consume them by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence.

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets are saying unto them, You will not see the sword, neither will you see famine. But I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets are prophesying lies in My name.

I did not send them, neither have I commanded them, neither did I speak unto them. They are prophesying unto you a false vision, a divination and a thing of nothing, and the deceit of their hearts. Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name.

And I sent them not. Yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land. By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

It's a terrible thing to speak in the name of the Lord your own opinions, thoughts or ideas. It's alright to speak your own opinions, thoughts and ideas as your own opinions, thoughts and ideas. Now, Paul the Apostle was careful to make a distinction in writing.

He said, Now, I don't have any word from the Lord on this, but this is my opinion on the subject. And that's good. You can express your opinion.

There's nothing wrong with expressing your opinion. It's just when you express your opinion in the name of the Lord that it becomes wrong. Because then when it doesn't work out, then you make God to be a liar or God to be made a fool.

So there are a lot of people that are speaking in the name of the Lord things that aren't really of the Lord, things that aren't really scriptural, things that are really anti-scriptural. In fact, much like these prophets. Everything is going to be great.

Everybody is going to prosper. Everybody is going to just be healed and everybody should be prospering and God wants you all to go out and purchase new Mercedes and all to be blessed and prosperous now. Peace, peace, prosperity.

God said, They're not prophesying from me. For God said, For they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If any man suffers according to the will of God.

These false prophets, some of them are now saying if Jesus only had enough faith he wouldn't have had to suffer the cross. Oh, what blasphemy. And God will deal with them.

And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword and they shall have none to bury them. Their bodies, they'll die and they'll just throw them out in the street. It's a horrible thing.

In some places of the world today people are dying and there's really no one. They just put the body out in the street and they sweep them up like dust in the morning. Tragic.

A person dies. You don't even have enough strength to just put their body out in the street and let someone else carry it off. Therefore, thou shalt say this word to them.

Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day. The weeping prophet. Let them not cease.

For the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach with a very grievous blow. If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword. If I enter into the city, then behold those that are sick with famine.

Yea, both the prophet and the priest go about the land that they know not. So he questions God. Have you utterly rejected Judah? Does your soul loathe Zion? Why have you smitten us and there is no healing for

us? We look for peace and there is no good.

And for the time of healing, and behold, there's trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against Thee. Do not abhor us.

For Thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory. Remember, break not Thy covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? Here's this great drought.

People are dropping off like flies. They're dying all over the place because of the famine and all. Are there any of these vanities of the Gentiles or the gods that the Gentiles worship, the pagan gods, that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art thou not He, O Lord, our God? Therefore, we will wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all of these things.

He continues this message on the drought. Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth.

Now, it's interesting that when God chooses examples of men of great intercessory prayer, He chooses Moses and Samuel. There is an interesting characteristic about both Moses and Samuel and that they were men who had the ear for God. You remember Moses was out in the wilderness and he saw the burning bush and he approached it and God spoke to him out of the burning bush.

He heard the voice of God. He had the ear tuned to God's voice. Men of prayer, powerful men of prayer, are men who are tuned to the voice of God because the purpose of prayer is to get God's will done always.

The purpose of prayer is never to get your will done. Prayer is not... God is not a genie. Though so many times we sort of approach Him as that.

You know, God, I've got three wishes. Please grant them to me, you know. You heard about the three fellows who were on the deserted island and about ready to die.

A bottle came floating up on the beach. One guy went down and got it and rubbed it and the genie popped out and says, grant you three wishes. First fellow said, oh, I wish I was back in London.

Oh, just to be in London again. Back in my own bed. Back in his own bed.

Second fellow said, oh, if I was only back in Italy. Sipping coffee. Once more, just on the streets there in Rome.

Oh, to be in Rome, sipping coffee. Back in Rome, sipping coffee. Third fellow said, oh, I'm so lonely without my two friends.

I wish they were back here with me. You see what we could do with wishes? We could really mess up the world. So prayer is not to get our will done.

It isn't that, you know, God is just going to grant our wishes. Samuel, when he was a little boy, brought by his mother to Eli. And there as he was sleeping, he heard the voice, Samuel, Samuel.

He went running into Eli. Eli said, did you call me? No, I didn't call you. Go back to bed.

Got back in bed and he heard, Samuel, Samuel. Went running into Eli again and said, you called me. No, I didn't call you.

Go back to bed. And again he heard his voice, Samuel, Samuel. Went running in and Eli said, look, if you hear the voice again, just say, speak, Lord, your servant hears.

So he got back into bed again and he heard, Samuel, Samuel. And he said, speak, Lord, your servant hears. And God began to tell him all about the sins of Eli, the priest.

And so Eli the next morning said, well, what happened? Well, I don't know. He had a tough time. But he heard the voice of God.

He was tuned in. His ear was tuned. Men of prayer are always men who are tuned to the voice of God.

So God uses two examples, Moses and Samuel. But they are men who had the listening ear and the listening ear always precedes the life of prayer, of powerful prayer. Hearing the voice of God, knowing the will of God, makes for powerful prayer.

So though Moses and Samuel, God said, these two shining examples of men of intercessory prayer capacities. You remember Moses said, Lord, forgive their iniquities. And if not, then I pray you'll blot my name out of your book.

Intercessor before God for the people. But though Moses stood before me, God said, my heart can't be towards them. Though Samuel stood before me, my heart can't be towards them.

Cast them out of my sight. Let them go forth. And it shall come to pass that they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? Then thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord, such as for death to death, such as for the sword to the sword, such as for famine to famine, and such as for captivity to the captivity.

And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord. There will be the sword to slay, the dogs to tear, the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all of the kingdoms of the earth.

And God goes back now because of Manasseh, that horrible wicked son of Hezekiah that introduced these people to this pagan idolatry. The son of Hezekiah for that which he did in Jerusalem. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside to ask how you are doing? Now as forsaken me, saith the Lord, you're gone backward.

Therefore, I will stretch out my hand against thee and destroy thee. I'm weary with changing. Now, an interesting verse because we know that God does not change.

God does not repent. God is not a man that He should repent or the son of man that He should change. But we are limited in talking about God to human terminology.

So we have to describe God's actions in human terms. So we are faced with the dilemma how to describe what apparently is a change of attitude by God. It would, from my end, look like God has changed His attitude.

Not so. God is always known, you see, from the beginning. God doesn't change.

He knows His foreknowledge. So from my standpoint, it looks like God has changed. His pronounced judgment is going to come.

The people pray. They repent. And so God forestalls the judgment.

You say, oh, well, God changed. No, He always knew that He was going to forestall the judgment. He really didn't change, but it would appear that He changed.

So I have to describe it in human language. We don't have divine language with which to speak of God. And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land, and I will bereave them of their children, and I will destroy My people since they return not from their ways.

Their widows are increased to Me above the sands of the seas. I have brought upon them against the mother of the young man a spoiler at noonday. I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly and tears upon the city.

She that hath borne seven is languishing because she has given up the ghost, or she has died. Her son has gone down while it was yet day. She has been ashamed and confounded.

And the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the Lord. Woe is me! My mother, that Thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth. I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury, yet they are all cursing me." Of course, Jeremiah was not saying things that were very pleasant.

They were being angered by what this prophet had to tell them from God. Oftentimes, the true prophet of God is not a popular man. They do generate... People don't want to hear the truth.

People want to hear a lie. When people come in for counseling, so often they want to hear a lie. They want to hear you say, well, it's just all right.

You know, go ahead and do it. It doesn't matter. God doesn't care.

Oh, you're a great counselor. Oh, I love you. If they come in and say, look, man, you persist in that and you're going to hell.

That's a part of the works of the flesh. And we know that they who do those things will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. You better get right with God.

They go out angry, cursing, kicking. Horrible counselor. He told me the truth.

I don't want to hear the truth. I want to hear pleasant words. Jeremiah was telling them the truth.

They had other prophets that were telling them lies. They were popular men. Jeremiah was unpopular.

The Lord said, Verily, it shall be well with the remnant. Verily, I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction. Though the people are going to be destroyed, there will be a remnant that will be saved.

They'll be taken captive to Babylon and they're going to do well in Babylon. Well, they did. They prospered in Babylon.

In fact, the Jews were so prosperous in Babylon, they were basically farmers. But when they got into business, they were fantastic. And soon they were running the best operations in all of Babylon.

Becoming very wealthy men. So that when they were able to go back from the Babylonian captivity, some of them were so prosperous they didn't even want to go back. Why should we go back to that hard life in Jerusalem? You know, we've got it made here.

And so a lot of them did not return because they had become so prosperous. So God here declares that it's going to be well with the remnant though they are in captivity. In the time of their affliction, shall iron break the northern iron and the steel? Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price and that for all of your sins, even in all of your borders.

And I will make you to pass with your enemies into a land which you know not, for a fire is kindled in my anger which will burn upon you. He's predicting the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah responds, O Lord, you know, remember me and visit me and revenge me of my persecutors.

Take me not away in your long suffering. Know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Well, that's good.

Jesus said, Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for so persecuted they the prophets before you. He's referring to Jeremiah.

He says, Lord, you know, for your namesake, because I've spoken in your namesake, they're persecuting me. They're rebuking me. For thy words were found and I did eat them and the word was unto me a joy and rejoicing of my heart.

Oh, can you say that of God's word? To me, it is. It's the joy and rejoice. How I love the word of God.

How I enjoy finding beautiful truths in God's word that minister to my spirit and to my soul. It's the joy and the rejoicing of my heart just to get into the word and to read it and study it. It's just sort of devour it.

Here's Jeremiah saying, I found your word and I devoured it and it was the joy and the rejoicing of my heart. For I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers nor rejoiced.

I sat alone because of your hand for you have filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable which refuses to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar and as the waters that fail? Therefore, thus saith the Lord, if you return, then will I bring you again and you will stand before me. And if you will take forth the precious from the vial, thou shalt be as my mouth.

Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brass wall. And they shall fight against thee, but they will not prevail against thee.

For I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the awesome. So, God's promise to His prophet.

Now, you go out to them and they will come to you again, but I'll make you like a brass wall. I'll be like a brass wall around you. And though they will come against you to fight against you, they'll not prevail because I am with you.

So, God's promise of the future. His sustaining of His prophet as He speaks forth the word of the Lord in the name of the Lord. Shall we pray? Father, we thank You tonight for the opportunity that You've given to us to again study Your Word.

O Lord, may we devour Thy Word. May it be the joy and the rejoicing of our hearts that we learn of Thee and that we walk according to all that You have commanded. God, help us to hearken unto Your Word and to do it.

May we not be hearers only, living in deception, but may we be doers of that which is right. God, help us that in these desperate days we might become desperate before Thee in prayer. Make of us, Lord, men of prayer, women of prayer, men and women of Your Word in these last days.

O God, help us that we might be able to lift others from the destruction that is coming upon the earth, that they might walk with You in Your kingdom. God, use us as Your instruments to speak Your truth. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

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