

Jeremiah & Lamentations - Through the Bible

by Zac Poonen

Jeremiah's message emphasizes the importance of repentance, return, and knowing God personally, and warns of the consequences of not doing so.

Duration: 55:44

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:5, Jeremiah 20:9, Jeremiah 29:13, Lamentations 3:22-23, Lamentations 3:40-41, Lamentations 5:21

Topics: "Faithful Obedience", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

This sermon delves into the life of Jeremiah, a faithful prophet who preached to Judah for over 40 years, trying to save them from their sins and impending judgment. Despite facing rejection and persecution, Jeremiah remained steadfast, like Jesus, in his simplicity, sensitivity, and strength. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God wholeheartedly, standing true to God's word even in the face of opposition, and having a deep burden for the spiritual well-being of God's people.

Transcript

I turn today to Jeremiah, the book of Jeremiah, and chapter 1. Jeremiah was a man who preached to Judah, to the southern kingdom, for more than forty years, and he never succeeded in turning Israel back from their sins. He was trying to save Judah from their sins. He was trying to save Judah from facing the judgment of God.

He was the last voice that God sent to Judah to save them from being sent captive, and he never succeeded in getting them to listen. They never listened, but he was not a hard man. Even though he spoke very strongly, he would weep in secret for their sins.

He felt very deeply about the backsliding of God's people. He was a very simple man. He started prophesying when he was very young.

At the same time, he was very sensitive in his spirit, and at the same time, very strong. Those are good qualities for anyone who preaches God's word. He's simple at heart, sensitive to God and to the feelings of others, and yet very strong when it comes to proclaiming the truth, and in that sense, he was like Jesus.

Jesus was also a very simple man, very sensitive. He wept over Jerusalem just like Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem. Once when Jesus asked his disciples, who do people say that I am? They replied, well, some say you're Jeremiah.

Come back again. Why did they say that? Because there's so much similarity between Jesus and Jeremiah, and that's a great compliment to Jeremiah, that people mistook Jesus for Jeremiah. And Jesus wept and suffered because God wept and suffered, and Jeremiah wept and suffered here for the same reason.

And yet, though he had a tremendous concern and he was the mouthpiece of God, the people just misunderstood him. Just like all the prophets through the generations have been misunderstood, persecuted, rejected, but he never gave up for 40 years. A tremendous example of a man who stood true to the end, and many of his prophecies he wrote in a dungeon, what they call jails or prisons, they're just a dungeon, a pit in the ground like Paul.

And he was prophesying under the reign of many kings. One year before he came on the scene, there was a revival under Josiah after Manasseh had ruled, had an evil reign over Judah for 55 years. Jeremiah comes along after that, and Habakkuk was also prophesying around this time.

The prominent word, phrase that we find in the book of Jeremiah is the Lord of hosts. Many of these prophets spoke of the Lord of the armies of heaven. That comes about 82 times in this book.

Let's turn with that introduction to Jeremiah chapter 1. The Lord called him when he was a young man. We see that from verse 5 and 6 and said to him, I formed you, verse 5, in the womb. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

And before you were born, I consecrated you and I've appointed you a prophet to the nations. So when was Jeremiah appointed a prophet? Before he was born. There's a lot of dispute nowadays whether a child is a child when it's in the mother's womb.

Here is a verse that should clear that doubt forever. That God anointed Jeremiah and called, consecrated him before he was born. I don't know whether he was one month in the womb or two months in the womb, but at that point when he was just a small little dot in his mother's womb, God had his eye on him and consecrated him to be a prophet.

That's a great encouragement for us to know that God had his eye on you when you were a little dot in your mother's womb. He has a plan for your life just like he had a plan for Jeremiah's life. Can you imagine when Jeremiah went through all those difficulties, how this thought must have encouraged him? Okay, I'm facing a lot of difficulties, but God knew me when I was in my mother's womb and he had a plan for my life and that plan is going to be fulfilled and I'm going to respond to God.

I want all of you to have that attitude whenever you face some trial. Remember that in your mother's womb, God saw you, picked you out, had a plan for your life and he wants you to fulfill it. So don't get discouraged.

Inside the mother's, before he was formed in the mother's womb, God says, I knew you and I consecrated you and I appointed you as a prophet and then he says, Lord, I don't know how to speak. It's amazing how God picks up these people to be prophets who don't know how to speak. Moses was like that.

Jeremiah, he says, Lord, I'm not a preacher. I'm not a person who can speak publicly. I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, don't think that God can't use you to speak his word if you don't have the ability to speak or you don't have the boldness to stand in front of people.

If you allow God to break you and to fill you with the Holy Spirit, he can make you his mouthpiece. It all depends on your walking with God. The Lord said to Moses, I made man's mouth.

Who made man's mouth? You think I can't make you speak? I know in my own life how I was a very shy, discouraged person when I was young and I found that when God anointed me, he could make me speak and he can do the same with you. And I want to say this also to all of you. Don't ever say to God, Lord, I'm so young, okay, you don't have experience.

But if the Lord has called you and consecrated you, your age doesn't make a difference. You don't have to wait till you're old before you start serving the Lord. As soon as God's called you and you find a burden in your heart and seek God to be filled with the Holy Spirit, you can go forth and proclaim the word of God.

The Lord said to me, verse seven, don't say I'm a youth because everywhere I send you, all that I command you, you shall speak. And again, this phrase that comes frequently to the prophets, don't be afraid because I'm with you to deliver you. You see, there was one thing the prophets had.

The Lord was with them and therefore they were not afraid of any men. And I believe that's the way we need to serve the Lord in our land today, having the Lord's presence with us. And then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, I have put my words in your mouth.

It's the same thing he did to Isaiah. You find he does the same thing here to Jeremiah and says, now I've appointed you this day over the nations. And I want you to notice here what his ministry was.

His ministry was, there were six things mentioned here in verse 10. And notice that four of those things are negative. To pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow, build and plant.

Building and planting was the positive things and four of them were negative. In other words, he had to tear down an old building and put up a new building. And that's not easy.

It's much easier to go and build on an empty plot of ground. But when we move into Christendom today, we find Christendom is a very similar condition to Judah in those days. There are huge religious structures which are contrary to the word of God.

And any prophet that comes with God's word to this situation will have to first tear down, pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow, and then build and plant. And it's that initial work with a bulldozer breaking things down that many people are reluctant to do. They always want to put a patch of a new garment on the old one.

And the Lord says, no, you've got to throw away the old structure, throw away the old garment and make something completely new. And when people don't do that, they don't succeed in building what God wants them to build. The Lord says to him in verse 19, they'll fight against you, but they won't overcome you.

In chapter two onwards, right on to chapter 45, there are a number of prophecies to Judah. And then in the last six or seven chapters, 46 to 52, the last seven chapters, there are prophecies to other nations. And I just want to show you a few verses.

I just want to, as I said the other day, put a few pieces of the jigsaw puzzle here and there and help you to encourage you to complete the rest of the puzzle. In chapter two, verse 13, the Lord says, this is the message. The verses I'm going to show you are some of the basic messages that the Lord gave to Judah

through Jeremiah.

My people have committed two evils, he says, one, they have forsaken me. And second, they didn't just stay empty. They went and hewed themselves cisterns that can contain no water.

They forsook me, who is a fountain of water. And they went making vessels with holes. Those are idols that they worship, which can hold no water at all.

That's his charge against them. In chapter three, he speaks about adulterous Judah and backslid in Israel. Israel was the northern kingdom that had already gone into captivity.

And the main burden of people like Jeremiah and other prophets of his time was, have you fellas learned a lesson from what happened to that northern kingdom? That northern kingdom, you know what happened to that a hundred years ago? They did not listen to the prophets and God sent them into captivity. That's Israel. Now Judah, have you learned a lesson from that? And Judah did not learn a lesson.

They always said, oh, we are better than them. How does this apply to us today? Today we can say broadly, Protestant Christianity is divided into two groups. One is the regular mainline denominational churches.

And then you, that's like the northern kingdom of Israel. And then you have those which call themselves separated assemblies who have, who believe in water baptism and other doctrines. And when these separated assemblies separated initially, they were very, very good.

But do you think they learned a lesson from the failure of the mainline denominations? No. And so God says to Judah through Jeremiah, Israel is better than you. And that is what has happened to a lot of these separated assemblies and their leaders today.

What God is saying is, some of those leaders in those mainline denominations are better than you people. Some of those people in those denominations are better than you people who are in the so-called separated assemblies. Exactly the same thing.

They don't learn from the failures of others who've gone before them because they say, that won't happen to us. That's exactly what Judah said. And it happened to them.

And that's what all these separated assemblies and their pastors say. But it's happened to them. That's the condition of Christendom today.

So these things are written in scripture, but it's amazing that people don't learn a lesson from here. But the Lord says, I'm going to bring a remnant back. That's another great burden these prophets had.

There's going to be a remnant that's going to come back. And the Lord says, return, O faithless sons, chapter 3, verse 14. First of all, acknowledge your iniquity.

Verse 13. The remnant are those who acknowledge their iniquity. And the Lord says, come back, verse 14, O faithless sons, and I will take you one from a city, from a whole city, there may be just one, and two from a family, and the rest of the family will be there, and I'll bring you to Zion.

And Zion here is a picture of the true church. And what is the mark of the true church? One mark is this, verse 15. There, I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you on knowledge of God and

understanding of his ways.

You know that you have come to Zion when you have found a shepherd after God's own heart. And you know that you have not come to Zion when you haven't found a shepherd after God's own heart. And God says, I'll bring you to Zion and I'll give you shepherds who have got a heart like mine, not who have got a lot of intelligence, but who have got a heart of compassion and love for God's people, and who will not try to exploit you, who are not interested in your money, but interested in your life.

In chapter 3, verse 16 and 17, it says, they'll never say again the ark of the Lord, but they will talk about the throne of the Lord, the reality, instead of the symbol. That's the last time in the Bible that you read of the ark of the covenant. You read it mentioned in Revelation again, but otherwise it's the last time it appears it's replaced by the throne of the Lord.

The ark disappeared after the Babylonian people took it away and nobody has ever seen it since. And now we come up to chapter 4. The Lord says here in verse 3, break up your fallow ground. The Lord says to Judah, don't sow among thorns, circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the four skins of your heart.

The Lord was always speaking about stop depending on human resources, humble yourself, confess your sin. And then in chapter 5, verse 1, before that, let me just say that Jeremiah sensed that the armies were going to come. He says in verse 19 of chapter 4, my soul, my soul, I'm in anguish.

My heart, my heart is pounding because I've heard the sound of trumpet. The enemy is coming. Jeremiah had a great burden because he loved the people.

That's why God made him a prophet. It's not enough that God touches our mouths when we speak to God's people, we've got to touch our hearts so that we love them, so that we can speak from a burden. And God said to Jeremiah, something similar to the time when Abraham pleaded for Sodom.

Abraham said, if there are 10 people in Sodom, will you spare the city? God said, yes. If there are 10 righteous people in Sodom, I'll spare that city. And here the Lord says to Jeremiah, if you find one person, not 10, one person in Jerusalem, anywhere, I will pardon her.

I'll pardon the whole city. If I can find one man in that city who does what is right and who seeks after the truth. There were not many, many conditions who does justice and seeks the truth.

And Jeremiah could not find one. Can you imagine the condition of God's people that there was not even one man in Jerusalem who sought out justice. Do you know that one man in a church, one man in a church can bring the blessing of God upon a church? Do you know that one man can bring the blessing of God upon a fellowship, upon a home? One man.

Be a man like that. Be a woman like that. One man can turn the tide against the devil.

Okay. In chapter 6, verse 16 and 17, the Lord says, stand by the ways and ask for the old paths, the way that the apostles walked. Find the good way.

They said they would not walk in it. In chapter 7, Jeremiah told you there had been a so-called revival just before Jeremiah came along under Josiah, but it wasn't a deep revival. There are a lot of revivals among God's people which are very superficial on the outside.

And Jeremiah came and stood in the gate. The Lord said to Jeremiah, stand in the gate of the Lord's house and tell them, change your ways. Don't just, verse 4, trust in deceptive words, saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, verse 4, the temple of the Lord.

In other words, don't depend on words. If there's no change in your ways, if you don't let this revival go deep enough, then it's not going to make any difference. In your private life, the Lord says, verse 9, if you're going to steal, murder, commit adultery, tell lies, offer sacrifice to Baal, and then you come and stand before me, verse 10, in this house and say, we are delivered, is it to do all these abominations? This is the verse Jesus quoted, verse 11, has this house, which is called my name, become a den of robbers? That's exactly what Jesus said when he stood in the temple 600 years after Jeremiah.

And now 2000 years later, God needs men who will stand in the church and say, are you going to live in sin in your private life? Are you going to be unrighteous in financial matters? Are you going to live in sin in your home and then come to God's house and say, we are redeemed, we're God's children? That's hypocrisy. We need people like Jeremiah, because that's exactly the condition of God's people today. Let's turn further.

You see, this is the same two streams of religiosity and spirituality that we considered from the time of Cain and Abel. Here it is, religious people having a so-called religious revival that does not deliver them from sin. Any revival that does not deliver you from sin is a superficial and worthless revival.

They were coming to the presence of the Lord and yet the same time they were, verse 18, baking cakes to the queen of heaven. Even in Christianity today, they call someone the queen of heaven. In those days, they had a queen of heaven too.

And today's Christendom's queen of heaven is patterned after that heathen queen of heaven that they worshiped in those days. There is no queen in heaven. Jesus Christ is Lord and that's all.

And Jeremiah warns these people that it's possible that you can go on like this and after some time, the harvest, the reaping will be over and you can miss the bus altogether. In chapter 8, verse 20, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. A word that we need to proclaim to a lot of people in our day.

There is a particular time when the Lord comes to reap and after that, it's too late to respond to the word of God. And here we see how Jeremiah wept. He says in chapter 9, verse 1, Oh 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.

Though he spoke so hard words in public, in private, he wept. And this is how all godly men have been. And the Lord's message further in chapter 9, verse 23 to 26 was don't let a wise man boast in his wisdom.

You know, people were boasting. This is one of the sins that the prophets always spoke against, being proud of your wisdom or verse 23, proud of your riches. A lot of people are proud of their wisdom or proud of their riches or proud of their might, their influence in society.

The Lord says there's only one thing you should really, that's really worth boasting about. And that is that you understand and know me. Jesus said eternal life is to know the Lord.

And that's what Jeremiah spoke about in the Old Testament. The only thing that's of value is not money. It's not influence.

It's not even wisdom. It's the fact that you know the Lord personally. In chapter 10, Jeremiah says, Lord, verse 24, correct me, O Lord, a good prayer for all of us to pray, but with justice, not with your anger, lest you bring me to nothing.

In Jeremiah 13 and verse 17, Jeremiah again says about how he weeps, he says, if you will not listen to my preaching, my soul will weep or sob in secret for your pride. My eyes will bitterly weep and flow down with tears because the flock of the Lord has been taken captive. Repeatedly, you find this expression, and that's why Jeremiah is called a weeping prophet.

He never wept in public. He was a very strong man in public, but behind the scenes, he wept like Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Behind the scenes, Jesus never wept in public concerning the only time he wept in public as far as he knows of the tomb of Lazarus, but otherwise he wept in secret because you know, you weep when you're concerned.

If you don't have any concern for God's people, you don't weep. You don't weep when somebody else's child is dying. You weep when your own child is dying.

Weeping is an expression of concern and real love that this, I'm a part of this. And that's how Jeremiah felt. And it's only that type of prophetic utterance that the Lord anoints and backs up.

Now I want to move on to chapter 15. There's a lovely passage here from verse 16 to 19, 16 to 20, 21, where the Lord tells Jeremiah how he is to prophesy. In verse 16, he says, Lord, I found your words and your word has become for me the joy and delight of my heart.

Now if you want to be a true mouthpiece of God, this is condition number one, that God's word must be the joy and delight of your heart. Just like the businessman has joy in making money. Your joy must be in getting into God's word.

I'm sorry to say there are many people standing in pulpits today who want to be preachers, who are not willing to spend time digging into God's word, who don't find God's word, the joy and delight of their heart. Thy words were found, and I ate them. And number 17, verse 17 rather, here's another condition if you want to be a mouthpiece of God.

I did not sit in the circle of merry-makers. There are a lot of jokers in the world today. And you sit in the circle of those jokers, joking and laughing and making fun of things.

I can tell you now itself, you'll never be the mouthpiece of God. Not in a hundred years. Things are serious.

I'm not saying we shouldn't have humor. I'm not saying we shouldn't joke. But there are some people who don't know where to stop.

They are perpetual jokers. And Jeremiah says, I made sure that I didn't go and sit in the midst of such people. Avoid such people.

Let me tell you that. And then number three, the Lord says, you know, Jeremiah made a little complaint to God in verse 18. He says, Lord, why have you let me down? You have been to me, last part of verse 18, like a deceptive stream, like unreliable water.

I come to the stream thinking there's water and there's no water. You let me down. And the Lord says, don't ever say things like that to me.

That's a word of unbelief. Verse 19, if you return to me and you throw away all these worthless words like the ones you said just now, and make sure that in your mouth you speak only the precious words of faith and goodness and throw away these words of unbelief and throw away idle conversation, throw away useless conversation, then you will be my mouthpiece. I want to challenge all of you.

How many of you want to be God's mouthpiece? Not just preach dead old sermons that you study up from somewhere, but to be God's mouthpiece. Get rid of the company of jokers and dig into God's word. Let that be your delight.

Get rid of conversation that is useless and idle from your mouth and speak the word of faith whenever you speak to God. Take out the precious and throw away the worthless in your conversation. And the Lord says, I will make you my mouth.

There's no partiality with God. And he says to them, you must never go back to them. You must never let them influence you.

The Living Bible paraphrases like that. You influence them. Don't let the world influence you.

Don't let corrupt Christendom influence you. Don't let backseated pastors and leaders influence you. Let God influence you and you influence them towards godliness.

Don't let them influence you towards the world. And I will make you to this people like a fortified wall of bronze and they will not be able to prevail over you. There's a price to be paid if you want to be God's servant in these days.

I want to show you another verse in chapter 16. One of the prices that Jeremiah had to pay was he was not allowed to marry. The Lord told him in verse 2, you must not take a wife or have sons and daughters in this place.

Some people are called to that type of life like the Apostle Paul, like Jeremiah. They were not permitted to get married. They were not permitted to go to a house of mourning.

Verse 5, don't ever enter a house of mourning. And verse 8, don't go into a house of feasting. These prophets had to be disciplined in their bodily desires, their eating habits had to be disciplined if they were to be prophets.

And can you imagine what people said about Jeremiah? This fellow is not at all social. He was like a social outcast because he didn't have time to fool around like other people. He had to wait before God to get his message.

Now a lot of people today don't want to pay that price and they want to stand up and speak in God's name. Christendom is full of people who want to stand up and preach without paying the price. And it's not that they don't do any good, they do a lot of harm.

Chapter 17, verse 5 to 8 is a very blessed passage which tells us about trusting in the Lord and trusting in men. The Lord spoke through Jeremiah and to us, to his people. Cursed is the man who leans upon the arm of flesh, but blessed is the man, verse 7 and 8, who trusts in the Lord.

For he'll be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He will always bring forth fruit. To trust in the Lord means to depend on the Lord fully, to lean upon him, and not to trust in my own abilities or in men who say they will help me.

The man of faith will always produce fruit, he'll never be dry, he'll always be fresh. Anytime you meet him, anytime, because his inner life, he's drawing water from the river of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 17, verse 21 to 24, Jeremiah rebukes all those who work on the Sabbath day in order to make more money.

In chapter 18, the Lord shows him in a potter's house how a potter is making a vessel of clay. You can take time to read it. And the vessel was spoiled, and then he made it again, another vessel.

It's a word of encouragement. The Lord could do that for Israel, and the Lord can do that for you. Maybe the Lord tried to do something with you, and you did something that spoiled it.

Is there no hope for you? Read Jeremiah 18. There is hope for you. The Lord can still make you a vessel.

If he succeeds in humbling you, you know, why was that vessel spoiled? Because there were some hard lumps of clay there that wouldn't fit in. If you allow God to break that hardness in your life, he can still make you his servant. Chapter 20, verse 7 to 11, there's another passage where he complains about, Lord, you've always made me, verse 8, proclaim violence, like the New Living Bible says, you've never allowed me to preach a kind word to these people.

It's always judgment, judgment, judgment. You know, there are many preachers who like to be balanced. The prophets were never balanced.

The prophets were imbalanced. They had a message from God, and they kept on preaching it. Jeremiah preached one message for 40 years.

In the body of Christ also, God may give you a particular burden. He may not give that burden to other people, but he gives you that burden, and you must be true to that. And don't let other people divert you and try to make you balanced when God has given you a burden for some particular task or ministry.

Don't get diverted from that. God told Jeremiah, you've got to preach judgment. He says that.

You've never allowed me to speak one kind word to these people. The Lord says, that's it. And for 40 years, he stuck to that task, and he was God's mouthpiece.

There were many people who tried to destroy him. Verse 10, I've heard the whispering of many people. They said, denounce him.

All my trusted friends are waiting for me to fall. But the Lord is with me. Verse 11, as a dread champion, therefore my persecutors will stumble and they will not prevail over me.

They will be utterly ashamed. Jeremiah had that confidence. Now let me move on to chapter 23 in verse 5 and 6, where we read, Jeremiah prophesies about the coming of Jesus Christ, who is called here the righteous branch.

And this is the name by which the Messiah will be called, verse 6, the Lord, our righteousness. He's speaking about justification, which we experience in the new covenant. Jeremiah prophesied quite a bit about the new covenant.

In chapter 23, it's a wonderful chapter for all those who preach God's word to read. Because chapter 23 is a chapter where he denounces false prophets. And he says these false prophets, first of all, they don't listen.

Verse 18, their fundamental problem is they don't stand in the counsel of the Lord to listen to what God has to say. There are multitudes of false prophets like that, who don't take time to wait to hear what God has to say. But they want the honor of getting up and preaching.

And verse 25, these false prophets, they prophesy falsely about dreams. Have you heard people like this, who get up in verse 25, it says, who say, I had a dream. Let me tell you about that dream.

Falsehood. These are deceivers. Don't listen to them, Jeremiah says.

Don't be deceived by all these people who talk about their dreams and their... It says they invent words and prophesy falsely in the name of the Lord. They say, thus said the Lord, but the Lord hasn't spoken. It's a very dangerous thing to get up and say, thus said the Lord in a prophecy, when you're not sure that God has spoken.

And multitudes of people today who have absolutely no fear of God, get up in meetings and say, thus says the Lord, and say something which just comes out of their own mind. I would encourage all such people to read Jeremiah chapter 23 and get a little fear in their heart. God speaks, but I've never heard him speaking from these type of false prophets.

Verse 29, God's word says, my word is like a fire and like a hammer. Why isn't it that you say the Lord spoke those words? Why isn't it your word isn't going like a fire? Why isn't it your word isn't going like a hammer, breaking their hard hearts to pieces? Because it never came from the Lord. God's word is like a fire and a hammer.

It says in verse 29 and chapter 25, verse three, the Lord, he says, Jeremiah says from the 13th year of Josiah, even to this day, these 23 years I've spoken to you again and again, you've not listened. This is sort of midway through his ministry. He says, 23 years, I preached to you again and again and again and again and again, and you never listened, but he continued to preach and he predicted that they would be captured and they would be in captivity for 70 years.

I just want to tell you one thing here about the sovereignty of God. You read in Jeremiah 26 in verse 20 to 24, that there was another prophet, not a very well known one. His name was Uriah, Jeremiah 26, verse 20, and he prophesied the same message as Jeremiah prophesied, and when the king heard it, they tried to kill that man, verse 21, and Uriah heard it and ran off to Egypt and King Jehoiakim sent people to get him from Egypt and they brought Uriah from Egypt, verse 23, led him to King Jehoiakim and Jehoiakim killed him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place.

But the hand of Jehoiakim, the son of Shephon was with Jeremiah so that he was not killed. Two prophets, both preaching the same message, just like James and Peter were in prison, James was killed and Peter was freed, Uriah and Jeremiah were preaching the same message and God allowed Uriah to be killed. Sometimes, I don't know why.

Some faithful servant of God is working in one place and God allows him to be killed. Another equally faithful servant of God preaching in the same place, he escapes. God has a plan for our lives.

God's plan for Uriah was over. God's plan for Jeremiah was not. What we learn from that is, if you're a true and a faithful servant of God, you don't have to worry about when somebody kills you.

You cannot be killed till God's time. And God gave Jeremiah favor with one of the authorities in that palace, so that man saved his life. Okay, we go on to chapter 29.

Chapter 29 onwards to chapter 33, we see about the future restoration of Israel and also about the new covenant. In chapter 29, we read some wonderful verses. In verse 12 and 13, first of all, you will seek me.

First of all, he says in verse 10, you're going to be for 70 years in Babylon. This is the prophecy that Daniel read and was stirred by. But he says in Babylon, you must seek me and you will search for me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Verse 13. See, when God, I told you about this movement from Babylon to Jerusalem, to the true church that can only come where a man has got a burden to seek God with all his heart. And Jeremiah says that when you are over there and you're sick and tired of that Babylonian life, seek me with all your heart and then you'll find me.

If you don't seek for me wholeheartedly, you will not find me. And even in Babylon, Jeremiah says, be careful about the false prophets that there are in Babylon. Take time to read about that in verse 21 and verse 31.

The false prophets. And he names them. He's not afraid to name the false prophets.

Move on to chapter 31 in verse 3. The Lord says a wonderful verse to encourage us. I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, I've drawn you with loving kindness.

And chapter 32, we read of Jeremiah being imprisoned in the. He was imprisoned in the orders of the king. And in the jail, when he was in jail, the Lord told Jeremiah to buy a plot of land in his hometown.

Now that it's a very stupid thing to buy a plot of land when there's a war going on or about to come. And you know, the enemy is going to take over everything. And what's use buying land when there's a war? Jeremiah had to buy this land, pay the money, get the deed to prove to these people one thing.

I believe 70 years later, God's people are going to come back and my relatives will be able to occupy this bit of land. It was an act of faith. I'm going to put my money down on something that's going to last after this period of judgment is over.

It's something like when we put money down for God's work, something which humanly speaking is foolish to give money for something you don't get any benefit from. No businessman would do it. But we put it down believing that's the expression of our faith, that when we put money down for God's work, we're going to get returns from it.

Jeremiah expressed that faith. Take time to read it in Jeremiah 32. And then we read in chapter 33, another wonderful verse, verse three, call unto me and I'll answer you, show you great mighty things that you don't know of.

Verse 17, sorry, Jeremiah chapter 33, he says in verse chapter 32, that is not 33, 17, Lord, there's nothing impossible for you. He's saying that in relation to the purchase of this property. Verse 27, the Lord says, I am the Lord God of all flesh.

Is anything too difficult for me? We sing that song, nothing is difficult for the Lord. It's from this verse, verse 17 and verse 27. In chapter 33, verse 15 and 16 is another prophecy about the coming of Christ.

And then in chapter 34 to 45, we read about the fall of Jerusalem. Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians, the king of Babylon came. I just want to go quickly through this, just a few things.

In chapter 35 is a family of the Rechabites and take time to read Jeremiah 35. It's about a family. The Lord said, bring people from that family and put a glass of wine in front of them and make them drink it.

And when he did that, those Rechabites said, I'm sorry, we don't drink. For generations, our parents have told us, our grandparents, we should not touch drink, and they refused to drink. For 200 years, they had kept that principle, amazing faithfulness.

And the Lord said to them, I want to show these Israelites, here is one family that is faithful in obeying my word. Therefore, they will always stand before me, verse 19, because they were true to me. See, very often in the midst of so many backsliders, you'll find one family like that standing true to God.

Yeah. In chapter 36, Jeremiah is asked for the first time to write down something. Verse 2, take a scroll and write down this, he says.

And when the king, when that scroll was taken before the king, it says here that the king, verse 22 and 23 of chapter 36, read it and tore it up and put it in the fire. And so what did Jeremiah do? This is scripture, remember. So verse 32, Jeremiah wrote it again.

And it says in verse 32, this time he added some more words. So that's why we've got 52 chapters in Jeremiah, because the king tore it up. If the king hadn't torn it up, maybe we'd have had only 40.

So sometimes you see there how God turns the tables on Satan. OK, we come to chapter 37, and we read of Jeremiah's imprisonment there in verse, because he was preaching that the enemy would come. And they did not like that.

And it says they imprisoned him, verse 14 and 15. And 21, he was imprisoned. But there was one man who was an African.

We read off in chapter 38, verse 7, who went and spoke to the king and said, he will die there, Jeremiah. Let me go and lift him up. And he went down, verse 11, Ebed-Melech, and lifted up Jeremiah from there.

And we read that because he did that to God's prophet, God honored him. We read later on in subsequent chapter, in chapter 39. And finally, we read in chapter 39 and verse 11.

This is a very interesting verse. When Nebuchadnezzar came, he had heard about Jeremiah. And Nebuchadnezzar gave orders, 39:11, about Jeremiah and told the captain of his bodyguard, take him, verse 12, look after him.

Don't do anything harmful to him, but rather deal with him just as he tells you. And we read in chapter 40, when Nebuchadnezzar met Jeremiah, he said to him, now, verse 4, chapter 40, verse 4, I'm freeing you. If you want to come with us to Babylon, I'll look after you and I'll treat you well.

But if you don't want to come, you can go where you like. The heathen appreciated God's prophet more than the people of Judah. The Greeks, John chapter 12, wanted to see Jesus.

The Jews crucified him. It's always been like that. The heathen appreciate a man of God.

Very often, Christians do not value their prophets sufficiently. This is the tragedy in Christendom. It was exactly like that here.

Imagine a heathen king valued a man like Jeremiah. But Jeremiah could have lived a comfortable life in Babylon, and he could have gone there, but he chose not to go and stayed with those despised Israelites. And later on, we read in chapter 44, he was taken to Egypt.

And after that, we don't hear of him at all. I want to show you one last verse there, Jeremiah chapter 45, verse 5. Baruch was the man who was writing down the prophecies of Jeremiah. And the Lord said to Baruch through Jeremiah, a lovely verse which we can all apply to ourselves, Jeremiah 45, verse 5. Are you seeking great things for yourself? Do not seek them.

Don't seek honor, Baruch. We are to be despised and rejected in this world. People like Nebuchadnezzar may appreciate us, but this people Judah will never understand.

In chapter 46 to 51, there are prophecies of judgment on a number of nations. I don't have time to go into all that. In chapter 52, we read about the fall of Jerusalem.

And now, I want to turn to just these few chapters in the book of Lamentations. Lamentations are the Lamentations of Jeremiah. And let me read that to you.

See, Lamentations is a number of... You know, the Hebrew alphabet has got 22 alphabets in Hebrew. And in Lamentations, the chapters are written like a poem with each verse beginning with the first letter of a Hebrew alphabet. It's like if you wrote an English chapter with 26 verses, with each verse beginning with A, B, C, D, like that.

And chapter 3 has got 3, 3 verses beginning with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. That's why it's got 66 verses. So, those first 4 chapters are an acrostic like that.

Just like Psalm 119 has got verses beginning with the first letter of the alphabet. And Proverbs 31, the last 22 verses about the God-fearing woman. So, this is a funeral song for Jerusalem.

Jeremiah is weeping. He's lamenting. That the streets of Jerusalem once bustling with people, verse 1, like a widow broken with grief, she now sits alone in her mourning.

He identified with the people. That's what you want you to see in Lamentations. Verse 9, the people of Jerusalem defiled themselves with immorality, with no thought of the punishment that would follow.

Like many of God's people today, they sin not realizing one day they'll have to answer. And look at this beautiful expression in verse 14. The Lord took all my sins, the sins of Jerusalem, wove them into a rope and tied that rope and pitched me to a yoke of captivity.

It was your own sin. And the Lord sapped my strength and gave me to my enemies. Chapter 2, verse 7, the Lord has rejected his altar.

He despises his sanctuary. He made careful plans, sorry, He has given them to the enemies. They shout, but still they shout in the Lord's temple as though it were a day of celebration.

This is the tragedy in Christian churches today. There's sin in the camp. There are leaders who are in sin, people in sin, but they shout in the midst of the Lord's sanctuary as though everything is all right, instead of falling on their faces and weeping.

Chapter 2, verse 9, the gates, the locks, the bars, the kings, the princes, the law, the prophets, everything is gone from Jerusalem. Chapter 2, verse 11, Jeremiah says, I've cried until I can cry no more. The tears no longer come.

God's servants must weep for innocent people who are being exploited by corrupt Christian leaders today. My heart is broken. Little children, verse 11, and tiny babies are fainting, dying in the streets.

Verse 12, Mama, we want food. They cry and they collapse in their mother's arms. Young people being led astray because they don't have good examples among their leaders.

And God's people must stand against this whole system. He says in verse 14, your prophets have said so many foolish things, which are totally false to the core. They did not try to hold you back from your judgment.

Verse 19, a good exhortation. Rise during the night and cry out. Pour out your heart like water to the Lord.

Lift up your hands to him in prayer. Chapter 3, verse 22, the unfailing love of the Lord never ends. It says here, his mercies are new every morning.

Verse 23, great is his faithfulness. His mercies are new every morning means every morning he looks at us as though we have never sinned. If we have repented of all our past sins and confessed them, he does not remember our sins anymore.

And it's a good word for young people here in verse 27 onwards to 33. Submit to the yoke of discipline when you're young. Humble yourself under the authorities God places over you.

And put your face in the dust. And then there will be hope for you. Verse 30, when people strike you, turn the other cheek.

Jeremiah said that before Jesus did. For the Lord, even though he brings grief, verse 32, will show you compassion. Verse 40 and 41, let us test and examine our ways and let us turn again in repentance to the Lord.

My tears flowed on endlessly, verse 49, until the Lord looks down from heaven. Verse 53 to 58, he says how when he was in a pit, they threw stones on me. And I thought that was the end, but I called on your name from within the well, verse 55, and you heard me.

Chapter 4, the fine gold has lost its luster. The finest gold has become dull. The precious children of Jerusalem, worth their weight in gold, verse 2, have now become like earthenware pots.

Chapter 5, verse 21, restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again. Here was a man who not only preached, but who had a deep concern in his heart for the backslidden state of God's people. And that teaches us it's very easy to get up and preach.

But what made Jeremiah was this weeping behind the scenes, this concern, this burden, this rising up in the night and calling to God. And I want to say to all of you, if you want to serve the Lord, you must have a

secret life like that before God, where you're concerned that the name of Jesus Christ is dishonored in Christendom in India today. And you weep before the Lord and you cry out to him.

And then, when you stand in his name in the pulpit, you'll find God stands with you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6bXzcMBwKsQ.mp4>

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