

Message #13**Jeremiah 9:1-26**

Mr. Miles used to say **any believer who gets out of fellowship with God is capable of anything**. Never is that point more vivid than when you look at the entire nation of Israel, in the book of Jeremiah. The entire nation was totally and completely out of fellowship with God and still is. When you look at Israel, you would never suspect that she is the nation of God because you do not see evidence of the presence, power and blessings of God on her.

Now the key sign of the covenant for O.T. Israel is circumcision (Genesis 17:10-12). This matter of circumcision comes up in this chapter. It is mentioned at the end of the chapter in the last two verses in **Jeremiah 9:25-26**. So Israel had a covenant relationship with God and the sign of that covenant relationship with God was circumcision. The problem was even though she had a physical covenant relationship with God, there was nothing about her spirituality that even looked like she was in any way connected to God.

There is a key point to see here:

JUST BECAUSE ONE HAS A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD DOES NOT MEAN ONE HAS A HEART THAT IS IN A SPIRITUALLY RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

As Mr. Miles said, when God's people are not in fellowship with God, they are capable of anything, and Israel sure proves that. God's own people can drift so deep into sin that they do not think right and will not repent and turn to God so God is forced to punish them for their wickedness.

**REALITY #1 – One could be in a covenant relationship with God and be living a life of sin.
9:1-6**

It breaks God's heart to see this, but He does see people in His family who live a total life of sin. When Jesus saw this He wept (Luke 19:41); when Paul saw this he was sad (Rom. 9:1-5) and when Jeremiah saw it, he wept (**9:1**). He had wept so much he could not even weep anymore.

What he saw was a covenant nation of God that was bankrupt spiritually. In fact, Jeremiah is actually called the weeping prophet because this so troubled him (Jer. **9:18**; 10:19; 13:17; 14:17; Lam. 1:16; 2:11, 18; 3:48).

It is very rare to find someone who is so overwhelmed with the pathetic spirituality of the people of God that they are sad to the point where they weep. In fact, in most churches the emphasis is not on being sick and depressed over your sin; it is on being happy, filled with enjoyment and laughter in life.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe made an important observation when he said, “Instead of evangelists and revivalists, the church now has ‘religious comedians’ who apparently have never read James 4:9-10: ‘Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up’” (*Be Decisive*, pp. 57-58).

According to **verse 1**, Jeremiah was broken by what he saw in the people of God. He was so heavy-hearted that he ran out of tears. He was so sad he wanted to cry more. He would have wept day and night but he couldn't. He saw several things among God's own people that made him very sad to the point of tears.

If we have any spiritual wits, this verse should cause us to check our own real attitude toward sin:

- 1) We should evaluate our attitude about ourselves when we sin.
- 2) We should evaluate our attitude about others when we see them sin.

In fact, according to **verse 2**, Jeremiah wanted to get as far away from these people as he possibly could. He said I would like to get away from them all because they are so ungodly. Jeremiah was totally and completely disgusted with the people of God and so was God.

There are some people who are so disgusting and pathetic in their spirituality that you do want to get as far away from them as you can. They have no real love for the Lord and love for the Scriptures. They have no pursuit of righteousness. They are not people of prayer. Who wants to hang around people like that? Jeremiah didn't. There were eight depressing sights he saw:

Depressing Sight #1 - Many of God's people were dead because of their sin. **9:1**

Many of God's people were dead physically because God had executed them and many were dead spiritually. Jeremiah saw it all. He knew they were not right with God. It is sad as a leader to see this. When you have to do a funeral for one who was never really dedicated to God, it is depressing.

Depressing Sight #2 - Many of God's people were in adultery. **9:2a**

Charles Feinberg said, “the blatant sins Jeremiah describes are literal” (*Jeremiah*, p. 440). Many of God's people were involved in things that were sexually immoral. The word “assembly” describes sacred gatherings where gross immoral things were happening.

Just this week I saw a statistic that said nearly 70% of the Christians regularly look at pornography on the internet. Most of God's people continually commit adultery. Do you think God will bless people like that? He specifically says to set no unclean things before your eyes. God will not bless this; He will judge it. Jeremiah saw the same kind of stuff.

Depressing Sight #3 - Many of God's men were treacherous. **9:2b**

The word "treacherous" (begad) is a word that means to act covertly as a fraud. This describes one who covers up his real character which is out to oppress, afflict and defraud others (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 101-102).

Depressing Sight #4 - Many of God's people opened their mouths and always lied. **9:3a**

God's people did not only not tell the truth, they were habitual liars. They lied to their mates, children, friends, relatives, and people at worship. They were "consummate liars" (*Ibid.*, p. 441). They bent the truth like a bent bow. When people get in the habit of bending the truth, they are heading to the judgment of God.

The greatest number of liars I ever saw in a church was Pocatello, Idaho. Blatant liars and frankly, many of them are dead. They went to church and could tell one lie after another.

Depressing Sight #5 - Many of God's people pursued one evil after another. **9:3b**

It wasn't that these people just struggled with some flesh sin now and then; they pursued one evil after another. The word "evil" even speaks of perverted and depraved things. They went from one perverted thing to another.

Depressing Sight #6 - God's own people did not know God. **9:3c**

God, Himself, is declaring that His own people do not know Him. They not only did not know God, they did not want to know God. I am convinced that His declaration is the same today.

Most people who claim to be Christians do not know God because the way you really know God is by a serious study of God's word, and most people don't do that and most people don't want that.

Depressing Sight #7 - God's own people could not be trusted in any relationship. **9:4-5**

Truthfulness could not be found in any relationship. They could not be trusted as a neighbor. They could not be trusted as a brother. They would lie and deceive and commit all kinds of iniquity. These were God's own people sinning in any way against each other. There are traitors in the church at times. You can't trust them. You can't depend on them.

Depressing Sight #8 - God's own people were deceitful. **9:6**

Instead of living life in the context of truth, God's people lived their lives in the context of deceit. They dwelt in a life of deceit that refused to know God and His word. That word "know" means deep commitment to God and His word.

No wonder Jeremiah was so sad. This is all he saw with the people of God.

REALITY #2 – One could be in a covenant relationship with God and be heading to devastating Judgment. **9:7-22**

In **verses 7-9**, God says I am going to turn up the refining heat. We cannot help but see the heart of God here. **His desire is not to exterminate His people, but to turn the heat up so His people will turn to Him.** God says I am going to punish My own people and avenge Myself and My name. God was appalled by what He was seeing with His own people. **Verse 8** says their tongue was deceitful and dangerous.

There are eleven judgments that God would pour out:

Judgment #1 - God will judge the land. **9:10a** - God will literally demolish the land.

Judgment #2 - God will judge the cattle. **9:10b** - They will be gone; they will leave.

Judgment #3 - God will judge the birds. **9:10c** - They will be gone; they will leave.

Judgment #4 - God will judge the beasts. **9:10d** - They will be gone; they will leave.

God literally is removing His blessings and good things from their existence.

Judgment #5 - God will judge Jerusalem. **9:11a** - God will destroy Jerusalem.

Judgment #6 - God will judge the cities. **9:11b** - God will destroy the cities.

In **verses 12-14**, God says **I want My people to hear the fact that the reason I am doing this is because My people have forsaken My word and they do not listen to it or obey it.** They live their lives their way and they are stubborn and hard-hearted idolaters.

Judgment #7 - God will judge their food. **9:15a** - God will remove nourishing food.

Judgment #8 - God will judge their water. **9:15b** - God will poison fresh water.

Judgment #9 - God will judge by scattering them. **9:16a** - God will scatter among nations.

Judgment #10 - God will judge by sending a sword against them. **9:16b** - His people chased

In **verses 17-20**, God appeals to the women to mourn over what He is doing to His own people. He appeals to the women to proclaim the truth of why this is happening. Obviously the men weren't listening, perhaps the women would listen.

Judgment #11 - God will judge by causing death. **9:21-22**

God will kill children, young men, old men and the bodies will be seen by everyone. This is a judgment of God. **Verse 21** is so true; death sneaks through windows at any time and takes men, women and children.

It doesn't matter where they live, in the streets or palace. Death finds them. Philip Ryken said "God's people received judgment the old-fashioned way—they earned it" (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 176).

As Ryken went on to say, the question was not what have they done to deserve judgment; the question was what haven't they done. You name the evil and as people of God they did it.

They were involved in idolatry, immorality, adultery, lying and child sacrifices. They did not fear God; they did not know God and they did not live for God. They were following false teachers and false preachers and they were given to murder, goddess worship, racism, greed and they refused to turn to God and amend their ways. They did not see themselves as pathetic sinners who said, "What have we done." They went merrily on their way. They earned every bit of the judgment of God just like this nation has earned it.

REALITY #3 – One who is in a covenant relationship with God should want to know God and please God. **9:23-26**

People like to boast. Just listen to them talk. Paul said, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." Is this the beat of your heart? This is a grace offer. God invites people to seek what is truly valuable as to what He deems as wise. God says let not a wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not a mighty man boast in his might. Let not a rich man boast in his riches.

There are three things listed in **verse 23** that people trust in who are not right with God:

- 1) They trust in their own wisdom.
- 2) They trust in their own strength and power.
- 3) They trust in their riches.

When God sends His judgment none of this will help in any way.

Verse 24 says let a man who is wise boast in his relationship with Me.

- 1) **Boast that he understands Me.**
- 2) **Boast that he knows Me.**
- 3) **Boast that God is a merciful God.**
- 4) **Boast that God is a just God.**
- 5) **Boast that God is a righteous God.**
- 6) **Boast that in the future God will punish all who don't know Me.**

John Calvin made an interesting observation about **verse 24**. He said most ministers know these words, but very few consider the previous context in which they are given. **The context is one of judgment because there is no one wise who actually understands these things.**

These are the attributes that one who knows God grasps. One who knows God realizes God must judge. One who knows God admits the whole character of God. One who knows God understands grace and mercy, but also understands righteousness, justice and truth.

In **verses 25-26**, God wants to show that the real circumcision that matters is that of the heart. In **verse 25**, Israel was circumcised physically but was uncircumcised spiritually. God Himself will have to do this, and He will (Jer. 31:33-34). In **verse 26**, God lists Judah between Egypt and Edom. So in many ways His own people were like the heathen nations that practiced circumcision.

But this was no protection from His judgment. God would judge them for their evil. It is a very sad thing when God puts His own people on the same level as the rest of the world that does not know Him. But that is what God does here.

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS:

- 1) Ask God to purify your heart and mind.
- 2) Turn away from every form of evil.
- 3) Carefully guard your words.
- 4) Always tell the truth.