

A Time To Pray For Forgiveness – 1/14/24

TEXT- Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

Jeremiah 9:1-2 *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! 2 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.*

Jeremiah 14:8-10 *O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? 9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not. 10 Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.*

INTRO – Jeremiah was of the priestly line and lived in the priests' city of Anathoth. Apparently, he had some personal wealth because he was able to purchase real estate and even hire a scribe.

Jeremiah served as a prophet from the days of Josiah all the way through the reigns of Judah's last four kings: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Jeremiah died in 570 B.C.

Though Jeremiah's birth date isn't exactly clear, he received God's call at a young age, probably as a teenager **Jeremiah 1:6**. He began proclaiming God's messages and continued to do so through trial and peril.

Jeremiah ministered during the last forty years of Judah's history, from the thirteenth year of Josiah (627 B.C.) to the destruction of Jerusalem and beyond (587 B.C.). He lists the kings during whose reigns he served (**Jer 1:1-3**), the last leaders of the once-prosperous kingdom of Judah. *Josiah* was a godly king; he died in 608 B.C. It was during his reign that the Law was found and the temple worship restored. *Jehoahaz* followed, but reigned only three months, so Jeremiah does not mention him. *Jehoiakim* was next (608-597 B.C.); he was a godless man and did his utmost to persecute Jeremiah. It was he who burned the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies in **Jer 36:1-32**. *Jehoiachin* was the next king, but he too reigned just three months before being taken captive to Babylon. The last king was *Zedekiah* (597-586 B.C.); he presided over the ruin of the nation and the capture of the city of Jerusalem. So, the Prophet Jeremiah lived to see his beloved nation go down into sin, war, and judgment; yet through it all he was faithful to preach God's Word throughout all the lands.

I. Jeremiah Was Appointed by God

The name "Jeremiah" means "whom Jehovah appoints." Apart from this appointment by God, certainly the prophet could not have continued to minister faithfully. He was called to the ministry when but "a child"

Jer 1:4-6; this was in the year 627 B.C.

- **God still calls people into His service**
- **Very often God calls men and women while in their youth.**

1 Timothy 4:12 *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

- **People God called: Noah, Abraham, Samuel, Ruth, David, Nehemiah, Esther, John The Baptist, The Apostles, Paul**

Many since the early church have been called for a specific time and a specific ministry.

II. Jeremiahs Message was Truthful

A. His message was needed

B. His message was: repent and turn from sin

If Judah did not repent, they would be taken into captivity

God gave opportunity after opportunity for repentance. Our God is a God of forgiveness. But when we refuse this forgiveness, a just God can only allow wickedness to continue for so long.

Jeremiah's task was not an easy one because he had to sound the death knell for his nation. The first part of his book records several of his sermons, given in Jerusalem, in which he denounces the people, priests, and princes for their sins, especially the sin of idolatry. In **Jer 25:1-38** he announces that the nation will go into captivity for seventy years, and then return to reestablish the nation.

- **We must preach the whole counsel of God**

III. The Response He Received

After several years of preaching, Jeremiah's family turned against him and even plotted to kill him (Jeremiah 1:8, 11:21-23, 12:6). Over the years, he was whipped and put in the stocks (Jeremiah 20:1-3), attacked by a mob (Jeremiah 26:1-9), threatened by the king (Jeremiah 36:26), and ridiculed (Jeremiah 28). Some of Zedekiah's princes had Jeremiah arrested, beaten, accused of treason, and thrown in jail (Jeremiah 37:1-15), from whence he was then thrown in a deep empty well (Jeremiah 38:1-6). He lived through the siege of Jerusalem along with the rest and was there as the people were taken away as captives.

God gave the wicked people such a long time to repent shows His love. "*I have loved you with an everlasting love,*" **Jeremiah 31:3**. He sent dozens of messengers proclaiming repentance, but these messengers were killed, abused, and mocked.

IV. The Burden He Bore

- **He was called the weeping prophet**

He knew that Judah's only hope was the Lord, but her sins were so great, the nation had lost the blessing of God.

One of the key words in the book is "backslide" (Jer_2:19; Jer_3:6, Jer_3:8, Jer_3:11-12, Jer_3:14, Jer_3:22; Jer_49:4). The nation had turned her back on the Lord and was following false prophets who led them to worship idols. Eleven times the word "repent" is used by the prophet, but the nation did not repent. We read of Jeremiah weeping, so burdened was he for his fallen nation.

Because he prophesied the captivity and told the kings to surrender to Babylon, Jeremiah was called a traitor and was persecuted by his own people. No OT prophet faced more opposition from false prophets than did Jeremiah

Sometimes our greatest critics are religious leaders

Jeremiah used many dramatic illustrations to get his messages across: fountains and cisterns (Jer_2:13); medicine (Jer_8:22); a "good-for-nothing" girdle or sash (Jer_13:1-11); a clay vessel (chaps. 18-19); yokes (Jer_27:1-22); drowning a book (Jer_51:59-64).

The people of Israel had become so hardened by the numbing effects of sin that they no longer believed God, nor did they fear Him. Jeremiah preached for 40 years, and not once did he see any real success in changing or softening the hearts and minds of his stubborn, idolatrous people. They were pearls being cast before swine.

V. The Hope He Gave

Jeremiah led a tumultuous life, and, most likely, death. However, his words live on thousands of years later, offering teaching and hope even today.

Jeremiah served God even when it meant giving up everything and facing persecution in a culture that had abandoned God.

Jeremiah was given the task of delivering an unpopular, convicting message to Judah, one that caused him great mental anguish, as well as making him despised in the eyes of his people. God says that His truth sounds like "foolishness" to those who are lost, but to believers it is the very words of life (1 Corinthians 1:18). He also says that the time will come when people will not tolerate the truth (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Jeremiah 31:33-34 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the*

LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah 33:14-17 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. 15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. 17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;*

V. The Legacy He Left

No matter how low we have fallen, we have not fallen from the love of God, and we are not beyond the reach of His plans.

The book of Jeremiah offers many valuable lessons. However, two of the most important lessons are those of repentance and God's faithfulness. His prophecy of 70 years captivity happened just as he prophesied.

CONCL – Our world has lost any sense of morality. The message to repent is just as pertinent today as it was then.