



Jeremiah 9

Jeremiah CHAPTER 9

Turn to Jeremiah 9 as we continue our study through the Bible. Chapter 9 is a continuation of the message of Jeremiah that was given at the gate of the temple as the Lord told him to go down to the gate and cry out to those people who were coming into the temple to not trust in the lying vanities or lying words saying, “the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.” That the fact that they were observing worship again was not sufficient for national salvation. Religious observances will not save, it takes true repentance and a true turning to God. And God was requiring that they thoroughly amend their ways and to be fair in their dealings with their neighbors. The society had broken down. The morals were almost nonexistent. Ethics were a thing that was unknown. There was lying, cheating, deception in all of these practices as we will find in the text tonight.

When a society breaks down morally, has a total moral breakdown where you have preying on everyone else, no one’s word can be trusted, there is lying, stealing and cheating; those kind of things will destroy any society. And it is hard to see a society that is turned over, become reprobate and is on its way out. It is being eroded within and the society is collapsing. These things bring natural inevitable results. We call them judgments but they are just the result of the total moral breakdown. It always leads to the total collapse of that society and that leads next to tyranny and dictatorship and you start all over again.

So the nation of Israel was in this final moral decay that was going to bring the inevitable consequences of falling to their enemies, becoming captives to the Babylonians. And Jeremiah’s first response to it was that of weeping. He is called the weeping prophet. You remember the question from the Sunday School, who was the weeping prophet and Jeremiah was the correct answer. In verse one we find out one of the reasons why he was known as the weeping prophet.

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! (9:1).

So he saw the consequences of their evil. The nation was being destroyed. It got him, he was really distressed over it. He was weeping over it. I am afraid that often times that our response and our reaction to the decadent society is that of disgust. I am prone to just say, “Go to it Lord, they got it coming.”

But Jeremiah is there just weeping over these conditions but his second response was a desire to escape. Now I find that I have this also. I can identify with Jeremiah here. He desired to escape from what was happening. When I look at what is happening in our society I often get a desire to escape. I would like to take my family and find some island in the South Pacific and just go out there and spend the rest of my life fishing and eating crabs and coconuts and bananas and a few papayas.

Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men (9:2);

In those days they had these little shelters out in the wilderness when you were traveling across country. No one really lived in them but you could go in and spend the night. It is sort of like the little lodges up in the Sierras where when you are backpacking through the Sierras they have these little places that you can go in and spend the night. So he wishes for one of these places out in the wilderness where he could escape.

that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men (9:2).

If you will read the works of Josephus as he describes the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians you will get a little insight to the culture of that day as Jeremiah describes it the things that were going on in the city even while they were under the siege of the Babylonians. The inhumanity of the Jew to the Jew. The gangs

that were ruling within the city. The murders and the stealing of food and all that was happening within the city. The city was practically destroyed by itself before the Babylonians ever came in.

Jeremiah is distraught over the complete moral breakdown. They were an assembly of treacherous people. They were all adulterers and that was probably both physically and from a spiritual standpoint. They had turned away from God and were worshipping their idols. They lied, they could not be trusted.

And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies (9:3):

This is an interesting picture of speech where you see the tongue is sort of bent like a bow and then the lies come out like arrows, shooting out. Everything that they said was a lie, you could not trust them. They were just shooting lies like arrows from a bent bow.

but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil (9:3),

They were going from bad to worse. We remember that Jesus said that in the last days that men will wax worse and worse upon the earth. And so was the case here. They were going from evil to evil.

and they know not me, saith the LORD (9:3).

They had left God out. They really did not know God. Now here were the people going into the temple to worship. And yet the prophet is standing there at the gate saying, "You don't really know God." Thus saith the LORD, "You don't know Me."

Deception is a terrible thing. Especially in religious matters and especially in things that pertain to God. So he is warning the people to be careful.

Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother (9:4):

You can't even trust your own brother. You have to watch out for every neighbor.

for every brother will utterly supplant (9:4),

Now that is what Jacob was called: the supplanter. He took advantage of his brother Esau. Jacob: one who takes advantage of another by tripping him. So he was called Jacob, the heelcatcher: one who takes the advantage or overcomes by tripping. So every one had become as a Jacob as they were taking advantage of their brothers.

and every neighbor will walk with slanders (9:4).

So a society that was totally broken down.

And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity (9:5).

You cannot really picture a scene quite as debased as what is being described for us by the prophet Jeremiah. The conditions of the nation that were bringing the destruction upon them.

Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD (9:6).

As we mentioned earlier, it is tragic that a person can be deceived about his relationship with God. James talks about a man whose religion is vain. He seems to be religious but he does not know how to bridle his tongue. This man's religion, he said, is vain. So they do not know God, they are deceived, they think they do but they don't really know God. They think that God is not concerned or that, worse, God condones or approves their lifestyle. That is the worst part of deception- when God, because He is so patient in dealing with us. One of the characteristics of God is that of longsuffering. And because He is longsuffering and patient and does not immediately strike people often mistake that longsuffering of God as weakness and they think that God is not able or worse they think that the longsuffering of God is actually the condoning of their

evil; it does not really matter to God what I do or how I live or that I live the way I live. And then the final heresy is that God actually approves of the thing that I am doing. Don't be deceived, you don't know God if you think that God approves of evil.

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them (9:7-10);

He will start weeping and lamenting for the land itself, the mountains, the wilderness, they have been overrun by the enemy. The mountains, the trees, are being destroyed. The fields are being ripped up and none can pass through them.

neither can men hear the voice of the cattle (9:10);

The cattle has been stolen by the enemy.

both fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone. And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant (9:10-11).

Now, Jeremiah the prophet of God is weeping over the desolation that must follow the collapse of the society. "I wish my head were water," he said, "and my eyes like fountains of tears." That he might weep day and night. You remember when Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem that he stopped there on the Mt. of Olives and he began to weep over the city. And he said, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if you had only known the things that belonged to your peace on this thy day, but they are hid from your eyes. And now the day is going to come when they are going to encircle the city. They are going to hedge it in. Your little children are going to be slain in the streets." And he tells of the destruction that is going to come upon Jerusalem. And he weeps over it.

Here is a city that has rejected God. Here are a people that are going to crucify him. Here are a people who have lost touch with God. There is so much politics within their religious system that they have lost touch with God completely. The whole religious system was corrupted even as it was in Jeremiah's day as he speaks about the priests and the prophets who pervert the judgment. They are given over completely to covetousness, the prophet, even the priest, everyone deals falsely. So the whole system was corrupted, on in through the religious system and yet Jesus wept because the destruction that must follow that will inevitable follow such a collapse within a society.

So he describes that destruction that was going to come upon Israel and upon the city of Jerusalem.

Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? (9:12).

Who is the wise man? Can't you see where we are headed? Can't you see what these actions are going to bring to this society? We look at today and we see these things in our society. We see the breakdown of our judicial system. We see the breakdown of our society itself of the educational system, we see how in our educational system children are being led into the New Age Movement, taught to contact their spirit guides, taught techniques of relaxation and meditation. And we see this whole breakdown and the prophet is calling, "isn't there anyone wise enough to see what is going on, to see what is happening? Isn't there someone who will speak for the LORD, to warn of the consequences of these kinds of things?"

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein (9:13);

So here is the reason. Desolation and destruction is coming because they had forsaken the Law of the LORD. Now the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Again, if you have a problem with the Law of God then I don't want you as my neighbor. I have no problem with the Law of God. I consent to the Law of God that it is good. That is what Paul said. I look at the Law and I consent that the Law is good. "Thou shalt not kill." I have no problem with that. I think that we should deal with murder in a very stern way. "Thou shalt not steal." I get angry when someone steals something from me. I wish they would get caught. And I wish I was the one that caught them. I have no problem with the Law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not bear false witness." I have no problem with that. But these people had forsaken the Law of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." I have no problem with that. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." I have no problem. But these people had forsaken the Law of God and they walked after their own ways.

But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them (9:14).

So the worship of Baal had become ingrained in the society. Parent teaching children. The Bible tells that in the days of Noah that was the problem. Everybody was walking after the imaginations of their own hearts. They were seeking to fulfill their own fantasies.

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink (9:15).

Wormwood it is a questionable translation of wormwood. Wormwood is very bitter but there is a nutritional value to it. There is another preferred translation that is a herb that is both noxious and bitter. And thus you will feed them with a noxious bitter herb and give them the water of gall. Again the noxious poisonous hemlock to drink.

I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them (9:16).

God is declaring the judgment that is going to come upon this people because they have not walked in His law, they won't listen to His voice, they walk after the imagination of their own hearts and after the false gods and thus they are going to go into captivity and even in captivity they will not have peace, a sword will be sent after them until they have been consumed.

And so we look at history and we see that the children of Israel did go into captivity. The men of Judah were taken captive by the Babylonians and we see how they were persecuted and mistreated and even to the present day; persecuted and mistreated throughout the world.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women (9:17),

You remember that we told you that in those days from a cultural standpoint the greater the wailing at the death of a relative it showed the greater respect and love that you had for them. So if a relative died, you wanted every one in the neighborhood to know how much you loved them so you would hire professional mourners, women who could really wail. And you would pay them to come and wail. And throughout the whole neighborhood you could hear these women wailing so all of the neighbors would know that you really honored and were missing your relative that had died. They would know how much you loved them.

Here he is telling them to call for the mourning women. And that is what they were known as, these were the professional mourners, those women who were particularly adept at wailing.

that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come: And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us (9:17-18),

The wailing for the people, for the city.

that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out (9:18–19).

With the destruction that will be coming, the utter destruction; the villages destroyed, Jerusalem destroyed and left in heaps. The wailing, the mourning.

Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and everyone her neighbor lamentation. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets (9:20–21).

The place is going to be left desolate. It is going to be like a ghost city.

Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvest man, and none shall gather them (9:22).

Utter and complete desolation and destruction.

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches (9:23):

The wise are going to be cut off. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. And the wise of the land are going to be desolate. So all of your wisdom isn't going to get you anything. No matter how strong you are you are not strong enough to overcome the enemy. Don't go around boasting in your strength. And your riches: they are going to be carted off by the Babylonians. So don't let the rich boast in his riches. So if you are going to glory, here is the thing to glory in; that you know and you understand God. That is the only thing that is going to keep you in the days to come. It is going to be tough, it is going to get worse. Things are rapidly going down, the prophet is saying. They are going to destroy and utterly devastate this place and wisdom will not preserve you, strength won't preserve you and riches won't preserve you. And if you are trusting in your wisdom you are trusting in a false hope. And if you are trusting in your strength it is not going to prevail. If you are trusting in your riches they are going to be ripped off. You better put your trust in the Lord.

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD (9:24).

Now that is an interesting characteristic to speak about in the midst of this desolation. And God in the midst of the desolation declares himself as the God who exercises lovingkindness. You say, "Well, it doesn't seem to be anything loving or kind in that kind of destruction that he is describing." In order for justice to be fulfilled the unjust must be judged. It is his lovingkindness towards the innocent, toward his children, that he brings the wicked into judgment. But the lovingkindness is attached to his judgment and to his righteousness. And he exercises these things in the earth. Lovingkindness toward his children.

Oh the depth and the riches of the love of God towards us. How tender He is with His children. How patient, how kind, that a person who takes a stand against God is obdurate in his stance against God, he will discover that He is a God of judgment and of righteousness. And God delights in these things.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised (9:25);

A day of judgment that is coming upon all. Circumcision was a mark of the covenant that God made with Abraham. God made several covenants with man and for each covenant God gave a sign. God made a covenant with Noah that He would not destroy the earth again with a flood. What was the sign of that

covenant? Rainbow. God then made a covenant with Abraham that his seed would be a blessing to the whole earth and whoever would curse Abraham would be cursed of God, whoever would bless him would be blessed of God. And God gave him the sign of the covenant which was circumcision. It indicated that they were to be a people who lived and walked after the Spirit rather than after the flesh, the cutting off of the flesh, and thus the symbolizing of spiritual people not living after the flesh.

God made a covenant with Moses. He gave the people the Law. And God said, "If you keep this Law, you will be My people and I will be your God and I will bring you into the land and I will bless you." And He tells all of the things that He would do for them in that covenant. And so God made a covenant with the nation of Israel. The sign of the covenant was the Sabbath day. That was to be the sign of God's covenant with Israel: perpetual throughout all their generations, they were to keep the Sabbath day unto the LORD.

God has made a new covenant with us. Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for the remission of sins." So the sign of the new covenant is communion. Communion service becomes the sign of God's covenant with His church. We are His church. He is our Lord. The sign of that covenant is communion.

The covenant people who were circumcised, the seed of Abraham, the judgment was going to come upon them as well as those who were uncircumcised. A Day of Judgment is coming upon the earth, the whole world is going to be judged by God.

Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart (9:26).

Though they had gone through the physical ritual, yet it did not take place in their heart. So Paul picks this up in Romans 2 as he is talking about the whole world guilty before God and he speaks of the uncircumcision of their heart. So with any ritual; a ritual is only a ritual and has no validity unless it expresses a true experience of your heart. Now what circumcision was to the Jew, the sign of the cutting off of the flesh life to live after the spirit water baptism becomes to the believer. Water baptism is a symbol of the burial of the old life and the old nature. As many of you as were baptized were buried with Christ in the water of baptism. Therefore, if you are baptized but you are still living after the flesh than the baptism is meaningless because it is in the heart that you have to live after the Spirit and deny the life of the flesh and the dominance of the flesh in your life. And thus, the ritual doesn't substitute for the reality. And many people have made that mistake because they have gone through certain spiritual rituals. They sort of think, well I was baptized. Well, was it a physical baptism or that of the heart.

As Peter talks about baptism he said, "Wherefore baptism doth also save, but not the washing away of the filth of the flesh." Not the outward dunking but the clear conscious before God- the heart, the work that was wrought within my heart, reckoning my old man to be dead, crucified with Christ, now buried. This new life in the Spirit that I am to live.

Now Paul's argument to the Romans was this: if the circumcision of the Jew was only a physical experience and not of the heart, than the circumcision was counted as uncircumcision and he is using Jeremiah here as the basis for this. God says that the judgment is going to come on the circumcision and the uncircumcision alike because they are uncircumcised, Judah is uncircumcised in their heart. And thus it was counted as uncircumcision in the time of judgment.

And so Paul reverses that in his argument. He says: therefore a Gentile who has not been physically circumcised but in his heart is living after the Spirit and is walking after God than surely his uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision because it is an issue of the heart. And so with baptism: it is an issue of the heart. And it does not matter how many times you may have been dunked and how you were dunked, forwards, backwards, three times, sprinkled or whatever. If it hasn't happened in your heart it is meaningless. God is looking for the change of your heart and the living after the Spirit in your heart, that

longing in your heart, to live and to walk after the Spirit; a life of purity and holiness before God the longings of your heart is what God is reading not the outward observances of your life.

Judah is destined to be destroyed. The seeds of destruction have been planted and are now ready to bear fruit. And Jeremiah sadly watches, weeps as he sees the things that are going on that will provoke the collapse of that society. Now the interesting thing to me is that even though the society was down and almost out God did not stop talking to them. God still had His prophet warning them. The patience of God, His stubborn love. He just won't let you go easily. It is tough, real tough to go to hell. You have to really work at it. You have to fight God every step of the way. He will put every kind of road block in your path. But if you are tough and stubborn and stupid you can make it. But then when you are there you can't say that God sent you there, He did everything to keep you from going there. Right up to the end God is faithful. Oh the faithfulness of God! The lovingkindness of God! The goodness of God to us!

Father, as we look at the pictures that are given to us here in Jeremiah and we see Your prophet so disturbed over the nation, the things that were happening; as he knew that a society that had decayed to the extent of Judah would surely collapse and fall. So Lord, our hearts are concerned as we see what is happening in our society, as we see the minds of our children being polluted by the perverted music of this day and by the false images being portrayed in the movies and the videos and how their whole value system is being destroyed, undermined, and how evil is looked upon as good and good is looked upon as evil. Lord our hearts weep for our children and for our grandchildren, for the world that they are growing up in, so corrupted by sin. And Lord we pray that You would put a hedge around Your people, around Your church, around our hearts and Lord, that we might determine in our hearts to live for Jesus Christ even in this dark and perverted age. And may our lives shine like a light in this darkness. May we stand against the forces of evil that are so entrenched today within our society. Gird us Lord, with the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, the breastplate of righteousness, our feet, Lord, may they be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace that we might carry Your message of peace and love to a world that is about ready to destroy itself. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.