



Jeremiah 13

Jeremiah CHAPTER 13

Jesus often used parables in teaching to illustrate a point with a story. This is an excellent way of teaching. Telling a story that gets the point across. In the Old Testament the prophets used parables but they also used actual experiences to illustrate truth to get people's attention. They caused the people to wonder what he is doing, what is going on? Then they make their point. In chapter 13 is one of these cases where the LORD is directing Jeremiah to rather odd kind of behavior. Through it all God is going to speak His message to the nation. When the point comes across it will be very powerful.

Thus saith the LORD unto me,

This is interesting, I bring it up now and I want you to observe how many times Jeremiah says, "Thus saith the LORD unto me." And how the LORD was speaking to Jeremiah. Verse 9, "Thus saith the LORD." In verse 15, "Hear ye, give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken." And all the way through Jeremiah is talking about the word of the LORD that came to me. Verse 3, "And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying," Verse 5, "So I went, and hit it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me."

How do you suppose the LORD spoke to Jeremiah? Do you suppose that God spoke audibly to him? Just how did God speak to him? It seems that it was very clear, thus saith the LORD unto me. It seems like it was very clear. I am going to let you ponder that for a few chapters and then we will get some insight from Jeremiah himself just how the LORD spoke to him.

Thus saith the LORD unto me, God and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

They wore robes in those days. They always wore a sash as their outer garments around the robe. They used it to tie the robe. It bound the robe tight around them because the robes were rather loose and flowing. They would use this sash to bind the robe close to them. When they were going to go to work or need to run then they would gird up their loins. And that is a phrase, gird up your loins. What in the world are you talking about? But the robes were long and I don't know if you girls have ever tried to run in a long dress. But I can imagine it could be quite restrictive. I can see the difficulty with trying to do so. So what they would do was pull the robe up to knee length and take the sash and tie it so that it would stay at knee length and work actively in the fields or run or whatever. They would gird up their loins or the robe around them with this sash and they would pull it up to knee length so they could get busy. So wherever the LORD says, "Gird up your loins." He is saying to get ready to go to work. Get ready for some activity. So whenever you read that strange phrase in the Bible you know that it is instructing you to get ready for some activity.

This sash was tied around the robe to keep the robe bound tightly to the body. He went out and bought this linen girdle. Now linen of course was what the priest was to wear. The priests' robes were to be of linen because it was a materiel that did not cause you to perspire and God did not want any perspiration in the service of God. I think that we need to remember that. He did not want the priest to perspire when they were serving God. He wanted inspiration not perspiration. And I see some of these ministers perspiring and all with their handkerchiefs and all and you wonder about the inspiration. If you do not have inspiration you need perspiration to get the message across.

Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." When people start complaining about the heavy burden that the LORD put on them, the heavy yoke that they feel, you have to know that it is not the Lord's. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I believe that we can take on ourselves things that the Lord is not putting on us. I think that friends or even ministers can put on us burdens that the Lord is not putting on us. Later on in the book of Jeremiah the LORD is going to speak to Jeremiah about those prophets that were going around saying, "The burden of the LORD, the burden of the LORD," and the LORD said, 'I did not put any burden on them. I am sick of that phrase. The burden of the LORD. I don't want you to use it Jeremiah because I am so tired of hearing that phrase, people going around saying, 'the burden of the LORD.'"

We hear that today. People saying, "Oh the heavy burden God laid on me, such a heavy burden. I don't know if I am going to be able....." Oh, come on. "My yoke is easy, My burden is light." No perspiration. As we used to say, "No sweat, man." And that is what the LORD saying to you. Just serve the LORD with gladness. It is a joy and a blessing to do the work and the will of God. He gives the strength and the ability for all that He requires of us.

So the linen was a priestly garment and he was not to wash it. So he got the girdle or this sash according to the word of the LORD and he put it on his loins. Now the idea was to wear it in Jerusalem until the people came accustom to seeing it. It probably was very colorful and usually they were because they used them to accent the colors in the sash to accent everything. Like women wear scarves to accent colors they wore these sashes to accent. Guys used to wear suspenders for accents, colorful suspenders or socks. When I was young it was the socks. Stunning colors of socks to draw attention.

But this was to draw attention to the sash that he was wearing until everybody noticed it. But they noticed that it was getting dirtier all the time. He was not washing it. So this sash was becoming progressively dirty.

So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins. And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.

Some have pointed out that the river Euphrates there in Babylon is just pretty sandy banks and is not that rocky. Somewhere there in the Euphrates, the upper Euphrates does have more rock and some have suggested that is where he went. But where he went, what difference does it make? It is immaterial to the story. You start reading commentaries and you get all kinds of information that really don't do you any good and you learn more than you ever want to know about something. What is the message, that is the thing. What's it going to say?

So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me. And it came to pass after many days,

A period of time. It seems that Jeremiah was absent from Jerusalem for a period of time. In fact over a year.

And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

And of course, you can imagine after being buried there in the rock. The bugs eating it, the colors

all running, and the material rotting by now. And so it was really profitable for nothing, it was marred.

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

He probably came back to Jerusalem with this old rotted sash, marred, ugly. And he began to wear it again. As he wore it throughout the streets and said, "Yuck, where did he get that thing, that rotted old sash?" And so he was to preach to the people. It came a very powerful illustrated message.

After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

Once beautiful and glorious but now it is to be marred.

This evil people,

And so God's indictment against them.

which refuse to hear my words,

They had closed their ears to God. They would not listen. How many times over and over Jesus said, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." These people had closed their ears to the voice of God. They were not interested in hearing the word of God. They refused to hear my words, God said. In fact, they had said to Jeremiah, "Don't speak to us anymore in the name of the LORD for why should die at our hands." In other words, if you say another thing, the LORD saith, we are going to kill you. We don't want to hear it. So they refuse, the LORD said, to hear My words.

which walk in the imagination of their heart,

In every place in the Bible where it speaks about the imagination of man's heart it is always in an evil sense. It is true that man can have imaginations that are not evil but from a Biblical sense it is that fantasizing of evil that is often in a man's heart. So at the time of Noah God saw that the wickedness of men was great on the earth for everyone was walking after the imagination of their wicked hearts. Everyone was doing that which was right in his own sight. From a Biblical standpoint whenever you read of it, it is evil.

Jeremiah speaks of it eight different times where you find that imaginations and all in Jeremiah more than any place in the Bible. It is used fourteen times in all. Jeremiah has the real bulk of them. Eight of the fourteen come from Jeremiah as he speaks of the imagination of the heart. This is the third time in the book of Jeremiah that we have come across it so far. They have evil hearts and thus evil imaginations.

God is interested in your thought process. Now God knows the thoughts and the intents of your heart. The Bible says that everything is naked and open before Him with whom we have to deal. And so God knows your thought process. He knows the secret of your heart. He knows the secret motivation of the things that you do. We will be judged according to those secret motivations more than what we did. Sometimes what a person does looks very honorable and very magnanimous but if you could read their hearts you find that the motive behind it was actually evil and not good. And with Ezekiel, the next prophet that we will be studying, God let him go into the minds of man to see what they were thinking even as God can go into your mind and knows your thoughts. So they are walking after the imaginations of their hearts.

and walk after other gods,

Again, when a man loses his conscious of God he does not lose his need for God and thus he will take and create substitute gods as they did walking after these other gods.

to serve them, and to worship them,

Whatever it is that you are serving, whatever it is that you are worshipping, that is the god in your life. For a man serves and worships his god. Whatever it is that dominates your thought process, that drive that gets you out in the morning, gets you going, your god. So they would not listen to God. They were walking after other gods, serving them and worshipping them and then

shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

The nation is going to be destroyed. It is going to be carried away to the Euphrates, to the other shores of the Euphrates, to Babylon. And there it is going to disintegrate and become good for nothing.

For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me that whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD;

Once the whole nation had been bound up in God. They were cleaving to the LORD. There was that beautiful relationship between these people and God. Just like a sash is bound tight around you, it is close to you, it is cleaving to you so this nation once was close to God, bound up in the things of God.

that they might be unto me for a people,

They were the people of God. They were known as the people of God. They were known as the people who were governed by God. The name itself. And for a name, the name Israel, governed or ruled by God and thus was the nation. And they were for a praise and for a glory.

Paul uses the phrase in Ephesians 1 over and over again: to the praise of the glory of His grace. A phrase that means that God has demonstrated His grace on us that He might receive the glory from our praise to Him for that recognition of the grace. Now the truest praise is that praise that rises spontaneously from our hearts to God as we have received from God such glorious blessings that we know that we are totally undeserving of. And God is so good and He has blessed us and we feel maybe sometimes so horrible because we have failed and we are disappointed with ourselves. And God chooses at that time just as encouragement just to bless us. And He pours out this great blessing, "Oh, Lord, you are too much, I can't believe this." When I am feeling so miserable and look at this, Lord you are too much, I can't handle this. Just that praise that rises spontaneously from our hearts in the recognition of God's grace. That brings God glory.

As a child of God, God desires to just glory in you. Just like we glory in our children and in our grandchildren. God wants to just glory in you and to receive glory and praise from you. The glory that comes from your praise. And Israel was once that. They were God's people. They were named: governed by God. And they were associated in the minds of the nations as the people of Jehovah or Yahweh. And they were a praise unto God and a glory unto God. But they would not listen, the whole problem, they would not listen.

Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

He said that every bottle is going to be filled with wine. They said, “Don’t we certainly know that every jar is going to be filled with wine?” But he then said that it is the wine of the wrath of God’s judgment against the people. He was talking about a different type of wine. The wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God that is going to come upon the nation. And the father standing by their sons in battle will fall together as well as the kings that are sitting upon David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness as they are dashed one against the other even as the father and the sons together. There will be no pity, nor sparing, nor mercy but they are to be destroyed. They will not hear God. God said that He will not hear them when they call.

Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

God’s word. He has spoken. And then the command.

Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

Even though they had gone so far there was still God holding out His hand. There is a Scripture that says His arm is stretched out still. And God continued to hold out His hand, calling on them to hear, calling on them to turn, calling on them to repent. Get right with God. Become what God wants you to be. God wanted you to be for His glory. So give glory to God before this darkness just envelopes the whole land. Before you are engulfed in this darkness, before it is too late and this darkness just overcomes and overwhelms.

But if ye will not hear it,

The prophet is saying, hear and give ear and don’t be proud for God has spoken to you.

my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD’S flock is carried away captive.

You heard that Jeremiah was the weeping prophet. There used to be in the Bible quizzes: Who was the weeping prophet? So from the time I was in Sunday School I knew the answer was Jeremiah, known as the weeping prophet. The reason why is that he is constantly referring to his tears. And here is another reference. If you will not hear God than my soul is going to weep for you in the secret places because of your pride and my eye will weep sore and run down with tears because the LORD’S flock is carried away captive. Jeremiah, weeping over the people. Weeping over their blindness, weeping over their spiritual dullness, weeping over really the tragedy that is going to befall them because they will not hear.

We read in the New Testament that Jesus when he was there on the Mt. of Olives looking at the city of Jerusalem, cried. He said, “Oh, Jerusalem Jerusalem, you have stoned the prophets and all that God has sent unto you.” If you only knew the things that God would do for you but they are hid from your eyes. The day is going to come when the city is going to be besieged. It is going to be destroyed, your little children are going to be dashed in the street. And he speaks of the terrible desolation and he was crying and weeping because of the tragedies that were going to befall them because of their blindness.

Here the prophet is weeping over the tragedy that is going to befall them because of their deafness. They would not hear the word of God and thus I am going to weep. My eyes will run down with tears

because you are going to go into captivity. God's flock is going to be carried off captive. Jesus weeping because of their blindness, you can't see, you don't know, they are ignorant. The things that belong to your peace they are hid from your eyes and he wept as he saw what was going to befall them because of their blindness, their deafness, their missed opportunities.

I wonder if Jesus is not weeping today as he looks at this world with its blindness, with its deafness. And knowing the Great Tribulation that is going to come, this holocaust of such magnitude and is described in Revelation 6-18. I wonder if the Lord is not weeping now as he sees the calamities that is going to befall mankind because they are blind to the things of God. They will not listen to the voice of God today.

Say unto the king and to the queen,

It is thought that this prophecy came shortly after the death of Josiah when his son, Jehoiakim began to rule in his stead and he reigned for eleven years and then he perished and his son Jehoiachin. And they think that it is during the reign of Jehoiachin that the prophecy came. Jehoiachin reigned only three months according to Chronicles he was only eight years old. So the queen mother really was ruling probably through this little boy. Her name was Nehushta. She was really probably the power behind the throne and so she is addressed also.

Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.

Humble yourself before God because this whole things is going to go to pieces.

The cities of the South (the Negev) shall be shut up, and none shall open them:

They are going to be destroyed. There will be no one to defend them.

Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

The land is going to be desolate. Judah is going to be carried away, the whole of the nation.

Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north (Babylon): where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

So here they are in their pride and arrogance going on in their rebellion against God and the LORD is calling for them to humble themselves because this whole system that they were relying in was going to crumble. This beautiful flock, the flock of God was going to be carried away captive. They are coming from the north.

And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.

They would be carried away captive. We say carried away and you think they are putting them in chariots. But they would be led away captive, that would be more accurate. And here they would be barefooted. Now the prophet got after the young girls in Jerusalem because they minced around with little bells on their feet and it was one of the fad things of those days. There was just a lot of haughtiness and proudness. The LORD says, "You are going to be walking away from here barefooted."

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are

accustomed to do evil.

That person that is accustomed to doing evil cannot change anymore than an Ethiopian can change the color of his skin or the leopard can change his spots. What you are, you are. There are a lot of people that are trying to change their lives. There are a lot of programs that are designed. I forget, what is it, 3 billion dollars a year that are spent on diet programs in the United States. Programs to help you. Programs to help you quit smoking. Programs to help you quit drinking. Programs to get you off of drugs. There are all kinds of programs and people are spending billions of dollars. But what you are by nature, you are. A person that is evil cannot do good. There is only one thing that can change you. That is the changing power of Jesus Christ. It takes being born again. You have to come to that place where you reckon that old life to be dead. That evil life of the flesh is dead, buried. A new life now in Christ Jesus.

I love Raul's testimony of how after he accepted the Lord, the Lord spoke to him and told him to go back to Baldwin Park High School where he had been kicked out of school and to just go back to that school and sit there during the lunch hour and read his Bible. Everybody in the valley almost knew Raul. They knew how mean he was. A viscous mean fighter. He had a reputation, so that when he came on the campus the school principle figured that there was a rumble going on. If Raul is coming there must be a big fight that is going to take place.

So he called the Police Department and the riot police came out. They knew Raul and had dealt with Raul in fights in the past and so when the officer came up he said, "Okay Raul, what is going on, why are you here." And he started to rough him up a little. He said, "Hey man, that Raul that you knew is dead. He does not exist anymore, he is dead. I am a new Raul. You don't know me, I am a new Raul. That old Raul died." Of course the cop did not know what he was talking about. But then Raul said, "This school has got all kinds of problems. Kids are on drugs. And the Lord spoke to me to come here to help these kids." So they explained the whole thing to the principle and he said, "Well, we need help so let him come." So Raul just sat there reading his Bible as the kids would pour coke on him and toss their sandwiches on him. He would just sit there and smile and say, "Hey man, there was a day I would kill you for that but because of Jesus I love you man." And they could not figure him out.

One day the Lord said, "Stand up on the table, Raul, and preach to those kids about me." So Raul stood up on the table and began to preach to them. He gave an invitation and said, "All you kids that would like to receive Jesus Christ, just step forward and stand in front of me." And there in the High School campus, it is a tough place, but four hundred kids stepped forward to receive Jesus Christ.

But the old Raul was dead, and now a new Raul. And a leopard can't change his spots and an Ethiopian can't change his skin. An evil man cannot do good except there be that change by the Spirit of God. If any man is in Christ he is a new creation and the old things are passed away and everything becomes new. So God tells of the worthlessness of self reformation. You cannot change your heart. Only the Spirit of God can change your heart.

Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

Now, whenever that wind comes from the wilderness it is like our Santa Ana's. It really comes howling out of the desert. It is those hot shorachos, a hot desert wind, just like our Santa Ana's. It is very similar. You know how that when that Santa Ana begins to blow everything begins to move: leaves, tumbleweeds and dirt. It just really blows away the stubble. It all depends on where you live. The Santa Ana winds can really make your yard just really clean. Oh, but what it does to your neighbors across the street. Years ago we lived in Huntington Beach and the street that came in teed of there and we lived right there and the house was facing east. Those Santa Ana's would come right up that street and the junk from

blocks would end up in our yard. You want to watch when you buy a place. Figure out what is going to happen when the winds blow.

So the Lord said, “You are going to be as stubble that just gets blown away by the winds of the desert.” Once powerful, once glorious nation. A nation that was once cleaving unto God and now to just be blown away, scattered.

This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

Forgetting God and putting your trust in lies.

Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

They will be pulled up over your head that your shame may appear. Actually the enemy armies would strip the people of their clothing and make them walk naked just for their shame. It was a horrible. It was a dehumanizing thing. But they did not have the Geneva rules of war and things in those days. It was just cruel. It was designed to be a very integrating kind of a thing.

I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings,

The neighings is that crying out after evil. The idea is that of; if there is a dog that is in heat in the neighborhood, how your dog in the yard will begin to howl and gets the whiff and that desire for those promiscuous things.

I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations of the hills in the fields.

They had made these altars unto these gods and goddesses and they worshipped them in these extremely lewd and lascivious sexual rituals.

Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean?

Here again, God is saying, “Won’t you be clean as you once were. The girdle is rotten but won’t you be clean. And really that is the question that God is asking still today for those who are in sin, those who’s life have been marred by sin. Like the girdle, marred, good for nothing. God said, “Don’t you want to be clean.” Even now the Lord will cleanse and wash. “Come now, let us reason together,” saith the LORD, “though your sins be as scarlet, you can be as white as snow. Though they be red as crimson you can be white as wool. Won’t you be clean? Would not you love to be clean? Wouldn’t you love to be washed from all of the filth of the past?”

Oh what a glorious offer that God has made unto man. The washing away and the cleansing of all of the filth of the past life. Making you clean again, making you pure again. Won’t you be clean? The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses the man from all sin. Won’t you be clean? Tragically they would not hear. Tragically they were carried or taken away in shame, led away to Babylon. Because they would not listen.

Father, give us ears to hear what the Spirit would say to us tonight. Lord, there are those here who You are speaking to. May they hear Your voice and may they respond. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Tonight we encourage you, if the Lord has been speaking to your heart about your own relationship with Him, maybe you once knew what it was to be close to God like the girdle that was tied tight around the robe. You once knew what it was like to be close to God but other interests, other things have sort of drawn you away. In Hebrews we are told to take the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at anytime we should drift away from them. Some of you have drifted away from that relationship that you once had. You have become spotted again by the world and the things of the world and God is speaking to your heart tonight. "Wouldn't you like to be freed of all that junk?" And He is offering to you tonight that wonderful washing and cleansing by the work of the Holy Spirit. He is offering to change you. You cannot change yourself. It is impossible for the evil person to do good except by a new birth, a new life in Jesus. That is what He is offering to you. This week will go a lot better if you just give God a chance to work in your life.

May the Lord be with you now and watch over you and give you a good week. And may you be close to God. May you be to the praise of the glory of His grace as you live for Him and as you walk for Him. May He receive glory and praise from your obedience. God bless you and keep you in His love in Jesus' name.