

Still not Saved

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Date: 03 November 2019

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn this time to the book of the prophet Jeremiah and chapter 8. Jeremiah chapter 8. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 771.
- Jeremiah chapter 8, and we'll read at verse 18. Jeremiah chapter 8 at verse 18.
- My joy is gone. Grief is upon me. This is Jeremiah speaking. My heart is sick within me. Behold the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land.
- Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her king not in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?
- The harvest is past. The summer has ended. And we are not saved. For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded. I mourn and dismay has taken hold on me.
- [1 : 0 9] Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored? But particularly the words of verse 20.
- The harvest is past. The summer has ended. And we are not saved. The harvest is past. The summer is ended.
- And we are not saved. My unconverted friend sitting here this evening.
- I want to say to you from the outset. Time is passing you by. Time is passing you by. We are now into the month of November.
- The year is almost gone. There are only a few weeks left of 2019. And your Bible, if you were reading it with me, your Bible is telling you this evening that the harvest has passed.
- [2 : 1 5] The summer has ended. And yet, you are not saved. And you know, that's what Moses reminded you in Psalm 90. Moses reminded you that your life, your life is just like a tale that is told.
- Three score and ten years do sum up. Our days and years we see. Or if by reason of more strength, some four score they be. It's not long, says Moses.
- Your life isn't long. Seventy or eighty years. That's why Moses prayed, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
- My friend, time is passing you by. And David, David also reminded you of that fact. In Psalm 103. When he said that your days are like the grass growing in the field.
- And it's there for a while. But then the harvest comes. And you just disappear. For over it the wind doth pass. And it away is gone.
- [3 : 1 7] And of the place where once it was, it shall no more be known. My friend, time is passing you by. And you're still not saved.
- Still not saved. And Jeremiah, not only Moses, not only David, but also Jeremiah is reminding you this evening that another harvest has passed.
- Another summer has ended. Another year is reaching its conclusion. And yet, and yet you're still not saved. And it's because the harvest is over.

And, you know, it was actually the other day at Presbytery. The Presbytery appointed the Harvest Thanksgiving Day. This might be helpful for the man who writes the intimations. Thursday the 28th of November is to be Harvest Thanksgiving.

And it's good to have a Harvest Thanksgiving service. To thank the Lord for all his gifts to us as communities and as congregations. But, you know, every year when it comes round to harvest Thanksgiving, I'm always brought back to the preaching of this young man, Jeremiah.

[4 : 30] And I'm reminded that although there's so much to be thankful for, I'm reminded of this very fact, of what he says here in verse 20. The harvest is over.

The summer has passed. And yet, you are not saved. And Jeremiah, you know, he said these words because the people he preached to, week by week, year after year, they had wasted all their opportunities to repent and seek the Lord with their heart.

Jeremiah had continually preached that the Israelites would turn from their sin and turn back to the Lord, but they wasted their opportunities. And sometimes looking at some of you whom I know quite well, I look at you and I worry that you may be like that too.

Because you hear about the reality of hell. You hear the call to come to Christ. You hear the call to repent of your sins and be converted. You hear sermons week by week, year by year.

Men pleading with your soul to come to Christ. And you know what you need to do. You know that you need to bow your knee before King Jesus. And yet another harvest has passed.

[5 : 42] Another summer has ended. Another year is reaching its conclusion. And tonight it can be said of you, you're still not saved.

And I wonder tonight, will this opportunity just become another wasted opportunity? Or will tonight be the night that you commit your life to Jesus Christ?

There are three things I just want us to consider from this passage this evening. Three headings. A worrying prospect, a weeping prophet, and a wonderful provision.

A worrying prospect, a weeping prophet, and a wonderful provision. First of all, a worrying prospect. Look at verse 20.

I want these words etched in your mind this evening. The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we are not saved. You know, if there was ever a dark day in the life of Israel, and the people of Israel, this was it.

[6 : 50] Because as you know, the Lord's people, the Israelites, they were to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, with all their strength. But the history of the Israelites was a history of disobedience.

Because the Israelites, they repeatedly disobeyed the Lord. They did what was right in their own eyes. And as we read in chapter 1, they worshipped other gods. They bowed down to idols.

And so what did the Lord do? The Lord raised up prophets. The Lord raised up prophets to remind the Israelites that if they refused to repent, and turn from their sin, that the Lord would bring judgment upon them.

And the prophets, their role was to proclaim God's truth. Their role was to herald God's covenant. Their role was to challenge anyone who worshipped a false god or bowed down to idols.

The prophets were to call the people to realize the error of their ways, and to repent, and turn to the Lord, and seek Him with all their heart. But the sad reality of the Israelites was that the Lord sent prophet after prophet after prophet.

- [7 : 59] And it didn't matter how many prophets proclaimed God's message, and how many opportunities the people were given to repent. They weren't listening.
- They were ignoring all the warnings of God's judgment. They were putting it to the back of their minds. They were just carrying on with life in the way that they wanted to. Yes, they heard what the prophet had to say when he spoke.
- But after that, it made no difference to them. They thought that they would be okay in the end. They thought that they had plenty of time. They thought that there'd be more opportunities for them.
- Just like you, my friend. Just like you. The Lord has sent many preachers to you over the years. And I'm sure that they've called and challenged you as to where you stand with Jesus Christ.
- They've reminded you again and again and again that judgment is coming. There will be a day when you have to give an account. But before then, you need to repent and turn from your sin and turn to Christ.
- [9 : 09] But it seems that up until now, you refuse to listen. You ignore what's said. You willingly let your opportunities to be saved pass you by.
- Despite everything you've heard, you're still going headlong towards a lost eternity in hell. My friend, why are you wasting your life chasing the things that will not last?
- Why are you holding on to the things that will only be taken from you? Why are you clinging to the things that will never satisfy? Because you know what's so sad is that the harvest is past.
- The summer it has ended. And you are still not saved. Still not saved. And you know, Jeremiah, he uses this agricultural illustration and he uses it in order to emphasize your window of opportunity.
- Because as you know, the summer, it's a busy time for a crofter. Because during the warmer weather, during the summer months, during the longer days, the crofter makes use of that window of opportunity to plant and to sow and to fertilize the ground.
- [10 : 33] The summer is the window of opportunity to be busy preparing the harvest. Because when the summer is over and the weather cools and the days become shorter, that's when the harvest comes.
- And when the harvest comes, it's another opportunity for cutting and gathering and storing and selling. The harvest is another busy season of opportunity in preparation for the coming winter.
- And you know, what we have to see here is that the seasons of summer and harvest, they're all about preparing for the winter. The seasons of summer and harvest are all about preparing for the winter.
- And was it not Solomon who said, to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die.
- And what Solomon meant was that there are times and seasons in your life. The season of spring at the beginning of your life, that's when you're young. The season of spring is when everything is new, everything is growing, everything is full of life.
- [11 : 42] Just like the young children, full of life and energy and vitality. And when you were young, you were enjoying the season of spring in your life. But as you've grown older, as time has passed, the season changed, it changed to summer.
- And during your summer, you reached what you could say, the pinnacle of your life. In your twenties and your thirties and your forties, like the crofter, it's a busy time in your life.

You're settling down, you're getting married, you're having children, you're putting down roots, you're building a house, you're preparing always for the harvest, preparing for when retirement comes.

And as you know, it doesn't take long until that reaches you either. It doesn't take long until the harvest comes round. A few short years and the season of your life changes again.

And as you know, autumn is a season full of change. The strength of summer is gone. Everything is slowly changing. We see it around us just now.

[12 : 45] The leaves on the trees are all changing colour. And that's what happens in the autumn of your life. You change. You grow older. You move towards retirement.

You become weaker and slower. You're not as fit as you used to be. There are ailments now appearing in your life that weren't there in your spring or in your summer. Everything is changing in the seasons of your life.

Everything is going towards the winter. And like it is tonight, the cold, long, dark nights of winter are on their way.

The seasons have changed so quickly in your life. And that's what it's like. Isn't it? That's what it's like in your life. They change so quickly. They quickly change from spring to summer to autumn to winter.

And they pass just like a tale that is told. And when the winter of life comes, the Bible reminds us that the cold reality of death hits.

[13 : 53] Because when you enter into the winter of your life, you can count more of your friends among the dead than among the living.

My friend, the seasons of our lives are changing and we can't do anything to stop it. And yet, I look at some of you here. Some of you here I knew in my spring.

And I look at you and Jeremiah is speaking to you about the season of your life and he's saying to you, the harvest is over. The summer has passed.

And yet, you are not saved. You are not saved. My unconverted friend, for some of you, you are now in the winter of your life.

And the sad reality is you've wasted all these opportunities that were given to you in the spring and the summer and the autumn. But Jeremiah's plea and my plea to you is don't waste the few opportunities that the winter will provide for you.

[14 : 59] Don't waste the few opportunities that the winter will provide for you because it's a worrying prospect to waste the opportunities that were given as we approach the nights of winter.

It's a worrying prospect. And it's because of this worrying prospect that we see, secondly, a weeping prophet. A worrying prospect and secondly, a weeping prophet.

We're told in verses 20 and 21, the harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved. For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded.

I mourn and dismay has taken hold on me. We mentioned earlier that the history of the Israelites was tainted by disobedience.

But out of grace and mercy and love, the Lord sent prophet after prophet after prophet to warn the people. And the message that the prophets preached was the solemn message.

[16 : 00] Judgment is coming. You need to repent because judgment is coming. That was the role of the prophets. They were to call the people to realize the error of their ways and to repent and turn to the Lord.

But as we said, it didn't matter how many prophets the Lord sent to His people. They weren't listening. And then we're told here, as we read it in chapter 1, the Lord raised up one final prophet, this young man called Jeremiah.

And as we were reading in chapter 1, Jeremiah knew that he was a young man. He knew that he was an inexperienced man when it came to telling the message of the gospel. But the Lord reminded Jeremiah just like the Lord, like Paul, reminded Timothy, let no one despise you for your youth.

The Lord spoke to that young man, Jeremiah, as we read it in chapter 1. And he said to him, do not say, I am only a youth. For wherever I send you, you shall go.

And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord. Jeremiah may have been a young prophet, but he was the Lord's prophet.

[17 : 13] He was the Lord's anointed. And the Lord called him and the Lord appointed him as a prophet to the people. Jeremiah was to be God's spokesman and he was to proclaim whatever the Lord wanted him to say.

And from the outset of his ministry, Jeremiah was told that his ministry and his message, it wasn't going to be a different ministry or a different message to those who were before him.

It was going to be the same ministry and the same message. The message wasn't going to change just because he was a young prophet. The message wasn't going to be watered down or diluted just because he was an inexperienced man.

No, the message was going to remain the same. Judgment is coming. You need to repent because judgment is coming.

And even though Jeremiah was a young and inexperienced prophet, he took his calling seriously. Jeremiah knew that the message he had to preach was of the utmost importance because it was a message of life or death, blessing or cursing, salvation or judgment, heaven or hell.

[18 : 29] And because Jeremiah felt the burden of the message he had to preach, this is the thing about Jeremiah, he often preached with tears. That's why Jeremiah is known to us as the weeping prophet.

He often wept over the state of the nation that he was part of and he wept over the hardness of their hearts. That's why Jeremiah writes the book of Lamentations.

He's lamenting, he's weeping, he's mourning over the spiritual state of those whom he has to stand before. My friend, Jeremiah preached with tears because he loved the people he was preaching to.

And you know, every preacher and every Christian should be more like Jeremiah. I wish I was more like Jeremiah because when Jeremiah considered the reality of God's wrath and judgment just like we did this morning.

When Jeremiah considered the reality of God's wrath and judgment being poured out upon unrepentant sinners, he wept. He wept.

[19 : 36] When Jeremiah experienced the weight and burden of the people to whom he had to preach, his eyes filled with tears. When Jeremiah looked into the eyes of the people whom he had to preach to, tears ran down his face because he had this genuine concern for their soul.

And Jeremiah wept because when he looked at those in front of him, he knew that they were in their winter of opportunity. He knew that they didn't have many opportunities left.

That's why he says to them, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and yet you are not saved. You are not saved. And now with the people in the winter of opportunity, Jeremiah knew.

He knew that they wouldn't have many opportunities left. And Jeremiah, you see him, he's weeping before the people and he's pleading with them. He says to them in verse 21 that his burden is so heavy, his heart is so wounded and he's mourning over the people.

He's distressed. He's dismayed that they're refusing. They're refusing to lay hold of their opportunities. And you know my friend, when I look at you in the season of your life, I think, how can you pass up another opportunity?

[21 : 04] How can you pass up another opportunity to repent of your sin and to seek the Lord with all your heart? How can you put off coming to Jesus Christ for your salvation?

how can you put it off another moment? Do you know, this is the burden I have. The longing I have to see people saved.

Because I know that the gospel is a message of life and death. Blessing or cursing. Salvation or judgment. Heaven or hell. I know the seriousness of this message.

I've stood over the graves of people who reached the winter of their life and they had wasted their opportunities. What do you say to people when they're still those who are living when the one in the grave wasted his opportunities?

I know the seriousness of this message. I know that the season in your life tonight, when I look at some of you, the harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and you're still not saved.

[22 : 15] Still not saved. But like it was for Jeremiah, I know that my concern for your soul will never save you.

I wish I could save you, but I can't. my friend, you have to be concerned about your own soul. You have to seek the Lord with all your heart.

You have to cry out to Jesus for mercy. You have to go on your knees and submit your life to Jesus Christ for salvation. You have to commit your life to him.

I can't do it for you. And you know, when you reject the gospel, when you reject the gospel as you have done for many years, that's what leaves a preacher like Jeremiah.

He describes himself as one who has a wounded heart, distressed and dismayed that you would waste your opportunities rejecting and refusing the offer that's before you.

[23 : 21] And you know, there were many preachers who throughout the centuries wept when they preached and pleaded for people to be saved. The English evangelist in the 18th century, George Whitefield, he was often moved to tears when he preached the gospel.

And it's said that his sermons were so sincere and filled with so much love and compassion towards lost sinners that he wept. He wept as he looked at them and preached to them the gospel of Christ.

But you know, the greatest example of a preacher, a preacher who preached with passion and compassion towards lost sinners, the greatest example is Jesus himself.

Because when Jesus came to his own people, they refused him. He was despised and rejected by men. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

And it was for that reason that Jesus, he wept over the city of Jerusalem because they refused to listen to him. And they refused to listen to the message of the prophets. And Jesus said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as hens gather her chickens under her wings and you would not.

[24 : 47] And you would not. Jesus wept over his own people just like Jeremiah. And he wept out of genuine concern for lost souls.

And you know, my Christian friend, if we don't have a burden for lost souls, then there's something far wrong with us. If we don't have a care and a compassion for those still out of Christ, then we need to take a long look at our Christianity.

If we don't have a longing and even a weeping over those who are still on the broad road to hell, then we need to wake up. Because it was like it was in Jeremiah's day.

The gospel of the world around them, it preached this message, peace, peace when there is no peace. There were so many false prophets speaking with their false voices and giving the people false hope, preaching peace, peace when there is no peace.

There are many tonight listening to their false prophets and their false prophet is sitting in a box in front of them in their living room.

[26 : 06] The prophet of television and media, that's their gospel and their gospel tells them they don't need to repent. Their gospel of television and media tells them you don't need to worry.

The gospel of television and media tells them you don't need to turn to the Lord. This is indulgent. You have plenty of time. But my friend, all you have to do is look around you.

All you have to do is look around you and even look at yourself. Look at yourself and see that time is passing. Time is passing.

The seasons are changing. And you know that before the winter of your life comes to an end you need to be saved. Time is passing.

That's why there's a wonderful provision. That's what I want us to consider lastly. A wonderful provision. A worrying prospect, a weeping prophet and a wonderful provision.

[27 : 19] Look again at verse 20. The harvest is passed, the summer has ended and we are not saved. For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded. I mourn and dismay has taken hold on me.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is the health of the daughter of my people not been restored? Lord? In this closing verse, in verse 22, Jeremiah, he asks a rhetorical question.

He says, is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? And Jeremiah's purpose of asking such a rhetorical question is of course to emphasize that there is balm in Gilead.

And there is a physician there. There's opportunity, he says. There's opportunity for redemption and restoration. There's opportunity for help and healing.

There's opportunity for freedom and forgiveness. There's opportunity for safety and salvation. But for such a long time, just like the media in our day, these false prophets in Jeremiah's day, they were feeding the people this lie that there's no balm there.

[28 : 35] There's no balm in Gilead. That's what they were being told. There's no balm in Gilead. There's no need of a physician. The prophets were trying to ignore the disease, cover over the wounds of the people.

But as time was going by, as the days were passing, as the years were passing, as the harvest was passed, the summer was ended, the wounds of the people were still there.

They were still festering. The disease was still as deadly. The lie that the media had fed them never gave them any hope. And Jeremiah says to the people, is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there? Jeremiah reminds the people of the wonderful provision of salvation that the Lord has made for them. Because the balm which came from Gilead, you know the balm that came from Gilead, it was the best and most valuable balm that money could buy.

But until the people sought the balm of Gilead, they would never receive the correct treatment from the great physician and they would never be restored. Until they sought the balm and until they sought the physician, there would be no help, there would be no healing.

[29 : 57] And the same is true for you, my friend. Because this world will feed you the lie that your condition is not as bad as the Bible tells you. The media and the gospel of television will tell you that you have no need of a great physician.

But the truth is, and you know it to be the truth, this is the thing, you know that this is the truth, you know that your sin is a deadly disease and it's causing wounds that are deep and festering.

And there's no doubt that this disease of sin is going to bring you through the season of winter all the way to death. You've seen it with others and you see it time and time again.

And maybe with every week and funeral you put it away from yourself and say, well it's not me just now, not my time just now. But your Bible is reminding you again tonight, the wages of sin is death.

The wages of sin is death. but but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[31 : 11] My friend, there is Bam and Gilead. There is a physician there because God has made a wonderful provision for you in the person of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus says to us tonight in the gospel, he says, those who are well, they have no need of a physician but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Which means that the qualification for coming to Jesus the great physician, the qualification is not are you good enough? The qualification is are you bad enough?

Do you see your sin and do you see your need of a savior? are you bad enough to come to this Jesus? Do you see your ruin and your need of a remedy?

Do you see your problem and your need of this provision? Because tonight you have another opportunity to receive this wonderful provision by simply going on your knees and asking Jesus Christ to save you and by committing your life to him.

[32 : 24] The gospel says to you my friend if you believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and if you confess with your mouth then you will be saved.

Believe in your heart confess with your mouth and you will be saved. The harvest has passed the summer has ended and you are still not saved.

Time is passing you by. You need to be saved. You need to make the most of your opportunities because you know I don't know this might be your last opportunity to hear the gospel.

You might never sit where you're sitting ever again. You might have sat in that pew all your life but this might be your last opportunity.

So make the most of your opportunity if this is your last opportunity because the harvest is past, the summer has ended and you're still not saved.

[33 : 41] Don't waste your opportunity. Seek the Lord while he's to be found. Call upon him while he is near.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Let us pray. Lord