

Jeremiah 20

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- [0 : 00] Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Jeremiah. We'll be in chapter 20, Jeremiah chapter 20. I want to read with you, if I could, just one verse out of the chapter to get started.
- Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 9. You know, if you're going to serve God, you're going to have opposition. If you're going to serve God, people aren't going to like it.
- If you take a biblical stand, take a biblical stand for marriage. If you take a biblical stand for how you ought to handle your money. If you take a biblical stand for how you ought to live. If you take a biblical stand for morality.
- If you take a biblical stand, it's just not going to make for a very comfortable message. And in Jeremiah chapter 20, Jeremiah's preaching is just getting him in all sorts of trouble.
- And it's costing him massive cost because he preaches the truth. And he actually gets arrested and gets slapped around a little bit and gets locked up.
- [1 : 05] And they bring him back the next day to get a word from him. Maybe he's softened up during the night. And when they bring him up, he just lets loose with another tirade. That God's going to bring the curse on them.
- And everybody makes fun of Jeremiah. He's just tired of not being appreciated. He's a man of God and no one seems to appreciate his ministry.
- And so he decides, I wish I just didn't have to do it anymore. I wish I didn't have to take a stand for God. I wish I didn't have to preach what he has for me to preach. He certainly didn't give me a happy message to preach.
- I'm not the prophet with the good message, that's for sure. And I just like to hush. And so this verse has become a famous verse. I think maybe out of context.
- I think you'll understand it doesn't change what it means. But I think you'll understand much more why he said what he said after we get this whole chapter. But look what he said in chapter 20, verse 9. Then I said, I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name.
- [2 : 09] I just am not going to do it anymore. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.
- And I was weary with foreboding and I could not stay. I'm tired talking about Jesus until I'm blue in the face.
- Tired of telling people Jesus is coming again. I'm tired of teaching my children to love God and do the right thing. Tired of just preaching and preaching and teaching and teaching. Discipling and discipling.
- And sometimes I wonder if it's worth it. People think of me as the old fuddy-duddy. People think of me as the weird guy at the church because all I ever want to do is talk about the Bible. I'm discouraged today and so I don't want to talk about it.
- But I just can't keep it in. I just can't keep it in. It's eaten me alive. I got to get it out. I got to share it. I got to tell people what God has to say. And so he said, I could not stay.

[3 : 07] I hope that is your story. I hope you don't have to get all that discouraged. But Jeremiah is pretty discouraged in this chapter. He's pretty discouraged because things aren't, he's not popular.

He's pretty discouraged because he's the preacher of doom and gloom. And so they're probably making fun of him on the evening news. They're writing him up in the newspaper. No one's got a nice word to say about old Jeremiah.

Father, I pray that tonight you would help us to stand for you and preach truth no matter what it cost us. And I pray to your God that though it may seem sometimes that you don't come through like you said you would, as soon as you said you would, or in the timetable we kind of expected that you would, that you'd help us to hold firm, to keep teaching, to keep preaching, to keep honoring you.

I pray, God, that you would honor your name through your word and through our lives. And I pray, God, that Jeremiah 20 might encourage your people. And I'll give you praise for all you do in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. Look, if you would, in Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 1. Now, we got old Pasher here, and he's the son of the priest, and he's a big shot. And he heard all that old Jeremiah is preaching.

[4 : 22] And so he punched, slapped, knocked some sense into Jeremiah the prophet, and then he locked him up and put him in stocks. And he put him out there where people could look at him and people could mock him.

I'm sure you've seen a cartoon or a TV program where they got the guy on his head's in the stocks and his hands were in the stocks and whatever. And he's out there that were in the high gate of Benjamin.

So they put him out there where everybody could see him. They put him out there, which was by the house of the Lord. And everybody sees Jeremiah. And I suppose, Pasher thought, I'll soften him up.

I will remind him that his preaching is not popular and that his preaching has consequences and that if he don't stop it, it's going to get worse for him. And so in a lot of ways, the world does that to us.

They'll quieten us any way they can. They will cause us not to do what we ought to do. When I was in college, I was in college from 1972 to 1976.

[5 : 23] I went to a denominational school where they basically denied all the basic fundamentals of the faith. They mocked the virgin birth. They mocked the blood atonement.

They mocked that the Bible, there wasn't even a real copy of the Bible anywhere on the planet. And it was a regular thing. And so me and a bunch of my buddies got together.

And I mean, I was not the head honcho of it by any stretch. A friend of mine was. I was kind of like his co-captain. And we got together, this group. And we'd been meeting in a room in the library.

They had this room. We went up there. We met all the time. We listened to tapes and preaching. And we read books. And we preached to each other. And so we were trying our best to take a stand for what we thought was true.

I'd gotten tired of hearing Jesus call the bastard son of a Roman soldier and so on. All that was going on. And so we got together and we decided to go ask all of our professors in the college.

[6 : 21] We wanted to ask all of them some questions, basic questions. Do you believe the Bible is written in the inspired and fallible Word of God? Do you believe that Jesus was literally born of a virgin? Do you believe that the blood atonement is the only way?

So we went through all the fundamentals. And question number six was that if you die today, you know you go to heaven. So we went to all of our professors, took a little notebook, asked all the questions, wrote down the answers. And buddy, they did not like our questions.

So they first threatened us with jail. And they threatened us with lawsuits. And they threatened us with never, ever getting a pulpit. They said all the manner of foolishness to us. And we were on the verge of, I mean, the more they pushed us, man, the braver we got.

And then after that, the head honcho left. And I kind of became the de facto head honcho. And one day I had a book, a Greek New Testament was in my box, my mailbox.

And I knew who it came from. It was my professor. And he had written a personal note in there without signing his name and telling me how academic I was, how smart I was, and how he was just excited for me.

[7 : 28] And I was like, well, it's hard to be mad at a guy who gives you a book like that. And so I started softening up. And then one day he called me and the other guy who had become the other de facto leader in the office. And he said, this old pastor is retired.

He's going to give away about 2,000 books. I'm going to divide them half and half. Man, by the end of the day, we was all for him. Call Jesus anything you want. We're for sale. 1,000 books will buy us in a heartbeat.

And my friend called up and said, what in the world? You guys are for sale and you give up. And so then we went back to fighting and got in more trouble. But Jeremiah wasn't like me.

Old Jeremiah got put in the stocks. And if you look in Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 3, the next morning it came to pass on the morrow that they got Jeremiah out of the stocks. And Jeremiah comes out of the stocks.

And I think they're kind of hoping that Jeremiah will come out going, gentlemen, look, I mean, I knew you didn't like my preaching, but I didn't know it was that bad. So I can dial it down a notch or two.

[8 : 23] I can kind of trim my sails and I can kind of lower things down. I don't have to be quite so rude. I think that's what they hoped would happen. But Jeremiah was an old-fashioned prophet of the Lord.

And he had a tree trunk for a backbone. And so it says in Jeremiah chapter 20, first in chapter 20 and verse 3, he changed old pastor's name to Magor Meshav.

And that has to do with this. He said, God said, I will make thee a terror to thyself and to all thy friends. Boy, God is going to bring it on you, pastor. You thought you was going to quiet me down.

I'm telling you, you're in trouble. In Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 4, he said, you will fall and your friends will fall by the sword of their enemies. And you're going to watch your buddies get cut in half by a sword.

And I'm going to give all of Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. Y'all are going into the Babylonian captivity. I'm telling you, you're in a heap of trouble and it's over for you. In Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 5, he said, And God's going to deliver all of your strength and all of your labor and all of your precious things and all the treasures into the hand of your enemies.

[9 : 31] They're going to rip you off. They're going to spoil you, take it all. And they're going to take it all over to Babylon. And you're going into captivity too. Chapter 20 and verse 6, you and all your family.

And you've been prophesying lies. You don't tell the truth. You're a false preacher. You're the man of God in town, but you're a lying preacher because you don't preach the book. It backfired on old Pasher.

He thought that I could slap him around a little bit and put him in the stocks and kind of embarrass him publicly and put his picture on the front page of the paper, locked in stocks and having people throwing rotten tomatoes at him and everybody making fun of him.

And that'll quiet him down. But it didn't quiet him down. Old Jeremiah still took a stand. I'd like to pause here for just a second and talk to you heart to heart. You know, you and I ought to be as faithful to God and to do his will even if it causes us to suffer.

I knew you shouldn't say those things about Jesus. But a few books was all it took to get me to start thinking differently. I knew I should have taken a stronger stand.

[10 : 38] But I was willing to back down and back off. What are you going to do when the devil starts coming for us? They say that 57% of all preachers right now are for same-sex marriage.

I don't know if that's true or not. I have no idea how you get that number. I don't even know how you come up with it. They say 98% of all statistics are made up on the spot like I just did. So maybe that's what they did. But what are we going to do if they take our tax exemption?

What would happen if it meant losing your job but standing for Jesus? Would you choose Jesus or would you choose your job? Would you share your faith even if it costs you friends?

What have you ever done for Jesus that costs you? This story about Jeremiah, he just spent last night in stocks out in public.

Probably had to endure the temperatures of the night, whatever they were, hot or cold. Had to be mocked and have people watching him. So here's the question. Do you ever pay a price to be the man or woman of God?

[11 : 46] Or do you border on prosperity gospel beliefs? We would all, I think, condemn the prosperity gospel that if you serve God, he'll make you rich.

I think we would all say that's not true. You well know that people in China today are serving God and paying a price for it. You know that people are serving God in Muslim countries and paying a price for it.

You know that people all around the world can take a stand for Jesus and it can cost them. And in the story here, it costs Jeremiah. And so the question I bring to you tonight is, has you ever paid a price?

Are you willing to pay the price? What's it take to cause you to change your message? We were, they even took us to the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Had us speak. Had the leader of God do some talking. And all of a sudden, we were on the front page of the Macon News and Telegraph because we were telling what was going on in the college. And it was a big stink in the convention.

[12 : 49] And when he moved out, the rest of us were a lot easier to sell, a lot easier to give up, a lot easier to quit. Because taking a stand costs you. It costs you grades.

It costs you friends. It costs you other things. And I can easily be bought. Jeremiah said, I will preach my message. What God wants.

I'm telling you what I think. And you can just get a little upset with me. And I'm going to get right into this chapter. I believe over the next few years, you're going to have to take a stand that Jesus is the only way to be saved. And you're going to have to tell people that you really believe that.

I think you think it's going to be about same-sex marriage. But I'm going to tell you what they're doing. They're going to do everything they can to get you to not believe it's only Jesus. They're going to try to get you to accept that you can be saved this way and this way.

All of my life, I've been told things back when I was a kid. All roads lead to Rome. So all ways will get you to God. And you can go the Jesus way. You can go the other way. They're going to try to press us into being a tolerant group of people.

[13 : 50] And a tolerant group of people that would accept that there's a lot of ways. And it may cost us. We could lose tax exemption. We could lose popularity as being that old group that still believes the Bible.

I hope you and I are willing. Truth hurts. Truth costs. Truth divides. Are you willing to stand for Jesus even when it hurts your family and your finances and even your future?

The truth might save your friends, by the way. They're on their way to hell. They need to hear the truth. They need somebody that would tell them the honest truth. You and I have been muzzled and quietened.

Can we be honest? We don't talk about Jesus anymore. We don't invite people to come to know Jesus. We don't share the gospel. We have literally become the 007 Christians.

That might be why it doesn't cost us. In what ways have you died to yourself and taken up a cross and hated your family?

[14 : 55] And that's what Jesus called us to do. Go with me, if you would, to Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 7. Now, Jeremiah has been locked up and he's been slapped around and his message has cost him.

And even though he's willing to keep preaching a message, he's kind of discouraged and hurt right now. And in Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 7, he tells God, Now, God, you didn't quite make it clear.

When you called me in the ministry, I didn't quite know this is what was going to happen. Look, if you would, at verse 7. Oh, Lord, you have deceived me. And I was deceived.

You're stronger than I am. And you have prevailed. I am in derision daily. Everyone mocks me. I don't know how you see what's going on in verse 7.

But what's happening is Jeremiah is like, Now, God, I didn't fully expect that I was always going to be the note of doom and gloom. I didn't expect that every time I walked in a room, there would be a chill across the room.

[15 : 57] I didn't know that everybody was going to see Jeremiah comes. Oh, brother, here he comes. You remember old Mackay? When Ahab says, Ahab, he calls him in. He says, This guy never has anything nice to say about me.

And so Jeremiah's like, Lord, you deceived me. I didn't know that when you put me in the ministry, you were putting me into such a negative position. But you have put me here. God, I'm in derision.

You need to underline that. I'm in derision daily. That means he's the blunt end of the jokes. That means everybody's mocking him. Everybody's laughing at Jeremiah. I never expected your call to do so much to me.

Everyone's laughing at me. God, you pushed me into this. I'd have rather done something else. You pushed me into it. Jeremiah chapter 20, verse 8. God, the only thing you ever asked me to preach is doom and gloom.

Look at verse 8. For since I spake, I cried out. And what do I cry out? Violence and spoil. Violence and spoil. Basically, Jeremiah's message is God's mad at y'all.

[16 : 59] And God is going to destroy you. And violence is coming upon this city. And he's going to break down the walls of this city. He's going to take all of your good stuff. And everybody in this town is going to die.

And he's going to take all of our stuff. And everybody that does live is going to go to the Babylonian captivity. That's my message. You know, I got to preach this morning out of Psalm 4. I really like that. That's a sweet message, Lord of God.

I mean, I really like that. He loves you. Jeremiah's like, well, I'd like to preach Psalm 4 one time. Would there be a possibility you could put that in my repertoire? And God says, nope. You just tell him I'm going to kill him.

You just tell him I'm going to kill him. He was tired of the messages. He was tired of being the preacher everybody loves to hate. He said, the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me.

Everything I said, they hate the Bible. They hate me. And everybody's laughing at me every day. So he didn't know what God had to say. He didn't know what God had to say next.

[17 : 58] And he wasn't sure he even wanted to know. He got to the point in Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 9. He said, God, I'd just like to quit preaching. I don't want to say anything else. God at first.

Anyway, look, I just got slapped around. I just got put out in socks. I came out and preached your word. But God, good night. Could you give me a break? Could you let me not say any more stuff?

And put him in there and said, I won't make mention. But God wouldn't let him quit. The word of God was in his heart as a burning fire. Shut up in his bones. He was weary with forbearing and he could not stay.

Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 9. He wanted to quit, but the word burned too hotly in his heart. He tried to walk away. He tried to quit, but he couldn't quit.

That's because God's word was working in him. And he knew God had a message for him to preach and he was going to preach it. Here's a big lesson for you. God's man can get discouraged. Isn't that a crazy thing?

[18 : 56] You're reading the book of Jeremiah and you're reading about this great man of God. And he's like, I mean, I think when y'all read Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 9, I think you read it positively. But it's the opposite of positive.

It's a verse where he said, No, I don't want to talk anymore. I don't want to.

And it's bubbling inside of him. And you know what's going to come out? Doom and gloom. He's not going to say, boy, he loves us. He loves us. I don't want to say, we're in a heap of trouble here. It's hard to deal with what Jeremiah is going through.

And all of us are doing the work of God. We're called into an emotional job. I mean, you and I, you go in there and teach that Sunday school class. You ever get tired of it? You ever think about quitting?

You ever think, man, I have taught these people for the last 200 years. And they don't listen. And they don't change. And it seemed like I said the same thing over and over. And they just want to pay attention.

[20 : 01] I just think I'll quit. You ever been there? You've been doing it long. You might have. He wants to quit, but he can't quit. But the word of God had seized control of him.

And God's going to use him. And he'll have victory because God's word is going to work in and through him. And so by the time you get to verse 9, it's like, well, it looks like old Jeremiah is coming out of it.

Because he said, I will not make mention. I will not speak anymore in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.

And I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. Your kids won't listen to you. The Sunday school kids won't listen to you. The children's church kids won't listen to you. You feel like you're just doing the same song and dance every week, and nobody's paying attention.

You don't see anybody growing. You don't see things happening, and you're wanting to quit. That's where he is. But by the end of it, he said, I can't quit. But he still can't get his emotions under control. Look, if you look at Jeremiah 20 and verse 10.

[21 : 06] God's word should have been enough, but Jeremiah still hears, and everybody's mad at him. Look at Jeremiah 20 and verse 10. For I heard the defaming of many. And so what happens is he heard.

They're over here talking about me. They're over here discussing me and saying I'm a nut, and they're saying they're tired of my messages. And I hear about it over here, too. People are always talking about me. And I walk in, I catch people talking.

They're all talking about me, and they're all putting me down. I'm tired of the defaming of many. And fear's on every side. I don't know who's going to hurt me, but somebody wants to hurt me. People are out to get me.

People want to kill me. Reports say they, and we will watch it. And all my familiars watch for my halting. Everybody who knows me is waiting for me to fall.

Halting, stumbling. Everybody's sitting there going, he can't keep going. He's going to give up. He's going to quit. He's going to drop off. He's going to trip and stumble, but he doesn't. They said, peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him.

[22 : 05] We shall take our revenge on him. So everybody's watching Jeremiah, and Jeremiah's like, God, I want to quit, but I can't quit. But God, do you realize everywhere I turn, they talk about me.

They may be talking about you at work. They may talk about the Jesus freak. They may talk about the nut. They may talk about the person that leads in prayer. They may not have the nicest words to say.

The word worked in him, but it seems now he's already lost focus. Everybody wants to hurt him. Everybody's talking bad about him. But he knows the Lord's with him. Look at chapter 20, verse 11. But the Lord is with me.

Well, that's good. Glad to hear that now, Jeremiah. You're coming back. The Lord is with me as a mighty, terrible one. God's on my side, and he's all-powerful, and he can do the work. So I know my persecutors will stumble.

They will not win. They will be embarrassed. They will not prosper. Everlasting confusion will come on them. And God, Jeremiah's like, so God, I really want you to kill them.

[23 : 03] That's what I'd like. That's probably a little overkill. Come on, Jeremiah. It's one thing to be discouraged. It's one thing to, it's one thing to, you're tired of everybody making fun of you. But praying that all your church people will die is probably not the best move for a pastor.

But look at what he says in verse 12. Oh, Lord of hosts, you try the righteous, you see the range of hearts. Let me see your vengeance on them. God, take them out.

Kill them. And so in chapter 20, verse 13, he said, sing unto the Lord. Praise you to the Lord. He had delivered the soul of the poor. God has helped me.

I'm excited. In verse 14, he said, curse the day I was born. I mean, you want to talk about a roller coaster. Some of you people, y'all like this? This guy's a nut.

You see him on one day, he's like, I ain't preaching no more. You come the next day, he said, glory to God, the word of God's in me. See him the next day, he's like, everybody's against me. See him the next day, but God's going to help me. See him the next day, he's like, curse the day I was born.

[24 : 06] Kill the guy that brought me into the world. I shoot the guy that announced my birth. Watch, that's what he's going to say. Sometimes I think we think we ought never be discouraged, and then God says, let me show y'all my buddy, Jeremiah.

Jeremiah chapter 20, verse 14. Cursed be the day I was born. Let not the day wherein my mother bear me be blessed. Okay, nobody needs to write happy birthday on the day I was born.

And nobody's getting a day off, and nobody's having a party, bless God. Fact is, just right across it, curse everybody on that day. If you were born that day, I just hope you're cursed too. Verse 15, and curse the guy who told him I was born.

Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father and said, you got a boy. Jeremiah said, find that guy and kill him. Curse him too. The doctor walked in the room.

You know, when my first two were born, I couldn't be in the same room. And the doctor or somebody came in there. I don't even remember who it was. They'd walk in and say, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Gardner. And here I am, like 18, 20 years old. So, Mr. Gardner?

[25 : 09] And they look up, and I said, yes, that's me, Mr. Gardner. I'm having a first time. That's my daddy's name. But yes, sir. And they said, you just had a baby. It's a little boy. And Jeremiah said, well, curse him.

I don't appreciate him announcing that. Cursing. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father. A man child is born, and to me, they make him very glad.

Jeremiah hoped that the man that announced his birth would suffer. Somebody would slap the doctor who brought him into the world. Chapter 20, verse 16. And let that man be as the cities that the Lord overthrew.

God, you know what it looks like after you tore up Sodom and Gomorrah? That's what I want. The guy who gave birth to me and the guy who announced my birth, just wipe them out. Adam bomb them. Right there. I wish he'd have killed me when I was born.

I'm reading this out of the Bible. This is a man of God talking. In Jeremiah chapter 20, verse 17, he said, Because he slew me not. Why do I want him killed? Because he didn't kill me when I was born. I wish he'd have killed me.

[26 : 09] Or I wish I'd have died in my mother's womb. And I wish I'd have just died there and stayed there. Why in the world was I born? Jeremiah chapter 20, verse 18.

Why did I come forth out of the womb? To see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame. Boy, things have been rough on me. So, have you seen what Jeremiah does?

It's God that put him in the ministry. It's God that put his word in him. It's God that when he tried not to let it out, it made the word come out. But when he hears the threats and thinks about the Lord, he wishes he was never born.

He's on a horrible roller coaster of emotion. I have a question for you. Do you deal with discouragement and doubt and fear in your life and ministry?

I don't know. You know, I spend more time with preachers than I do with regular church people. You know, so many Christians are just embarrassed about being depressed and discouraged and beat up.

[27 : 19] But when you live like an oddball in the world, it kind of can do that to you. I mean, we're the only ones that believe I ought to be loyal to that one woman. We're the only ones that believe I'm going to give God at least 10% of my income.

We're the only ones that are going to say I'm going to keep my wedding vows and honor them. We're the only ones that says, hey, I'm not going to get into pornography. We're the only ones that won't tolerate all this other stuff. We're the only ones that believe God is really true and the Bible is really true and we still believe that.

We're the only ones that believe God and believe his character. But you know what you've got to do? And I'll just say to you, on the whole, I know you can have victory.

By the way, a lot of God's people have had massive discouragement problems. Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher, used to get so discouraged his wife wrote Bible verses and pinned them on the ceiling so when he woke up he'd see a Bible verse.

Because the old boy just dealt with discouragement and doubt. I want to tell you a couple of things that I believe give you victory. And Jeremiah has just let us see his heart.

[28 : 24] Jeremiah has let us see I'm hurting. I don't think you should be shocked that you might be hurting. I mean, there's health issues going on right now and they may be eating your lunch.

And there's money issues going on. There's marriage issues going on. There's all kind of junk going on in your life. And it's eating your lunch and you want to quit. You want to walk away from God. You can't seem to get victory and you're beat up by it.

Well, can I just tell you the book of Jeremiah keeps on going so he doesn't quit. Can I get an amen right there? We're just less than halfway through. Old Jeremiah is still going to be plugging when you come to the next service. Old Jeremiah is not quitting.

So he's going to get victory. But God did let us see that he was dealing with junk. I guess sweet of God. I think we can all look and say, wow, I thought I was a wicked person.

Well, you are a wicked person. No doubt about that one. But the truth is it's common to man. So what do we do? We have to think on these things. We have to learn to say, yes, people are mocking me.

[29 : 24] And yes, people are defaming me. And yes, things aren't going my way. And yes, my money is not happening this way. Yes, life did not turn out like I want it to. And yes, there's a lot of reasons for me to be discouraged. I'm hurting physically.

I'm hurting spiritually. I'm hurting emotionally. And my whole life seems to be messed up. It's kind of hard for you not to get that way on occasion. What do you do?

In Psalms 4, you talk to yourself. You learn truth. So the first thing we want to do is we want to think about God and not about us.

We focus on God and his character. Who is our God? And we go ahead and we accept some basic truths about ourselves. Can I remind you just some basic truths?

You aren't good. And you didn't deserve to get saved. And you didn't deserve to be forgiven. But the good, sweet God of heaven forgave you anyway.

[30 : 21] And he saved you. And therefore, he knows you're messed up. He knew you was messed up the day he saved you. Okay, so think about our God and think about his character. You know, he is love and he is mercy and he is gracious and he is long-suffering.

And there's a thousand other great words about our God. Think about him. I find that I get mostly discouraged when I think about me. I'm not sure that old Jeremiah's problem wasn't that he was focused on what was happening to him and not what God was wanting done.

I think old Jeremiah could have easily, instead of looking up to God, started looking in the mirror and thinking about him. Believe God and his character. Believe God and his character. In Philippians chapter 4 and verse 8, you were told a whole list of things that kind of describe God and Jesus and truth in the Bible.

And it says all those things, whatsoever things are, and it names all those things for you. And it ends up saying, think on these things. It's hard to get discouraged thinking on those things. It's easy to get discouraged thinking on my things.

It is easy to get discouraged thinking about my bank account. It's easy to get discouraged thinking about my fights with my wife and my children. It's easy to get discouraged thinking about my health. It's easy to get discouraged thinking about your age. We focus on all the wrong things.

[31 : 33] Believe the Lord. Believe God. Believe his character. Focus your heart and mind on the word of God and keep your thoughts under control. You need a daily time with God.

Boy, do I feel foolish because I say it so much. You need to get up and have some time with God. I tell the ministeries, pray yourself happy before you start the day. Pray yourself happy.

You've got a lot of junk going on. The world is a busy place and there's a lot of junk going on and things are happening and things are going wrong. But if you get focused on him and you get God-centered and scripture-centered and Holy Spirit-centered in the early morning, you'll probably make it through the day a whole lot better.

So get a hold of this and start saying, man, I want to think on the right things. He says, memorize Bible verses. Carry them in your pocket until you've got them memorized in your heart. Think on these things. And remember this.

It's never about just thinking. He said, think on these things. But then he said, submit to God and the devil will flee. So some of us are like, well, I think how good God is all day long.

[32 : 44] But the devil's still there. But then you've got to say, no, no, I want to obey what God said. You see, it's not just thinking about the Bible, but it's saying, what's he saying I need to be doing in my life? Did you know when I let discouragement and depression beat me, I've chosen not to believe God?

Submit and obey. I don't know what causes your discouragement and maybe no one in this room ever deals with it, but I know the mysteries do.

I know the language whips them. I know the culture whips them. I know being away from home whips them. I know they're in trouble and they need to learn to focus on the Lord. If you're not careful, here's what the devil wants.

I'll quit. We're in the Garden of Eden and Eve's about to eat the fruit.

You know what God does? The devil does, excuse me. He says, don't think about what God said. Think about how God's not being good to you. You ever notice that? God knows if you eat this, you'll be like God.

[33 : 52] God's holding out on you. God's ripping you off. It's all about you, sweetheart. What she should have said, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You see all this big garden he made for us?

See all this stuff he did for us? You know Jesus will be down here to go walk with me in just a minute. That's what she ought to have done. But instead of that, she thought to herself, boy, God is ripping me off. And life isn't what I wanted it to be.

And she didn't stay God-focused. She became Eve-focused. And then she crashed and burned. If you're not careful, the devil wins. You're no longer useful to God and his ministry and his kingdom.

And we don't want that to happen. There are kids in a Sunday school class that need you. There are children at your home that need to hear you and watch you live for God. There are people that need your discipleship.

There's a whole ministry here watching you. And other people are learning from you. Don't let the devil win. I know you'll go through discouraging times, but get out of them.

[34 : 54] I know you'll be right back.