

Jeremiah 8

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[0 : 0 0] Jeremiah chapter number 8, that was beautiful. That song, the testimonies that we have heard, our glorious God and what he's doing around the world and that he is reaching. He wants us to do that as well.

Mr. Potter, Shelby's dad, got good news this after he was at Emory. And he got some good news about his heart. Things are not in a condition that the other doctors had told. And we praise the Lord for that and what God's doing.

And the great testimonies that we had heard. Jeremiah chapter number 8. You know that Jesus that we think about at Christmas time. He not only came to do compassionate acts, but he also came to show compassion, to feel compassion.

And so my prayer as we get started today is that God would keep our hearts in the ministry. And that we would not want to flee from the place that God has placed us to serve. Many of you probably grew up singing the song, Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.

How many of you sung that growing up? How many of you have ever sung that song, Sitting Down? It feels really weird, doesn't it? You can't really sing Stand Up for Jesus while sitting down. And as I read this passage, my heart was so heavy because I say, How am I going to go through a text where Jeremiah is brokenhearted over the condition of his people?

[1 : 0 5] How am I going to challenge the church for us to be brokenhearted over the condition of people when I feel so dead and not broken over the condition of the world? We know way more about the world.

We know way more about our communities than any generation before. And we just become numb to the need around us. And I've been reading this. God's really been working in my heart.

And I pray that he does the same. I'm going to read one verse, verse 18. When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Heavenly Father, I ask that you be with us tonight, Lord. We send all too common story with the children of Israel and your people and their rebellion.

But Lord, the response of your weeping prophet is so abnormal. Lord, I want the heart of Jeremiah. Lord, I want your heart for people. Lord, I want this church to have the heart for people. Lord, when we get so tired, Lord, I pray that we won't run and look for rest to get away from people.

But we will find our strength in you and we'll be faithful in the work that you have called us to do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Unfortunately, in Jeremiah, we find too common of a problem over and over again.

[2 : 0 6] It says in verse number five, When this is the people of Jerusalem slidden back by perpetual backsliding, thou hast fast to see they refused to return. The truth was readily available to them.

This was the children of God. They had the word of God. They had a prophet. They had been warned. They were going through red light after stoplight, red light over and over. And God was warning them and his being long-suffering to them.

And they had truth. He uses a human analogy. He says, don't you know when you fall, you get back up again? Then he used a couple analogies from nature. He said, you're like horses that are trying to rush in the battle.

You don't even know what's going on. A soldier would be on top and he would know you don't need to run. But this horse, it's just like it wants to run in the battle and be slaughtered. And then the last one it gave was of a stork.

And I don't think of storks. I know storks bring babies. But other than that, I don't know much about storks. But I know geese this time of year fly. You know, you see them in a V. And you may know this. You know why one side of the V is longer than the other side of the V?

[3 : 00] There's more geese on that side of the V. All right? And so I did a lot of research about this. And so as the geese, as birds migrate back to where they're supposed to be from, God says, even a bird brain knows go to where you're supposed to go.

Children of God, you know, go back to the Word of God. When you get away from the Word of God, when you're living in sin, you know the path back home. Get to it. Children of Israel, they don't do it.

They continue to refuse. They distort God's Word. Verse 9, the wise men are ashamed. They're dismayed and taken. Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord. And what wisdom is in them? You have possessed the Scriptures.

Verse 8, we say we are wise and the law of the Lord is with us. But lo, certainly in vain made he. The pen of the scribes is in vain. Those men sitting over there that are writing the Bible and keeping it for you and all the work they're doing to make sure that you have the Word of God, it's in vain if you have it in your hand and you ignore it.

So it's just the common story for the children of Israel that we see. They possess the Scripture, but they don't practice the Scripture. And then there's a group of false prophets leading people astray. Chapter 5, verse 12 says, They have lied to the Lord and said, It is not He, neither shall evil come upon us.

[4 : 07] They're telling people all the time, Don't worry about the consequences of sin. They elevate community over truth. And they're treating a disease that is fatal as if it's something that's not important.

Verse 11, common passage, it says, For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Slightly. I'll never forget a sermon I heard as a college student about that word, slightly.

It's just the fact that they thought they needed healing, they thought they needed help, but all they received was slight help. They didn't have what they needed. End of this chapter, a passage you're familiar with, especially if you like Southern Gospel music, Is there a balm?

There's a balm in Gilead. You want to sing that with me? All right. Is there a balm in Gilead? Is there any help for us? And why did they not receive help? Was there not a physician? Was there not a remedy? Was there not help?

Well, they didn't know that they were fatally wounded. They didn't know that they needed help because the false prophets had helped them ever so slightly, just enough to continue on, and so they do not seek for a physician.

[5 : 08] So Jeremiah pictures these men as deceitful physicians. I sometimes like to listen to podcasts, and one of the things I hate the most is when people in leadership take advantage of people. When doctors, they take advantage of people.

I hate it when the mechanic does, but the doctor's even worse, all right? And so these are people that he says, these are like physicians passing out drugs to people that don't need it. These are physicians treating one thing that isn't really needed.

We've already heard them in chapter 5. They were called empty win. It wasn't the spirit that was speaking through them, but it was just an empty win. The Spencer's of Chaff in chapter 23. Chapter 23, they're going to be called ruthless, selfish shepherds.

Chapter 23, they're going to be called infected people that are spreading disease. He has no small thing to say about these prophets. God had not sent these so-called prophets, nor did he receive their message. Chapter 14, verse 14, then the Lord said unto them, the prophets prophesy lies in my name.

I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them. And we're just reminded that the people are hurting because the word of God has been distorted. And as we have a discipleship program, the whole world has a discipleship program.

[6 : 11] And while we're racing to get the people, other people are racing to get the people, and they're being hurt by lies. Maybe you think about something that you learned earlier. I remember having a distorted view of God, and it hurt my understanding of who he was.

And somebody took the word of God and showed me who he was. I remember what it brought freedom in my life. There's people in bondage. There's people in bondage believing that they're not good enough, maybe because they haven't spoken tongues.

There's people that don't believe they're good enough because they can't keep the list that their church is giving them. All these things that are keeping people that are hurting by these deceitful physicians that are still alive today, a rejection of God's word and destruction.

It's going to be comprehensive. Verses 13 and 17, it says it's going to be across all the fields. The cities will be destroyed. Verse 19, the people will be slain or in captive. And in the first four verses, it says that bodies are going to be laying everywhere.

It's not even going to be a proper burial. And if you're not laying there dead, and you're standing there surrounded by the corpses during this time of judgment, when they come in, you're going to wish that you were dead. The judgment is coming.

[7 : 12] It's horrific. It's like drinking poison. Verse 14, it's like experiencing an earthquake. Verse 16, it's like being attacked by a venomous snake. Verse 17, it's like being crushed and broken.

Verses 21, and then the people in their self-reliance, they're going to flee, and they're going to go to their walled cities, and they're going to cry out the Lord. And in verse number 20, they're going to see the summer has passed, the harvest has ended, but we're still not saved.

And God's going to say, I've been warning you. I've been trying to save you. I've been offering you hope this whole time. And they're saying, but we're not finding it anywhere because they're ignoring God, and they've only been helped slightly.

So you might believe that you and I don't feel the sorrow for this group of people. They're so far away. But would it change if we were in the middle of it? If we were in Jeremiah's day, we would really have to be part of two choices.

We'd either be part of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet and the weeping people that were brokenhearted over sin, or we would have been part of these people that have been lulled to sleep. You know, a lot of people know what IQ is, but, you know, EQ is your emotional intelligence.

[8 : 15] You know, my wife's emotional intelligence is way beyond what mine is. If you brought both of us bad news, my wife would begin crying immediately, okay? Because you'd immediately feel what you said.

If I don't see it, it isn't happening, right? All right, until I see it, and then maybe not even then because I kind of compartmentalize. Because if you don't, it's just too hard. Because if you don't compartmentalize it, I'd be nervous all the time because there's always something else to be doing.

And so I put things in boxes. In my own spiritual life, I have put some things in boxes that don't belong there. The need of this community, things in Pakistan, things in Cleveland, they don't affect me like they should.

They don't break my heart for sorrow because that's them and their world, and I have my world, and it's just completely different. And I'm not feeling what Jeremiah's feeling at times. My heart's not broken for the lost.

It just doesn't seem real. When we need weeping prophets, I become like a pundit. I become just a person that gives a commentary on it. What happens when you scroll through Facebook and social media and we see something crazy that's going on out in another part of the world?

[9 : 18] It doesn't break our heart. It's just something for us to talk about. It's just something for us to criticize. It's just a debate between conservative people and liberal people, but it doesn't break our heart, and I want a heart like Jeremiah.

We need to have a heart like Jeremiah. He has this rare response to sin, the one that we often don't have. Jeremiah verse 18, when I could comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

When Brother Brad said that his church was named Vision Baptist Church, I won't name who back there, said, are we going to send him a cease and desist letter and tell him he can't use that name? Because as you know, we had a letter like that because we were World Vision Baptist Church.

But Robert Pierce that started that organization, he barely had enough money to get to China. He stops off in Hawaii. He sees an orphan kid. He isn't able to help the kid. He gets on. He starts sending \$5 a month to help the kid.

And he says this quote that I love. He says, let the things that break the heart of God break my heart. Lord, whatever you say is bad and hurtful in this world, I want it to affect me.

[10 : 13] Because that's how Jesus lived. Matthew 9, 36, when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion. He not only put on a robe of flesh, but he put on the feelings that we should feel when we see people that are hurting.

Jesus' ministry is filled with weeping. Hebrews 5, 7, who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto them was able to save him from death and was heard that he feared.

In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications and strong crying. When Jesus saw people living in sin, it broke his heart. When Jesus saw it, it moved him to compassion and the tears to do something.

Jeremiah hears the cries of people being carried away in verse 19. They say that all hope is gone. The summer has passed and no hope was there. The harvest has passed. The summer, there's nothing.

21, for the hurt of the daughter of my people, I'm hurt. I'm black, astonished. It's taken hold of me. An astonishment. He's just mourning and he's feeling it. He's overwhelmed with sorrow for what he has seen.

[11 : 13] When William Carey wanted to learn about the world, he could read about Captain Cook and he would read about a few people that had been to another part of the world. Judson got a sermon outlined by a guy named Claudius Buchanan called The Star of the East and about how the three wise men, they came and how they were seeking after Jesus and the sermon talked about how people in the other part of the world, they don't know the one true God and it broke their heart.

But what do we have? We have access to all kinds of information and having access to all kinds of information, our heart isn't more broken and we're not more sorrowful but we're just numb to the fact that it's going on.

Brother Brad, it is incredible that we get to hear 40 missionaries or whatever he heard tonight giving an update. When you're preaching, it seems like 700, okay? And I'm happy for most of you. It's always the last few I'm ready to be done with, all right? Only when I'm preaching, all right?

And so, but as we hear one after another, it's just at a certain point there's just a saturation and it doesn't do something. Jeremiah lives in it year after year and he feels it and he's moved with compassion and this is what he said.

It's always amazing when you turn to the next chapter. I'm reading chapter number eight, David, and as I'm reading chapter number eight, I'm just feeling so bad. I'm like, I don't feel like Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived in it and he felt it all the time.

[12 : 24] His emotions were raw and open and he wasn't ignoring the problems and he was weeping for the people. That's not how I feel. Chapter number nine, verse two. Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of a wherefaring man that I might leave my people and go from them for they all be adulterers and assembly of treacherous men.

Jeremiah was real. Jeremiah felt like what we felt like. He said, man, I just want to break from this. I just want to break from people wanting stuff. I just want to break from the consequences of sin.

I just want to break from this world that's like it is. I'm just tired of it. He's not saying he wants a prayer, a sabbatical. He's not saying he wants solitude. He's just saying, I've had enough of all of this. I got to get away from it.

Have you ever felt that way? You know, we get to tell her things. I'm introverted, so I need time away from people or I just need a little break. But what we really want is we just want an escape. We all love each other, but we just want away from each other sometimes.

Most of you know what I'm talking about. Nate Wilkerson thinks I'm just a mean old man, okay? Because he loves you all the time. If you ever need anything 24 seven, okay? He'll be there for you. But Jeremiah says, it's just too much.

[13 : 32] I can't live with this emotion all the time. I need a break. I feel, I just feel all alone. Why? Jeremiah 5, he said, send people out and see if you can find anybody seeking the truth. They went out there and they didn't find anybody.

Nobody seemed to feel the things that he was feeling. He felt all alone, that daily weight that he had. Vince Hadner said it like this, the tragedy of our time is that the situation is desperate, but the saints are not.

We live in a very desperate time. What I just read to you and went through it very quickly, that situation that the children of God were in, we're in the same situation today. People are distorting the word. People are being hurt.

People don't know the true gospel. There's people teaching a gospel that's not true and it's hurting families. There's people that have never heard the gospel and they live with the consequences. And we live in a desperate time, but we're not a desperate people.

And God, I hope you, I pray that it'll change our hearts. We are people who care for a generation. We're given a responsibility. Acts 10, 38, this is what it says about Jesus after his earthly ministry, how God anointed Jesus and Nazareth with the Holy Ghost with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed.

[14 : 40] Sometimes I think when kids hear us talk about doing good because we want to make sure they know that we don't earn salvation by doing good, it doesn't change the fact that after salvation, God left us in this world to do good and to make a difference.

We know what the ultimate good is. It's sharing the gospel. It's helping people, meeting where they're at. But Jesus meant for the truth in our heads to awaken a passion in our hearts. Have you felt that it's hard to do the work when your heart is not in it?

That if we don't keep our heart with all diligence, the issues of life, we have no shortage of ideas. We have no shortage of programs. We have no shortage of opportunities. But what we lack to execute it is heart.

We just don't have the heart to do what he has called us to do at times. What we want to do is we want to run and escape. Twenty years from now, Jeremiah is going to get his chance to step away from the people and get away from it.

Jeremiah chapter number 40 verse 6. Then went Jeremiah and the Gil, Gedaliah, the son of Heicham, the Mizba, and dwelt with him. This is what I want you to notice. And dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

[15 : 44] Jeremiah stays with the people that God's called him to. A couple applications. God's put you with some people. Maybe it's family members. Maybe it's some people you work with. I don't know where they're at. But I want you to make a decision tonight in your seat or here at the altar.

And this decision is not for you. It's for them. Missionaries, you're going to go to people and they're not going to be as lovely as they look in the missions video. They're going to take and they're going to take and you're going to spend your life and you're not always going to see what you want.

And you're going to want to run and you're going to want to flee. And you're going to say, I want to just find a lodging place like a wayfaring stranger. I'm tired of feeling the weight and pressures of ministering to people. I just want to get away from it.

But I pray that Jeremiah is going to say, I'm going to dwell with my people. These are my people. These are the people that God put me in, whether it be on the east side of Cleveland, whether it be in Alpharetta, whether it be on the other side of the world up in New York.

I pray that whatever people he puts you in, you will allow yourself to fill it. It's what it said about Jeremiah. But he did not leave them. He was too noble and generous at heart to become a mere looker on, for this craving is a moral weakness.

[16 : 41] The heroic natures in every age are not seated on the balcony, and they're down among their fellow men, bearing the strain and stress of their position, identifying themselves willingly with the people among whom it may have pleased God to cast their light.

We are called to be soldiers, not to be deserters. We are set here by the ordering God not to fly away, but to hold on, flight on, and trust on to the end. That group of people that you want to give up on, don't.

That group of people that are wearing you out because you're tired of carrying their burdens, love them. Continue. Allow God to strengthen you. Don't leave them. Jeremiah foreshadows Jesus.

Matthew 16, 14, they say, Who do you say that I am? Well, some say you're Elias, and others say that you're Jeremiah. What a compliment, isn't it? When people say, Who do you think they are? They say, We think that maybe you're like Jeremiah. Jesus, Jeremiah foreshadows Jesus in this way.

Remember when Peter tells Jesus, Be it far from you, Lord. Don't let these things happen to you. And Jesus responds, and he says, But he turned, and he said unto Peter, Get thee behind thee, Satan. There are an offense unto me, for thou savest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

[17 : 47] Peter says, Escape. Get away from it. Don't stay here with mankind and let them kill you. Just get away from it. And Jesus says, God forbid. I'm going to stay here.

Jesus not only came to the manger to be with us, but he lived a perfect life, and in many chances he had escaped the ministry, but he stayed until the cross, and he died for us. There's people that God has called you to serve, and they wear you out, and you're tired of seeing the consequences of sin, and they weigh heavy upon your heart, but follow the example of Jesus.

Don't escape. Be like Jeremiah. Have a continual sorrow, but don't get away from it. Look to God to give you strength. So what are some of the ways that we escape? We no longer pray for unbelievers, because it's too heavy on our heart to think that some people will die and go to hell, so we don't want to think about that anymore, so we place that in a box.

Unwilling to meet the needs of people, because meeting the needs of people is messy, and it takes away from ourselves. Always having a commentary about how this world is dying and going to hell, but never praying to God to save some people from going to hell.

Seeking nonstop amusement from television and our electronics, so that we're never faced with the reality that we live in a world where there's people that are hurting. Hiding away with our families with no concern for other people that are dying and going to hell, we have escaped from the world that we live in.

[19 : 05] But Jeremiah felt it. So I want to challenge you to stay in the fight. 9-2, Oh, that I had a wilderness, a lodging place to my wayfaring men, that I may leave my people. Ask God for a godly sorrow for the condition of this world.

Ask God to help you identify your people and give them all that you have regardless of how they're going to respond. Jeremiah, every day, laid his heart on the line and said, God, I'm going to serve these people regardless of what happens.

He knew they weren't going to term, but he had a god that he wanted to obey. So at Christmas, we celebrate that God is with us and we thank God that he stayed with us all the way to the cross and never left us in our condition.

He felt compassion on us. He did not give up on us. According to God's word, I'm going to ask you to recommit to not giving up on your people, that you'll stay in the fight though he causes you to have a heavy heart.

Follow the example of Jesus. There is a bomb in Gilead and his name is Jesus. And so on behalf of the people that you're ministering to here and around the world and you want to give up because you just get tired of your heart being so heavy, don't.

[20 : 09] Strengthen yourself in the Lord. Allow the God of heaven to reach down in compassion and to change some lives because when you wanted to run, you stayed and you kept sharing the gospel. Would you make a decision tonight?

One that's not just for you, but one that will make a difference for the people that God has given you influence with. One that's not just for you,