

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah

A Ray of Hope – the Remnant

November 1, 2020

Sermon Text: Jeremiah Selections

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Last time we just mentioned these doctrines that we see repeatedly in Jeremiah – and really all through the Bible – which we emphasized are vital for us to know and understand. Here they are once again:

Judah's Judgments as a Picture and
Warning of Hell 5:6-9

The Doctrine and Promise of the
Remnant 5:10-11

The Power of the Real Word of God
Contrasted with the Straw of False
Teachers 5:14

The treatment of widows, orphans, and
what the Bible calls “strangers in the
land.”

So as we go through Jeremiah and we see so many of its sections laying out in detail the depths of the sin of the people of Judah (and other godless nations as well such as Babylon), and as we read about God's promised judgments upon them – incredibly horrible judgments – we should remind ourselves of the Lord's holiness, of His perfect justice, and of His great mercy and patience.

Hell is real. The judgments upon the wicked pronounced by Jeremiah, as incredibly severe as they were so that even Jeremiah was often overwhelmed by what he saw and he wept rivers of tears, are nevertheless God's merciful warnings to the wicked of all times and places. See how patient He was with Judah for such a long, long time. See how patient He is with those today who spurn His pleas and warnings. As the Lord was so patient in the days of Noah – so He is today. But one day, the flood will come.

2 Peter 3:9 ESV The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

And then we see this in Jeremiah:

The Power of the Real Word of God
Contrasted with the Straw of False
Teachers 5:14

Look particularly at this passage:

Jeremiah 23:28-29 ESV Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. (29) Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

I do not fully understand this truth, but I do know that it is an amazing thing and that our own salvation in Christ is bound up in this being true. Our hearts were like rock – hard and unbelieving. Stubborn. But the Word came. The gospel came and...

Romans 1:16-17 ESV For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the

power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

For me to be saved, for me to be born again, for me to be made a new creation, *required power. More power than could ever be found in all the world.* It required that creative power of God by which He spoke and the world came into being. Here it is again:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. (4) For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. (5) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

And again:

Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the

thoughts and intentions of the heart. (13) And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

His Word creates. His Word brings life from the dead. His Word brings judgment and destroys the enemy. He speaks and it is done. And that is why this Book we hold is powerful. It is His Word.

1 Corinthians 14:24-25 ESV But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, (25) the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

And what Jeremiah is emphasizing is that the false prophets spoke merely straw. Their words nourished no one. They were powerless. God's Word exposes that straw and burns it up.

All of this and more is a primary reason we gather each Lord's Day to hear His Word. It is why we emphasize the importance of picking up our Bibles regularly and reading. I know soooo

many people who are stuck. They are stuck in those old strongholds and fortresses that are raised up against them knowing and being freed by the Lord's truth. And why are they stuck? Because they keep eating straw as a diet. They listen to false teachers and read false things. They embrace a religion that claims to be of Christ but it is not.

John 8:31-32 ESV So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, (32) and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

People want counseling. They want therapy. Those things have their place but the bottom line is that it is the power of God's Word, of Christ's truth empowered by His Spirit in us that is going to blow apart those false ideas and lies in our minds that hold us captive. His Word can do it. It will do it. But if we choose to eat straw, then we are going to remain stuck right where we are.

The treatment of widows, orphans, and what the Bible calls "strangers in the land."

One mark of a true church, of a true Christian, of a genuinely regenerate heart indwelt and led by the Spirit of Christ, concerns this matter of the treatment of the oppressed. This shows us God's own character – He cares for the downcast and oppressed. He hates the wicked who oppress.

And this theme is found over and over and over again in the Bible. The Lord clearly wants us to get it. You see it in the story of the Good Samaritan which we read earlier. And here it is throughout the Bible:

Exodus 22:21-24 ESV “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. (22) You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. (23) If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, (24) and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18 ESV For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. (18) He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow,

and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 ESV “You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge, (18) but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. (19) “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. (20) When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. (21) When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. (22) You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

Deuteronomy 27:19 ESV ““Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

Psalms 68:4-5 ESV Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him! (5) Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

And here you have an entire Psalm on the subject:

Psalms 82:1-8 ESV A Psalm of Asaph. God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: (2) “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah (3) Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. (4) Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” (5) They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. (6) I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; (7) nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince.” (8) Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!

Isaiah 1:16-17 ESV Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, (17) learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

Jeremiah 22:3 ESV Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.

Malachi 3:5 ESV “Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

So if you want to know something about God, if you want to know God truly, here is something that is obviously an essential part of who He is – He is the defender of the oppressed. His intense anger burns against those

who oppress them. And if we say that we are His people, then we had better be sure that this quality of His is evident in us.

People say, you know, “there will be hell to pay.” Well more accurately, “there will be the wrath of God to pay” for all who take advantage of and neglect or oppress the weak.

Now, let’s spend the rest of our time this morning considering this theme of the remnant which we find in Jeremiah and throughout the Bible.

The Doctrine and Promise of the Remnant 5:10-11

Jeremiah 5:10-11 ESV “Go up through her vine rows and destroy, **but make not a full end**; strip away her branches, for they are not the LORD's. (11) For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly treacherous to me, declares the LORD.

You see this kind of phrase pop up right in the midst of these sections announcing Judah’s coming judgment. There is usually no explanation given – just “make not a full end.” Here are some more examples:

Jeremiah 4:27 ESV For thus says the LORD, “The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.

Jeremiah 30:11 ESV For I am with you to save you, declares the LORD; I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

Jeremiah 46:28 ESV Fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD, for I am with you. I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.”

Amos 9:8 ESV Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the surface of the ground, except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” declares the LORD.

Isaiah 10:20-22 ESV In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in

truth. (21) A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. (22) For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.

Romans 9:27-29 ESV And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: **“Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,** (28) for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” (29) And as Isaiah predicted, “If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.”

Romans 11:1-5 ESV I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. (2) God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? (3) “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” (4) But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept

for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” (5) **So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.**

This last verse here in Romans 11 is the key to this whole theme of what the Bible calls *the remnant*. You should be very, very thankful and encouraged each time you come across it in the Bible.

Look at 9:27 again. Just as it was only a remnant of the Jews who returned to Israel after the captivity (under Ezra and Nehemiah), so it is a remnant, a chosen remnant, who are saved in Christ. And this remnant is all of God's own creation – we exist only because of His loving election. If it were not for His doing, we all would have perished in our sins just like Sodom and Gomorrah. Chosen – by grace. That is what this remnant is. And that is what these verses back in the Old Testament are about when the Lord says things like “only I will not make a complete end.”

Isaiah 6:10-13 ESV Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and

understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” (11) Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, (12) and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. (13) And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

See it? From the remnant of Abraham’s offspring, Christ came. And from all of the human race, it is those chosen by grace, entirely of grace – who are the real people of God. These truths are evident in the Old Testament, and yet the Jews completely missed them.

Do we see the doctrine of the remnant being ignored and willfully denied today in the church? Of course.

When I was a kid, growing up in the church, I was in an environment that largely taught, formally and even more often informally, that lots and lots of people are Christians and that it was my job to make more Christians. And yet, look at this:

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 ESV What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. (6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (7) So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

It is the remnant, and the remnant *is God’s own creation*. There would not be one single Christian *ever*, if God had not created us. We exist only because we are chosen by the Lord by grace, and grace alone. Otherwise, to say it again, we would have been a pile of ashes for all eternity like Sodom and Gomorrah.

This is what Jesus meant when He told the woman at the well:

John 4:23 ESV But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Therefore, no matter how dark and evil the days become, *God always has His remnant*. His true church is always in existence – the gates of hell will never overcome it and wipe it out. Never. And that is very, very good news.

