

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

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## *Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah*

Persevering in a Land Racing  
Toward Judgment

*January 31, 2021*

**Sermon Text:** Jeremiah 15

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 15

This morning we are reminded in this chapter of Jeremiah of the judgment to which every wicked nation and people in our time are racing toward. God's dealings with the unrepentant, unbelieving, idolatrous, covenant-breaking people of Israel and Judah not only effected His justice upon them so long ago, but they also serve as a graphic warning to all today who are walking in the path Jeremiah's countrymen were:

Matthew 7:13-14 ESV "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction,

and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

We learn in Scripture, even though it was written so long ago to people who lived so long ago, the same things they needed to learn. We learn about God. About who He is. About how He deals with His creation and with man. We learn about ourselves and how, when a person is without Christ, living in hardened unbelief, such a person is headed for eternal destruction. We learn the blessings of following Christ and of the new creation that is coming. We learn that we need a Savior or else we would surely travel down the very same damning path the people of Judah did.

Here, and in many if not most of the book of Jeremiah, we are having a sobering truth driven home to us. Specifically, that any person who rejects Christ is going to end in destruction eternally, and even more sobering – that the wicked will eventually cross a line so that God hands them over to judgement with no

place left for His mercy. That is to say, we learn that God's mercy is not infinite. That His grace is patient to an incredible degree, but it is not unlimited.

How many people today claim that it is? Most people who claim to be Christians have been taught that "no matter what, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Is that the message we see here?

Jeremiah 15:1 ESV Then the LORD said to me, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go!

Moses and Samuel were two of the greatest intercessors in the Old Testament. For example:

Exodus 32:11-12 ESV But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? (12) Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the

earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.

Psalms 99:6-8 ESV Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called upon his name. They called to the LORD, and he answered them. (7) In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them; they kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them. (8) O LORD our God, you answered them; you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

And similarly-

Ezekiel 14:12-16 ESV And the word of the LORD came to me: (13) "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, (14) even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD. (15) "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the

beasts, (16) even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.

I want to mention two things in this regard:

1. First, to those of you who know Christ and are born again. *This sobering truth is part of the gospel.* We must warn people with the bad news before we give them the good news! And specifically, that if they refuse to turn and repent and come to Christ in faith, the day will come, if they persist in their evil sin, when that turning will be impossible, *even if Moses, Samuel, Daniel, Noah, and Job were to pray for them!*
2. And to those who are hardening themselves and refusing to come to Christ – many of you seem to think that your mother’s prayers or your grandmother’s prayers for you will, in the end, surely be heard by the Lord no matter what and you will not see hell. You are deceived. Look at the scripture

here. Were any of your mothers or grandmothers or fathers or grandfathers more godly than Moses, Samuel, Daniel, Noah or Job? I think not. And yet here the Lord declares that even if THEY were praying for you, there will come a time, if you persist in rejecting Christ, that the Lord will not hear them.

“Send them out of my sight and let them go!” Go where? This is the answer:

Jeremiah 15:2-3 ESV And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.’ (3) I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the LORD: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

Note: *There is no place of rescue or refuge for such people. None. Pestilence. Sword. Famine. Captivity.* All forms of judgment that the Lord had decreed for Judah, and all of them

pictures of the fate of all who reject Christ and serve false gods today. These terms are pictures of hell.

Jeremiah 15:4-6 ESV And I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem. (5) “Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you? Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare? (6) You have rejected me, declares the LORD; you keep going backward, so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you— I am weary of relenting.

The Lord is merciful and gracious and forbearing with the wicked. But notice here that He says of Himself that at some point He is *weary of relenting*. Weary of giving them one more chance. Weary of withholding the wrath that His holy justice requires.

Consider this, all who reject Christ now and refuse to confess your sin to Him –

*The Lord has been relenting of His judgment upon you for your entire life!*

We all enter into this world dead in our sins and under condemnation, deserving of God’s wrath. There are no exceptions. That little child, that old man – all are dead in sin and the only remedy is Christ. *There is no more important thing in our lives at any time than this – you must be born again.*

How many years have you lived in this present life? If you are born again, how many years did you live before? Dead to God. A hater of Christ. Walking in rebellious sin. How many years? Then realize this – all that time, ALL of that time, ALL of those years, *the Lord was relenting of exercising His just and righteous judgment and sending you to hell*. Every day. Every second, He was relenting. Why?

1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And so He relents. He holds back His hand. And yet, every second of every minute of every hour of every day, you were standing at the brink of your “just reward,” and as Jonathan Edwards said, *the only thing that was holding you*

*back from that eternal hell, was the hand of the One whose justice required that He cast you into it.*

***There is no greater peril than to be the enemy of the Lord, and for Him to be your enemy.***

And one day, for all who wickedly persist in detesting the cross of Christ, God will grow finally weary of relenting, and no prayer for you will ever be heard again.

Notice again the first part of verse 6 –

(6) You have rejected me, declares the LORD; **you keep going backward**, so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you—I am weary of relenting.

See it? *You keep going backward.* Backward. Here is its meaning:

Isaiah 50:5 ESV The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward.

To go backward is to embrace evil, instead of going forward in following the Lord. It may come from the idea seen in battle when the Lord is blessing

or not blessing, giving victory (so the army goes forward), or defeat (and the army flees back). The people of Judah habitually went backward. They fled from their enemy, the Lord. Instead of going forward in His righteous way, they went backward and followed their sin. The Lord invited them, called to them, urged them to repentance, but they turned their backs to Him.

He relented, and relented and relented, until one day when He grew weary of relenting and the northern armies came and wiped out Judah.

People often speak today of “having a close call with death.” Perhaps a car wreck they survived or something heavy fell and just missed them – so they say “that was a close call.” The meaning is, *a close call with death*. For all who are not in Christ at this moment, *every second of every day is a close call with death!*

Isaiah 1:18-20 ESV “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (19) If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; (20) but if you refuse and rebel,

you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Look also again at verse 5 –

Jeremiah 15:5 ESV “Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you? Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?”

Let’s apply this once more to our own day and situation.

- Pity
- Grieve
- Ask about

None of us, no matter how troubled and unloving a background we may have come from, have ever lived for a moment in a world where pity, grief, or concern for others were non-existent. In fact, one of the ploys of the wicked is to manipulate people into feeling sorry for them, pitying them, grieving over them, being concerned and asking about them. These things are classic tools of a psychopath. He or she wants you to feel sorry for them.

But sometimes pity, grief, and concern are good and proper. We are to be concerned for others, we are to pity

them when they are in a miserable plight – especially one that is not of their own making – and we grieve for others when they are grieving. These are blessings from the Lord and they are expressions of genuine love for others.

Imagine, however, if you can (and you probably cannot do so completely), imagine a place where there is no pity or grief or concern for others. Ever. Not even the smallest amount. Imagine the wicked being in a place *for all eternity* where no one will ever pity them, no one will ever grieve about them, no one will ever ask “hey, how is Joe doing?” Never, never again. That place is called Hell. And it is such a place because it is devoid of the Lord. It is that place of outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth because nothing good is there – all that is good comes from the Lord, you see.

And so, let me address anyone who is dead in their sin, who is refusing to humble themselves and plead with Christ for His salvation – you want people to pity you. You want others to grieve with you when you are grieving. You want others to be concerned about you and ask about you. Right now, you can have these things – though in your sin you probably don’t get as much of

them as you crave. I want to warn you soberly – while the Lord Himself pities you in your sin, while He grieves over your hardness of heart, and while He is concerned for your soul – a Day is coming when all of that will be over for you if you do not repent and believe in Christ and be born again. No one, not even the Lord, will ever again regard you in either of these 3 ways.

Those of you who do know Christ – let's think about this. Will we, when we are in the New Creation, pity the wicked in hell? Will we grieve for them? Will we ever ask about them? My opinion is that we will not. Because the New Creation is a place of perfect joy. I suppose that if we ever did think of someone we knew or loved in this life who ended in Hell, that somehow our love for the Lord and our joy in all that He is will be able to rejoice even in respect to His glorious justice exercised upon the wicked. And perhaps we won't even remember such people then?

Revelation 21:3-4 ESV And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their

God. (4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

### Christ the Winnower

Take note of verse 7. It is passages like this, coupled with the New Testament, that show us we certainly are to see that the Old Testament is the picture of the reality in the New -

Jeremiah 15:7 ESV I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork in the gates of the land; I have bereaved them; I have destroyed my people; they did not turn from their ways.

Now, compare this verse with this one:

Matthew 3:11-12 ESV "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (12) His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

John the Baptist, you see, announces blessing for those who believe in Christ and judgment for the wicked. The picture is drawn from verses in the OT like this in Jeremiah. And here it is *Christ* who has the winnowing fork in his hand.

Notice that, as we have seen in Jeremiah, there is always certain hope for the righteous. While Christ winnows and burns the chaff, that same winnowing process separates the chaff from the wheat. If you are in Christ, then YOU are wheat. If you aren't, and you depart this life outside of Christ, then you are the chaff.

Look now at verse 8-

Jeremiah 15:8 ESV I have made their widows more in number than the sand of the seas; I have brought against the mothers of young men a destroyer at noonday; I have made anguish and terror fall upon them suddenly.

The Lord's judgments upon the wicked are always ironic. I suppose we could say they are *fitting*. And you see it here. Remember this? –

Genesis 22:17 ESV I will surely bless

you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,

Understand? God's judgment of Judah was a reversal of the Abrahamic covenant. It was the blessing turned to curse. It would be *widows* who would be more in number than the sand of the seas.

The words of the Lord through His prophet Jeremiah then are words of encouragement to His people, and sober, serious, fearful warning to those who are stubbornly refusing Christ. Both purposes are His mercy. It is merciful to warn the wicked of their peril and of Hell.

Though there will always be false prophets and preachers who tell us that the Lord would never do anything like this, that there will always be peace and security and prosperity for everyone – the people of Judah found out otherwise. The same words remain true today.