

Crushed

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Bible Text: Jeremiah 23:9-12
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Take your Bibles and turn to Jeremiah chapter 23 and verse nine. Now let me also say that in your bulletin today if you will read the little tract we put in there about cultural conformity, if you will read that, not while I am preaching, but if you will read that some time today and then also the pastor's notes and it pretty well goes along with both the messages that we are preaching today.

Sometimes people say, "Tell it as it is." And that is what I am going to do today by God's grace and his enabling power.

You know, sometimes, well, every time we should tell the truth even if it hurts. But you tell the truth in love because you realize the consequences of the truth is not heeded. And I feel like that I am coming as that today as I told you when I first started on Jeremiah 23—I think we had five messages in it total—is that God just impressed it on my heart and kept bringing it back to mind till I finally started preaching and then tonight I will preach the last message which goes only through verse 22. We won't finish the rest of the chapter, but it is a passage that really jumps on the preachers. It lets the preachers have it right between the eyes, ok? And that was the preachers of their day, but there is a message for your preachers today.

So let's look at Jeremiah chapter 23 verses nine through 12.

Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.¹

¹ Jeremiah 23:9-12.

Now shall we pray?

Father, I pray that you would begin to reveal the holiness of God in his love, but also in his justice, in his peace and yet in his judgment, the holiness of God in his joy and yet the holiness of God in his correction. And I pray that you would just begin to open the understanding of each one to your person in your holiness. If there is one in this auditorium who does not know that if they died today that heaven is their home, I pray that today would be the day they come and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We ask this in Jesus Christ's precious and holy name. Amen.

I have titled this sermon "Crushed." The word "crushed" conjures up thoughts of a person who is completely broken. They are drained of the energy of hope and accomplishment and they are in mourning, but not just mourning, they are mourning bitterly and the Spirit seems to be broken.

I use the word "crushed" because it is the result of a people, a church, a country. We love them. But their actions have crushed us completely.

You see, any person that has been hurt by an unfaithful man and they will know the meaning internally of the word "crushed." You find a parent whose child is under the control, the total control of drugs, alcohol, deviant sex and resultant crimes and you will see a parent who knows what it means to be broken or crushed.

And our text gives us, today, four views. First of all we see crushed in heart. Look again at verse nine.

"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness."²

He says, "My heart is broken." That phrase simply means, "My heart is crushed." But he knows why. It is because of the apostasy of the day, not falling away from religion, but falling away from true doctrine and holy living.

Oh, he has just spent the previous verses speaking of the great time of the millennium, but now the present day and judgment is about to fall. His heart is crushed for the actions of the prophets, speaking of the preachers of the day, the pastors of the day who had corrupted their way, the liberal clergy, the folks that decided to go with the contemporary crowd, those preachers. And this chapter is addressing them.

I recently heard of a Christian college that was formerly a fundamental independent Baptist college, that has now just produced their first religious rock music CD album. My friend, it breaks your heart to see that Satan has had the victory. And, oh, that more of us who are the preachers of the Word would be broken over the state of Christianity today.

² Jeremiah 23:9.

Notice the description of this broken man Jeremiah. His bones shake. He staggers like a drunken man, one who is incoherent. His heart is broken because of those who are supposed to be the teachers and the preachers of this precious Word of God have compromised it. They have led the people to the very life that they are to hate. They have led the people to live the life and they have justified that life of which God would want them to preach against, obviously.

Jeremiah is a man who loved God and took things to heart. He suffered greatly at the hands of the people and, may I add, it was religious people. Notice his view of the Word of God.

If you just turn back to chapter 15. Keep your finger where we are, but just go back to chapter 15 and in verses 16 and 17 we find Jeremiah's view of the Bible, the Word of God.

He says in verse 16 of Jeremiah 15:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name.”³

You know, we are called Christians, that means Christ like. That is to be called by his name.

He says, “I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers.”⁴

That assembly are the religious, but they are the ones that mock the fundamentals of the faith.

“...nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand.”⁵

“I separated. I come out from among those who would not stay true to this Word.”

“...for thou hast filled me with indignation.”⁶

His heart is crushed. He is as a man who falls apart physically and staggers as the drunkard, crushed because men who pretend to have a divine commission from God speak their falsehood as if it was from God. They have justified the works of the flesh while at the same time they have vilified the life of holiness and separateness from the world and the words of the Lord and the words of his holiness.

³ Jeremiah 15:16.

⁴ Jeremiah 15:16-17.

⁵ Jeremiah 15:17.

⁶ Ibid.

The Bible and holy pureness are twisted to justifying, to living in accordance to this age.

As men have further corrupted his Word with each new bold translation they have diluted his holiness and they have diluted the holiness of the house of God. And as the prophet views it, he is broken. He is broken.

There are those of us in this auditorium today who can remember back of how it was. And you have got to realize there are people under 40, under 30s that never saw it that way. But we remember how it was and it breaks our heart. And the question is: Are we truly crushed? And if we are not crushed have we considered that maybe we are growing numb, numb to the offense.

As a drunkard is numb as he falls and hits the ground, but doesn't feel it due to his drunkenness we cease to be an instrument that God could use for a revival because we have grown numb to the offense to his holiness.

Secondly, we see he is crushed by the hatred of man for that which is holy.

In verse 10 it says, "For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right."⁷

Well, we are beginning to see the facts and the consequences. The land is full of adulterers.

A few years ago a president of the United States had an affair with an intern. Recently a congressman sent lewd photos from his telephone and it becomes a thing of jokes and our political offices that should be held in regard becoming more and more of a joke and they lose the dignity of their call.

Ninety years ago a comedian by the name of Thaddy Arbuckle had some sexual misconduct and it was made known to the public and it completely ruined his career. Have you seen any Hollywood celebrities ruined by adultery lately? Instead, they are made heroes. And it is a terrible commentary on the country.

But he also adds, "Because of swearing."⁸

Now a lot of times we think of swearing as, "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God," but that is not what it is talking about in this particular instance. It is talking about foul language, cussing.

Because of cussing and foul language, the land mourneth. The prophets were mentioned in verse nine. The preachers, they have not spoken up against these sins. They have not condemned them and if foul language is not removed from our television, if it is not

⁷ Jeremiah 23:10.

⁸ Ibid.

removed from our print media, if it is not removed from our day to day public discourse, let me tell you something. This country is doomed.

Now some many laugh about that because of our foul language is so common everywhere we go. But, my friend, God listed it as one of the main reasons that he put Israel completely out of the land, destroyed the majority of their people with a violent death and nobody occupied that land for 70 years. It may not be serious in our sight. It is because we lack the capacity to understand the holiness of God. And we have got to wake up. We have got to wake up.

God is holy and we are seeing a slow, downward spiral that continues to pick up speed as did in the day of Israel. It began affecting its economy and agriculture just before military attacks. Where are we?

I remember a guy that I knew in high school who was arrested for public profanity. How often do you hear that now? Is it because it has stopped? Oh, no. Even our public officials use it in their speech and giving speeches. People, every where you go think nothing of it. Your men that are a little older now, do you remember back there whenever a lady walked by if there were any men using foul language they cut it off right there. Now the ladies are worse than the men in many cases.

You see, this foul language you must first quit using it in your homes. Not only quit using it in front of your children, quit using it at all. If you are cussing, you have got a spiritual problem. That is the truth. Children come to church and they use foul language. Guess where they got it? There is no revival without repentance. And one of those things that involve repentance is cussing. And it is a shame that there are many Christians that if they heard this message today they would think that that was one of the funniest, craziest and most extreme things they had ever heard. And they would think that, honestly think that, because they have no idea of the holiness of God. And that breaks our heart.

We are told “the land mourneth”⁹

That means that there are famine conditions. Have you noticed that besides the tornados and the floods and the drought and the economy, people have not said a whole lot about the effect all of this is having on our crops? Too much more of this and we are going to have more trouble than just a lack of jobs in this country. And too many preachers have backed off when the media attacked them for saying the judgment of God is beginning to come and it is for our sin in this country and as soon as preachers say that, boy, the media attacks them and they back off.

And, as Margaret Thatcher said years ago, “It is not a time to go wobbly. It is time to stand.”

⁹ Jeremiah 23:10.

“Their course is evil,”¹⁰ which speaks of violence. How safe is it to walk in just a town like ours? We don’t have to say, “New York City.” What about Watts in Los Angeles? Walk in those places and oh, boy, your life is in danger. Why don’t you walk by yourself downtown to [?] about midnight one time? Scare you half to death.

What I am saying is that violence covers the land as it did in the days before the flood, as the Lord said it would be before he returns.

The people don’t know it and I don’t know why they don’t report it, but on Memorial Day just past several major cities saw young gangs attack women, children and the elderly.

Dryness and drought affects many areas whereas on the other hand floods are affecting the other areas. And because there is no repentance in the land, no repentance in the church and no repentance among the liberally contemporary preachers, the judgment of God is beginning to unfold. And if we have standards they are of the holy to crush our hearts.

Let me tell you something. Nineveh in Jonah’s day, they did not become a spiritual giant, but they did repent from their sin and God gave them an extra 150 years. But that is not the normal. When Isaiah preached they killed him. When Jeremiah preached they put him in chains, they put him in dungeons, they beat him. Ezekiel and just before the judgment came God sent these men of God with the message and they hated them. And usually it was the religious people that hated it. It was the religious preachers that hated it.

And what I am trying to say to you is that where you see the preaching of the Word, telling the truth and then it calls the things that our flesh like to do sin, especially if it is going on in our churches like the rock music, the immodesty and so many other things. They don’t like it called sin. It is a preference, preacher. Yeah, it is. It is a preference for sin. And what I am saying to you today is that the world doesn’t like that message. It hates it.

The two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11 during the tribulation period, they are going to preach the truth. They are going to be put to death and this civilized world is going to let their bodies lay in the street for three days, viewed there so all the world can see it and they will all send gifts one to another as if it were Christmas time, celebrating the death of men who told them the truth, who could have just stopped and spared their lives, but motivated by love they told the truth.

Where are we in this country today? Are we going to stand?

Next he is crushed by the hypocritical clergy as verse 11 points out.

¹⁰ Ibid.

“For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.”¹¹

Prophet, priest, again. We are looking at pastor and evangelist, the televangelist. And notice the charges that they are profane. That word means wicked, corrupt, polluted. Basically that is referring to these preachers. They are hypocrites.

And how are they hypocritical? Because they are supposed to be preachers of the Word. They are supposed to be men who walk in the Spirit and their ministry justifies the life of the flesh. They condemn holiness, calling it Legalism.

Jude verse four states it best of these people when it says that these folks, these people “[turn] the grace of our God into lasciviousness.”¹² In other words, removing the restraints. If it feels good, do it.

And it was predicted of the last days. It was predicted that the preachers in the last days would... many would turn that way. They have a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof, the power of holiness. That which purifies and makes us new creatures. They are profane in my house. They have copied Hollywood and they are more interested in a production than they are a message. Their important thing is time frame, sound bytes and sentimentality. And they have led multitudes to drink the Kool Aid.

Their example has affected the rest of the country. Let me tell you something. Anyone who says you can't win them anymore with that kind of music and with that kind of preaching is usually someone that has found numbers are more important to their ministry than truth. Numbers are more important than the Word.

And, my friend, pray for those people because their judgment is coming except they repent.

Instead of being crushed by the hypocrisy that has allowed CCM and immodesty in the Church, let alone in the public fanfare. We are being entertained. The Christians, God's people that sit in God's house seek after week after week are being entertained by the filth of Hollywood with this language and sex and it is dooming this country to destruction.

And unless Christians say, “All right. I am going to stand. It is not going to be in my house. As for me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord,” until we get to that point, this country is on its way out.

Rock music was listed by a Cleveland disk jockey with the terminology rock and roll to describe the sexual connotation that the music inspires. Beat driven music, now in the church they like to say CCM, as if it is something new. Do you realize that is not new?

¹¹ Jeremiah 23:11.

¹² Jude 4.

Do you realize beat driven music was used 3500 years ago for the purpose of pagan religion and sexual activity?

I used to early in my ministry ask couples when they had marital problems and there was sexual immorality I would say, “Why kind of music are you listening to you when you get in your car? What kind of music do you listen to around the house?”

And it fit the pattern. And here is this music that is so sexually stimulating. And then we think it is good for teenagers who are their most virile part of their life. We think it is good. They will put Bible words and the name of Jesus to it. And we don’t think there is anything wrong with that? And pastors have allowed it in first.

We need a revival to save this country.

Finally we see he is crushed by the hardness of the people. In verse 12, you know, at some point people lie to justify their going away from God. And when they truly don’t see anything wrong with these things it means they have hardened themselves against the holiness of God.

And so verse 12 says their ways are slippery.

These ways will not save homes and marriages. They won’t save your children from pornography. They won’t save us from corrupted worship. They won’t save us from God’s judgment. And God says, “I will bring evil upon them.”¹³

Then? The prophets, the priests, the preachers. Why? Judgment begins at the house of God, the houses that have compromised. And God says, “I will bring evil upon them.”¹⁴

It has the idea of trouble and adversity.

“Even the year of their visitation.”¹⁵

That word “year” speaks of a cycle. There will be a cycle of punishment that only grows more strong.

“Visitation” speaks of the punishment itself. It is the anger of God outpoured.

Now let me tell you something as clearly as I can tell you right now. Hell is a reality. And you don’t escape it by being religious or joining a church or being baptized. You must be born again. God’s judgment is a reality. God’s chastening of his people is a reality and if we are unrepentant, we will see the wrath of God outpoured upon this country and true repentance will seem very radical to the world about you, to your own family.

¹³ Jeremiah 23:12.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

But if you don't, just like as that dirty dish water goes down the drain, we will see our children, our grandchildren sucked down the drain of hell because we, in order to have a relationship—whatever that is—with our kids, put God on the back burner. It is time to quit making it about ourselves and make it all about Jesus Christ.

Judgment begins at the house of God, but I ask you a question. Has the sin of the day, as it permeates so many Christian homes and churches, has it crushed your heart?

Shall we bow our heads?

Now, Lord, as we prepare to sing hymn 366, I Surrender All, I pray that our people would surrender all, being willing to be used of you in these wicked and evil days, to be a light that is the true light of Christ, not the lights of this world, but the light of Christ, not the light of religion, the light of truth, the light of your Word. And I pray that their personal lives, our homes and our church will be built on that and may we commit ourselves to that today, if these things, this language, this music and these other things are in our lives, I pray that today would be the day we come and say, "Lord, take it from me. I don't want it. Please take it from me." In Jesus Christ's name. Amen.