

## Peace, Peace, When There is No Peace- Nigeria

I've given some hard messages the last couple nights and I do it not because I desire to give hard messages, I do it because I want to heal the people of Nigeria. There's a reason why the Word of God is called a sword, because when it's yielded properly it hurts. It doesn't mean that we don't find comfort from the Word, but the Word is designed to cut. I hope tonight to cut; I hope to also give hope because God promises good to His people. He promises good to those who turn from their sin. I want to specifically talk through a passage in Jeremiah 6, where God speaks to Jeremiah with warning but also tells us what we must do. He doesn't desire to leave His people without hope, even those in rebellion to Him, He says how they can be rescued. I want to preach through Jeremiah 6, starting in verse 10. Remember the context of Jeremiah is before Judah gets taken to Babylon. Jeremiah goes through the wars, through going to Egypt and finally the destruction of the Jews. Chapter 6 is before they have been taken into captivity and at this point He had sent prophet after prophet and Jeremiah is one of the last prophets before judgment comes on Judah. In verse 10, this is God speaking, "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it." I've been saying a lot of warnings and it's so easy if your ear is uncircumcised, meaning if God has not opened your ears to hear, I can give you all these warnings and they will just pass over you, you're not even able to give heed or respond because it is by God's grace that we can respond. The person who thinks that they have heard, but really has not heard at all, they say their ear is circumcised, but the question is do you heed and accept the Word of God? Do you heed what God says? God, through Jeremiah, is going to make a very simple test whether your ear is circumcised or not, whether you can hear what God says or not. It's really simple, it's how you respond to the Word of God. Do you desire the Word of God? The idea of the word of the Lord being a reproach to them is that they read it and it bothers them. They read it and they don't say what can they do to obey this, they read it and instead say God can't be like this. They read it and say God couldn't have said to do this, they read it and instead of using it to see who they are they use it to deny who God is. The hope is that you read the word of God and accept it as true. If you do that you're far along with accepting the teachings of the last couple nights. But if you instead want to treat the word as something that should be twisted, should be cut in pieces. What I mean by this is if you read what God said through Moses, let me make that clearer, what Jesus Christ said through Moses, because Jesus Christ said no one has seen the Father. So when there was the fire on the top of the mountain, when Moses went up amidst the lightning and thunder, when he received the law of God he didn't see the Father, he saw the Son, he saw Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ said to obey all His commandments, His commandments are what He gave Moses. If you want to take the law of Moses and say that God can't say to put someone to death for adultery, be very afraid of the state of your soul because the word is a reproach to you. God gave us His law and His law is this test. That's what it says in 2 Corinthians 3, to the Jews when Moses came before them, they were terrified to see the glory of God on his face so they demanded at all times he wear a veil because the word of God was a reproach to them. But in 2 Corinthians 3, it says everyone who does not know God has a veil on their heart and they cannot look at Moses, they cannot look at his words because they are a reproach to them. Everything changes with Christ, when Christ comes into someone's heart the veil is removed and instead of not being willing to

see what the law of God says, we look at it and we are transformed. We are transformed from glory to glory. That's exactly the same thing Jeremiah is saying, those who hate God hate His word so when they look at His word they change it, they twist it, they ignore it. Jeremiah goes on to say that they have no delight in it. If you are in Christ the opposite is true, the word of God is a delight. We read Deuteronomy and we are thankful that God shows us our sins because we recognize that sin separates us from the living God. Our desire should be to draw close to God. God says the church is His bride, if a bride does not want to draw close to her husband, there is a problem. There's either a problem with the bride or the husband, if you are part of the bride of Christ and you do not desire to draw close to God, He's perfect so it's not His problem, it's always your problem. Draw near to God, desire His word, desire to understand what He has said you should do. Is God's word a reproach to you or is it a delight to you? These things that I have said over the last couple of nights, in one sense they are a judgement, but in a more important sense, they are a hope. I've told you how your society can be healed, not based on my wisdom because I'm not that wise, but God is wise and all-knowing and God has told you what you need to do. This is how Nigeria is healed, but it starts with the church desiring the word of God. I think four years ago when I was here I challenged you to read through the Bible in a year. You want to heal Nigeria? Find hope and help and delight in the word of God. Do you ever open it or is it just this prop you carry around to look holy so people say there's a Christian or do you open it and read it? If you delight in a certain kind of food, how do you know you delight in that food? Given a choice you eat it. How do you know if you delight in the word of God? Given a choice you open it. Are your ears uncircumcised or do you find your delight in the word of God? Have you even tested it? I assume this is true in Nigeria as well that you give a new food to a little child and they say they don't want that, I want what I'm used to and then the parents make the child eat the new food. A lot of times they find great delight in it. As a child, it's just that they haven't tried it. This should create fear in you if you do not find delight in the word of God. If you don't know, go find out. If you haven't been opening it and reading it, go open it and read it to find out what God has said. Don't just read the gospels of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ said the law. Make sure that you delight in looking in the face of Moses. Go read the word, don't just walk away from this weekend and ignore what was said. You can say you are more comfortable if you just close your eyes and ignore what was said, but the reality of God's judgement doesn't change because you ignore it. It's far better for you to know where you stand with God, go find out if you delight in His word. Verse 11, "Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, and on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, the aged with him who is full of days." This is Jeremiah's message, he sees how the Jews are despising God, how they claim to make offerings to God, how they claim to praise God, and Jeremiah doesn't sit back and say it's all fake, but so what. Instead he is filled with fury, righteous fury. I don't come here filled with fury towards you, but there is a point where if the sins of Nigeria are not repented of, it is valid for me to come with fury because it's reflecting the fury of God. God isn't kidding, He isn't saying this is some game. God, just for an example, took something like three million people out of Egypt and He saved two of them into the Promised Land, Joshua and Caleb. The rest of them He killed as an example for us. God's willing to kill people so you will understand. God is serious about these things, Jeremiah was serious about these things, are you serious about these things? God says in verse 12, "And their houses shall be turned over to others, fields and wives together; For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land," says the Lord."

Jeremiah recognizes God is going to cause the elderly to die, husbands shall be taken with his wife, the young men are going to be judged, fields will all be destroyed. God is serious about these things, how serious are you about His word? How serious are you about knowing what your sins are? How serious are you about the worship of God? Yesterday I talked about when God looks at our worship, as we raise our hands, if we are not dealing with our sins, He looks at them as if they are covered with blood. How serious do you think God is? How serious do you think He considers sin? Serious enough to send His Son, serious enough to have His Son mocked, scourged, crucified. If you don't take sin seriously you are denying the seriousness of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is not possible to think Jesus Christ is significant without thinking that your sin is significant because His significance to us is He dealt with sin. If you don't take your sin seriously, you don't understand who Christ is and what He did. Verse 13, "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely." Have you ever held out your hand for a bribe? You are given to covetousness; you are wanting something you did not earn. I see so much bribery when I come to Nigeria, bribery is a sign of a nation given over to covetousness. Are you given over to covetousness? Are you trying to figure out how instead of receiving a fair wage, how to manipulate to get extra? Instead of giving a fair price for a good that you sell, try to manipulate to get a higher price. When Zingak and I go shopping he always tells me to hide in the car because he says if I go in the store the price will go up. That's a sign of a nation given to covetousness. A workman is worthy of his hire, but if you try to take advantage, that's covetousness. God is looking at Judah with all their sins and He says He is filled with fury and He is going to destroy their families, destroy their fields, destroy their houses, and He says it's because of covetousness. Are you given to covetousness? Are you different than the world around you or are you dismissive of your sins and say it's not that big of a deal? Or to put it another way, do you just say the crucifixion of Christ is not big deal? If you don't take your sin seriously, you do not take Christ seriously. Even those sins that seem so minor, like the sin of covetousness, all sins are serious. Are you dealing with your sin? God goes on to give another testimony of Judah, who is going to be destroyed, is like. From the prophet to the priest, everyone deals falsely. Do you realize how serious lying lips are in the eyes of God? But you say you're not a prophet or a priest. If that's true you are not a Christian because Acts 2 says that in giving the Holy Spirit to everyone, He made each one of us a prophet. That doesn't mean you are now going to know the future. What that means is that you have the Spirit of God and you can declare who God is, which is what it means to be a prophet. The prophets and priests were lying. God says His children do not lie. I want to consider one of the most damaging lies that people can say, which is in verse 14. "They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace." When you see someone struggling with sin and you say, 'But you love Jesus Christ', then you are dealing with your people falsely, you comfort them for the moment, but you don't get them to peace with God. It's so easy when you see someone with sin to say, but I see how you worship, I see how faithful you are with your money, I'm sure you're fine with God. That's saying 'peace, peace' when there is no peace. As a prophet and priest, make sure you never give false comfort. As you read through the Old Testament, this is a consistent sign of false prophets, they want to give comfort without knowledge. Nobody knows anybody else's heart, all you can see is the outside. Don't ever presume you know someone is a Christian. As you read through history you hear these bold men of God that end up in serious sin, sin that testifies they could not possibly ever have been saved. I remember the story of a famous pastor who keeps his seminary degree

on the wall in his office, not to brag about how he has a seminary degree, but because of the signature on the certificate. The person that was the head of the seminary turned to sodomy and rejected all things of God. Never comfort people by saying you know they are Christians because it is a lie, you do not know and it is not your job to be the comforter. God sent a comforter, God sent the One who testifies in our heart if we are saved or not. The Holy Spirit is the One who gives us peace with God. It is the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of truth that never lies, never says peace, peace when there is no peace, and never heals the hurt of His people slightly. This has always been a sign of false prophets, that they say what the people want to hear instead of saying what God says. Be a faithful prophet, declare the holiness of God, declare the mercy of God testified to by His Son. Let God be the Comforter. Verse 15, "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, they shall be cast down," says the Lord." Do you know how to blush? Be ashamed. What that means is, do you ever see what you do and you are ashamed of what you did? Do you actually look at your sin and say you can't believe you did this? Do you say you hope no one can see you did this? When your heart is hardened to sin, people can confront you and say, 'How dare you bribe', and you have no shame. They can say, 'How dare you charge him one price and me another' and you just shrug your shoulders. Are you ashamed by your sin? If you are not ashamed of your sin, God will cause you to fall. Another way to put this is, are you modest, are you trying to show yourself off? Men can do this as easily as women. Women can do this by their dress, a man might do this by their behavior. In either case they don't know how to blush and be ashamed of their behavior. Do you want everyone to look at you? That's a dangerous thing because you made yourself the center and God says He will punish them and cast them down. Then He goes back and says this is how you have hope. Verse 16, "Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" Do you want to know the paths that were set by the Christians before you? Paul gives a command to Timothy when he sends him out to lead a church. He doesn't say to come up with something new to entertain the people, he says to keep the form of the words he had given him. Do you want to know the old ways, the ways of the people who God blessed before? Or do you say that's old fashioned, we've come up with a better way now. That's a sign that you have left the ways of God because He says this is the narrow path and you have to stay on the narrow path. If you don't want to look back at the men and women before you and look back at the ways they preached the gospel and the things that were said, then you should be concerned about the state of your soul. In July I did a conference in Miango and an elderly man came up to me after one of the sessions and said that he was in church not long after the original missionaries were there and he said I said the same things they said. That was very pleasing to me because my desire is not to do anything new, my desire is to tread the paths that many have done before me. The narrow path is still the narrow path. The things that pleased God are still the things that please God. Do you want the old path? I want to speak to the youth especially. When you hit a certain age you want to show yourself as distinct from your parents. That distinction should only be, are you more faithful to walk on the old path. If you want to walk on a path different than faithful parents, you are saying you want to walk on a path that leads to destruction. I don't care what you say with your mouth, people falsely proclaim Jesus Christ all the times. The Jews said they were the people of God and God said there was only a tiny remnant. Do you want God's path or the worlds path? It has nothing to do with your parents, it has all to

do with the rebellion in your heart. Do you want the path of the faithful that went before you or do you want destruction? He promises destruction for those who will not walk the old path. Make sure you are choosing and not just blindly following, because the judgement is the same for both. They will fall, they will be destroyed. Whether it's the simple who just follows his friends or if it's the ring leader that tries to get people to join in with him. Both are on the path that lead to destruction. Make a choice who you are going to serve. Are you going to serve the Lord? If you are going to serve the Lord you are going to want to know the old path, the other choice is to choose destruction. If you choose the old path, then you will find rest for your souls. God will give you rest, God will give you peace, God will give you joy. The things that are most precious in this world is what God will give you, but you have to desire the path that Paul set down, that Jeremiah set down, that Moses set down, that Jeremiah set down, that Peter set down, that James set down, that Christ set down. That's what it means to follow Christ, to not desire new things, but to desire the old things. God goes on and says in verse 17, "Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'" Maggi keeps referring to my last name, listen to the sound of the Horn that is blowing here tonight. Listen to the sound of the trumpet. God has set a watchman over you, He has sent me here standing in front of you to declare truth and hope to you or to declare judgment to you and that you are headed to destruction. That's what every Christian is to do. Ezekiel 33 talks about the watchman blowing the trumpet and warning the people of the destruction to come. I'm here warning you of the destruction to come, don't let it fall on deaf ears. Judah responded by sticking their fingers in the ears, they responded by saying they wouldn't listen. That didn't change their destruction at all. If you think this just applies to the Jews read verse 18, "Therefore hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them." Do you even read the word? Do you even know what it says? I'm sure everyone in this room knows certain verses. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." But God didn't say one verse was more important than others. He didn't say to read John 3:16, but not Deuteronomy. He destroyed Judah and made the Jews wander the earth. At the end of Deuteronomy 28, He said He would make them a watchword and a byword throughout all the nations. We hear about problems with the Jews all the time, about sinful persecution of the Jews, but understand that God set them there so we would look at them and say this is what happens to a people who will not hear. This is what happens to a people who profess my name with their lips, but will not heed my commandments. He says, hear you nations, hear you Nigeria, this is what God does to people who will not heed His word. Do you want to know what it says? You cannot heed it unless you want to know what it says. Do you open it? Do you read it? You say you can't read well, go learn how! If this is your life, why aren't you making an effort to hear what He said? That's exactly what Isaiah said. One group says they can't read it, but that's not excuse. If you desire to know God, you will figure out a way. If you think the judgment of God is a real thing, then He is going to pour out His wrath on those who reject Him, on those who will not heed His word, you will sacrifice all to know it, you will sacrifice all to know that God said. He destroyed Judah so you would know the importance of reading His word. Those who won't heed His word, heed His law, those who reject it. Verse 20, "For what purpose to Me comes frankincense from Sheba, and sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet to Me." He says your worship is worthless. If you do not want to know His word, if you don't want to obey His law, your

worship means nothing, your tithes and offerings mean nothing, your prayers mean nothing, your baptism means nothing. Do you desire to heed the word of God?

Oh Lord God, I do pray that You cause Your word to flow mightily in this place for that is how You cleanse Your people, that is how You love Your bride, You wash her in the water of the word. This is how You remove her sin, how You remove her spots and wrinkles. This is how You give us life, a life that's faithfully lived for You is we know what You want. Oh God I pray that You give a burning desire for the people in this room to know what You want, to know what You hate, to know what You love. Give us a desire for Your word. Let us look in the face of Moses with no veil on our hearts so we change from having the glory of just salvation to have the glory of shining forth who You are to the world. This requires Your Spirit to work in us, convict us of our sin oh God, guide us to Your truth oh Lord. Put to death the old spirit. We all need this. I beg You to work among us. We thank You for everyone who believes, we have the promise that You will do this. For everyone who You started to save, You will conform us to the image of Your Son. Oh God, do this work among us.