

THEY CRY PEACE, WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE

JEREMIAH 6:14 • TV-007A

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Jeremiah 6:14

“They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”

The greatest blessing that almighty God can give to a nation, to a community, to a church, or to a people, is to give them a truthful, regenerated, godly and sincere minister of the Gospel.

And the greatest curse that God can permit to fall upon a nation, a community, a church, or a people, is to leave them in the hands of an unregenerate, blind, unfaithful and an insincere preacher.

One of the greatest blessings that God can give is to give us men who fearlessly and boldly and for God’s glory proclaim His Word.

Now, there have been false prophets and false preachers down through the ages; our Lord called them, *“Wolves in sheep’s clothing.”* He said, *“Beware of false prophets. They come to you as wolves in sheep’s clothing. Inwardly, they’re wolves. Outwardly, they behave themselves like ministers of righteousness.”*

I want you to take your Bible with me and turn to several passages of Scripture that deal with false preachers and false prophets.

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First of all, in **Jeremiah 5:30**; now listen to this Scripture; *“An astonishing and horrible thing is committed in the land.”* What is this horrible thing, this astonishing thing?

“The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests rule by their own hands.” And here’s the astonishing thing, *“And my people love to have it so. But what will they do when the end comes?”*

Our Lord is saying that the prophets are prophesying falsely and the priests are ruling with their own hands and the amazing thing is that people like it that way. But He says; *“What will they do when the end comes?”*

And then in **Jeremiah 23:1-2** the Scripture says this; *“Woe to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God against the pastors that feed not my people; you have scattered my flock and driven them away.”*

I was looking in the book of Ezekiel the other day and I found these two verses of Scripture; they are amazing. The application to this day is absolutely astounding. I want you to listen to this in **Ezekiel 34:2-3**; *“Son of man; speak against the shepherds of Israel. Speak against the false prophets. Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves, that do not feed the people.”*

Should not the shepherds feed the sheep? They feed themselves. They don’t feed the sheep. They eat the fat from the sheep. And they wear the wool from the sheep but’ *“You feed not the flock. You take the fat from the sheep and you take the wool from them but you don’t feed them. Woe unto these shepherds, woe unto these pastors, and woe unto these false prophets.”*

Then, over in **Romans 16:18** the Scripture says; *“They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but they serve themselves. They serve their own belly. And by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple by beautiful speeches.”*

And then in **2 Timothy 4:3**; listen to this; *“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears who will turn away their ears and their hearts from the truth.”*

Now, I’ve selected from my text today, from the book of **Jeremiah 6:14**; *“They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”*

Jeremiah is speaking against these false prophets, these false teachers. He’s speaking against these who do not feed the sheep. And he says; *“They have healed the hurt of my daughter slightly, saying, Peace when there is no peace.”*

Now, he charges these false prophets with three crimes.

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First of all: He says in **verse 13**; *“They are covetous men, every one of them; every one of them is given to covetousness.”*

What is it that the false prophet or a false preacher covets? Well, first of all, he covets the praise of men. *“They love the praises of men more, our Lord said, than the praise of God.”*

The apostle Paul said, *“If I please men I’m not the servant of Christ.”* My business is not to please men. My business is to please the Lord, to preach the Word, to preach for the glory of God, not to please men or to seek their praises.

Another thing that these false prophets covet is money and material possessions. That verse I read to you from **Ezekiel 34:2-3**; you write that down and go back and read it later. He said, *“They eat the fat of the sheep. They take from the sheep, the fat, and they wear the wool that they take from the sheep but they don’t feed them.”*

And that’s the way so many false preachers and prophets are in this day. They receive salaries from their churches. They drive automobiles furnished by their churches. They live in houses furnished by their churches. They eat food furnished by their churches but they don’t feed the sheep.

And then not only do they covet money and material possessions but these false preachers and false prophets, our Lord says; they covet titles and high-sounding phrases. He says, *“They love the uppermost seats in the synagogue.”* They love greetings in the marketplace and they love to be called master, teacher, reverend, doctor, bishop, archbishop, superintendent, and masters.

These men love titles. They love the honor that comes from men.

They love the greeting in the marketplace and they love the high seats in the synagogue. They are covetous men, coveting money, coveting possessions, coveting fame, coveting personal glory, coveting titles and the praise of men.

Now another charge he brings against them is this; *“Every one of them is given to covetousness, (but not only that) they deal falsely with my people.”* Oh they deal with the people and they speak to the people but they do it in a false manner.

Now how does God deal with His people? How does the Lord God of heaven deal with His people? He deals with them through His Word. That’s how He speaks to us.

Through the Word of God we are convicted of sin. Through the Word of God our thoughts and our actions and our motives are judged. Through the Word of God Christ is revealed. Through the Word of God the Gospel is received. Through the Word of God we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God always has dealt with His people with a, *“Thus saith the Lord,”* not what the minister thinks, not the traditions and customs of the fathers. But here the prophets, the true prophets of

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God, came to the people and they said, “*Thus saith the Lord.*” That’s how God dealt with His people.

Listen to these Scriptures; “*My Word shall not return unto me void,*” God said. Now the Words that preachers speak may not accomplish anything but God’s Word always accomplishes something.

God’s Word, if it is preached in its purity; it will not return void. His Word is the savor of life unto life and death unto death but it does not fall on ears of people and return to God void. It will accomplish that whereunto He has sent it.

Listen to this Scripture; “*Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.*” How does a Christian grow? He grows on the Word of God.

Listen to this Scripture; “*All Scripture and is given by the inspiration of God (is God breathed) and all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might perfect (be mature and perfected) in Christ Jesus.*”

“*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that precedeth from the mouth of God almighty.*” We cannot grow on traditions and rituals and ceremonies; we’ve got to grow by a diligent use of the Word of the living God. “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed to the Word of God?*”

And these false prophets do not preach the Word. You can go into an average church today and sit down. And if you hear one, two, or three, verses of Scripture; it’ll be an amazing accomplishment.

They do not use the Word of God. The people in the pews do not carry the Word of God because the preacher never preaches from the Word of God. “*They’re dealing falsely with my people,*” God said.

God’s people must be dealt with from the Scriptures. That’s how I speak to you. We speak to God in prayer. He speaks to us through the Word, His Word, not my words, His Word.

Then, listen to this, He said; “*They’re covetous men.*” He says; “*They deal falsely with my people.*” And listen, He says; “*They heal the hurt, (they heal the bruises) and they cry peace when there is no peace.*”

I was in a revival meeting one time in Ashland, Kentucky. Another man was preaching and God was blessing. People were being convicted of sin. People were being shown their guilt before God. They were seeking the Lord and they were crying for mercy. They were receiving Christ.

And one night after the message was preached a young man came forward, about 19 or 20 years of age. He was a church member. He’d been a church member for years, an unsaved church member, a professing Christian, but did not possess Christ. He didn’t know the Lord.

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But he came forward and he told the minister, the evangelist, that he was lost. And the evangelist talked with him for a few moments and another young man walked up who was a church member and said to this young man; “You’re not lost, you believe the Bible don’t you? You believe Jesus Christ died on the cross don’t you? You’re not lost; you’re just disturbed, that’s all, you’re just having doubts and fears. You’re not lost.”

“Peace, peace, when there was no peace,” but he was giving peace. There was no joy but he was trying to give joy. There was no comfort but he was trying to comfort. This young man was disturbed about his relationship with Christ.

And here was a church member trying to sooth him and comfort him in his misery. And the evangelist very wisely said to the young man doing the comforting; “Young man, the only person who will try to convince a lost man he’s saved is another lost man.”

Now I’m not God and I’m not the Holy Spirit and I cannot tell you that you’re born again. I cannot tell you that you’re saved. I cannot tell you that you are a child of God. And the moment I try to begin to tell you, the moment I begin to try to tell you, that you are saved and you are a Christian, is the moment that I’m stamping myself and identifying myself as a false prophet.

These men say, *“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”* God says, “I have convicted, I have bruised the people. I have warned the people.” And then the false prophet comes along and says, *“Everything’s all right.”*

Now my friends; the preacher is sent to preach. The preacher is sent to warn men. The preacher is sent to exhort sinners, not to tell men that they’re all right, not to tell men that they’re saved, not to tell men that all is well between them and God. Only the Holy Spirit can do that.

Paul says; *“I have planted, Apollos has watered, but God gives the increase, God gives the increase.”*

When Paul left those people he said, *“I’m pure from your blood. I have not ceased to warn you day by day with tears, house to house I warned you. I’ve kept back nothing profitable unto you. I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God (the whole Word of God).”*

But I’ve not tried to give you peace; that’s got to come from God almighty. The preacher cannot give it to you. And when he does try to give it to you he’s branding himself as a false prophet.

They are crying *“Peace.”* They’re healing the hurt. They’re soothing the conviction. They’re healing the bruise. They’re pouring ointment over the top of the sore instead of letting God deal with it through His Word and by His Spirit. And they are crying; *“Peace when there is no peace.”*

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Now my friends; let me take the Scriptures and show you God's way of dealing with sinners, God's method of grace. Before the Holy Spirit speaks peace, and I can't do it; the Spirit of God has to speak peace.

And before the Holy Spirit speaks peace to a man's heart, God will give that man a foundation for peace. God will give that man a reason for peace. God will give that man some reason to expect peace.

And here are five things that the Holy Spirit will show every man who has true peace with God. This is God's method of grace. I know this; now you listen to it. I'm not giving peace; the Holy Spirit has to do that.

But I'm showing you what takes place in a sinner's heart when God speaks peace to that heart.

First of all: Before any man can speak peace to his heart he must be made to see, he must be made to feel, he must be made to acknowledge, and to weep over, his actual sins against God almighty.

Every man who has peace with God has wept over and mourned over and grieved over his sins. That's right! Listen to these men who found peace with God:

Listen to David, **Psalm 51**; *"My sins are ever before me. O God, against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightiest be justified when thou condemnest, that thou mightiest be just when thou chargest me with guilt."* I'm a sinner. *"My sins are ever before me. O God purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me; I shall be whiter than the snow."*

Listen to Job; *"I abhor myself. I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes. Once have I spoken things too wonderful for me. I'll not speak again for mine eyes have seen the Lord."*

Listen to Isaiah; he found peace with God. But we hear him saying; *"Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."* This is acknowledging sin.

This is feeling sin. This is grieving over and weeping over sin.

Listen to Paul; *"O wretched man that I am. I'm the chief of sinners. I'm less than the least of all the saints."*

Listen to the Publican who found mercy; *"God be merciful to me a sinner."*

My friends, salvation is for sinners. It's not for righteous people. It's not for moral people. It's not for religious people. It's not for good people. It's for sinners. Salvation is for sinners.

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When the angel announced to Joseph that Mary would bring forth a son conceived by the Holy Spirit he said to Joseph, *“And thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

“The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I’m chief.”

Romans 5:8; *“God commended His love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”*

1 John 1:8-9; *“If you say that you have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But, if we confess our sins, He’s faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Preachers are giving men a word of peace, men who have never felt their guilt, who’ve never taken their place as sinners, who’ve never repented of their sins, who’ve never acknowledged their sins.

They say, “It’s no longer the sin question.” Oh yes it is! Christ said, *“If you die in your sins you cannot come where I am.”* The Scripture says, *“Be sure; your sins will find you out.”* Isn’t that in the Word of God? It is the sin question.

For those who believe on Christ it has become the Son question. But for every person listening to my voice who has not received Christ; it still is the sin question. And before a man can speak peace to his heart he’s got to come to see, to know, to acknowledge, and to feel his sins. Grace is for the guilty.

Secondly: Before a man can speak peace to his heart, not only must he feel and acknowledge his sins, but he will feel and know the foundation of sin, not only what he has done, but what he is.

The Holy Spirit will reveal to him original sin and the nature of sin. Now let me ask you some questions; why do you think evil thoughts; we know we do; now why do we think them? Why is it easier to do wrong than to do right?

Why is it easier for you to read a novel or a fiction magazine than to read the Word of God? Why is it that it’s easier for you to talk with a neighbor than with God in prayer? Why is it that we murmur, complain, covet, envy, hate and are filled with jealousy? Why is it that children who are brought up in Godly homes turn to the way of the flesh, why is it?

Something happened. Something happened not to the outside of man but to the inside. And I can tell you what it is. It happened back in the Garden of Eden. It happened when man fell. It happened when Adam sinned against God.

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And Paul gave an account of it. You see it in **Romans 5:12**; *“By one man sin entered this world.”* We weren’t created this way. *“We were created in the image of God. We were created holy, perfect, and upright.”* Something happened.

“Why do men love darkness rather than light?” There’s something wrong. *“Why is it we call bitter sweet and sweet bitter?”* Why are stolen fruits sweet to the taste? What happened?

“By one man sin entered this world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men (spiritual death).” We died. We lost contact with God. We lost communion with God. We lost the desire for God. That’s what happened.

Look at the world of nature, storms, floods and earthquakes. How many people were killed in this earthquake recently in Guatemala? Droughts, famines, wild beasts, insects, sufferings, sorrow; what happened to this world?

It wasn’t created that way. What took place? I’ll tell you what took place, something happened in the Garden. *“And when Adam fell the whole creation was subjected to vanity,”* the Scripture says.

And God said in **Genesis 3:17**; *“Adam; cursed is the ground because of you.”* When you dig a furrow and plant your seed, thorns will come up, briars will come up, and weeds will come up. It didn’t used to be that way.

When you plant your fruit tree and it grows up the worms will get your fruit and the blight will get your fruit and the draught will kill your garden. Thorns and thistles will come up. *“By the sweat of your brow you’ll earn your bread.”*

What happened? Sin visited this world and contaminated it. And not only contaminated us but it contaminated the ground.

Look at man, *“Created in the image of God.”* Now what does he look like? He’s weak, deformed, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, diseased. He’s old and gray, bent and broken, dead and dying. He wasn’t created that way. What happened? *“In Adam all die.”* That’s what happened.

And my friend, when you look into your heart you’re made to say with the apostle Paul, even you who are born again; *“The things I would do I do them not and the things I would not do, I do. I find a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me.”*

So I’m saying that a man not only repents for what he’s done but he repents for what he is. And these false prophets that eat the fat of the sheep, and wear the wool of the sheep, and don’t tell the sheep the truth are deceiving them, original sin.

Third: I want you to stay with me. Before you can speak peace to your heart you’ve got to come to see what sin is, not only your outward sins, but the condition and nature of your heart.

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Before a man can speak peace to his heart he must be able to see that even in his best duties, even in his best performances, even in his good deeds, there is sin and there is evil

Now my friends, when the Word of God deals with our hatred, when the Word of God deals with our anger, when the Word of God deals with our lust, when the Word of God deals with our covetousness, when the Word of God deals with our blasphemy, and our outward sins like Adam; what do we do?

We run to our good works and we try to balance the account. Or we run and try to make a fig-leaved apron to cover our nakedness. But when we come to see the real holiness of God and the real righteousness of God; it'll reveal to us that even in our good works and even in our so-called righteousness there is sin and selfishness.

Let me ask you this; can you worship God as He is worthy to be worshipped? Have you ever taken inventory of your prayers, how much selfishness there is in our prayers? Have you ever taken inventory of your good deeds, why you do them?

Are they totally motivated by the glory of God or is there a lot of self in it? When there is self, there is sin. Isaiah said, "*All our righteousnesses are filthy rags.*" Bishop Ryle said, "Our best duties are nothing but splendid sins."

God could justly damn us for the best prayer we ever prayed because there's so much flesh in it. And then again He said, "Even our repentance needs to be repented of."

Examine your worship, examine your prayers, and examine this so-called love. Do you really love your neighbor as you love yourself? Do you really, "*Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?*"

Do you really do all, "*In word or deed for the glory of God alone?*" Well, if you don't it's sin. "*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Anything short of holiness is sin. Anything short of righteousness is sin.

So my friends, when we're convicted of sin; we're convicted of the sins of our outward flesh, the sin of our heart, and even the sin of our best duties and our so-called righteous works.

Fourthly: Before a man can speak peace to his heart he will also grieve over one particular sin and I'm going to hit myself broadside now and everybody listening and everybody watching and that one particular sin that is the chief sin, the great sin, the horrible sin, is the sin of unbelief, unbelief!

"*Israel could not enter into the land because of unbelief.*" And Paul said, "*Take heed brethren, lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.*" Can't all of us cry right now, "*Lord I believe; help my unbelief?*"

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Can we not take our place with the Centurion at the feet of Christ and say, “*Lord, help my unbelief? All things are possible to them that believe,*” but we don’t believe. There’s too much unbelief. Will the Son of man when He comes find faith in this world, faith in Christ?

Fifthly: Before a man can speak peace to his heart he must savingly lay hold on Jesus Christ, His righteousness and His sacrifice!

Listen to Him; “*Come unto me and I’ll give you rest.*” There is rest to be found but it’s in Christ. Come to Christ. “*To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God.*”

There’s a privilege for us to become sons of God but that privilege is ours through receiving Christ, not my righteousness, His, not my righteousness, not my works, but His. In Christ I have all things. All spiritual blessing are in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Read these blessed promises found in **Ephesian chapter 1**; “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*”