

TO SEEK IS TO FIND

JEREMIAH 29:12-14 • TV166B

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Jeremiah 29:12-14

“Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”

My subject this morning is entitled: **“TO SEEK IS TO FIND.”**

If you jump to conclusions you will immediately say, “Well, he is going to preach on *“Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.”*”

But, that’s not my subject here. I am going to talk about something that is very vital, very personal, very important, and I think you need to hear it. Our text will be taken from the book of **Jeremiah, chapter 9: verses 12 through 14.**

I want you to hear this message. There is a good possibility it will clear up some things and will answer some questions, at least it will provoke you to thought. I hope not to just provoke you, but to also provoke you to thought.

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In **Jeremiah 29:12 through 14** it says, *“Then shall you call upon me and you shall go and pray unto me and I will harken to you and you shall seek me and find me when you search for me, when you shall search for me with all your heart and I will be found of you, saith the Lord.”*

Now, what’s this all about? Well, Israel was down in Babylon, in captivity, and the Lord God sent a message to Israel by the prophet and this is part of the message; this is part of the directions that He gave to Israel by His servant.

Back, up above that, God said to them; *“I know my thoughts toward you.”* This is back there in **verses 10 and 11**. He said, *“I know my thoughts toward you, (as he was speaking to Israel by his prophet); my thoughts toward you are thoughts of peace, not of evil.”*

The Lord said, *“I will visit you, I will deliver you. I will perform good toward you. However, you will remain in Babylon for 70 years.”* The time of deliverance is not come. The fullness of time has not come. God’s day of deliverance and salvation for you have not come.

“You are going to stay in Babylon for 70 years (you are going to marry and you are going to have children and raise families). You are going to stay in Babylon for 70 years and then at my appointed time I will deliver you.”

“I will be merciful to you. I will bring you out of captivity and I will return you to your land; I will do that.” But, He said, *“then, you will call on me. Then, you will pray unto me. Then, you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your hearts.”*

First of all: Now, let me build a case here; I know this; these truths are undeniable! All spiritual blessings begin with God; they don’t begin with men. All spiritual blessings begin with God.

He said, *“I know my thoughts toward you.”* “I know your thoughts toward me too. Your thoughts are thoughts of hatred and rebellion and enmity.” The natural mind it is *“enmity against God.”*

God said, *My thoughts toward you are peace. My thoughts toward you are good not evil. I will be merciful to you. I will give you peace and not evil.”*

“Herein is love, not that we love God, but he loved us. We love him because he first loved us. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

So, all spiritual blessings begin with God. God is the fountain of mercy. God is the source of grace. It all begins with him.

God is love and we are hate. God is Light and we are darkness. God is truth and we are lies. God is good and we are evil. God is life and we are death. It all proceeds from him. So, I know that to be a fact.

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Secondly: All spiritual blessings come to us from God freely; we don't pay for it and we don't earn it. God said, *"I will visit you; I will bless you; I will come to you."* In **Romans 3:24**, Paul said; *"We are freely justified by his grace. The wages of sin is death."* Yes, we have earned those wages; we deserve those wages, they are ours by merit.

But, *"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Salvation is to everyone that believeth. The gift of God is in our Lord Jesus Christ. All spiritual blessings are from God. They originate with God and they come to us freely, freely.

Thirdly: All of them are in Jesus Christ!

Let me ask you a question: why do so many serious and sincere people seek and never find God? Now, you think about that. Why do so many, I believe sincere, serious, religious, and moral people, seek God and never find Him?

I will tell you why; they seek Him in the wrong place; God is in Christ. There is no way for you to have any kind of relationship with God except in Christ. *"No man cometh to the Father but by me."* That is what Christ said.

There is no way that you can have any knowledge of God apart from Christ. *"No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* That's just so!

There is nothing deep or confusing about that; that is just the truth. *"This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life. He that hath not the Son of God shall never see life."*

Everything God has for sinners are in Christ. *"It pleased God that in Christ should all fullness dwell and you are complete in him."* I know these things to be true.

If you will read the Scriptures and if your preachers will read the Scriptures and if we will teach the Word of God, you will also see that they are true.

Even your natural understanding tells you the truth (that anything good must come from God), because man is not good, God is good. Anything that comes from God to man has to come freely, because we don't have anything to contribute to God. God is independent without us.

How can the creature contribute anything to the Creator? He made all things. He made us. He made everything we eat, drink, wear, and enjoy. What can we add to Him, it is all His?

God said, *"If I was hungry I wouldn't ask you. If I was thirsty I wouldn't ask you. The cattle on a thousand hills are mine"* and all that God gives to us is in Christ, the only perfect man, the God-man.

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Fourthly: Now; you listen to this; this is the foundation of what I am preaching: God said to Israel *“You are in captivity. You are going to stay there 70 years.”*

“There is a day appointed when I will deliver you. I plan to deliver you. I know my thoughts toward you, thoughts of kindness, peace, not evil. I will deliver you but you will call upon me and you will pray to me and you will beg deliverance and you will seek me.”

The Scripture teaches, there is a people chosen and are given to Christ by the Father.

There is no need to deny that; the Lord said six times in **John 17**, *“Those that the Father gave me.”* In **John 6:37, 39** he said, *“All that the father giveth to me shall come to me. This is the will of him that sent me that all of which he hath given me I will lose nothing but raise it up the last day.”*

“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation” and He has given us to Christ. We know that is so. Those who are redeemed by His blood, and we know that is the only way sinners are redeemed, by the blood of Christ, *“not by corruptible things such as silver and gold.”*

We know the only way that sinners are forgiven is in the blood of Christ. God said, *“When I see the blood I will pass over you. Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he hath saved us.”*

“Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ. I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, go in and out in find pasture.” You see; that’s clear in the Scripture.

What I am saying is this; those who have been given to Christ and those who have been redeemed by Christ will truly seek Christ. They will pray unto Christ, they will seek Him, and they will cry unto Him with all their hearts.

This is what God says to Israel: *“I know my thoughts toward you. (I know what I purposed to do for you. I know what I planned to do for you through the surety). I will bless you, I will deliver you, I will bring you out and deliverance will be free, but you are going to seek me.”*

“You are going to cry unto me with all your heart. You are going to call unto me.” *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* If a man never calls on the name of the Lord he will never be saved. That’s true!

In **Mark 16:15** our Lord told the disciples to *“go and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”* No man will ever be saved who does not call on Christ.

A man is not saved by praying; he is saved by Christ. No man has ever been saved by praying but no man has ever been saved who didn’t pray. That’s just so!

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No man has ever been saved by his calling on God. He is saved by the death of his Son but no man has ever been saved who does not call on God. That's just so!

Some fellow says, "Well; I will tell you what I will do; I will just sit in my rocking chair and fold my arms. If God will come, He will come. If God will bless, He will bless. If God will save, He will save. If God will love me, He will love me.

That man will be left in darkness. He will be left in sin and confusion. He will be left to face the judgment of God on his own. Here is what God is saying to Israel: "Yes, I will come, I will come to you but you will come to me."

Listen to this verse: "*All that my father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.*" Yes, He will come to you, no question about that but you will come to Him, you will come to Him.

Yes, He will call on you, but you will call on Him also; "*whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

Yes, He will teach you; "*they will all be taught of God but every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, he cometh to me.*"

He will teach but you will learn. Yes sir! God will love you but you will love Him too. It says, "*If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord comes.*" That's so!

Yes, He knows you. He said, "*I know my sheep but I am known of mine. I know my sheep; other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them I must bring and they shall be one shepherd and one fold.*"

You will know Him. "*This is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.*"

Let me tell you something; no man will ever find God who does not seek God and no man will ever seek God who does not need God. No man will ever need God until he is awakened by the Holy Spirit and has that need revealed to his heart.

But, that will be done. The Holy Spirit will regenerate and quicken that sinner and break his heart and strip him and knock his foundations out from underneath him and he will realize his need of Christ.

He will realize that all others fail and he will look to Christ and he will call for mercy and cry for grace and seek the Lord with all his heart. That's so my friend!

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You might say, “How is that consistent with sovereignty? How is that consistent with responsibility?” I don’t know how it is; I just know that is consistent with the Word of God. I’m not trying to be consistent with myself or you or with the Baptist doctrine or anybody else’s doctrine.

I am trying to tell you what God says. He came to Israel and he said, “I’ve got good thoughts toward you. I know your thoughts toward me are not good but I’ve got good thoughts toward you, peace not evil.”

“I will deliver you. That’s my purpose and plan. I am going to set you free. You are my people. I am going to bring you out of captivity and take you back to your glory but you will call on me. You will cry unto me. You will seek me and when you do, you will find me.”

First of all: I hold these truths to be clear from the Word of God; the Lord God in His covenant of mercy has purposed to have a people like Christ.

Secondly: The Lord God has chosen those people out of all humanity, “*out of every tribe, kindred, nation, tongue, and people under heaven*” and given them to Christ and has made Christ their Surety, their Representative and their Federal-head.

The Lord Jesus came to this earth in human flesh and as a man He obeyed the law. “*He was tempted, tried, and tested as we are, yet without sin.*” He fulfilled and imputed to His people a perfect righteousness.

He went to the cross and there He bore God’s wrath in our stead. “*He was wounded for our transgressions and by his stripes we are healed.*”

The Holy Spirit comes in due time to regenerate, to quicken, to awaken, to bring forth the dead from spiritual graves and call them to faith in Jesus Christ.

But, every one of these people whom God has purposed to save, whom Christ has redeemed, to whom the Holy Spirit calls, they will cry for mercy, they will cry unto the Lord out of their trouble, they will cry unto their Lord from their graves.

They will cry unto the Lord from their distress and they will seek Him with all their hearts. When they do they will be saved and they will be found of Him. It is a sure sign.

Let me tell you something and let this ring loud and clear. It is a sure sign that a man is not one of God’s own who does not seek the Lord. That is a sure sign. There’s not a doubt about it. That’s a clear sign, that’s clear evidence that man does not belong to God.

He is not one of God’s elect; he is not one of Christ’s people. He is not an object of God’s affection if he never seeks the Lord.

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It's a mighty good sign that a man belongs to God if he seeks the Lord; it's a mighty good sign if he cries for grace. He's like the publican in the temple, he cries, "*Lord; be merciful to me a sinner.*"

He'll be like the thief on the cross that sometime in his life with sincerity of purpose in heart, he cries, "*Lord; remember me.*"

Like the woman with the issue of blood who crawled on her hands and knees saying in her heart, "*If I can just get to Christ.*"

Like Bartimaeus of old who couldn't see the sun, who was blind from birth, but reached out with those arms and cried from his sightless position; "*Jesus, thou son of David; have mercy on me.*"

Do you reckon that he would have ever been healed if he hadn't called? Do you reckon the thief on the cross would have ever been saved if he hadn't called? Do you reckon the publican in the temple would have ever been saved if he hadn't called? I will tell you; no sir, no sir!

You might say, "But they will call." That's all right; they will call. Have you called? "Well, no I haven't;" then you are not one of His own.

If you were blind like Bartimaeus you would call. If you were dying like the woman with the issue of blood you would call. If you were in your 11th hour like the thief you would call.

But, you have never been in distress. That is what God said to Israel; "*You will call out of your distress.*" If God brings your heart down to labor and brings you down low enough in despair and sin then you'll call.

Let me show you something, three or four things as we close:

First of all: He said, "*You will seek me and find me.*"

Now, my friends; it will help us to stop with each word: First of all He said; "*You will seek me, you will.*" Now, it's not "let's all go to Christ, let's all of us get together now and form an army and attack the throne of heaven."

No sir! This thing of salvation is a personal matter. I'm not saying that you accept Jesus as your personal Saviour; I am saying that you bow to the Lord of glory; you bow to the Saviour of sinners.

You bow to the redeemer of rebels; you bow down, whatever He does with you, whether He saves you or damns you; He is still Lord. Whether He has mercy on you or passes you by, He is still Lord. He is going to be Lord whether you reign with Him or whether He reigns without you.

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But, I am talking about this; you will seek him, you will. It's not momma and daddy and all the kids, it is you. It is you, "*with the heart man believeth, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

"*Peter, do you love me?*" The other disciples were sitting over there by themselves and He had Peter isolated and He leveled His finger between His eyes and He looked straight into his soul and He said, "*Peter, do you love me?*" That is what I am asking you, do you (you) love Christ?

"*You shall;*" I love the shalls, the musts and the wills of God's Word. God doesn't say, "they might; they ought too, they could or perhaps, "*they shall; you shall seek me.*" "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*"

"*Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring: And they shall hear my voice and they shall be one fold.*" I like that!

Almighty God declares His purpose from the beginning. He said, "*I declare the end from the beginning from ancient times the things that are not yet done.*"

"*You shall seek.*" How does a man seek God? Where does a man seek God? I told you a while ago, the only place to seek God is where God is, where He is revealed, where He is manifested, where He has vested Himself and His presence.

Back in the Old Testament day in the wilderness the place to seek God was in the tabernacle. That is where God dwelt. That is where God met man and men met God was the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies.

That is where the Ark of the Covenant was. That is where the mercy-seat was. That is where the cherubim's were. That is where the Shekinah glory was; on the mercy-seat. God is where He is! Christ is our tabernacle.

God will meet you in Christ or God will meet you at the judgment. You will meet God in Christ or you will meet God at the judgment.

Where does a man seek God? In Christ! He seeks Him in His Word. "*These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and believing you might have life through his name. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*"

Also, a man will seek God in the preached Word. "*God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;*" that which some call "foolishness" is "*the power of God unto salvation;*" that which some call, "sure nonsense." God uses to call out His people.

Who wants to sit and listen to a man preach and preach and preach? Well, most men don't. I don't want to listen to them either (false preachers). I am on your side. Somebody said to me one time; "If you knew what I had to listen to every Sunday, you wouldn't urge me to go to church."

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Well, I will more or less agree with you; I wouldn't go either if I had to listen to a lot that you have to listen to. But, I will tell you; if you can find somebody preaching the Word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then go and hear it because God will reveal Himself in the preached Word.

Also, seek him among His people. I like what Moses said to his father-in-law; *"come with us, come on, go with us, we'll do thee good."* God manifested Himself among his people. That's where you seek the Lord.

Now watch this: *"You shall seek me."* You don't seek the blessing. I know that a lot of people say, "Come to the front and seek the blessing." Well, you might find something; you might find another spirit. You might find a blessing that you think is a blessing that turns out not to be a blessing.

You better not seek the blessing. Satan can give you a form of feeling, blessing, and a lot of things, *"peace where there is no peace."* Don't you seek the blessing; don't seek even forgiveness alone; you might find some kind of peace. I am serious; I am telling you the truth; you might find a peace of presumption.

You talk about peace at any price. Well, the grave offers peace too. No place is as peaceful as a cemetery. That is the most peaceful place on earth. There is nobody coming out and nobody going in. There is nobody making too much noise out there.

You might find the peace of spiritual death. Don't seek peace; don't seek the covenant. Don't seek and find out that you are one of the elect. Don't seek assurance. What did He say? *"You'll seek me, me."*

If you get to Christ you will have everything that Christ is, has, and gives. Don't seek these things; you will fool around and find some of them without Christ, temporary blessings; seek Him.

Israel; *"Let Israel hope in the Lord; with the Lord there is mercy."* Too many religionists are satisfied with the form, the ceremony, the rules, the doctrines, and the constitutions and creeds, by-laws, catechisms, and all of these things, (customs and tradition of men).

I want and need Him. Read the Song of Solomon; *"My beloved is mine and I am his."* I have to have Christ. Christ is real. Christ is personal. Christ dwells in us and Christ lives in us. I have to have Him and you have to have Christ. *"You shall seek me."*

You see, if you have Him you have forgiveness, you have the blessing, you have assurance, you have the covenant, and you have all of these, peace and rest. Christ is our peace, He is our rest, and is our wisdom.

Don't seek these things; I warn you; please don't seek these blessings, these gifts. I know people who seek tongues, who seek prophecy, who seek healing, and seek all of these things.

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There is another spirit, *“there are principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places.”* They give things and do things remarkably.

Do you remember when Moses threw down his rod and it became a serpent and those pagan wise men of Egypt duplicated it?

You be careful; you seek Christ and whatever He has for you now, whatever He is pleased to give you now, whatever He is pleased to do with you now, that is His business, that is His providence, that His prerogative, but seek Him. He said, *“When you search for me with all your heart, with all your heart.”*

Now, I know that God doesn't work apart from the mind. I know that a man can't seek what he doesn't know; he can't trust an unrevealed Christ. But, salvation is a heart-work.

It is not a mental acceptance of facts. It is not seeking the denomination or the religious creed that appeals most to you; it is a heart-work. Repentance is a heart-work. Faith is a heart-work. Listen to the Scripture:

“Keep your heart; out of it are the issues of life. My son; give me your heart,” God said. *“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit. God looks not on the outward countenance but on the heart.”*

One of the charges our Lord brought against the religionists of His day; He said to them, *“you call me Lord with your lips but your hearts are far from me.”*

That won't do, it just won't do. *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”* But the devil doesn't love God. We must seek Him with a true heart, not a false heart, not a divided heart, not a double heart, not half a heart, but a sincere and true broken heart.

I don't know how to make this clear to you; I have tried, and tried and tried, but religion is one thing and salvation is an entirely different matter. You may be satisfied with religion but I'm not. I want to know Him *“who to know is life eternal.”*

“I want to win Christ and be found in him.” I want to know Christ *“and the power of his resurrected life.”* I want a union with Jesus Christ.

The Lord makes it plain that those who come to Him, they come in heart. Coming in heart, they come completely like old Caleb; *“Caleb followed the Lord fully.”* Do you know what Caleb means? It means, old faithful dog. That's exactly what it means.

Come continually, *“to whom coming as to a living stone.”* Come willingly, *“whosoever will, let him take the water of life. Thy people shall be willing.”* Come lovingly; *“We love him because he first loved us.”*

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Come obediently, falling at his feet, *“my Lord and my God.”* Come empty-handed. Don't bring anything. Don't bring your time, talents, tithe, or anything else:

**“Just come as you are
Without one plea
But that His blood was shed for thee
And that He bids thee come to him
Oh Lamb of God I come.”**

**“In my hands no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Christ I cling.”**

Sink or swim I go to Him. If I go to hell I will go to hell looking to Christ, believing on Christ, trusting in Christ, and clinging to his cross. That's the way you come. It's a heart faith and a heart union and a heart reception:

**“My Jesus I love thee
I know thou art mine
For thee all the follies
Of sin I resign.**

**My gracious redeemer
My Saviour art thou
If ever I love thee
My Jesus is now.”**

The Lord said, *“You will seek me and find me, when you search for me,”* not as a hobby or a sideline or a religious persuasion or a fit of emotion or out of fear or out of covetousness, but when you seek Christ with all your heart.

When nothing else matters, but a relationship with Christ, *“I will be found of you.”* What a promise! *“Seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart and I will be found of you!”*