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

**What God Thinks of the
Hypocrite**

September 27, 2020

Sermon Text: Jeremiah 3

Scripture Reading: Psalm 33

Let's begin by summarizing the main points and principles we saw last time in chapters 1 and 2.

1. Jeremiah's call from the Lord to announce His Word to faithless Judah was accompanied by the Lord's promise:

Jeremiah 1:17-19 ESV But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. (18) And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls,

against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. (19) They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the LORD, to deliver you."

We also can be assured that the Lord will equip and strengthen us sufficiently to do the work He calls us to do. We need not and must not fear the enemy or be dismayed by them.

2. Forgetting and/or willfully suppressing the history of what the Lord has done for us is an evil sin that will always lead to His judgments coming upon us –

Jeremiah 2:5-7 ESV Thus says the LORD: "What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? (6) They did not say, 'Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man

dwells?’ (7) And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.

3. Very, very often in the history of the church it has been the appointed leaders of the church who have rejected the Lord and led the people astray. We must *never* lazily and carelessly stop searching out God’s Word ourselves.

Jeremiah 2:8 ESV The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’ Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.

4. The sin of idolatry is not only an evil and wicked rejection of the Lord, it is lunacy. It is insanity. It is here compared to rejecting a gushing spring and going out into the dry desert to dig out our own cistern that not only has no water but it cannot even hold rain water since it is full of holes.

Jeremiah 2:12-13 ESV Be appalled, O

heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, (13) for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Yet this is exactly what man the sinner does. It is what people all around us today are doing.

5. Wickedness and rebellion against the Lord in itself brings bitter consequences upon those who pursue it. Those who choose idols will become like them. Dead, unseeing, deaf, insane.

Jeremiah 2:19-20 ESV Your evil will chastise you, and your apostasy will reprove you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God; the fear of me is not in you, declares the Lord GOD of hosts. (20) “For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, ‘I will not serve.’ Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore.

Christ has broken our yoke and burst our bonds, and yet the vast majority of

mankind *will not have Him*. And they perform this rejection without any fear of God.

6. When the wicked are confronted and their sin exposed, they will deny their guilt no matter how clear the evidence against them is.

Jeremiah 2:23 ESV How can you say, 'I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals'? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done—a restless young camel running here and there,

Jeremiah 2:34-35 ESV Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of the guiltless poor; you did not find them breaking in. Yet in spite of all these things (35) you say, 'I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.' Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.'

Understand this – Jeremiah's wicked countrymen were very religious. They went to the temple. They offered sacrifices. They kept their holy festivals. They insisted that they were loyal to God. You will see this theme over and over as we go through Jeremiah. And you see it today, do we

not? The idolater worships his idols, but insists that he is a fine Christian. He refuses to obey the Lord, yet he is adamant that he is in good standing with God and on his way to heaven.

7. A corrupt "church" will always be found putting its faith and trust in something or someone other than the Lord. Such people will always deny their guilt in this, and yet their actions condemn and convict them.

Jeremiah 2:36-37 ESV How much you go about, changing your way! You shall be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria. (37) From it too you will come away with your hands on your head, for the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust, and you will not prosper by them.

We need to think very carefully about this point. We need to think what "Egypt" and "Assyria" the church of our day commonly is trusting in rather than in the Lord. Be sure of this and mark it down carefully:

God never blesses the unrepentant. He does not bless those who run after idols. His blessing is never upon those who,

like the Pharisees, are whitewashed tombs – so holy looking on the outside and yet in reality corrupt, stinking, and rotten in their heart.

Consider this:

Psalms 33:12-22 ESV Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! (13) The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; (14) from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, (15) he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

(16) The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. (17) The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

(18) Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, (19) that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

(20) Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. (21) For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in

his holy name. (22) Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

There is nothing wrong with us when we expect our nation to have a strong military. The king is to bear the sword so that evildoers fear doing evil. And there is nothing wrong with us wanting to have a competent, wise “king” (President in our case, or governors, etc). *But God’s blessing is upon those who fear Him and place their trust in Him. Without His blessing and presence with us, no amount of military might will save us. Those who are delivered from death and kept alive in famine are those who fear the Lord and hope in Him.*

And it is quite apparent to us all I suggest, that our nation and even specifically the churches of our day for the most part are embracing remedies and saviors from all our troubles in a long list of false hopes.

The Lord looks down from heaven, *he sees all the children of man; he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, and he knows their hearts, their motives, and all of their deeds.*

And just what do you suppose He sees? I can tell you at least in part – He sees an unrepentant people. People just like those of Jeremiah’s day. People who go to church on Sunday. People who do not go to church on Sunday. People who call on and use His name and people who only use it for open blasphemies in their cursing. And He sees that so many of these people are just alike. One group sins more openly than the other, but both are walking in sin.

Let me give you an example – and it is exactly as it was in Jeremiah’s day.

I know people, and so do you, who are conservative in their politics, who are opposed to abortion, who believe homosexuality is a sin, who profess belief in God and many even in Christ as God, and yet.... Behind the scenes, out of sight of man, what is happening? They are committing these very same sins and acting as if the Lord does not see:

Romans 2:17-24 ESV But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God (18) and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; (19) and if you are sure that you

yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— (21) you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? (22) You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (23) You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. (24) For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Is this not true in our day? Is the name of God not blasphemed among the non-Christians because of what is going on in the lives of so many who claim to be Christians? Of course this is true. It cannot be denied.

And this is why Peter said this:

1 Peter 4:17 KJV For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

This is a clear principle all through Jeremiah. God begins His searching judgment with Judah, and only then to the nations. He searches out those who claim to be part of His church and people but are in fact counterfeits. And they will receive the most severe judgment of all:

Matthew 11:21-22 ESV “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

Therefore, on that Day when Christ comes, there will be myriads of people who claimed to be “God-fearing,” who in fact will experience the most intense wrath of God – more wrath than even Sodom. These are things for all of us to consider seriously and soberly. It is genuine repentance and faith in Christ alone, it is being born again and being made a new creation that really matters:

Romans 14:16-18 ESV So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. (17) For the kingdom of God

is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (18) Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Let’s move on now into chapter 3. Follow along as I read it and then we will just make a few initial observations and applications – specifically regarding God’s exposure here of the hypocrite’s real person:

[NOTE: idolatry is covenant unfaithfulness to God, and therefore is frequently described in Scripture as marital infidelity, prostitution, or whoredom. Also, references here to “Israel” are spoken about the northern kingdom which was conquered a century or so before Jeremiah’s day by the Assyrians as a judgment of God for evil disobedience to Him].

Jeremiah 3:1-25 ESV “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? declares the LORD. (2) Lift up your eyes to the bare heights and see! Where have you

not been ravished? By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers like an Arab in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your vile whoredom.

(3) Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; yet you have the forehead of a whore; you refuse to be ashamed.

(4) Have you not just now called to me, ‘My father, you are the friend of my youth— (5) will he be angry forever, will he be indignant to the end?’ Behold, you have spoken, but you have done all the evil that you could.”

(6) The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? (7) And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. (8) She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. (9) Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the

land, committing adultery with stone and tree. (10) Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”

(11) And the LORD said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. (12) Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. (13) Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. (14) Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; **I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.** (15) ““And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

(16) And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of

the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again.

(17) At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. (18) In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage. (19) “I said, How I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. (20) Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD.”

(21) A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel's sons because they have perverted their way; they have forgotten the LORD their God. (22) “Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness.” “Behold, we come to you, for you are the LORD our God. (23) Truly the hills are a delusion, the orgies on the mountains.

Truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. (24) “But from our youth the shameful thing has devoured all for which our fathers labored, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. (25) Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.”

This chapter, as we will see next time, looks away into the future – to a day that is still future to us, though it is “now and not yet.” Jeremiah speaks especially toward the end of the chapter of a time of genuine contrition and repentance, and a time when the Lord would call His true people – his remnant –

I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. (14b)

But for now, let's end with this observation.

(4) Have you not just now called to me, ‘My father, you are the friend of my youth— (5) will he be angry

forever, will he be indignant to the end?’ Behold, you have spoken, but you have done all the evil that you could.”

And this is how the hypocrite functions. It is why the Lord despises the counterfeit among His people. They “pray” “my father,” and they remind Him that He must look at them with favor because ever since their youth and from their parents and grandparents’ day, everyone was soooo, “church.” “he is so merciful and forgiving, you know. He understands that we walk in sin but Jesus died for sin and so we are covered.”

This is how they *speak*. But in fact, the Lord tells them, *you have done all the evil that you could*.

Do NOT be this kind of person. The Lord sees and the Lord knows. And take encouragement if you truly do belong to Christ that He knows who His true people are. And who are not.

Calvin’s Prayer:

“Grant, Almighty God, that since you have deigned to adopt us as your people, and to unite us to yourself in

your only-begotten Son, O grant, that we may continue pure and chaste in our obedience to your Gospel, and never turn aside to those corruptions which disunite that sacred bond of union, which has been confirmed between us by the blood of your Son, but that we may so persevere in serving you, that our whole life and all our actions may be evidences of that holy calling, by which is laid up for us the hope of eternal salvation, until we shall at length come into the possession of that kingdom which has been obtained for us by so great a price, and there enjoy the fruit of our faith, sincerity, and perseverance, through Christ our Lord, Amen.”