

*I've Seen It All*I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2,3 **The Abolitionist Movie** - Mon May 16th Only. Former U.S. Homeland Security Special Agent Timothy Ballard. O.U.R. *Operation Underground Railroad*.
- B. Slide4a/b **Thrive** -

II. **Intro:**

- A. Listen in on a very old mans wisdom. He has been through a lot. Studied much. Experienced *women, wealth, & the world*...basically, *he's seen it all!*

III. Slide5 **I'VE SEEN IT ALL (15-20)**

- A. (15b) David answers this in Psalm 37 as Asaph does in Ps. 73.
- B. But I love God's answer when Jeremiah asked it in (12:1-5) *Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?* (1)
- C. Slide6a **Jeremiah struggles w/a couple problems.** He was **troubled**...but *teachable*.
- D. His 3 questions?
 - 1. (1b) **Why does the way of the wicked prosper?**
 - a) Why does a Holy God permit false prophets & unfaithful priests to prosper, while he, *a faithful servant of God*, was treated as a sacrificial Lamb?
 - b) This has been asked by many...*Job, Asaph, Hab, Mal, Jer., by you & me.*
 - 2. (1c) **Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?** *Why are evil people so happy?* NLT
 - 3. (4a) **How long will the land mourn/lie parched?**
- E. Jeremiah gives **his** suggested answer in vs.3...*Make your sheep into roasted mutton or lamb chops. Then* GOD gives His answer (read 5)
 - 1. Slide6b Definitely not what Jeremiah expected...*God's focus wasn't on the wicked but on His servant Jeremiah.*
- F. We usually ask, like Jeremiah, *How can I get out of this? Instead of, what can I get out of this?*
- G. God's servants don't live by *explanations* but by **promises**.

1. Slide6c **Explanations** satisfy *curiosity*, and make us *smarter* but do not heal.
 2. Laying hold of **Promises** build *character* & make us better *servants*.
 - a) God's promises are checks to be cashed, not mere motto's to hang on our wall.(Vance)
- H. auto God's answers are never *philosophical* but **pastoral**.
1. auto They rebuke us, re-orientate us, or reassure us.
- I. God reveals 2 important truths:
1. Slide7a/b **Godly service isn't easy** (5a)
 - a) It's like running a race. Hard work, *mental & physical, sweat & nerves*.
 2. **Godly service becomes harder** (5b,6)
 - a) You've been running w/the **footman** (living in the land of peace/Jerusalem).
The **horses** are coming (the thickets of the Jordan).
 - b) It will move **from** an outside attack **to** inside his own family(6). *The pace just quickened*.
- J. Each new challenge will help develop our faith & help us to grow.
1. *The question isn't* How long? (4) but How will you compete? How will you do?
 2. Slide7c/d Hugh Black (Scottish Preacher) said about Jeremiah, *He needed to be braced not pampered*.
 3. Remember, God is concerned with the development **within** us, not just the difficulties **around** us.
 - a) Stay in the Race – Accept new challenges – Mature in the Lord.
- K. Slide7e (16-18) What's this saying? Is it a warning against extremism? No. Is it saying play it safe & have the best of both worlds? No.
1. It's not saying, *don't be too holy, don't be too wicked...just sin to a moderate degree*.
 2. It is not cautioning against possessing too much *real righteousness*.
 3. The *tense of the verbs* in Hebrew give the meaning, *do not claim to be righteous & wise*.
 - a) You are still on the way & have not arrived yet...

b) As Paul said, *Not that I have **already attained**, or am **already perfected**; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to **have apprehended**; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* Phil.3:12-14

4. That's why God balances our life w/trials & triumphs – to keep you from getting proud & set in your ways.

5. So, he was condemning the self-righteousness of the hypocrite & false wisdom of the proud, & he warned that the sins led to destruction (16b) & death (17b).

a) 1 Cor.1:30 *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us **wisdom from God**; and **righteousness and sanctification and redemption.***

b) Jesus is both Rt & Wisdom to the believer, **don't** try to manufacture these yourself.

c) Also note: **do not be overly righteous** (16) ...must line up w/vs.20.

L. (18) Grasp both **true righteousness & true wisdom.**

1. **How? Walk in the fear of God** (18b)

M. **Slide8** (19) **Power** from w/in is needed *more than* **advice** from w/o.

1. **Slide9** Oliver Wendell Holmes said, **A moment's insight** is sometimes worth a **life's experience.**

2. Swindoll defined wisdom as, *The God-given ability to see life w/rare objectivity & to handle life w/rare stability.*

N. (20) G. K. Chesterton, philosopher/theologian, was once asked, **What do you think of civilization?** Chesterton said, *I think it's a great idea. Why doesn't somebody start one.*

1. Later on, after seeing a series of articles on *"What's Wrong with the World?"* Chesterton sent a short letter to the editor. *"Dear Sir: Regarding your article 'What's Wrong with the World?' I am. Yours truly, G. K. Chesterton."*

2. **All are guilty before God**

a) Ps. 14:3 *They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.*

b) Ps.16:2 *O my soul, you have said to the LORD, You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You.*

3. We are all guilty of the sin of **commission** (commit sin) **but** we are all also guilty of **omission** (from omit, forget to do). *eg. [I had bitterness in my heart for someone vs I didn't show them love]*

IV. Slide10a **EAR PLUGS (21,22)**

A. (21) Spurgeon told his students that they “*ought to keep one blind eye & one deaf ear. You cannot stop people’s tongues & therefore the best thing to do is stop your own ears & never mind what is spoken.*”

1. Who is more at fault in gossip, the **talker** or the **listener**.
2. It not only takes two to fight, it takes two to gossip also. (and tango)
3. Slide10b Great minds talk about ideas; mediocre minds talk about things; small minds talk about other people.
4. **Satan** may want to use criticism as a **weapon** to batter us; **but** if we let Him **God** can use it as a **tool** to build us.
5. Look beyond the critic!

B. (22) Many times...we have cursed others ourselves - We are all *multiple offenders*.

V. Slide11a **INACCESSIBILITY OF WISDOM (23-26)**

A. (23) **But it was far from me** - Even Solomon, in all his God-given wisdom, could not understand all that exists.

1. This wise man knows, that he does not know...**and** this is what helps to make him wise.

B. (26) Solomon had been snared by so many women...*he ought to know!* *Takes one to know one.*

1. Didn't he go after *them*? (yes his fault...**but** he thought he was stronger & smarter **than** to get snared into her trap of *idolatry*)
2. Slide11b So how do you flee from her? Fear God(18)& seek to please Him (26b)

VI. Slide12a **THE SINFULNESS OF MAN (27-29)**

- A. (28b) **1 man in a 1000** - This isn't a literal statement, *rather*, an expression of the limitation of human righteousness (see vs.20). *Wisdom was scarce*.
- B. **Not one woman...** This sounds like *Solomonic Chauvinism*. It wasn't that women were *less intelligent...*
1. He spoke highly of women. *An excellent wife is the crown of her husband* (Prov.12:4). *He who finds a wife finds a good thing* (Prov.18:22). *A prudent wife is from the LORD* (Prov.19:14). *Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies* (Prov 31:10-end). Song of Sol & in Prov. 8 he personifies *wisdom* as a woman.
 2. Women in that day did not have the **freedom**, nor the **status**, to have learning equal to a man.
- C. (29) **This only I have found** (6x's/find or found)...the whole human race is bound by sin.
1. God made man/Adam upright/morally good – **but he disobeyed, fell and now all men are sinners who seek out many schemes.**
 2. **Slide12b But the good news...though we are more *sinful & flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe; yet at the very same time we are more loved & accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.***