

Jeremiah 4

9-25-97

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Over **40 times** Jer. Calls for God's people to "***Return to the Lord!***"
 - 1.1.1. Again Jeremiah uses many images to call them to this!
 - 1.1.2. We are going to look from the angle of "The Heart"!
 - 1.1.2.1. **George Macdonald** "The secret of your own heart you can never know; **but** you can know him who knows its secret."
 - 1.1.2.2. **A. W. Tozer** "The widest thing in the universe is not space; it is the potential capacity of the human heart. Being made in the image of God, it is capable of almost unlimited extension in all directions. And one of the world's greatest tragedies is that we allow our hearts to shrink until there is room in them for little beside ourselves."

2. The Heart Needs a PLOW! (1-3)

- 2.1. **Fallow** = Land that is fallen out of cultivation, or never was cultivated.
- 2.2. Hard hearts need plowing up so they can receive the seed of the Word & bear fruit!
 - 2.2.1. **Julio** in Haiti - All by hand, with a hoe,...it's hard work!
- 2.3. "Their hearts were hard & crowded w/thorns like a neglected, unplowed field."
 - 2.3.1. **Hosea uses this - Hos.10:12** "**Sow** for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your **fallow ground**, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you."
 - 2.3.2. **Jesus uses this** - In Mt.13 in the parable of the Sower (falls on hardened path & on thorny ground)
- 2.4. Where do we see "**Fallow Ground**" today?
 - 2.4.1. **[1]** In The **World** - Un-reached groups(missions...or on your block).

- 2.4.2. **[2]** In The **Church** - There are many who enjoy its privileges - But don't maintain its work!
- 2.4.3. **[3]** In **Our Own Heart's** - What abilities, gifts, & talents are wasted? What opportunities for good neglected?
- 2.5. "Do not plant your good resolutions in a heart filled w/the roots of thorns, but 1st rake up the soil, cleanse it of noxious germs, & then sow the seed which will grow up in a **Holy Life!**"(Pulpit)
- 2.6. **Story:** "There was once a man who had a heart transplant but the operation was a total failure. For the man was a mean man and the heart was a kind heart. His body simply rejected it. - The Bible tells us, however, of a heart transplant that was successful. 'And I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take out the stony heart. I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. And they shall be my people and I will be their God.'" (Ezek 11:19-20)

3. **The Heart needs a SCALPEL! (4)**

- 3.1. The Jews liked **plastic surgery**(dealing w/their outside things); but not **heart surgery** (dealing w/the heart within).
- 3.1.1. **Ps.51:6** "Surely you desire truth in the *inner parts* ; you teach me wisdom in the *inmost place*."
- 3.2. Paul uses this analogy in **Rom.2:28,29** "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."
- 3.3. Later, Jeremiah tells them to circumcise their "**Ears**"! **Read** - Jer.6:10.
- 3.4. Many people depend on: Baptism, others The Lord's Supper, some Confirmation, or other Religious rituals for their salvation - when what God wants for us is "*sincere faith from a repentant heart!*"

4. **The Heart Needs the RIGHT CLOTHES! (5-9; 30)**

- 4.1. Wear the clothes of the Penitent(8), don't dress like a Prostitute(30)!
- 4.2. vs.5 - *Trumpet*/Shofar - to call an Assembly or to War!

- 4.3. vs.6 - Jer. Announces the invasion of the Babylonian army from the North.
- 4.4. vs.7 - *The lion* = Nebuchadnezzar/king of Bab.
- 4.5. vs.8 - *Sackcloth*/Preparation is again by repentance!

5. The Heart Needs CHAP STICK! (10-13)

- 5.1. Chap stick for the “*Dry Wind*”(11) that was coming!
- 5.2. vs.10 - Judgment was coming & they weren’t prepared because they believed the “deceptive message of peace” by the **false prophets**.
 - 5.2.1. They were accusing God of **deceiving** them but they were false prophets who were telling them “peace”.
 - 5.2.2. Their slogan, “*It can’t happen here*”...After all we have the Temple & the Ark of the Cov.
- 5.3. vs.13 - This speaks of how swift Babylon will plunder them: [1] As fast as *clouds* come in [2] As fast as a *whirlwind* whips up [3] As fast as an *eagle*(can drop like a rock about 80-100miles an hour).

6. The Heart Needs a WASHIN! (14)

- 6.1. What a verse! What a question!
- 6.2. Remember in 2:22 they couldn’t scrub themselves clean enough, but God could Wash em!
 - 6.2.1. **Ps.51:1,2,7** “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. **Wash** away all my iniquity and **cleanse** me from my sin.” (7) “**Cleanse** me with hyssop, and I will be **clean**; **wash** me, and I will be whiter than snow.”
- 6.3. **Did you know?** -- In 1842 the first **bathtub** was denounced as a "luxurious and democratic vanity".
Boston made it unlawful to bathe, except on doctor's prescription.
 In 1843 **Philadelphia** made bathing illegal between November 1 and March 15.
 How tragic most **Christians** have adopted a similar schedule of spiritual cleansing. We would rather put up with the stench of our unconfessed sins than come clean before God!
- 6.4. vs.14b - *Thoughts* are important to God not just outward sins

- 6.4.1. Even if a person thinks that they are morally a “good person” (take em here!) Where their *thoughts* keep them from Salvation!
 - 6.4.1.1. Ask them if they ever had a bad thought?
- 6.4.2. **Bertrand Russel** “...**Thought** looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid.”
- 6.4.3. **Marcus Antoninus** “The **soul** is tinged with the color and complexion of its **thoughts**.”
- 6.4.4. **A. W. Tozer** “What we think about when we are free to think about what we will...
...that is what we **are** or **will** soon become.”
- 6.4.5. **Horace** (65-8 B.C.) “Rule your mind or it will rule you.”

7. The Heart Needs a CONFRONTATION! (15-18)

- 7.1. **vs.18** - NIV "Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!"
- 7.2. Note: “**your**” (3 times!) **You** brought this on yourself, **your** conduct, **your** actions!

8. The Heart Needs to BLEED! (19-21)

- 8.1. Listen to the Weeping Prophets heart beat, it’s beating so fast!
 - 8.1.1. He was contemplating a national tragedy that could have been averted.
- 8.2. **NIV** - “Oh, my anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain. Oh, the agony of my heart! My heart pounds within me, I cannot keep silent. For I have heard the sound of the trumpet; I have heard the battle cry.”
 - 8.2.1. When Jeremiah Ministered **Publicly** - he was bold before men;
When he ministered **Privately** - he was broken before God!
- 8.3. **We must care!** - Don’t be self righteous, or condemning!

9. The Heart Needs MATURITY & WISDOM! (22)

- 9.1. God explains 4 reasons why their judgment was coming:

- 9.1.1. **[1]** The people were foolish **[2]** They did not know God **[3]** They were senseless children **[4]** They lacked understanding!
- 9.1.2. Believers should be childlike not childish!
- 9.2. **Q:** Are you as Skillful in doing **good** as a believer, as you were skillful in doing **evil** before you were saved?

10. The Heart Needs to HEED WARNINGS! (23-29)

- 10.1. Jer. Prophecies here what the Babylonians would do to the land.
- 10.1.1. The Chaos that was coming was compared to that of the chaos as described in Gen.1:2.
- 10.1.1.1. Be careful in using this text to pull things out for the creation account. This is used Vice-versa, see prob. w/vs.26 "**cities**" (unless you believe in a pre-Adamic race?)
- 10.1.2. Even the stable mountains were shaking!

11. The Heart Needs to not PROCRASTINATE! (31)

- 11.1. Judah's judgment of her sin, is compared to the woman's curse in **Gen.3:16** "To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children;"
- 11.2. **vs.31b - Procrastination!** She finally throws her hands up in the air to surrender to God...but it's too late(note: murderers are already upon them)!
- 11.2.1. **Don't wait:** Break up the fallow ground of your heart now! Do surgery on your heart now! Repent now! Wash your heart now! Throw up your hands now...in surrender to Him!

- 11.3. **Story** - A **soap manufacturer** and a **pastor** were walking together down a street in a large city. The soap manufacturer casually said, "The gospel you preach hasn't done much good, has it? Just observe. There is still a lot of wickedness in the world, and a lot of wicked people, too!" The pastor made no reply until they passed a dirty little child making mud pies in the gutter. Seizing the opportunity, the pastor said, "I see that soap hasn't done much good in the world; for there is much dirt, and many dirty people around." The soap manufacturer replied, "Oh, well, soap is only useful when it is applied." And the pastor said, "Exactly, so it is with the gospel."