

Jeremiah 9-10

Good evening, Church.

It is so good to be here with you all tonight.

We are going to continue our study through the Book of Jeremiah.

We are now in Chapter 9 and will go through Chapter 10 tonight.

Just a couple of announcements tonight.

Ladies, you will meet at the Big Bear retreat center this Friday for your time away with the Lord.

You are expected to be there around 4 pm for Check-in. I believe dinner is at 5:30 pm.

I have been praying for your time away... I believe God has great things in store for you.

Also, there is still time to sign up if you are a last-minute holdout...

Now, men, there is a men's breakfast this Saturday at 8 am... please come on out for fellowship, food, and a special time in the Word.

Bring your sons too...

Last thing, please get your kids registered for VBS, June 25-28.

Pastor Jairo and his team have already put a lot of work into it... it will be a special time.

I also want to encourage you to post a link for the registration for VBS on your social media platforms... this is a huge outreach opportunity for our Church.

You can find the link on our home page on the website.

So, let's pray, and we can get into God's Word tonight.

Maybe you have heard the phrase, "No one cares about how much you know until they know you care."

As Christians, we have a message of Truth, Absolute Truth, but our message is often not heard because the messengers are led by pride.

They want to prove that they are right and win an argument.

Many put out videos of themselves arguing with people... I am not sure that the ministry is fruitful...

Cold, to the point, insensitive shouting of the Gospel is not enough.

We are instructed in Eph. 4:15 to *spea*k the truth in love.

That love we are called to have makes a big difference.

Paul also taught 1 Cor. 13:1-2 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Love is what connects our message to the heart of the hearer.

People will be drawn more to God's love when they can see it in God's messenger.

Jeremiah, the prophet, was a man who loved intensely those whom he was called to minister to.

He wept for them and cried over them repeatedly because Jeremiah cared.

Tonight in Chapter 9, we will see Jeremiah's heart on display...

Look at the first two verses of Chapter 9...

Disobedience Brings God's Judgment

9:1 Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people! 2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men.

Remember, at the close of Chapter 8, Jeremiah saw the people of God being conquered and exiled.

He knew this was coming and tried to warn and plead for the people to change course.

Here, he is stating poetically that he did not have enough tears or time to truly express his sorrow over the slain of the daughter of his people.

Jeremiah knows what is coming because of their hard hearts, and this reality is breaking him as a minister of truth.

He was filled with grief over the coming judgment on his beloved nation, but at the same time, we see that he was also filled with disgust over their rebellion against God.

He wanted to leave them and escape the corruption of Jerusalem and Judah.

For Jeremiah, the wilderness was preferable to the evil of city life.

He was so despaired about the conditions around him that he wanted to flee; he tried to head for Texas or Tennessee because of the fallen nature of those in his city.

Jeremiah will be called to stay put, to be that herald of truth, as he watches his beloved nation fall due to their rebellion.

Sometimes, we want to flee our problems, run, and escape... but the Lord closes every door... because we are called to stay and proclaim.

Jeremiah sat in the assembly of treacherous men... In our State, we are sitting in a similar place... But we have a mission to accomplish for our King.

Remember, it is not about us, our comfort, our survival; our lives were meant to be used for the Kingdom of Light, to expose the Kingdom of Darkness...

Jesus said, **Matt 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Shine where you are at Church... that is our calling...

It has been said, "A missionary is not just the person who crosses the sea, but who sees across the street."¹

Our brother Curtis, who used to hang around here often, would always send me songs from the '60s and

¹ <https://www.sandyadams.org/media/pdf/2429.pdf>

'70s. One artist was Keith Green, and he has this song called Asleep in the Light where he sings these lyrics...

Do you see? Do you see?
All the people sinking down?
Don't you care? Don't you care?
Are you gonna let them drown?
How can you be so numb?
Not to care if they come
You close your eyes and pretend the job's done

[Verse 2]

"Oh, bless me, Lord! Bless me, Lord!"
You know, it's all I ever hear
No one aches, no one hurts
No one even sheds one tear
But, He cries, He weeps, He bleeds
And He cares for your needs
And you just lay back and keep soaking it in

[Chorus 1]

Oh, can't you see it's such sin?
'Cause He brings people to your door
And you turn them away
As you smile and say:
"God bless you, be at peace!"
And all Heaven just weeps
'Cause Jesus came to your door
You've left Him out on the streets

[Verse 3]

Open up, open up
And give yourself away
You see the need, you hear the cries
So how can you delay?
God's calling
And you're the one
But like Jonah, you run
He's told you to speak but you keep holding it in

Oh, can't you see it's such sin?
The world is sleeping in the dark
That the church just can't fight 'cause it's asleep in the light
How can you be so dead when you've been so well fed?
Jesus rose from the grave
And you, you can't even getta out of bed
Oh, Jesus rose from the dead
Come on, get out of your bed

[Bridge]

How can you be so numb, not to care if they come?
You close your eyes and pretend the job's done
You close your eyes and pretend the job's done
Don't close your eyes, don't pretend the job's done

Jeremiah's heart ached for the salvation of those around him.

Look now at verses 3-6...

3 "And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me," says the Lord. 4 "Everyone take heed to his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbor will walk with slanderers. 5 Everyone will deceive his neighbor, And will not speak the truth; They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves to commit iniquity. 6 Your dwelling place is

in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the Lord.

We see here part of the breakdown of Judah's society was that Integrity was waning considerably.

You could not count on people's words any longer.

Dishonesty was the new normal.

In Jeremiah's day, no one could be trusted or counted on.

I used to hear from the old timers on the job site that business in our country used to be done with a handshake.

A person's word was everything.

They had an unwritten code of ethics that everyone lived by.

People trusted one another...

Not today; in our culture, we cannot agree upon any deal without 20 or 30 pages of contracts and signatures and with a lawyer ready.

People's yes today is maybe, and their no is not even certain.

And this is in the Church...

Jesus taught... **Matt. 5:37 But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'** For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Verse 7 now...

7 Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts:

"Behold, I will refine them and try them; For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people? 8 Their tongue is an arrow shot out; It speaks deceit; One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, But in his heart he lies in wait. 9 Shall I not punish them for these things?" says the Lord. "Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?"

Remember Jeremiah's picture of the metal refiner in Chapter 6.

Jer. 6:27-30 "I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people, That you may know and test their way. 28 They are all stubborn rebels, walking as

slanderers. They are bronze and iron, They are all corrupters; 29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; The smelter refines in vain, For the wicked are not drawn off. 30 People will call them rejected silver, Because the Lord has rejected them."

Here again, God tells Judah that He will refine them. The heat and melting to come were certain.

But understand the purpose of refining... is not to destroy but to purify.

Growing up, we had that song, Refiner's Fire; Pastor Josh will end the night with it tonight.

But understand, when we ask the Lord to Refine us, the process is not fun but necessary.

As the metal goes through the heat, it is melted, and the impurities are worked out, leaving it the purest metal possible.

For our lives to be pure and right before our Lord, we often must go through the Refiners Fire.

God speaks here and says, I will refine them and try them.

Spurgeon said, “The Lord is so resolved to save his people that He will use the sternest possible means rather than lose any of those whom he loves.”²

The refining process is done because God loves us...

Maybe you are in a season of being refined tonight...

The heat is turned up; you might even be tempted to wonder if God is there because it is so painful.

Understand that there is a purpose in the Refining... God purifies your life... Trust Him through it.

Look at verse 10...

10 I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains, And for the dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation, Because they are burned up, So that no one can pass through; Nor can men hear the voice of the cattle. Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled; They are gone.

² <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/jeremiah-9/>

11 "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a den of jackals. I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

With the prophet's vision of the future, he sees the destruction of the cities and villages of Judah.

There will be no more civilization or ruins.

There will be no more farm animals to sustain human life, just wild jackals.

All of this will come to them by the coming Babylonian invasion.

God's justice will be meted out.

God's wrath awakens when deceit, unkindness, and ungodliness rule people's lives.

God will avenge His Holy Name.

We wonder how long our nation will be spared... As wickedness and perversion are not only promoted from the top of our government but celebrated and forced on others.

Gay Parade in Ukraine – If there is time...

Ruth Graham is quoted as saying, "If God Doesn't Punish America, He'll Have to Apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!"³

Look now, starting in verse 12...

12 Who is the wise man who may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?

13 And the Lord said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, 14 but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them," 15 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. 16 I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them."

³ <https://sojo.net/articles/billy-graham-punish-america-or-apologize-sodom-gomorrah>

God spoke clearly in His Word to Israel on what they should believe and how they should live.

Yet, sadly, the leaders and the people of Judah rejected God's Word and turned their hearts away from His Holy Law.

Instead, they followed their hearts' dictates and went after Baal and other false gods.

They kept on serving something... they put themselves in the place of God and served other false gods from the pagan nations around them.

Within the heart of every person, we are designed to worship and obey.

If those instincts are not directed toward God and God's Word, we will be directed somewhere else to our peril.

Judah was directed to self and other gods.

The worship of Baal was a huge temptation throughout Jewish history...

It was sensual and lewd and appealed to the fleshly nature of man's heart.

The sexual rites of the Baal and the fertility cult drew the Hebrews away from Truth and Holiness.

This is one of the greatest struggles of our modern era, as images surround us, and access is as simple as a search on Google.

God tells Judah that He will answer their sins with judgment and exile.

Verse 17 now...

The People Mourn in Judgment

17 Thus says the Lord of hosts:

"Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come. 18 Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water. 19 For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: 'How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.'"

20 Yet hear the word of the Lord, O women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a lamentation. 21 For death has come through our windows, Has entered our palaces, To kill off the children — no longer to be outside! And the young men — no longer on the streets!

In ancient times, you hired professional mourners to attend, weep, and wail for the dead.

This is still practiced in some places today; I read this Job Opening on Job Monkey...

Professional mourners, also called moirologists, are actors hired by family members to grieve at funerals and wakes. The intention is to increase the number of funeral participants, provide new faces, show support for the deceased, and help people deal with a tragedy through other's expressions of grief. While many people are uncomfortable with the idea of professional mourners, it's a job that is growing in popularity.⁴

⁴ <https://www.jobmonkey.com/uniquejobs4/professional-mourner/>

In verse 18, Jeremiah hires these mourners to attend the funeral of God's people.

The Jew's hearts were cold and difficult, needing help expressing their grief.

Jeremiah warns that the voices of celebration and carelessness will be turned to mourning in Zion.

They will be humiliated.

On that day, they will not need to hire the professionals; they will instead teach their women and daughters to wail.

Jeremiah gives them this terrible imagery of death coming through their windows to kill off their children and teenagers.

This war will be loathsome.

Verses 22...

22 Speak, "Thus says the Lord:

'Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, Like cuttings after the harvester, And no one shall gather them.'"

23 Thus says the Lord:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.

Sandy Adams writes, "And these are the three traits people today value most - wisdom, strength, and riches - mind, muscles, and money - academics, athleticism, and acquisition."⁵

Nothing has changed in humanity over the last twenty-five hundred years since Jeremiah wrote this...

This is where man still wants to make his boast. This is what is valued the most.

This is what consumes people the most... They flaunt their success, post selfies of themselves flexing, and discuss their wealth.

⁵ <https://www.sandyadams.org/media/pdf/2429.pdf>

Jeremiah warns not to glory in these things.

We are told in 1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Many invest all their efforts into this fleeting life, a temporary and transient life that pales in comparison to the eternal glory of God.

Even the most esteemed education becomes obsolete, our physical strength succumbs to age, and our material wealth eventually dissipates.

Though seemingly significant, these worldly pursuits are ultimately futile in the grand scheme of things.

Boasting and hoping in knowledge, health, or wealth is an empty boast and pursuit.

Vs. 24: “But let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.”

The profound knowledge of God, His nature, His ways, and His will should be the cornerstone of our lives, guiding our every thought and action.

To have God's lovingkindness, understand His judgments, and know His righteousness is a cause to boast.

As the saying goes, we can never get too big for our britches. No matter our achievements or status, we must never forget our place before God.

I like how Paul put it to the Corinthians using this text as his conclusion.

1 Cor. 1:26-31 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no

flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

Look now, starting in verse 25...

25 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised — 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."

A huge boast and brag for the Jewish men was that they were circumcised.

They relied on this one-time procedure when they were infants as their get-out-of-jail card.

They thought because of this, they would not be judged by God.

God promises here that they will be judged along with the Gentiles because it was the circumcision of the heart that matters.

That was only an outward symbol of what God did within.

Something like our Baptism today... which is no good, has no meaning and is worthless if the person is not genuinely saved first.

It is only a symbol of what God has done internally.

Moving to Chapter 10 now...

Idols and the True God

10:1 Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel.

2 Thus says the Lord:

"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

Jeremiah is now speaking directly to the evil of astrology.

We worship the Creator, never His Creation.

The stars and their movements do not dictate our lives.

God is the One who sets them all into motion.

Jeremiah says that the Gentiles were dismayed at the heavenly bodies.

All the ancient civilizations had an unusual fear of the night sky.

The ancients were fascinated with Mars; even the false god Baal was tied to it.

Rome was said to have been founded by the gods of Mars, Romulus, and Remus.⁶

They thought the movements in the heavens were ominous signs...

Even today, every time there is a phenomenon in the sky, a Blood Moon or an Eclipse, the Books are written, prophecies proclaimed, and money is made, and then the event comes and goes with nothing to write about.

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Romulus-and-Remus>

Astrology's evil grip on the ancient world still grips man's heart today.

People allow their fear to overcome their faith in God.

They worship the creation rather than the Creator.

God wants us to live by faith and not by fear.

Look at verse 3 now.

3 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. 4 They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple. 5 They are upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good."

Jeremiah describes the pagan custom of cutting a tree down in December, setting it in a particular corner of your house, decorating it, and then worshipping it.

Again, superstition caused them to fear these idols they made with their own hands.

If you are thinking, that sounds like my Christmas tree Jeremiah is describing...

Yes, the practice of decorating a Christmas tree has pagan roots, and it was initially a form of idolatry. This historical context can help us reflect on the true meaning of our modern Christmas celebrations.

During the Roman Empire, when Christianity was the religion of the state, as a compromise, many pagan customs were mixed with Christianity as a way of appeasing the pagans in the Empire.

Saturnalia, the pagan Roman winter solstice festival, was celebrated on December 25th, and it was a time of feasting, gift-giving, and decoration of trees.⁷

The Romans changed the day's meaning to Christ's birth, and Saturnalia eventually became Christmas. Much of the customs of that pagan holiday stayed with it, converting much of the symbolism to Christian ideas.

So, should we all throw out our Christmas Trees?

⁷ <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/history-matters/did-romans-invent-christmas>

I don't think they are an object of worship in our homes...

If you are worshipping your tree, then yes, get rid of that practice.

I don't put them up in the Church here because some Christians are offended by the idea of having pagan symbols in the Church, so as Paul taught in

1 Cor. 8:9-13 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

So, to not make the weaker brother stumble, we just don't put one up here in the Church.

To that point, if you should have one in your home, well, I would say only this: don't go against your conviction.

Paul would say, **Rom 14:14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**

So, for those who would be offended here in the Church, we don't bother with it...

But, in the Malkus home, we may have a tree with many gifts under it...

Our focus is not on the material aspects but on the cherished traditions, we create with our children, using this day as an opportunity to direct our hearts towards Christ.

We don't know when Jesus was born, so I don't have an issue with us celebrating the birth of Christ once a year.

However, your faith must be grounded in personal conviction, guided by the Lord.

Jeremiah spoke of the customs of the Gentiles, but our appropriation today is an expression of belief in God and His Son, not a custom of unbelievers.

In Jeremiah's day, trees were directly connected with idolatry... and were worshipped and even made into sexual symbols... we are nowhere near that at Christmas.

Look now at verse 6...

6 Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord(You are great, and Your name is great in might), 7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like You. 8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine. 9 Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skillful men. 10 But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble,

And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

Jeremiah here compares Yahweh to the foolishness of idolatry, where the gods were made and decorated with the work of man's hands.

Whereas the One True God created man.

Now, verse 11 is interesting here...

11 Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

This is the only verse in Jeremiah's writings written in the Chaldeans' language because this judgment went to all nations.⁸

Jeremiah now goes on to describe his God's greatness and sovereignty.

Verse 12...

12 He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. 13 When

⁸ <https://www.sandyadams.org/media/pdf/2429.pdf>

He utters His voice, There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: "And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasures."

The test between the idols and God was a simple look at Creation.

The idols are worthless against a star-breathing God.

Verse 14...

14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them. 15 They are futile, a work of errors; In the time of their punishment they shall perish. 16 The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The Lord of hosts is His name.

Jeremiah speaks now to the foolishness of those who make idols; their work is futile and a work of errors.

Yahweh was the Maker of all things, and He has chosen Israel as the tribe of His inheritance, and He is God of the hosts or heavenly armies.

There is no comparison.

Verse 17 now...

The Coming Captivity of Judah

17 Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the Lord:

"Behold, I will throw out at this time The inhabitants of the land, And will distress them, That they may find it so."

Jeremiah, looking prophetically into the future, sees the Babylonians coming as an instrument of God's judgment.

Even if they heed his warning, he tells them that whatever hurried preparations they might make will not work against God's judgment... they would be cast out of the land.

Look now at verse 19...

19 Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, "Truly this is an infirmity, And I must bear it." 20 My tent is plundered, And all my cords are broken; My children have gone from me, And they are no more. There is no one to pitch my tent anymore, Or set up my curtains.

Jeremiah here prays in the voice of someone enduring the Babylonian invasion that will come, and the prayer is filled with pain and distress.

He captures the despair, horror, and shock of those who would live through this terrible time.

Verse 21...

21 For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, And have not sought the Lord; Therefore they shall not prosper, And all their flocks shall be scattered. 22 Behold, the noise of the report has come, And a great commotion out of the north country, To make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals.

The leaders in Judah were a massive part of the problem; Judah's spiritual and political landscape was godless and spiraling.

Again, it is also hard not to see the United States in all this.

Our corrupt politicians and religious leaders lead us away from the truth and into God's judgments.

Our influence is felt all over the world.

My conversation with Pastor Hector in Mexico about the schools there...

Look at verse 23 now...

23 O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. 24 O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing. 25 Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, And on the families who do not call on Your name; For they have eaten up Jacob, Devoured him and consumed him, And made his dwelling place desolate.

As Jeremiah considers all of this, he understands God sent the Babylonians in judgment.

The Babylonians did not believe they were a part of God's plan, but He directed their steps.

Knowing that God directed this great judgment that was coming, Jeremiah appeals to God for Mercy.

He knew Judah must be corrected and refined through the Refiner's fire, but the reality caused Jeremiah to Cry out for Mercy.

He knows that God's judgment will come against them by the hands of the Babylonians but asks that God also judge that wicked nation.

He asks God to smite his enemies... Today, we can look back at history and see how ruthless and terrible the Babylonians were to their conquered foes.

They ruled through fear and terror, and it is no wonder Jeremiah is praying for this.

Jeremiah's prayer would ultimately be answered.

Jeremiah sees the desolation and asks God to judge the Babylonians.

But we see in Jeremiah's prayer this instinct within a man to plead with God to judge someone in our place.

"God, can you judge them or him instead of judging me?"

This instinct is in every man and woman alive... we know that we cannot stand alone and want mercy and judgment to pass to someone else.

Maybe that instinct is in us to point us to the One who took our place on the cross.

There is One willing to take our judgment that we wholly deserve.

Jesus, upon that Roman Cross, took the penalty of sin upon Himself, and the penalty will be paid in full for all who would receive His sacrifice by faith.

Church, I am forever grateful that my shameful, terrible, heinous crimes against man and God are all taken care of for me at the cross.

How can anyone not be thankful for this reality?

If you do not know the Lord and are bearing all your guilt and shame on your shoulders tonight... Come to Jesus and be free of that sin and shame.

He paid the price for you...

And if you are a Christian tonight, going through it, you are in the Refiner's Fire; trust the process, and allow God to work in you, purify your life, and be more like Him.

Let's pray...