

## THE LOST SOUL

Jeremiah Varied texts.  
Matthew 11:28-30

Every generation assumes they know what will bring them the good life. The Bible is a chronicle of people seeking fulfillment and love in 'all the wrong places.' These ancient stories are shockingly relevant for even a technologically advanced culture like our own. The book of Jeremiah provides one of these stories.

As a teenager God called Jeremiah to be his voice to the nations. He is called the 'weeping prophet' because of the depressing spiritual condition of his people. His warnings of impending disaster fall on deaf ears. Jeremiah says *"They have lied about the Lord; they said, "He will do nothing! No harm will come to us, we will never see sword or famine. The prophets are but wind, and the word is not in them; so let what they say be done to them."* (5:12-13) The people have forgotten the God who delivered their ancestors from slavery and gave them a new homeland.

The people now make idols of wood and stone to honor the gods Baal (or Molech) and Astarte, the Queen of Heaven. Archeologists say these horrendous practices included mandatory temple prostitution for women and young men and the sacrifice of infants by fire to insure plentiful rains and a bountiful harvest. Jeremiah weeps the words of God, *"And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind."* Jeremiah 7:31

### 1. HOW WE LOSE OUR WAY.

- **We follow the bad example set before us.**

*What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves...Therefore, I bring charges against you again, declares the Lord. And I will bring charges against your children's children.* Jeremiah 2:5

*Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols.* Jeremiah 2:11-12

- **We choose our own way.**

*Long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off your bonds you said, "I will not serve God." Jeremiah 2:20*

- **We feed our own desires.**

*Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, 'It's no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.'* Jeremiah 2:25

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### **We pull others with us.**

*(God) So I will go to the leaders and speak to them; surely they know the way of the Lord, and requirements of their God. But with one accord they too had broken off the yoke and torn off the bonds. Jeremiah 5:5*

*(God) Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to arouse my anger. But am I the one they are provoking? declares the Lord? Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame? Jeremiah 7: 17-19*

### **2. HOW TO FIND THE WAY OUT.**

*This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16*

- **Own that this is the most important decision of your life.**  
*Stand at the crossroads and look...*
- **Ask for God’s best way for you.**  
*...ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is,...*
- **Act on it.**  
*...and walk in it,...*

*“Return, faithless people,” declares the LORD, “for I am your husband. I will choose you—...and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.” Jeremiah 3:14-15*

### **3. JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY.**

*Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city. Jeremiah 5:1*

*“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”[a] 1 Peter 2:22*

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.  
John 10:11*

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, **and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**”*

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