

Calculating the Cost.

Jeremiah 9:1-6. I wish my head were made of water and my eyes were a fountain of tears, so that I could cry day and night over the slain **(chal'ey: slain, fatally wounded, pierced, defiled, polluted)** of the daughter of my people! ² I wish I were out in the desert, in some travelers' lodge then I could get away from my people and distance myself from them! "Indeed they are all adulterers, a band of traitors is what they are. ³ They bend their tongues, their 'bow' of falsehood, and hold sway in the land, but not for truth **('emuwnah {em-oo-naw'} firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness, security, truth)**. For they go from evil to evil, and me they do not know," says ADONAI. ⁴ Everyone, be on guard against your neighbor, don't trust even a brother; for every brother is out to trick you, and every neighbor goes around gossiping. ⁵ Everyone deceives his neighbor, no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to lie, they wear themselves out with sinning. ⁶ "You inhabit a world of deceit; deceitfully they refuse to know me," says ADONAI.

As Jeremiah looked around, he sees the people of Judah going about their lives, seemingly oblivious to the impending doom that he has been warning them about. He watches as they engage in deceit, lies, and oppression, their tongues sharp with dishonesty and flattery. The prophet's heart is heavy as he witnesses the moral decay and spiritual blindness that have taken hold of his people.

Among the crowd, Jeremiah recognizes familiar faces: wealthy landowners who exploit the poor, the corrupt religious leaders who have forsaken their calling, and the ordinary citizens who have apostatized from God. Despite his efforts to warn them of the consequences of their actions, they continued on their destructive path, heedless of the impending judgment that looms over them. Jeremiah's soul is burdened with grief as he laments the sinfulness and stubbornness of the people he loves.

Jeremiah's message resonates with a timeless lesson about the consequences of straying from righteousness and the transformative power of sincere repentance. We are called to reflect on our own actions, seek forgiveness for our sins, and strive to live with integrity and honesty in our daily lives, just as Jeremiah implored his people to turn back to Adonai.

Psalm 119:136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

This verse echoes Jeremiah's sorrow over the disobedience of God's Torah. Jeremiah is often referred to as the weeping prophet. God invited Jeremiah to be so. He was called by God to speak truth in a turbulent, corrupted Israeli society that had fallen into moral and social decay. Right was wrong and wrong was right. Judah had strayed so far from God that fierce judgement was imminent upon them. Jeremiah was called to weep over their sins, their evil, their gossip, their lying tongues, and their refusal to know Adonai. This seems hard to comprehend, a nation whose government, culture, and identity is founded upon a relationship with God but they radically strayed from Him in a

desire to be like everyone else around them. They desired to live unrestricted, unencumbered fleshly lives free from any moral limitations or boundaries. Jeremiah's calling was not one of rejoicing or merrymaker, it was one of weeping and sorrow.

A recent survey study, fielded over seven months in 2023-24, finds that 62% of U.S. adults identify as Believers. That is a decline of 9 percentage points since 2014 and a 16-point drop since 2007. 56 million people do not affiliate with any religion or relationship with God. That's 16% of the general population and that numbers is steadily growing. Our world today is not one of rejoicing or merrymaker, it's one of weeping and sorrow over our own nation's evil and rejection of God.

In Jeremiah's time God looked for a person, one person whom He could mold into a loyal servant, a person of truth, an obedient and submitted servant who would speak Gods word in power and truth, a person who couldn't and wouldn't be tainted or corrupted by the world in which they lived. God found such a man in Jeremiah, but for Jeremiah the cost was astronomical. Jeremiah sacrificed most of his youth in service to God, to be Adonai's messenger. Jeremiah forfeited family, reputation, and freedom to serve Adonai! Jeremiah suffered through gossip, slander, ridicule, and persecution. He was maligned at every turn. The false prophets tormented Him relentlessly, defaming his reputation, calling him a liar. They decreed peace, peace when there was no peace. Jeremiah was imprisoned, mocked, even placed into a muddy cistern and left there by the King to die:

Jeremiah 38:4-6. The leaders said to the king, "Please let this man be put to death; because by speaking such words to the soldiers left in this city and to all the people, he is demoralizing them. This man is seeking not to benefit this people, but to harm them." ⁵ Tzidkiyahu the king said, "All right, he is in your hands; for the king can't prevent you from doing as you please." ⁶ Then they took Yirmeyahu and threw him into the cistern of Malkiyahu the king's son, which was in the guards' quarters; they let down Yirmeyahu into it with ropes. In the pit there was no water, but there was mud; and Yirmeyahu sank into the mud.

Why did Jeremiah suffer so, even to the point of being left to rot and die in a muddy cistern? Because he was God's messenger of truth and impending judgment. Because Jeremiah was speaking the unadulterated truth of God's word to an evil, adulterous, and wicked generation who had turned from God! That generation did not want to hear God's message. And what about Jeremiah? How and why did He stick to God's message and remain loyal despite the persecution and oppression? Adonai warned him in:

Jeremiah 1:17-19. "But you, dress for action; stand up and tell them everything I order you to say. When you confront them, don't break down; or I will break you down in front of them! ¹⁸ For today, you see, I have made you into a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of bronze against the whole land - against the kings of Y'hudah, against its princes,

against its cohanim and the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you," says ADONAI, "to rescue you."

God warned Jeremiah that they would attack him! God told Jeremiah not to break or He would break him! Jeremiah listened to God and none other because Adonai was with him!! This is critical because HaSatan will do his best to convince you that obedience carries too high a price. If you listen to his lie, you will not be a bold and effective ambassador of God. HaSatan will whisper in your ear telling you not to share Yeshua because people will laugh, persecute you, reject you, or decry it's politically incorrect, are even now it's close to being a hate crime if one biblically speaks out against homosexuality or Islam. HaSatan fails to mention or whisper in your ear is calculating the cost of disobeying God!

If you desire to serve God, to be an ambassador, to pray for people, to share Yeshua, to stand for the Kingdom, to bear the message of truth you must make adjustments in your life! There is a cost for serving the King! There is a cost for obedience! Do not be deceived and think you can live your old normal life and be God's ambassador, God's prophet, God's servant.

I promise you when you call out sin, when you make a stand for righteousness, for the Kingdom of God, the attacks will come! There will be insults, gossip, and slander against you, you will experience rejection, you will be misunderstood, you will be ridiculed, you will experience hardships, maybe even imprisonment as people do not want to hear the truth! The darkness HATES the light! There is always a cost, a sacrifice! Yeshua said in:

Luke 14:28-29. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower **(purgos {poor'-gos}: tower, a fortified structure, to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction)**. Don't you sit down and estimate the cost, to see if you have enough capital to complete it? ²⁹ If you don't, then when you have laid the foundation **(themelios {them-el'-ee-os}: the foundation of a building, wall, city, beginnings, first principals or system of truth)** but can't finish, all the onlookers start making fun of you.

Yeshua is speaking a parable here, on the surface He shares about calculating the cost of building a tower, but underneath it's a Hebrew Idiom word play about Kingdom principles. Suppose you want to repel a hostile attack or enable watchman to see in every direction, don't you calculate the cost to see if you can complete it? If not, when you've laid the foundation of principles, the system of truth but can't follow through you'll be ridiculed and deceived. The hardships come.

Jeremiah calculated the cost and God was with Him! Jeremiah had the satisfaction of knowing that he was a faithful and obedient servant of God. Obedience is a step-by-step process. Often our struggle and difficulty in serving God is not that we don't know God's will, it's that we don't want to do it. We calculate the cost of what we're going to do for God as Yeshua said but we must

also calculate the cost of not being obedient to God and not doing what He has asked of you!

The cost of service to God involves a significant commitment, often requiring self-denial and sacrifice. This includes forsaking worldly possessions and giving up earthly loyalties to prioritize God's will.

Jonah knew what God wanted but he didn't want to do it! Jonah felt Ninevah deserved judgement. Jonas's disobedience affected the entire crew of the ship he was one, all of their lives were in danger until they threw him into the sea and the giant fish swallowed him for three days and three nights! Yeshua's words in Matthew 10 might have been confusing until now with what I've just shared. In fact, Yeshua's words ring true regarding the cost of serving God:

Matthew 10:32-36. "Whoever acknowledges me in the presence of others I will also acknowledge in the presence of my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns **(arneomai {ar-neh'-om-ahee} to deny, not to accept, reject, refuse)** me before others I will disown before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ "Don't suppose that I have come to bring peace to the Land. It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword! ³⁵ For I have come to set **(dichazo {dee-khad'-zo}: to divide into two parts, sever)** ³⁶ a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, so that a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.

First the cost of not serving Him-you will be disowned, rejected, denied, refused before Adonai! Your name will not remain in the book. The cost of not serving God and disobedience is eternal rejection, the smoking section, the lake of fire. Yeshua didn't come to bring peace to families, He came to divide between righteousness and unrighteousness! Yeshua came to divide purity from impurity, holiness from evil! He came to declare war on evil, to separate the evil from the righteous! Yeshua is clearly revealing that there is no grey area, there is no fuzzy area of not being sure. You are either for Him or against Him! Every living soul must decide whom they are going to serve! You are either serving Him or warring against Him!

Matthew 12:30. "Those who are not with **(meta {met-ah'}: with, associate, participant, in association)** me are against me, and those who do not gather with me are scattering **(skorpizo {skor-pid'-zo}: to scatter, routed or terror stricken, driven by impulses, to waste).**

There is no middle ground in the Kingdom of Heaven, no compromise, no areas of uncertainty. You are either with Him or against Him. If you are with Him and serve Him who could be against you? Adonai will be for you:

Isaiah 50:7. For Adonai ELOHIM will help. This is why no insult can wound me. This is why I have set my face like flint, knowing I will not be put to shame.

There is no offense in a mature believer, you cannot be offended, you cannot have your feelings hurt! No weapon formed against you shall prosper, you cannot be wounded! The body must mature beyond the emotion and milk stage to begin effectively changing our world. To forgive is to forget it and move forward!

The only stumbling block to sharing the "Good News" is yourself, the flesh. Its overcoming fear, inhibitions, peer pressure, even love of the world. The things we must be left behind, that's part of the cost, the focus on material wealth and money. God will provide for all that you need, stop being fixated on the things of the world. Yeshua said:

Luke 14:33. "So every one of you who doesn't renounce **(apotassomai {ap-ot-as'-som-ahee}: to set apart, separate, to take leave of, to renounce, forsake)** all that he has cannot be my talmid.

You, I, we cannot serve both the world and the Kingdom of God. Serving God and Yeshua requires one to jettison all the worldly desires and things they have! I'll never forget Craig Hill's teaching from numerous years ago regarding the Apache Indians who couldn't be beaten on the battlefield. The starfish leadership, cut one leg off another grows. They were snagged by material wealth, cattle. We cannot serve two masters.

Matthew 6:24. No one can be slave to two masters **(kurios {koo'-ree-os} to whom a person or thing belongs, he who has power of deciding; master, lord, one who has control of the person, the master)**; for he will either hate the first and love the second, or scorn the second and be loyal to the first. You can't be a slave **(douleuo {dool-yoo'-o}: to be a slave, serve, to obey, to submit to, to yield obedience)** to both God and money **(mammonas {mam-mo-nas'}: mammon, treasure, riches, avarice).**

Your either in service and obedient to the world or to God, you cannot do both. Kurios, masters are the power of deciding, if one is serving the world the world will decide and drive your decisions and lifestyle in a worldly way. If God is who you are obedient too, the kingdom of God will decide and drive your decisions, not the world. God's promise is that if you serve Him and are obedient to Him you will have nothing to fear and He will take care of all your provision. If we are united through Messiah:

II Corinthians 5:17-20. Therefore, if anyone is united with the Messiah, he is a new creation - the old has passed; look, what has come is fresh and new! ¹⁸ And it is all from God, who through the Messiah has reconciled us to himself and has given us the work of that reconciliation **(katallage {kat-al-lag-ay'}: exchange of evil for righteousness, atonement, restoration to the divine, reconciliation to God)**, ¹⁹ which is that God in the Messiah was reconciling mankind to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore we are ambassadors of the

Messiah; in effect, God is making his appeal through us. What we do is appeal on behalf of the Messiah, "Be reconciled to God!

A recent Barna's research study revealed a staggering & sobering statistic, Millennials and Gen Z seek truth! Not seeker sensitive places of worship. Could the AP poll that reveals 56 million Americans that do not affiliate with any belief are waiting for truth???? Are they departing from religion because it's not founded on truth? And by the way, I'm half way through Charli Kirks book: Stop in the name of God! It is a powerful, divine, eloquent revelation that everyone should be keeping Shabbat! Truth! Are 56 million people tired of same sex marriage, moral corruption, wokeness, slanderous elections, lying politicians, immorality in schools and work, a society the lacks integrity, character, honor and morals? What do they find when they do go to a house of worship? Is it Absolute truth or some form of suppersessionism or other man-made concoction vise the unadulterated word of God! The #1 problem in orthodox Judaism is apostasy from orthodox Judaism! Is the church experiencing the same? And if so why? Jeremiah 9 has the answer:

Jeremiah 9:4-5. Everyone deceives his neighbor, no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to lie, they wear themselves out with sinning. ⁵ "You inhabit a world of deceit; deceitfully they refuse to know me," says ADONAI.

Jeremiah warns against deceitful tongues and untrustworthy neighbors in this passage. The prophet is cautioning against believing everything you hear and being wary of those who may not have your best interests at heart. This verse serves as a reminder to stay vigilant and discerning in our interactions with others, as not everyone may be sincere or honest in their dealings with us. Many have devious motivations and agendas.

Think about it – how often do we encounter people who may not be entirely truthful or have hidden agendas? Jeremiah's words remind us to be cautious and discerning in our relationships and interactions with others, those who sin, immoral, and wicked. We can protect ourselves from being taken advantage of or misled by being mindful of the potential for deceitful tongues and untrustworthy neighbors. So, let us heed Jeremiah's warning and be wise in who we trust and believe.

Jeremiah also delves into the societal decay and moral breakdown that he witnessed among the people of Judah. This passage paints a grim picture of a community whose trust has eroded, where deceit and betrayal have become commonplace. The warning to "Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers" cuts deep, highlighting the extent to which even close relationships may be tainted by dishonesty and deceit. It serves as a stark reminder that betrayal often comes from those that are closest to us where we least expect is, shaking the very core foundation of trust and integrity.

The phrases “Everyone deceives his neighbor, no one speaks the truth” further emphasize the pervasive culture of deceit and falsehood that has taken root. These words paint a bleak picture of a community where honesty is a rarity and where lies have become the norm. The absence of truth in interpersonal relationships signifies a deep-seated moral decay that has permeated every aspect of society.

Drawing parallels from related biblical passages such as:

Ephesians 4:25. Therefore, stripping off falsehood, let everyone speak truth with his neighbor, because we are intimately related to each other as parts of a body.

We see a consistent theme emphasizing the value of truthfulness and integrity in the eyes of God. This verse underscores the importance of speaking the truth, walking blamelessly, and rejecting falsehood. Providing a moral compass for believers, guiding them towards a life characterized by honesty, holiness, and righteousness.

The relevance of Jeremiah’s message extends to our contemporary society, where trust and integrity remain essential in fostering healthy relationships and communities. In a world plagued by misinformation and deceit, the call for truthfulness resonates strongly. The breakdown of trust within families, workplaces, communities, and even congregations can lead to discord and division, highlighting the enduring significance of Jeremiah’s warning against deception. Many today will not accept truth even when it presented to them in clear view.

This condition is known as Cognitive dissonance. Frank Fanon defines it this way: Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect their core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny any truth that doesn't fit in with that core belief.

God’s appeal of truth is through US we are His ambassadors but I’m afraid we’ve not been doing a very good job! Every person must Count the cost! If we don’t act immediately, we may soon have nothing left to act for! People are tired of religious lies, they’re tired of wokeism, deceit and wickedness.

We must trust God’s Timing – Just as Jeremiah had to trust the unfolding of God’s plan, believers can rely on divine timing in personal and spiritual pursuits. We must overcome Fear: Fear of inadequacy or opposition should not hinder obedience; God empowers those whom He calls.

We must commit to divine purpose, dedication and consecration, like Jeremiah’s, encourage service and integrity in all areas of life.

We must influence beyond our immediate surroundings. Jeremiah's message extended to nations, reminding believers that our words and actions can impact beyond our immediate community

In summary, Jeremiah's prophetic calling teaches trust in divine purpose, courage in the face of fear, perseverance under opposition, and the importance of integrity and hope. His life remains a powerful model for answering God's call with obedience and faith, regardless of personal limitations or external challenges. Rebbetzin and I have been slandered, scorned, ridiculed, and maligned. Why? Because we called out sin! But we will not be moved! We stand upon the Word of God! Nothing new under the sun!

It's time for truth! Now is the time for us to arise, now is the time to be Jeremiah's! Jeremiah was called by God to rise and deliver messages of warning and hope, demonstrating both courage and obedience. By invoking Jeremiah, we encourage believers to embrace their God-given gifts, callings, roles and responsibilities, spiritually and morally. The kingdom must go out beyond these four walls. The word must go forth! Every person, every person who calls upon the Name of the Lord is commissioned to be a His Ambassador of truth.