

**Jeremiah 13**  
***Humbly Clinging To the Lord***  
**J.D. Farag**

We're going through Jeremiah book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse. Jeremiah is a book. We're going through the Bible book-by-book... We're off to a great start. You can tell what kind of week I'm having. Oh, well, Chapter 13 tonight.

So just one chapter again. So much here. Don't want to rush through it, so let's just get to it.

Why don't we pray? We'll ask God to bless our time together. If you would join with me.

Father in heaven, Thank You so much. Lord, we humble ourselves before You tonight, and we commit ourselves to You tonight, Lord.

Lord, You need to settle our hearts and help us by the Holy Spirit. That's why we're here, Lord; we're hungry and we're thirsty for You. And only You can satiate that hunger and that thirst that we have.

Lord, we need and are so thankful for Your Word and for what we have before us here in Your Word tonight. But we desperately need the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and be our guide, especially with this chapter that we have opened before us, Lord.

Lord, thank You for Jeremiah. Thank You for this book. Thank You for this chapter. Lord, we thank You in advance for what you're going to do in our time together in Your Word tonight, we pray, in Jesus' name, amen and amen.

All right, so this is actually one of the reasons why I didn't want to take two chapters tonight and rush through Chapter 13 because the chapter that we have before us tonight is very powerful, actually. It's kind of graphic in some places, as we'll see.

But Jeremiah is told to do something analogous, for lack of a better word, concerning God's people rejecting Him in their pride, namely that of humbly clinging to the Lord instead of refusing to hear the Word of the Lord because of their pride before the Lord.

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I know you know nothing of this. This is a theoretical Bible study for us tonight. Oh, my goodness, we talked about this on Sunday, didn't we?

When it comes to pride, I have a Ph.D. in pride. I'm very humble about my pride. I'm very proud of my humility. But in all seriousness, it is really my hope that our study of this chapter will have its much-needed impact on our lives.

Because if we're honest with ourselves, we all have this propensity towards pride. And pride is so destructive, so deadly, and we're about to see that.

Let's jump in *verse 1*. **"Thus the Lord said to me: "Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water." So I got a sash according to the word of the Lord and put it around my waist."**

Now, I think we would do well to understand what a sash is. This is not something common in our day, foreign to us, really, in our day, but it was a belt of sorts.

It would be strapped around the waist and worn typically by a priest. And it would denote dignity, beauty, nobility, humility. And it was really for the purpose of getting someone's attention because it would adorn the wearer of this - I hope I'm saying the word right - cummerbund.

Is that it? Oh, thank You, Lord. I needed to be right for a change on something.

But in the old days, right, a cummerbund, it would - Oh, how about this one? This is maybe better. You know when guys rent tuxedos? That's what they call it, right, a cummerbund?

Yeah. You'll never catch me - well, first of all, it wouldn't work for me very well.

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But it was like that, and it was something that would be ornate and even fancy. It would really get people's attention, especially if a prophet wore it.

Because you have to understand that they wore robes, right? They didn't wear jeans and aloha shirts, just, you know... They wore robes.

And so now Jeremiah's told by the Lord to go get this sash, a brand-new sash. Don't put it in water. Just put it on. Strap it to your waist and wear it.

Okay, so Jeremiah does it.

Now, *verse 3*. **"And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, "Take the sash that you acquired, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates [*This would have been ancient Babylon, modern-day Iraq*] and hide it there in a hole in the rock.**

**So [*Verse 5*]"**

And by the way, notice, conspicuously absent from the narrative is any mention of Jeremiah saying, "Why? Wait, what?"

Okay I got the sash; now You want me to - by the way, about 500, 600 miles one way. It would have taken about three months.

And there's no mention, no hint of any questioning of Lord, what are You up to? I mean, I got the sash.

Now You want me - for three months - to take this thing to Babylon, which, by the way, is the very place that Judah would be taken captive to.

**"So [*Verse 5*] I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me."**

Okay, now stay with me and think this through with me. Can you imagine?

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First, here's Jeremiah. We don't know how much time had went by from when he bought the sash, wore the sash, and then took the sash to the Euphrates.

So can you imagine people looking at what in the world is Jeremiah wearing? What is up?

Wow, this kind of looking dapper, Jeremiah. Well, you got a new sash, I see. And you're wearing it, and well, that's kind of odd.

And then all of a sudden, you know, they wake up the next morning and open up the blinds because they had blinds back then, let's say.

And they're looking out the window and oh, where's Jeremiah and his new dapper sash that he bought and has been wearing? Haven't seen him.

Yeah, I haven't seen him either.

Hmm, I wonder where he went.

You think maybe God's getting their attention because he would have likely - and he's going to do this twice as we're about to see - he would have likely been absent for about three months.

I wonder if they had parties. Finally, he's gone; we got rid of that guy, that doom-and-gloom prophet.

I think the sash sent him over the edge. That was the final straw.

Well, not so fast, *verse 6*. "**Now came to pass after many days**"

*[Again, we don't know how long]*

So now Jeremiah has come back, no sash. That got their attention too.

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Oh, Jeremiah's back; did you see?

Yeah.

Where's his sash?

I don't know.

**"Now it came to pass after many days that the Lord said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there."**

**Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place where I had hidden it, and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing."**

Okay, so he is on his way back now with a ruined sash. Question: Why wouldn't God just have Jeremiah speak this even in a parable form and prophesy?

Judah, you are likened unto a sash tied to the waist, then put in a hole, subjected to the moisture in the earth and the mold and ruined. And you are likened unto this sash and good for nothing.

Why?

First of all, if I'm thinking this through right, we've saved six months, right?

And I mean, the prophet Jeremiah has also not had the travel two times, about 500, 600 miles one way to get from Judah to the Euphrates.

So again, here's the question. Why would God have Jeremiah do this instead of just speaking this?

Answer: Because they weren't listening to the Word. He could have spoken about sashes until he was blue in the face. They would have given him no attention.

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Oh, but you do this. Now you've got their attention.

I imagine them kind of waiting.

Where'd he go?

He's gone again.

What's up with that?

Now he's back. He's got that stupid, stinking sash on, and it's completely ruined.

Why is God doing that?

Well, you'll forgive me, but this is my story, and I'm sticking with it. Here it is. Oftentimes, God will deem it necessary to use the dramatic, the demonstrative, and even the theatrical to do that which mere words cannot.

Now, why do you say that, that way?

Because sometimes I get blasted for (Sighing) being too demonstrative, too animated. Well, sometimes God uses that. Because sometimes that's the only way that God can get through to people.

I think it was Charles Spurgeon, by the way; I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure it was. He had an amazing sense of humor and he really, you know, under the control of the Holy Spirit, humor is, well, of course, it's medicinal, the Proverbs say. And by the way, God has a sense of humor. And if you don't believe that, just look at yourself in the mirror.

[ Laughter ]

God invented humor. And laughter is actually therapeutic and medicinal and healing, by the way. There's a lot of research on that, too.

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So I guess, Charles Spurgeon, you know, the humor - And I always pray, God, You have to temper me and control me. And I don't want to get to, you know, out of hand. And I want to have my humor be under the control of the Holy Spirit. And so You need to temper me and control me.

Well, Charles Spurgeon had an amazing sense of humor. And after one of his sermons, a woman approached him and said to him, Mr. Spurgeon, your sense of humor, it's not appropriate.

To which he responded, Oh, my dear sister, if you only knew how much I held back.

[ Laughter ]

And again, that's my story, and I'm sticking with it, so... We're going to see this here in a moment, but again, sometimes God deems it appropriate to use the dramatic, the visual in order to communicate a truth that is not being received when that truth is communicated using only words.

Real quick, one more thing on this before we move on. Think about Jesus in the Gospels. How much imagery did He use?

I think about Matthew 6, one of my favorite of all, well-known, the sermon that He preached. And He uses the visual illustrations of the birds in the air and the flowers of the field.

And He's using that visual so that they would understand what just saying the words may not get across.

You see that bird? Imagine him.

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For those of you that have been to Israel with us, it's affectionately known as the Mount of Beatitudes. They're on the hillside, the Sea of Galilee below, oh!

Oh, man, just give me a moment. I'm there.

Okay, now I'm back.

And I mean, it's beautiful, it's stunning, it's breathtaking, especially in the springtime; can you imagine?

There they are, and He's pointing to these birds. He's going, Look at those birds. Do you see them freaking out and fretting and worrying and fearing about what they're going to eat? Do you see them over here building these barns and stuffing them full of worms for next month?

No, they're singing.

Why?

Because your Heavenly Father feeds them, and they're not even created in the image of God, you are. How much more valuable are you?

That's the visual. And every time they would see birds, they would be reminded of that.

Same thing with those flowers in the field. Look at the lilies of the field. Look how beautiful they are, the splendor of their colors. Even Solomon wasn't clothed as majestically and beautifully as these flowers.

And here's the thing: They're going to be here today and thrown in the fire tomorrow, gone tomorrow. And yet your Heavenly Father clothes them.

How much more valuable are you than they are?



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I'll tell you, right then, I would never look at a flower the same again. And I would never worry about ever having something to wear again.

We open up our closets, and I got nothing to wear You got - I wore that last week, and they can't see me in that again this week.

By the way, that's another one of my stories that I'm sticking with. If I wear the same shirt two weeks in a row, I'm sorry. I just, you know, in advance, I'm sorry. I didn't realize that. We have plenty to wear.

You know, Sunday, in James, we're going to see this about clothes that are eaten by moths of the wealthy people that were oppressing the poor and innocent people.

You know, back then they only had - you were considered wealthy if you had more than one set of clothes to wear. If you had a wardrobe, you were considered wealthy.

Have you ever thought about this?

Moths will not eat holes in clothes that you're wearing. I know that's deeply profound.

No, the moths will eat the ones that are being stored, that you're not wearing, that you don't need.

So again, God will use the theatrical, the visual, the dramatic, the demonstrative, the animated. He'll go to this extent if that's what it takes.

*Verse 8, "Then the Word of the Lord came to me saying, thus says the Lord [I got your attention now, don't I?]*

Yeah, yeah, I do. Over the last six months, this whole sash thing has had us all on the edge of our seat. Now, I got your attention. I'm going to tell you what the sash thing's about.

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**“Thus says the Lord: [Verse 9] ‘In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing.”**

Now, again, let's just go back to the comparison. If Jeremiah would have just spoken about this sash and not gone through all that he went through with this sash, do you think they would have had and gotten and learned the lesson of the sash?

Judah, I know you've been wondering about my new sash and where I went and what in the world, I came back, and now it's good for nothing.

You're the sash! You're going to be taken captive to the very place I took that sash. You have become useless, unprofitable, good for nothing. You're ruined like this sash.

Why?

Pride, the pride of Judah. The sash is ruined. Judah is ruined.

What ruined the sash?

Pride.

The great pride - notice the delineation between Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

The pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. I mean, it almost sounds like the understatement of the century when you say it like this, but pride ruins everything.

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See, here's the other thing: That sash, it was a testimony that would bring glory to get the attention to bring the attention to God. So now it's been ruined. The testimony has been ruined.

What ruined that testimony/sash?

Pride. Pride ruined it. Now it's unprofitable. It's profitable for nothing. It's good for nothing.

By the way, getting back to this whole dramatic, you know, theatrical, wow, that's really quite a bit to get across that point.

Well, listen, it just shows you the extent, as we're going to talk about in a moment, to which God will go because of His love for us. God will do whatever it takes.

But He did something similar, almost more dramatic with Isaiah. How about Hosea, the prophet? How about Ezekiel?

The things that they did to illustrate dramatically; it was a dramatic, theatrical illustration and demonstration to get their attention. That's what He's doing here. He wants to get their attention.

He's got their attention. There are tensions on that sash, and now He's brought it home. He's driven the point home.

You're the sash; it's ruined. Pride ruined you.

**"For as the sash [Verse 11] clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me," says the Lord, 'that they may**

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**become My people, for renown, [Listen] for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.”**

See, Israel was to be for the glory of God, a witness to the Gentile nations. They were to get the attention of the people onto their God so that the Gentile, the pagan nations would look at Israel and those sashes and those people and say What kind of God is it that they serve? What kind of a God is this?

These people bring glory to God. They give all the credit to God. All the attention is drawn to God.

But they've ruined it. They've marred it.

Because see, I wanted you to be that sash that clings to Me, that adorns Me, that brought glory to Me, that brought praise to Me, for renown, that would bring people to Me.

This is the takeaway. There's many takeaways, but to me, this is the main takeaway.

We as believers are to humbly cling to the Lord for the glory of the Lord so that when people see our sashes, it glorifies God.

What if I said it this way? The purpose of your marriage is to glorify God. The purpose of your business is to glorify God. The purpose of your job, your career is to glorify God. The purpose of your life is to glorify God.

What does that mean?

That means in everything you do, God is magnified. The attention is not on you. You're not glorifying yourself. No flesh will glory in His presence.

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Even the priests in their service, in the tabernacle and subsequently the temple, they had to cover all their flesh symbolically, and they could not wear wool because that would cause perspiration.

That's the flesh. I want no flesh.

Those robes that you wear as priests, I want to cover every single bit of your flesh so that when you step up to the altar, nothing shows. I don't want to see any flesh. No flesh will glory in My presence.

Do not take the glory for yourself, the credit for yourself, draw the attention to yourself.

No, it belongs to the Lord and to the Lord alone. He is the One worthy of all of the praise, all of the glory, all of the honor.

And that is the purpose of our lives. And this was the purpose of Israel. We're going to see this next. They did not fulfill their purpose. And in a word, the reason why they did not fulfill their purpose, in a word: Pride.

*Verse 12*, here comes another illustration. **“Therefore you shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Every bottle shall be filled with wine.” And they will say to you, [Come on; well, they're not going to say, come on.] ‘Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?’”**

*That's a firm grasp of the obvious. That's the purpose of the bottle. It is to be filled! It is fulfilling its purpose when it's filled with wine, duh!*

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**“Then you shall say to them, [Verse 13] ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings who sit on David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness!**

**And [Verse 14] I will dash them, one against another, even the fathers and the sons together,” says the Lord. “I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but will destroy them.””**

Wow! So like with the sash ruined for its purpose, so too are the bottles broken for their purpose, which is what God would have to do. He doesn't want to do it; He has to do it.

Do what?

Oh, He has to break the proud. He has to break the proud. Brokenness: The stiff-necked, the obstinate.

I often refer to a very powerful, booklet really, not book so much, but kind of a devotional by Roy Hession titled, *'The Calvary Road.'* And he draws a very interesting example in there. And he got it from some missionaries about snakes and worms. And the illustration goes something like this.

You step on a worm, and it breaks. And by the way, some worms, they actually grow back.

Now you step on a snake; ain't gonna break. That's a song, 🎵 'Ain't gonna break that snake.'

🎵

What's that snake going to do?

It's going to hiss back and fight back and bite back.

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I think we're more like the snake than we're willing to admit and less like that worm, that breaks easily.

We devalue broken things, don't we? We throw away things that are broken and replace them, right?

But not in God's economy. God values brokenness. God is close to the brokenhearted, those of a contrite spirit. He resists the proud, He breaks the proud, He humbles the proud, He exalts the humble. The proud: He knows from afar off. But He's close to the humble.

When we're humble, we're more like Christ than at any other time. And conversely, when we're proud, we're more like Satan than any other time. To be humble is to be Christlike.

And by the way, the reason why the bottles had to be broken in this illustration and analogy and the reason why this sash had to be ruined in this analogy and illustration is because like with us, when we're full of pride, we have to be broken. We are ruined. We are unprofitable. We are good for nothing.

Let me take it a step further, and I want you to think this through with me. You know, we're actually dangerous when we're proud and unbroken.

Example: David. He was a danger, wasn't he, to Uriah the Hittite after he committed adultery with Bathsheba. And it wasn't until God broke him by sending Nathan the Prophet, And he just broke, and he crumbled to the ground, and he repented, and God restored him, and God forgave him.

I was thinking during my time off in my devotions, and by the way, this might come as a shock to you, but I've had no television, I have had no TV for a month. Are you guys okay?

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I fasted from the television. I mean, I have other sources to stay apprised of what's going on, but I just, all my screens were off. The TV's: I didn't even watch Kalo. You'll forgive me.

I mean, I just had my Bible software program on one screen, my main computer, and I just wanted to focus in on the Lord. And, man, I'll tell you, when you turn the volume down on the busyness of your life and you turn off all of those things that are clamoring for your attention, and you just give your undivided attention to the Lord, and you say to the Lord, speak, Lord, your servant is listening, whew, get ready!

If you're on a computer, you better have the file open and get ready, and you better be able to type like a 100,000 words per minute with only one error because He's going to speak.

I mean, I have pages, pages and pages of things that just the Lord ministered to me.

And one of the things that He ministered to me was, it's okay to be uninterested in listening to unbroken people.

Let me say the same thing in a different way. If I'm listening to a Bible teacher and there's no brokenness, it has no impact, and I find myself struggling because it is the Word of God, the Word of God doesn't return unto Me void.

We learned that in Isaiah. I mean, God's going to honor the teaching of His word. All a pastor has to do is just get up and read the Word.

But there's just something missing, and when you can't quite put your finger on it, and if you're open to it, the Lord will reveal to you that there's not been a brokenness yet.



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And so if you're uninterested, it's okay because they're unbroken. Think about the - this is another example out of India. You've got this huge beast, ox used to plow the field. And you got this small farmer, this Indian man.

That ox could just effortlessly, I mean, crush that man. But he doesn't, why?

He's been broken. And now He can be used to do the work of plowing the field for the planting of the crops and the yield of the harvest.

What if I said it like this? I'm speaking for myself. Because I have a Ph.D. in unbrokenness too. I have a lot of Ph.Ds., by the way. You should see; it's very impressive, the amount of Ph.Ds.' I have.

I'm speaking from the heart; just hear my heart on this. God can't use unbroken people. I am unusable like that sash. I am unprofitable. God has to break me before He can use me. God has to break me before He can bless me.

You will never see in scriptures the blessing preceding the breaking. Ask Jacob about that one. He wrestles with the Lord all night long. You talk about strong willed.

And again, I know you know nothing of that. I mean, you're wrestling with the Lord, demanding that the Lord bless you?

All night wrestling? I would be exhausted after about 45 seconds. I'm done. Okay, you win.

All night!

And the Lord's like, Jacob, I want to bless you, but I can't bless you till I break you. And He touched his hip, and He broke him. And He was never the same again.

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Now I can bless you because now you're broken. And, oh, now I can use you because now you're broken. Brokenness always precedes the blessing.

And I'll take it even further and say that the blessing is proportionate to the brokenness.

And brokenness, in a sense, is synonymous with humility.

When God breaks you and God humbles you, and God ruins you for Him, now you're usable for Him. I can use him now. Because see, he was too strong in his own strength for me to use. I couldn't use him. I want to use him, and apparently he wants Me to use him. So we're good on that.

But the only problem is, he doesn't realize - I'm talking about Jacob/JD here - he doesn't realize that we both want the same thing, but he doesn't know about the fine print.

(Chuckling)

I want to bless you. I want to use you. But I have to break you. And proportionate to the breaking is the blessing and proportionate to the breaking is the using. I'm now useful and profitable. God can use me because God values brokenness.

God loves broken things because see, God, as only He can, can take that which is broken and use it for His glory. Only He gets the glory.

**"Hear [Verse 15] and give ear: Do not be proud."**

(Chuckling)

I mean, we could just close the Bible study right there. We've got more chapters left, so we can't.

**"For the Lord has spoken."**

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And here it is again, and please don't miss this. Notice the repetitive nature of this word, "glory."

Here it is again.

**"Give glory to the Lord your God."**

You're not giving Me the glory. You're full of pride, and you're taking the glory for yourself.

**"Give glory to the Lord Your God [Verse 16] before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains. And while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness."**

Okay, here's a picture for you. Let's use our God-given imagination. This is not me. I'm not an outdoors kind of guy. [Laughter ]

Why are you laughing at that?

So you're hiking. I know that's big here. Everybody likes to hike these - not me.

Let's just say you're hiking, and it's starting to get dark now. And you're kind of, like, doing the math and realizing that if I don't turn around, I'm going to get lost. That's what He's saying. You're going to stumble in the dark.

And this is what pride does, right?

It blinds; ask Samson about that.

Boy, there's a built-in, three-point sermon, sermon in a can. Samson, you know the story, right?

Just eyes are taken out; sin blinds, sin grinds. I already forgot the third one. Wait, just give me a moment here. Great!

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[ Laughter ]

So much for my three-point sermon. It'll come to me like 2:00 in the morning probably. It's going to - you know how it bugs you when you can't remember it?

Anyway, you get the point.

Let's talk about sin blinding you. It pulls the darkness over your eyes, the wool over your eyes.

This is what's so insidious about pride. I liken it to a very sophisticated computer virus, but you've got to be careful with these illustrations these days.

But computer virus, computer virus: And it's so sophisticated that if you get it on your computer, it disables the anti-virus software you have.

That's what pride does. It disables that detection, that anti-pride software in your life so that you're completely blind to it. You don't even see it. That's what the Lord is saying here.

One more thing before we move on, and we'll - we'll get there. God is warning them, and in so doing, giving them a choice. And it's the same choice that God gives every single one of us when He warns us, and the onus is on us as to how we're going to respond.

Are we going to respond by being proud or by being humble?

Are we going to stiffen our neck, hardened our heart in our pride, and reject the Lord and not take heed to His warning?

Or are we going to humble ourselves and break, and receive, and repent?

*Verse 17, "But if you will not hear it, my soul [This is Jeremiah again] [This is why he's the weeping prophet.]*

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He says, **"My soul will weep in secret for your pride."** [*Hang on to that; I want to come back to that.*]

**"My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears."**

Because of your pride you're going to weep these bitter tears? Because of their pride?

Yes. Because see, Jeremiah knows what comes as a result of pride.

**"Because the Lord's flock has been taken captive."**

Pride - oh, that was it, binds! I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It binds; it traps you; it enslaves you.

Blinds, grinds, binds.

Thank You, Jesus. Hallelujah. Oh, thank You, Jesus.

[ Laughter ]

Please write that down because I'll forget it. I already did. Blinds, grinds, binds. Samson was blind and his eyes taken out. He was sent to the grinding mill. He was blind and grinding, and he was bind - eh, it works, still works. You get the point.

Sin binds. It enslaves.

Your pride: This is why I'm crying; it's why I'm the weeping prophet because of your pride.

Your pride is going to be that which takes you captive. It enslaves you and binds you.

**"Say [Verse 18] to the king and to the queen mother, "Humble yourselves; sit down, for your rule shall collapse, the crown of your glory." [Notice that]**

**The cities [Verse 19] of the South shall be shut up, and no one shall open them. Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it. It shall be wholly carried away captive. Lift up your eyes**

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***[Verse 20] and see those who come from the north. [Speaking of Babylon] Where is the flock that was given to you, your beautiful sheep?"***

Let's come back to this weeping prophet who's weeping because of their pride because he knows it will take them captive and bind them and enslave them. Notice he's compassionate for them and not condemning of them.

No, no, wait. Hang in there with me on this. This is important. What's our posture when someone is full of pride? What do we do? Do we have compassion for them?

It reminds me of another true story. A pastor: He's with the Lord now. I actually had the privilege of meeting him and sitting under his teaching at conferences. Amazing, just amazing teacher, very humble, so humble, a great teacher of God's Word.

After one of his sermons, somebody came up to him and said, Pastor, you are so full of pride.

Don't ever come up to me and say that because I will not be as gracious as this man was.

He looks at her and he says, Ma'am, you don't know the half of it.

Wow, it's one of those things where you think, man, why didn't I think of that? I wish I said that!

You know how sometimes in a conversation after it's over, you think of 10,000 things you wish you would have said, but didn't?

Oh, how I wish I would have responded: Oh, I am full of pride. Shh, you have no idea. You have no idea.

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Here's where I'm going with this. Jeremiah has compassion for them. He's not condemning of them.

Oh, but how quick are we to point and wag the finger? Oh, they're so full of themselves.

Oh, really?

You're coming down hard on them instead of weeping and praying for them?

Not Jeremiah.

Galatians 6, when we were in that book, the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit, writing to the churches in Galatia says you restore them, someone that's caught up in a sin, maybe they're full of pride.

You restore them, but you better be careful. You do it gently and humbly, lest you yourself stumble and fall.

I'll tell you when it comes to pride, it is again so insidious. And again, let's be honest. Every single one of us has pride. We all have pride to one degree or another.

Now, I'm more humble than you, but, you know, we all have.., No, that's... that right there.

See, that's the thing about pride. You think you're humble? You just got proud. You just blew it. That's pride.

You're so humble? That's pride! You don't know the half of it. Here's the point before we finish the chapter. I think we do err greatly, and I think we grieve the heart of God greatly when we're quick to condemn people instead of having compassion for people.

And isn't it true that our sin always looks so much worse on somebody else? And it takes one to know one, doesn't it?

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I mean, here we've got a telephone pole of pride in our eye, and we're so quick to point out that you got - brother, let me help you with that speck of pride in your eye.

Oh, really? How do you know I got a speck of pride in my eye? Because you've got the telephone pole of pride that the speck came from, that's how! Why don't you get rid of that telephone pole first? Then you can see my speck.

Okay, that's enough of that. I'm so convicted right now. I want to move on, *verse 21*.

**"What will you say when He punishes you? For you have taught them to be chieftains, to be head over you. Will not pangs [*Speaking of birth pangs*] seize you like a woman in labor?**

**And [*Verse 22*] if you say in your heart, "Why have these things come upon me?" For the greatness of your iniquity your skirts have been uncovered, Your heels made bare."**

Yes, I know this is graphic, and it's going to get even more graphic at the end, but this is leaving them without any excuse because of Judah's physical and spiritual harlotry and adultery.

*Verse 23*; now, this is interesting. **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil."**

Now, this is a well-known saying, right?

A leopard can't change its spots, just like an Ethiopian cannot change the color of its skin.

What's God saying here?

What God's saying here is the evil is so ingrained in you there's nothing you can do about it.

You cannot change yourself. But I can change you. I can.



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The evil is so ingrained, it's impossible for you to change yourself, but thankfully for us, Jesus can change us from the inside out vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit. It's called regeneration.

**“Therefore [Verse 24] I will scatter them like stubble that passes away by the wind of the wilderness. This is your lot, the portion of your measures from Me, says the Lord, because you have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood.**

**Therefore [And here's where it gets graphic again] I will uncover your skirts over your face, that your shame may appear. I have seen your adulteries and your lustful neighings, the lewdness of your harlotry, your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem!**

*[Sorrow, woe, grief, curse, O Jerusalem!]*

*[And then listen to this question that ends the chapter.]*

**Will you still not be made clean?”**

Oh, the long-suffering of God! Oh, the love of God, the loving kindness of God! Oh, the patience of God! Oh, the mercy of God! Oh, the grace of God!

He's still trying! Will you still? I'm still making this offer to you. Repent, repent, repent!

Return to Me.

Will you still not?

I'll clean you. I'll change you. You can't change yourself. You can't clean yourself. I will.

Will you let Me? Are you still going to refuse My invitation?

I - I - it's, it's... (Sighing)

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I'm sorry. I hate to end the chapter the way the chapter ends, but we're going to end the chapter because this is how the chapter ends.

So we'll have David come up; why don't you stand up, and I'll just ask the Lord to help me close in prayer on this one.

(Chuckling)

Oh, Lord, (Sighing) it's so easy for us, though, actually with a chapter like this to distance ourselves and disenfranchise ourselves and disconnect ourselves from what Judah did, but the reality is, we are so prone. There's a proclivity, a propensity in us for this.

And so, Lord, I would just pray and ask that if the Holy Spirit has been warning, pleading, and You've been wanting to break our pride so that we'll repent and come back to You so that You can purify and cleanse us and clean us and change us and forgive us of all unrighteousness, then, Lord, it was worth all that we saw here tonight, as graphic as it was. Lord, thank You that You're merciful.

Thank You that You're so patient with us. Thank You that You're so gentle, so loving, so kind. Thank You, Lord, like Paul writing in Romans 2:4 says that it's Your kindness that leads us to repentance, not Your harshness, Your kindness. You're so kind to us, Lord.

I pray that it will have the intended end of our repentance. Lord, search our hearts, see if there be anything at all that we've harbored, that's taken up residence in our hearts, in our lives, in our marriages, in our homes, in our families. Lord, we want to humble ourselves before You, cling to You.

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We want to be that sash that brings glory to You. We want to be that wine that represents joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Lord, thank You, we love You. May it be so in Jesus' name. Amen.