

Jeremiah 4:1-31 – April 21, 2022

Warning About What's Coming

J.D. Farag

Praise the Lord, God bless! You can be seated. So glad you're here tonight, welcome, welcome!

Also for those of you that are joining us online, we want to welcome you as well.

So Chapter 4 tonight, again, just one chapter. I mentioned this last week. We're certainly not in any hurry to get through this book, and so, so much here tonight.

And I don't want to rush through it. I really want to give the Holy Spirit the much-needed elbow room, so to speak, so that He can minister to us what He has for us tonight.

So why don't we begin with a word of prayer, as Kapono just prayed, that's a good prayer, so let's pray.

Lord, we don't want any distractions from whatever happened today or this week to in any way keep us away from what You have for us here in Your Word tonight.

Lord, we so look forward to these Bible studies on Thursday nights where we can just come together and put all the busyness aside and give You our undivided attention.

Lord, we always leave here different than the way that we came here, and we know that tonight is no exception. You meet us here, You minister to us here, You speak into our lives.

And Lord, we're just so desperate for You. We're so hungry, we're so thirsty, we're so needy. Oh, Lord, we need You.

So, Lord, tonight, would You not just bless our time together in Your Word, but do what You desire to do in our midst in this time that we have.

Lord, for any that are hurting, Lord, would You just encourage and strengthen?

And those seeking wisdom, Lord, would You hear from on high and hearken unto the voice of our cry?

Lord, You are so faithful even when we're faithless, and so Lord, thank You for that.

So we commit our time together tonight to You, Lord, and ask Your blessing on it, we pray in Jesus' name, amen and amen.

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All right, all right!

So here in Chapter 4, God through the prophet Jeremiah is warning the people about the terror, and the judgment that is coming. And sadly, southern Judah will not heed this warning.

And as such, they will be taken into captivity by the Babylonians as northern Israel had some 100 years prior to this been taken captive by the Assyrians.

So God is just pleading with His people, as we're about to see, especially in the first four verses.

But the matter before us this evening, and I really want you to think through this and hold on to this because really, it's the matter at hand, if I can say it like that. The matter before us tonight is one of whether or not we in our day will heed the warning concerning that which is coming.

Now, let me explain just by way of a preface before we jump in. The prophetic parallels to our day and what Jeremiah writes in his day or I'm going to use the two words which we'll talk about more in a moment: Chilling and stunning. Chilling and stunning because here's the fact of the matter.

Judgment is coming. This is a warning to us. That's why it's in our Bibles, by the way.

You know, I think sometimes we would do well to ask ourselves the "why" question. God, why did You deem it necessary to include this in the pages of Holy Writ?

Answer: Because I want you to heed the warning that judgment is coming. This is what's coming. Take heed because it is coming.

My people, Judah, did not take heed, and it came.

We're going to see some pretty graphic details and descriptions in the prophesying on the part of Jeremiah concerning what would come and what ultimately did come exactly as God said it would come.

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So for us tonight, and one more thing real quick: There is this propensity for all of us to disconnect, even disenfranchise ourselves from a chapter like the one that's before us tonight under the banner of, well, this was for them then. It really does not have application for us now.

Oh, yes, it does. In fact, it could be argued that the application for us now is more pronounced than it was for them then when you consider where the world is at today. It is coming, and this is a warning from God through His prophet Jeremiah to the people.

And one of the things that's going to come out of this chapter again tonight is that it is a plea from the loving heart of God. He loves his people so much. And that is the common thread woven through the fabric of these prophecies, this book.

And the reason that is so germane to our understanding is because absent the understanding, really the misunderstanding of God's love, we can read and study a chapter like this and miss the whole thing.

And in fact, it really does foster the aforementioned disconnect and disenfranchising ourselves from the text because we don't see it, we don't understand it, we misunderstand it, and as such, we don't apply it to our lives.

We become, as we are learning from James in our study through James on Sunday morning, we become merely hearers of the Word and not doers of the Word.

God is, through the prophet Jeremiah, pleading with His people: Take heed, you need to do something about this because this is a warning about what's coming.

So let's jump in, *verse 1*. **"If you will return, O Israel," says the Lord, "Return to Me, and if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be moved."**

If/then. If you/then I will make you immovable.

What are these abominations?

Well, these are the false gods that they would bow down and worship. And lest we be too quick to again disconnect ourselves from this and say, Well, that was then. I don't have any idols or graven images that I worship, I don't worship Baal.

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Well, not so fast. The names have been changed to protect the guilty. Same gods, different names. They've been repackaged, and it's an abomination in the sight of the Lord, those things that have taken the place, the rightful place that only God should have in our lives.

And we pay homage to them, we bow down to them, we honor them, we worship them, we give our allegiance to them. They become the master dominating affection and even obsession of our lives, the thing we think about most, the thing we invest in the most.

I'll just leave it generic like that for you to fill in the blanks. And the Holy Spirit's always so faithful, ever so gently, ever so lovingly to put His finger on that which is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, displeasing in the sight of the Lord.

When we read that God is a jealous God, never imagine that God is jealous of us; He's jealous for us. That's a big difference; it's not a play on words.

He loves us so much, and He wants to protect us from these false gods who are no gods at all and will never be there for us. And this was what they were doing.

And God is saying, Put them away, get rid of them, get them out of My sight.

Then if you - IF - big "if," right?

First word, verse 1, right out of the chute: "IF" if you will do this, return to Me, put away these abominations out of My sight, get them out of My sight, then you shall not be moved.

Well, again, they won't heed this. And they were moved when they were invaded and taken captive.

"And [verse 2] you shall swear, 'The Lord lives,' in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness. The nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory."

Well, this is really a continuation from the previous chapter which the Lord is essentially continuing to plead with His people because of His love for His people. I mean, it makes sense, right?

If God didn't love them so much, if God didn't love us so much, why bother? What would be the point?

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I mean, you're not going to care enough to warn someone you care not for. It's because you love them so much that you warn them, plead with them because of your love for them.

Again, I don't think it's possible to overstate the importance of understanding that this is written out of love from a Father in heaven who loves us so much.

Verse 3, "For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns."

Okay, just hang on for a moment before we move to verse 4. It ties into verse 4, but don't think of fallow ground as just being this hard, uncultivated ground.

No, at one point fallow ground was very productive, but it became fallow and hard and unproductive because it was neglected.

No plow would break it, no seed could be planted in it. And if you were to plant, it would be just sowing among thorns because now that fallow ground, once productive, is now barren and hard, and there are only thorns in place of what used to be there when it was cultivated.

So now how does this tie into *verse 4*?

Well, He goes on, "**Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest My fury come forth like fire and burn so that no one can quench it because of the evil of your doings.**"

We're going to talk more about this evil in a moment, but I want to draw your attention to the connection between the fallow ground and the uncircumcised heart, of course, metaphorically, the cutting away of the flesh in the spiritual sense.

Your heart is covered in flesh and your ground is covered in thorns, if I could say it like that.

So we need to do something about this.

Let's start with break - that word 'break' is where we get - I know this is deeply profound - the word 'breaking' - when God breaks you, when God breaks me.

No, I need to be broken because if I remain unbroken, my ground: fallow, full of thorns, and my heart: uncircumcised, full of flesh, if you will, God is saying, if you remain in that state, You leave me no choice.

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And really, if you think about it, this is the 'why' behind the 'what' concerning their obstinance.

They had a hard and uncircumcised heart, and God is drawing upon these analogies which they would have gotten and understood.

I guess in our day, you know, the agricultural society and economy and world is maybe foreign to us. Circumcision of the heart, again, potentially foreign to us, but they would have got it.

I think if you want to bring it forward and just apply it to us in our day, it would look something like this: Is my heart so hard that the seed of God's Word is not met with the supple soil of my heart? Why is my heart so hard?

Because it's unbroken.

Why is my heart so hard?

Because over time I've neglected that once cultivated, supple, fertile soil that was so receptive to the seed of God's Word, hanging on every word, a thirst, a hunger for the Word of God.

But over time, that waned, and oh, it comes with a heavy, heavy price.

I think of A.W. Tozer. I know I've shared this before, but I have a - of course, he's with the Lord now, so this probably isn't very fair, but I just have this love/hate relationship with Tozer, Chambers, too, Oswald Chambers. You know, I remember a season of my life.

I was, you know, my devotion years were spent, for like three months in Tozer, and about the third month, towards the end of the third month, I was like, I can't take this anymore.

I mean (punching fist) he just pulls no punches, just says it like it is. I don't want to hear it.

But the problem is I need to hear it.

There's this one particular writing of his concerning the fallow ground. He says, You know, the fallow ground is content, and he uses the word 'smug.'

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It never is interrupted by the plow that comes in as plows always do quickly and harshly, all business-like, and break the silence that the fallow ground was enjoying. I mean, everything was fine till the plow came in to start breaking things up.

I was content and smug in my fallowness, my hardness. Kinda've gotten used to the thorns actually, truth be made known, and then here comes the plow of God's breaking and it disrupts and interrupts and breaks.

And that once fallow ground though peaceful and silent, and content and lullabied into a spiritual slumber, well, now that's all changed.

But the heavy price that fallowed ground in all of its smugness paid was that it was barren, no fruit, nothing grew there.

It was dry and hard and barren. You have to allow the plow to come in and break up the fallow ground so that the seed now can be planted, and a new life can germinate and sprout and bear much fruit. But it has to be broken.

How about this removing of the flesh by way of the circumcising of the heart?

You know, the flesh, the world, the devil: The big three, as it were, your heart is too fleshly, your heart is too worldly, and here's the problem, My beloved.

I can't stand to see you in this condition because there's so much I want to do, but I can't.

You need to get it away, break it up, and cut it away so I can.

And that's what He's pleading with them concerning, and it comes packaged with this, again, warning that if - IF again, you don't do this, My fury will come forth like a fire.

I've stayed my hand heretofore because I'm long-suffering. I don't delight - I don't delight or take pleasure in disciplining and judging and chastising.

It's the last thing I want to do. I want to give you every opportunity to repent so I don't have to, but we force God's hand.

Now *verse 5*, **“Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say: “Blow the trumpet in the land. Cry, ‘Gather together,’ and say, ‘Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the fortified cities.’”**

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Set up the standard toward Zion. Take refuge! Do not delay! For I will bring disaster from the north and great destruction."

Look at this imagery, verse 7. The lion, typically docile until there's occasion or reason to rise up, and that's what we get now here in *verse 7*. **"The lion has come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of nations is on his way [speaking of Babylon]. He has gone forth from his place to make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste, without inhabitant. For this, [verse 8] clothe yourself with sackcloth, lament and wail. For the fierce anger of the Lord has not turned back from us."**

Well, how are you doing so far? You okay?

Oh, it gets better; actually, it gets worse. So if you want, we can bow our heads, close our eyes, you can slip out. Course, we'll stop you in the parking lot, make sure you can't. You'll have to come back in.

I'm just kidding, by the way, for those of you... I got to be careful of what I say.

[Laughter]

So what's happening here, why so strong?

Well, because they haven't repented, and they're not going to repent, They're not going to take heed the warning. And it's like God is saying, You're forcing My hand. I have to bring destruction and desolation because that's the only way. It's come to this. It's the last resort. I have no choice.

"And [verse 9] it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord, "That the heart of the king shall perish and the heart of the princes. The priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder."

Then I said [verse 10, and we talked about this] [I think it was in Chapter 1] [You're going to have to bear with me on verse 10] He says, "Ah!"

And this word translated 'ah' doesn't even begin, doesn't even come close to communicating and articulating the intensity and the enormity of the emotion in which it's said.

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It's a cry, it's a moan, and two letters in the English language are given to it, an A and an H.

Ah! (shouting in pain) Ah!

You could even say it like this: Ah, Lord? (sounding like a question)

Ah, Lord God! (sounding in pain)

And then he says this, **"Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'You shall have peace,' whereas the sword reaches to the heart."**

What? Did Jeremiah just accuse God of deceiving His people?

No.

I mean, at first read, it might seem like that, but again, bear with me.

I spent some time on this, asked the Lord about it. Certainly, I go to the commentaries on this, but mainly the Holy Spirit. Lord, would You open up the eyes of my understanding to what You're trying to communicate here? And here's what I see, verse 10 as.

Jeremiah is just himself astonished, and I will even say he's confused and he's really struggling, and we're going to see this. This will comport with the raw emotion that we're going to see here in a moment.

But he's really having a hard time here, and the hard time has to do with why God is allowing the false prophets of the day to deceive the people by prophesying peace, peace, it's all good.

Oh, don't listen to Jeremiah; he's a doom-and-gloom prophet. No, it's all good, it's all going to be okay.

And Jeremiah is really struggling as to why it is that - he's not really blaming God - I think that's too strong - but in all fairness to the prophet, what he's doing here is he's questioning, he's querying the Lord as to why it is that He's allowing these false prophets to deceive the people.

Now, Lord willing, next week in Chapter 5, at the end of the chapter, I want to say it's about verse 31, we're going to get these blanks filled in and these dots connected because he does say that they prophesy falsely peace.

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We saw this in Isaiah. It's replete throughout the prophets, the books of the prophets, both major and minor where they prophesied peace, peace when there's no peace.

In Isaiah, it was more like this: The people were demanding it. Speak to us on these smooth things. We don't want to hear this.

And Jeremiah is greatly struggling with this. God, the sword is coming; judgment is coming. I'm warning the people this is what's coming, and it will come, and it did come.

God, why are you allowing these false prophets to deceive Your people, telling them, Nah, it's not going to come.

Again, you're just going to have to bear with me as I just share my heart here because this is an issue. I get up here every Sunday by the grace of God, as is my privilege to, and really what I'm doing, especially as of late, for what I would hope would be deemed obvious reasons, I'm sounding the alarm.

I'm warning the people because according to the prophet Ezekiel, if I don't warn the people, then the people's blood is on my hands. And conversely, if I do warn the people and they don't take heed to the warning, then their blood is not on my hands. It's on them.

I've done what God has called me to do, as unpopular as it is, but I would be disingenuous at best and dishonest at worst if I did not tell you that like Jeremiah, I struggle with this. God!
Grrr! (growling noise)

Not quite that bad, but sometimes it does get like that. I mean, I grit my teeth. I'm not angry at God. I'm certainly not accusing God or blaming God. I'm just questioning God.

They're telling people, Yeah! Don't listen - they make YouTube videos. Don't listen to that doom-and-gloom guy.

Nah, it's not the end. It's all good. Keep moving. Nothing to see here. Keep calm, carry on. Peace. Peace. It's all good.

And I'm like, no, it's not! God, they're giving people false prophecies, false security, false peace when there's no peace.

And I know why.

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Again, I would be disingenuous at best, dishonest at worst if I didn't confess that, I mean, I'm not above it. I'm certainly capable of it.

Hey, listen, I want to be able to get up here and just tell you smooth things. Nothing would make me happier. You know, not last year but actually 2020, there was a time where I just remember distinctly crying out to Lord, going Lord, no.

And by the way, Jeremiah's going to do that, spoiler alert. He's going to say, I quit. The only problem is slaves can't quit, just so you know, nice try.

But he couldn't. He said, I've had it; I can't do this anymore. I'm warning the people as You've called me to.

They're rejecting it, they're rejecting me. They want to kill me. They hate my guts. I'm losing friends. People are leaving the church, but I'm speaking the truth.

I don't want to do this anymore. I want to get up there; can I just have like a month where I just get up there and just talk about the love of God and the goodness of God.

Oh, let's just all have a big group hug and Kumbaya my Lord (singing)

Oh, that would make my life so much easier. I would sleep so much better.

Oh, the spiritual warfare (whew) non-existent.

I mean why? The enemy is gonna... That's when you worry is when the enemy leaves you alone. You should really be worried when the enemy sends you a thank you card and a gift card, and a bouquet of flowers to your wife.

Keep up the good work. You are absolutely no threat. In fact, you are furthering the kingdom of darkness. Thank you so much. You just keep getting up there telling people what they want to hear, what their ears are itching to hear. You just keep doing that.

But I can't.

And Jeremiah concedes, and he says, You know, I couldn't because there was a fire; You put a fire in me that burns so hot there was no way I could shut my mouth.

It's akin to what the apostle Paul said about the love of Christ constraining him, propelling him. You just can't not. I know that's a double negative or improper sentence structure.

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But God, You've called me to this. I have to warn the people. I'm speaking truth, but yet they can go down the street and hear a message of peace. 'You Shall Have Peace.'

That was the title of their sermon last week, Lord.

No, right here, verse 10, "*You shall have peace.*"

Oh, I want it.

And then I got this other guy over here, and the title of his is, '*Warning About What's Coming.*'

Let's see: '*You Shall Have Peace,*' '*Warning About What's Coming!*'

I think I shall go to the '*You Shall Have Peace*' church. I like that better; that's just more palatable.

So you really can't blame Jeremiah. I mean, he's just struggling here with why it is that... And even taking it further, think about this.

Here he is warning and prophesying about what's coming, and nobody's responding. And he's pointing the finger of blame at these false prophets that people are flocking to in great numbers, like Paul writes to Timothy that will happen in the last days.

Because they won't put up with, they won't tolerate sound doctrine, they won't tolerate the truth. They don't want to hear it. So they have dull ears. They're dull of hearing. They stop their ears; they won't hear it.

Ahh, I don't want to hear it!

But then they have itching ears to hear what they want to hear. And there's no shortage of those like in Jeremiah's day that will tell them what their ears are itching to hear. You shall have peace.

Well, *verse 11*, **"At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A dry wind of the desolate heights blows in the wilderness toward the daughter of My people, not to fan or to cleanse.**

A wind [*verse 12*] too strong for these will come for Me. Now I will also speak judgment against them."

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In other words, the winds that are coming, they're not pleasant, like trade winds. You know, we love the trade winds. No, these are hurricane-force winds. That's what's coming, the winds of judgment.

“Behold, [verse 13] he shall come up like clouds, and his chariots like a whirlwind. His horses are swifter than eagles. [That's kind of fast] Woe to us, for we are plundered!”

O Jerusalem [verse 14] wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved.”

He's still pleading with them!

"How long?" [And I want you to pay particular notice of this] "How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?"

Interesting choice of words. Now we would say in our day, I got something lodged in my throat. It's lodged in there. I've got to get it out of there. Well, they had evil thoughts lodged within them.

Several months ago I stepped on a shard of glass, and it got lodged in my foot. Now, at first, I thought it was probably just a very small piece of glass. I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

God will - you know the way we're made, there's things in my body that will go to it and begin to dissolve it, but it didn't. (Chuckling) This thing was really lodged really deep in my foot, and it really hurt.

And as you know, I have no pain tolerance. I get a hangnail: I want Jesus to come back; that's how bad it is. I'm just super hypersensitive to pain.

When I go to the dentist, which I pray I never have to go to the dentist again. I pray the rapture will come before I ever have to go to the dentist again.

But he has to always give me extra Novocaine.

He said, I have no patients like you, like, thanks a lot, doctor. I really appreciate that.

And you're special. What is up with you?

I'm just a sensitive guy. That was my story and I'm sticking with it.

I just - I mean, I feel everything. I think there's maybe something to that, I don't know, in the physical sense.

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My wife is the exact opposite. Praise God for that because she's the one that gives birth to the children, three of our four children no epidural, natural. I was there. I hurt so bad instead of her, for her. I'm like, Oh, this is bad! I'll take the epidural!

[Laughter]

But man, she has such a high tolerance for pain.

Anyway, this thing is so painful. And I had to go in, and they had to cut into my foot and pull it out. And they showed me, and I took a picture of it. I didn't want to take it.

I said, Throw it away. Get thee behind me, Satan, you shard of glass!

But I took a picture of it. This thing was huge, and it had gotten lodged in my foot.

You see where I'm going with this?

They had evil lodged in their thoughts, deep in their thoughts.

Verse 15, "For a voice declares from Dan and proclaims affliction from Mount Ephraim."

I don't want to hear a sermon on affliction. I want to hear a sermon of prosperity and goodness, and love and forgiveness.

And all of those things are biblical, but this is a message from the prophet Jeremiah about affliction, proclaim affliction, preach affliction?

"Make mention [verse 16] to the nations, yes, proclaim against Jerusalem, that watchers [Some of your translations render it 'invaders'] come from a far country and raise their voice against the cities of Judah. Like keepers of a field they are against her all around because she has been rebellious against Me," says the Lord."

So this prophecy, by the way, of this invasion coming from the North with all the imagery that we just read, the affliction from Mount Ephraim coming from the far country, this is Babylon, and they would do exactly that.

It would be, some believe, about - interesting number, by the way, the number of judgment, 40 years.

Oh, that's not in my lifetime.

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Everybody thought it was going to be in their lifetime.

We got we got plenty time, plenty time.

Oh, really?

40 years away.

Yet notice Jeremiah is prophesying with such specificity. You know what's interesting is that it is exactly as Jeremiah prophesied it would be.

Now, verse 18, I want you to notice, and I'll emphasize this.

“Your ways and your doings have procured these things for you. This is your wickedness because it is bitter, because it reaches to your heart.”

You see very clearly what the lesson is here, right?

You brought this upon yourself. You have no one to blame but yourself.

Oh, but we will always blame everyone but ourselves. They're to blame, he's to blame, she's to blame.

No, no, no, no, no. You're to blame. You procured these things for yourself.

What things?

Your wickedness. You brought this on yourself.

Be sure that your sin will find you out. Again, God takes no delight or pleasure in judging sin.

And He's always long-suffering and giving us time to repent.

My goodness, he gave the Amorites 400 years to repent before the judgment came; that's called long-suffering. And He does that with us.

And then when, not if, the heavy hand of the Lord comes down, it needs to be very clear that it's because of your ways, your doings, your wickedness, your heart.

Now, *verse 19*, we turn a corner here, and this is Jeremiah. **"O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me.**

Have you ever hurt so deeply that I mean, it was this physical pain in your in your heart, not a cardiovascular event. But I mean, your heart is so hurt, so pained.

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And to say this, this is an interesting way that the Holy Spirit would inspire Jeremiah to say it.

But my heart makes a noise in me?

I tell you; I've had times in my life those deep, deep, anguishing, painful times where I mean, you didn't know that you could hurt that bad. You didn't know that it could be so deep. And it comes from just deep within your soul, this anguish of the soul.

He says, **"I cannot hold my peace because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."**

Listen, he's doing what David did in the Psalms, by the way. Stay with me on this. He's having a talk with self; that's different than self-talk.

Self-talk is very bad, very, very bad. That's where yourself is talking to you. Man, you're nothing, you're a loser, you're a dirty, rotten, stinking sinner, which you are.

But I have the Savior; so there!

But that's self-talk, different than talking to self.

Psalms 42 and 43 some believe it's actually one psalm, but repeatedly throughout these two precious psalms that have meant so much to many a saint over the generations who found such solace there.

David would have a talk with himself and almost like, sit down, we need to talk. O my soul, why be in such despair? For you will again have reason to praise the Lord. Be of good cheer, cheer up, O my soul. I know you're downcast.

He's talking to himself. I know they have clinical terms for that. Don't do it in the car at a stoplight if you're the only one in it. People look over go, Oh, one of those.

No, you're talking to the Lord. You're talking to yourself; you're talking to both!

O my soul! Oh, Lord!

The Lord's like, You need to have a talk with yourself. Sit down, boy, we need to talk. We need to have a good talk.

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"O, my soul, my soul." Verse 20, "Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is plundered. Suddenly my tents are plundered and my curtains in a moment. How long will I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet?"

This is the trumpet of war. We talked about this a little bit on Sunday, the delineation in scripture between two trumpets. There's the trumpet of God and the trumpet of angels.

The trumpet of God is for the church, the trumpet of angels for Israel. Please make that distinction.

There's the first trumpet and the last trumpet. And there's the trumpet - the trumpet is to gather God's people, but for different reasons. It's to gather God's people for battle, for war. That's the trumpet he's hearing.

And there's also the trumpet that gathers the people for a wedding. (Chuckling) That's the one I'm going to! That's the trumpet I'm listening for, to gather His people to Himself.

Now, this is the Lord's answer, *verse 22*. **"For My people are foolish."**

Picture - I don't think there's anything wrong with this - picture this dialog between the Lord and Jeremiah. I mean, Jeremiah is struggling, he's questioning, he's pleading, he's talking to the Lord, he's talking to himself. O my soul!

And now here's the Lord's answer, and that alone is a good lesson and takeaway for us.

When we talk to the Lord, guess what? The Lord will talk back to us.

Prayer, as it's been aptly said, is not a monologue; it's a dialog. We pray, we ask the Lord, we seek the Lord. The Lord will respond.

And this is His response: Jeremiah, **"My people are foolish. They have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding."**

And then again, I want you to pay particular attention to this. **"They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."**

Let that sink in. This is what I mean by a chilling and stunning prophetic parallel to our day. I mean, so advanced when it comes to evil, so primitive when it comes to good, so much so, as we studied in Isaiah, it's a curse to those who call good evil, and evil good.

Jeremiah 4:1-31 – April 21, 2022

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They're so good at evil they call evil good. They're so good at evil they call good evil.

Did I - I hope that - please tell me you got that. I think you get the point, right?

They've got it backwards.

Oh, would to God that we would never be numbered among those of whom it could be said, man, when it comes to evil, those guys are pros.

They're very advanced in their wisdom and knowledge of evil, their practice of evil. Man, they really know what they're doing when it comes to evil.

But when it comes to good, they're silly children. They're ignorant. They're uneducated. They have no knowledge.

Oh, they're so knowledgeable when it comes to evil, but when it comes to good, no.

Just real quick, I don't know how anyone could come to any other conclusion concerning our day today other than this world has become wise to do evil, but to do good, this world has no knowledge, no knowledge of good, and I think it is evidenced in what we're seeing in the world today.

Verse 23, "I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void."

Does that sound like Genesis before the creation?

That's because it's like it was in Genesis before the creation.

Now what's God saying here through the prophet Jeremiah?

"And the heavens, they had no light."

In other words, I'm the one that keeps everything together, and you take Me out of the equation and that's what you got. It goes, it reverts back to a world without form and void, and the heavens, there's no light because I'm the one who created the heavens and the earth. I'm the one that spoke into existence, **"Let there be light and there was."**

"I beheld [verse 24] the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled."

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Now, I don't mind that if it's just the mynah birds but not the other; I'm sorry, I just, I couldn't resist.

But, you know, we take it for granted, right?

When we first moved here; my wife, of course, born and raised here, and I moved her back here. And I remember early on we would listen to the pigeons and the doves coo-cooing. And of course, the mynah birds were (cawing) in the back, kind of marring it. That's why I don't like them.

I don't think there's going to be mynah birds in heaven. I know - just give me a break - don't email me on that.

And I remember telling my wife distinctly; I'll never forget this. This was like it was yesterday, I said, Honey, I hope I never stop hearing them. They're always going to be doing that.

But you know how you just get so accustomed to it and used to it?

I remember just the Ko'olau mountain range, just the majesty of those Ko'olau mountains. And I just remember just the beauty of these beautiful islands that we are so privileged to live on. And I just remember telling her I hope we never get to the place where we take it for granted.

Oh, you can write the next chapter in that in that story, right?

It wasn't long before I'm not hearing them anymore. And I get in my car and I'm in a hurry, I'm busy, I'm stressed, I'm under pressure, I forgot.

Oh, wow, look at those!

God, if this is what fallen earth looks like, what is heaven gonna be like?

That was gone.

And here, the birds are gone. Did you notice?

Hmm.

“I beheld, [verse 26] and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord by His fierce anger.

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For thus says the Lord: "The whole land shall be desolate, yet I will not make a full end."

Oh, that's the mercy of God. I'm not going to see this through to the end because I still have a plan for you, My people. The Savior's going to come from you, My people.

I'm not going to have this reach its full end and utterly destroy you. I'll restore you.

Verse 28, "For this shall the earth mourn and the heavens above be black because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, nor will I turn back from it."

It's been said, rightfully so, when God says it, that settles it.

"The whole city [verse 29] shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen. They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks. Every city shall be forsaken, and not a man shall dwell in it."

Exactly what happened! In 40 years this is exactly what will happen. The birds are gone, the land is desolate, once fruitful, no one's there.

And this is a very sad description of what would actually ensue after Babylon's invasion.

Verse 30, "And when you are plundered, what will you do? Though you clothe yourself with crimson, though you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, though you enlarge your eyes with paint, in vain you will make yourself fair. Your lovers will despise you. They will seek your life."

A couple of thoughts here real quick before we bring it to an end. This is, again, a pretty graphic description, two-fold in a way.

First, what are you going to do?

Oh, now you're going to clothe yourself with crimson? Too late.

See, there's a sorrow of being caught, and there's a Godly sorrow that leads to a genuine repentance. And this is what he's referring to.

And this notion of **'your lovers will despise you.'**

It's kind of like, you know, you're going to put on all this makeup, you're going to put on all the bling, the ornaments of gold. You're going to adorn yourself; you're going to clothe yourself.

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What for? What are you going to do?

They don't want you; look at you.

And then *verse 31*, lastly, **"For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself. She spreads her hands, saying, 'Woe is me now, for my soul is weary because of murderers!'"**

Oh, I so wish I didn't have to end the chapter and the Bible study in this way. But I think we would all do well to take heed to this warning, lest we, like them, live the remainder of our days in regret because that's exactly what would happen.

Getting back to this Godly sorrow, and by the way, Kaponu, go ahead and come on up, and I'll have you stand up, just a closing thought. The Godly sorrow that leads to genuine repentance leaves with it no regret.

And conversely, the worldly sorrow always has with it regret. In fact, that's the litmus test by which you're going to know.

See, the Godly sorrow that leads to a genuine repentance and there's no regret because there's no condemnation. There's genuine repentance. I think of - I want to say it's *Proverbs 28:13*, **"The one who conceals his sin will not prosper, but the one who confesses and forsakes will find mercy."**

When we come to the Lord and we confess and forsake, repent, turn away from that, get it away, out of His sight, and we turn back to Him, oh, He can't resist but to show us mercy. That's just who God is and how good God is.

And that's the plea, the warnings. Repent, repent, repent with a Godly sorrow while there's still time.

Father in heaven, tough stuff, but oh, it's needed, it's needed.

Lord, I pray that if anything before we make our way home tonight and leave this place, this time together, if anything, I hope we do so with a new-found fear and reverence, a trembling before Your Word, before You, Lord, just the seriousness and the urgency of the warning that's for us today because we know what's coming.

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You told us; I mean, we could parallel the warnings in the Book of Revelation with the warnings here in Jeremiah. You tell us what's coming, and it will come.

And Lord, I just pray that we would take heed, that we would get rid of the abominable things.

Lord, thank You. Thank You for warning us. Thank You that we even have the warning, and that there is still time. Lord, we love You so much, in Jesus' name, amen.