

WHAT QUENCHES YOUR THIRST?

Have you ever been so thirsty that you would settle for anything cold to drink? And have you done so with a beverage that only made you more thirsty? Well our spiritual life can be the same way. And if we are not careful you and I will settle for something that instead of satisfying our thirst and properly hydrating us only makes us more thirsty.

Today we are in **Week 2 of Prepare The Way**, which is part 5 of our 8 part journey Through The Bible. As we said last week the tension of the next several weeks will be filled with a call for God's people (Israel) to turn back to God and to be reminded that a SAVIOR is coming to deliver them and us out of the mess we have made with our lives due to our disobedience. This portion of the Bible that we are reading through isn't exactly filled with a lot of warm and fuzzies. Instead it is filled with threats of judgment and calls for repentance. In fact, it is probably because of this portion of the scripture that God is more thought of as a God of WRATH than He is anything else. But the beautiful part about this section of the scriptures is that it really does set the stage nicely for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. SIN which is the very thing God's prophets are trying to confront is the very thing that is robbing God's people of vitality of life and is devastating the nation of Israel. But until Israel, as well as ourselves, acknowledge the problem, we will never be ready for the true remedy. That is why we must acknowledge our sin in order to prepare the way for Jesus.

So today, as we continue to explore some of the prophets God called to warn Israel during this unprecedented time, I want to introduce you to the Prophet Jeremiah. As we look at what Jeremiah had to say, my prayer is that we would **quench our spiritual thirst with the true living water of Jesus Christ and live in such a way as to help others do the same.** So if you will find **Jeremiah 2** I will **PRAY** for us and we will jump in.

Just to help set the context of our passage this morning let me give you a brief picture of where we are in Israel at the time of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" and much of that had to do with what he would witness and experience during his life and ministry. His prophetic and priestly ministry would span 50 years and take place almost 100 years after the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians. It is during his ministry that Jeremiah would witness firsthand the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple as the southern kingdom fell at the hands of the Babylonians. Over half of Jeremiah's ministry would take place while the remnant from Judah was in captivity in Babylon. Not only would Jeremiah witness the demise of the southern kingdom but he personally would experience difficulty as a result of being God's mouthpiece warning the people what was going to happen to them if they did not repent of their sin. He was threatened, put in stocks, forced to flee from King Jehoiakim who wanted him dead, publicly humiliated by a false prophet and thrown into a pit. The spiritual condition in Judah had reached an all-time low with flagrant idol worship like never before, corruption at every level of society, abuse and injustices regarding the helpless, and great governmental tyranny all becoming the norm. Judah the only remaining kingdom of Israel was now ripe for God's disciplining hand and Jeremiah was the messenger,

lucky him right?!? As we look at Jeremiah 2 today I want us to be reminded of three important realities concerning our lives.

Jeremiah 2:1-6 (NIV) **1** The word of the Lord came to me: **2** “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: “This is what the Lord says: Jeremiah is simply going to proclaim exactly what God is instructing him to say. This is God’s WORD, not Jeremiah’s! This is God’s thoughts regarding His people, not Jeremiah’s! Yet it is this kind of message that the people will not be very fond of and will lead to Jeremiah being rejected. But even though they may not want to hear it and may not even want to accept it, it doesn’t keep it from being true or keep him from proclaiming God’s word!! Those of us who are following Jesus, we are called to be messengers as well. Let’s make sure that we don’t approach it as if we are trying to sell something to someone but instead let’s allow our lives to be God’s messengers and just proclaim His word. After all, it isn’t our word, it is His. And if people reject it they are not rejecting us, they are rejecting God.

2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: “This is what the Lord says: “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown. **3** Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,” declares the Lord.

God is recalling the time early on when Israel loved God and followed Him. He is pointing out that when they did they were greatly blessed and they benefited greatly from God’s favor and protection as they walked in fellowship with Him. It was a time where they had made the choice to be holy and set apart to God because of their love for Him. As a result of their relationship with God they would allow Him to use them to proclaim His glory to the nations surrounding them.

4 Hear the word of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel. **5** This is what the Lord says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me?” God is like, “Why did you stop? What did I do wrong that your ancestors felt it necessary to look elsewhere? How have I let you down? What have I done wrong that you would stray so far away from me?” Of course the obvious answer is, NOTHING! God has been nothing but good to Israel. But somewhere along the way they have strayed away and they started looking to other gods.

5 This is what the Lord says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me?” They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. **6** They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?’ Somewhere along the way Israel just started putting their trust into worthless idols. Things (objects created by men’s imaginations and by men’s hands) that have done absolutely nothing to benefit them or protect them personally. On top of that they haven’t even asked about ME. They haven’t even missed my presence. They have enjoyed and consumed my blessings without engaging with the ONE who blesses them. It is as if they feel that what they have acquired has been provided for them by the false gods that they are now

-serving. Do we sometimes make this same mistake? Do we fall in love with the blessings and forget WHO it is who blessed us? Do we ever get to the place where we think that we have accomplished all that we have without God's help or providence in our lives? Do we consume good things only to forget that they have been provided to us by a good and gracious GOD!

Reality #1 - REMEMBER who your God is!

We must be careful that we don't fall into the trap of enjoying blessings without understanding that those blessing flow from a good God who loves us more than we can possibly fathom. I want you to think about this for a moment. Do you realize all the things we would not have if there was no God?

1. How about the very Creation itself that we inhabit and steward
2. How about the very life you have been given
3. How about the Community/Family/ Companionship that you have enjoyed or benefited from (these are all God's ideas and institutions)
4. Sex (our bodies designed for pleasure and intimacy)
5. Beautiful Sunsets (painted by the hand of God as He has designed our physical world)
6. The peace that comes over you as you sit by the oceanside or on a majestic mountain top
7. The miracle of Childbirth for those of us who have witnessed or experienced it
8. Fresh water (which by the way makes up 60% of your body and 70% of the planet)
9. Food (that not only is good for your body but also tastes good and can be enjoyed)
10. Freedom (of which the principles have been established from God's word)

Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV) 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. **14** I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Hebrews 3:4 (NIV) For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

Amos 9:6 (NIV) 6 he builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth; he calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name.

All that we have is because of God! Let us not be guilty of enjoying the good things He has made without acknowledging the ONE who made it and gave it to us! **Reality #1 - Remember who your God is.** Notice what God says in verse 7.

Jeremiah 2:7-13 (NIV) 7 I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable. God is like, I gave you good things and all you have done is defile those good things with your wicked heart. After all, where do you think GOOD originates from?

8 The priests did not ask, 'Where is the Lord?' Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols. **9** "Therefore I bring charges against you again," declares the Lord. "And I will bring charges against your children's children. Even the spiritual leaders that God had placed over them had forgotten Him. They have been guilty of doing a job and going through the motions without really knowing God intimately. They were busy serving but not KNOWING Him. Does that describe us? Are we guilty of that as well? Are we going through the religious motions this morning but forgetting the most important part, Intimacy with GOD? Before God wants our service, He just wants our heart? Let's not substitute one for the other. God is calling us to intimacy with Him.

10 Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this: **11** Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols. How is it that the one nation who had the REAL God had turned away from Him while all the other nations have remained loyal to their false gods? Think about that! We tend to be more loyal to that which is a lie and will destroy us than we are to that which is real and has great value. You see, false gods are easy to serve because they do not demand anything from you and they cater to your selfish fleshly desires. Which is why they are so appealing in the first place. They are not real and they do nothing for us, but they sure do appeal to our fleshly appetites. Satan has no problem keeping us loyal to that which has no benefit and ultimately leads to our destruction. He works overtime to suppress the truth because He wants to keep us in the dark and separated from God

12 Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the Lord. **13** "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. It's bad enough to forsake God but the worst part is we go to the trouble of establishing something that in the end is empty. In fact, it doesn't even have the ability to hold anything of value at all.

Reality #2 - Stop wasting your time with EMPTY WELLS!

How much time and energy do we spend trying to draw from empty or polluted wells?
What are some of those empty wells we try to drink from?

1. Pleasure (one pleasure fix after another, which btw is an endless pursuit that never satisfies and leaves us only longing for more)
2. Money (provides a sense of security but like pleasure cannot ever seem to have enough and only creates more problems as we try to hold on to it)
3. Working/striving (trying to build our worth by what we have accomplished only to realize that once we have achieved what we set out for we get to the place of being disappointed when it isn't all that we thought it would be)

4. Education (doesn't fill voids in our heart and doesn't solve heart issues)
5. Complaining/misery (it is as if we get some sense of satisfaction out of complaining or being a victim)
6. Our status (societall, economic, social media) all of these can't fill the emptiness we fill in our heart. And only lead us on a journey of being disappointed
7. Religious motions (don't cure what has plagued our heart)

Notice what verse 14 says.

14 Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth? Why then has he become plunder? **15** Lions have roared; they have growled at him. They have laid waste his land; his towns are burned and deserted. **16** Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have cracked your skull. **17** Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the Lord your God when he led you in the way? **18** Now why go to Egypt to drink water from the Nile? And why go to Assyria to drink water from the Euphrates? **19** Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty. **20** "Long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off your bonds; you said, 'I will not serve you!' Indeed, on every high hill and under every spreading tree you lay down as a prostitute. Israel, like us sometimes, wanted to be free from God but what they didn't understand was that there can be no freedom apart from God. If you will not serve God you will be enslaved to sin and as you pursue other things they will only leave you empty and never satisfied. There is only one who can make us free and it is the one in whom we find the true living water. **Reality #1 - Remember who your God is! Reality #2 - Stop wasting your time with EMPTY WELLS!** And that brings us to our final reality,

Reality #3 - Start Drinking from the LIVING WATER

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NIV) **1** For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. **2** They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3** They all ate the same spiritual food **4** and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

There is only one place we can go to get the living water and that is Jesus! Stop drinking from the tap water of the world and drink of the living water that will quench your soul. How do we do this?

- 1) We drink by feasting daily in the Scriptures
- 2) We drink by praying fervently to the Father
- 3) We drink by meditating often upon the Word of God

4) We drink by listening attentively to the voice of God

5) We drink by being filled with the HOLY SPIRIT

In fact, when we drink from the living water and the living water is flowing in our lives then that creates thirst in others.

John 4:7-14 (NIV) When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” **8** (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[a])

10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The Samaritan woman’s encounter with the LIVING WATER (JESUS) changed her life that day. What she received she received in that moment and it satisfied her soul. What she longed for was a relationship with God but that was being hindered by her sin. She was guilty of drinking from empty wells up to that point and on that day she met ONE who would not only take away her sin allowing her to meet God intimately, but she drank deeply from THE WELL that would satisfy her soul forever. This encounter with Jesus and the change it brought into her life gave her the ability to lead others to the well of life. Because of her testimony regarding what she encountered when she met Jesus, she was able to lead a whole town to the LIVING WATER!

John 4:28-30 (NIV) **28** Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, **29** “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” **30** They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Have you met the ONE who is LIVING WATER and is your life being used to lead others to HIS DEEP WELL? Let’s PRAY!

Worship Team Comes Back Up

Invitation:

Who is God to you?

Have we even recognized His blessings in your life?

What empty wells are you trying to drink from? How is that working out for you?

Are you drinking from the everlasting water - JESUS? What is keeping you from doing so today?