

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

James T. Jeremiah:

Greatest message of love in all the world is the love of God as seen in Christ as he gave himself for us on the cross.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to take just a moment this morning to welcome all of you new students, and to welcome all of the returning students, after a good time of vacation. I've been informed that we probably have more than 80 new students in the school this quarter. And I think it'd be nice if all of you new folks or returning people would stand so we can see who you are. Some of them I'm sure are not here yet, but those of you who are stand up so we can see who you are, would you? Stand up now, before we start calling your names. You know, I couldn't do that, don't you? How about that? Isn't that great?

James T. Jeremiah:

It looks as though we may have as many or more students this quarter than we had last. You'll be interested to know also, that the applications for next fall are twice as many. There are twice as many applications as we had last year at this time. Now I don't know what we're going to do. Probably, we could buy some tents. A few things that we could take care of to house you, but on a day like this is not very enjoyable to think about, is it.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm glad that I'm alive today. I'm not unconscious of the fact that Heaven is my home and that one day by his grace, I shall be there. Heaven is a wonderful thing to think about. I hear people talk about being homesick for Heaven. Well, I'm not exactly homesick for it. I enjoy living. I thank God for the place he's prepared, but we're living in a great day, great day of opportunity.

James T. Jeremiah:

I would not want to wish that I were 20 or 40 years younger, but if some miracle could be performed that I could go back 20 to 30 years or more, I'd be delighted if I could go back to that distance in time and still have the opportunity to serve with the opportunities that are here today. Just think of the possibilities of proclaiming the gospel that we have today that no other year, no other time has ever enjoyed. Think of the challenges that lie before you as young people are going out into the service of Christ, whether you're going to be teachers or scientists or businessmen or preachers or missionaries. Whatever it is, the challenge today is greater than it has ever been in any part of our history. Think of the facilities available for us. What a great day it is.

James T. Jeremiah:

We live in an interesting time. We live in a day similar to that, described to the scriptures, as pertaining to the first century. And I'd like to read today from the book of Corinthians passage of scripture that I want to use, to show us 3 things. First of all, it shows us the kind of society in which we live and the kind of people we have been or could be apart from the grace of God. It also tells us what God by his grace has done for those who've trusted in Christ. And then it gives a word of instruction as to how God's people in this day should live. Let me read these verses out of the sixth chapter of first Corinthians. And read it with concern, because God doesn't mince words when he describes the society of the first century and in our time as well.

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

James T. Jeremiah:

Paul penned these words, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

James T. Jeremiah:

There is a feeling, I think, sometimes among people, God's people particularly, that our society is much worse than that of the first century. All one has to do is read passages of scripture like this in Corinthians and the first chapter of Romans, or make a quick tour to a place called Pompeii and see some of the pornography that has been left on the walls by the people of Paul's time.

James T. Jeremiah:

And we come face to face with the reality that sin has been sin for a long time. Iniquity has prevailed in the hearts of men from the days of the fall until the present hour. Paul gives some very, very pointed descriptions of the society of Corinth. The Corinthian society was a wicked one. To say that one was a Corinthian was to say precisely that they were a people who were vile and wicked and living in immorality. A Corinthian girl, a term used by people to refer to a prostitute, described the kind of society in which Paul lived when he ministered to the people in the city of Corinth. Notice some of the words that were used here to describe the society of Paul's time. It refers to them as unrighteous, as wicked people. And he makes it very clear that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

James T. Jeremiah:

That sort of speaks against the idea that all are children of God and all our brothers, and all are going to Heaven at the end of a long journey on Earth. Paul says there are certain people who are not going to Heaven, the unrighteous. And then he goes on to tell us who they are. Fornicators, those who live in sexual sin. Along with that are adulterers. You can take time if you wish to study the difference, the meaning of those two words, but they both refer to sexual immorality.

James T. Jeremiah:

And this is descriptive of our time. We live in this kind of a society. We live in a time when marriage means nothing to many people. We live in a day when we can live as we please and live in immorality. And the world thinks it is perfectly legitimate because truth is relative. And it changes with the way people think when they think it. We live in a time when perhaps we have something else that they didn't have, we have a thing called abortion. Which also is something that will increase the manifestation of these sexual sins. Some years ago a doctor stood in the platform of this chapel and said to a student, who asked the question when he was answering questions for them. The student said, what do you think of abortion? He said, without question, it is murder. And I have have reason to believe that he's right. I agree with him, wholeheartedly. Abortion is murder, and it adds to the immorality of our time.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

We live in a day like Paul faced at Corinth. He goes on to talk about those who were effeminate, those who were sensualist, those who were lost to the meaning of mankind. He talks about thieves. And this is a day of robbery, of breaking in and entering and taking that which does not belong to one. A time when thieves are rampant. Covetousness. When there are those who grab that to which they have no right. Someone has referred to them as greedy grabbers. And then there were drunkards, uncontrolled drinking in Paul's day in Corinth. Even the children were drinkers of wine and learned to be drunkard early. Extortioners, Paul says. Who were they? They were the people who express a violence. They were swindlers and revelers. What a list.

James T. Jeremiah:

When William Barclay, the great scholar in the field of classics, was commenting upon this, he left one out until the last that I'm leaving out until the last. The word of God refers also to the matter of homosexuality. I take note in the reading of the scriptures that the Bible does not talk about homosexuality as being a disease or being some kind of a twist in one's personality. He talks about it as sin. He talks about it as something that will keep people from going to Heaven and send them to Hell. They shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. I was amazed as I read from this man's book on 1 Corinthians, Barclay's book, what he had to say about the first century in which Paul lived. And about the people in high places, places of control in the governments. This is what this man comments and I'm quoting, because I think you ought to see what the society was like in that day and what it's like today. He said, we have left the most unnatural sin to the end. There were those who were homosexuals.

James T. Jeremiah:

This was the sin, which had swept like a cancer through Greek life, and which from Greece invaded Rome. We can scarcely realize how riddled the ancient world was with it. Even so great a man of Socrates practiced it. Plato's dialogue, the symposium is always said to be one of the greatest works on love in the world, but its subject is not natural, but unnatural love. 14 out of the first 15 Roman emperors practiced unnatural vice. At this very time Nero was emperor. He had taken a boy called Sporus and had him castrated. He had then married him with a full marriage ceremony and took him home in procession to his palace and lived with him as his wife. He goes on to comment further about the wickedness of that time.

James T. Jeremiah:

And young people, you are and I are living in that kind of a society. When the Bible and Christ and salvation can be ridiculed from our television sets, from our radios, from our newspapers and when immorality and vice and wickedness finds the first place. When people, instead of being called sinners are called sick folks and they need treatment. What they really need is salvation because this is the manifestation of a wicked, sinful, rotten heart.

James T. Jeremiah:

Say, what does that have to do with us? It has this to do with us. We live in this kind of a society. We need to recognize that knowingly or unknowingly, we become brainwashed... The society in which we live. And so when students in a Christian school gather, and there are rules and the regulations that conform to Christian ways of thinking, it is natural, it is only to be expected, I guess, that since we come out of a society like that to come into a society like this, where these things are not to be practiced or

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

not to be considered or condoned, there is some necessity of some transformation in thinking. This shows, my friend, what society was like, then it is not different now.

James T. Jeremiah:

But thank God for the privilege of living in a day like this. The word of God says we shall shine as lights in darkness. We are the lights of the world. The matter of fact is you don't need light if there isn't darkness. And there is plenty of darkness around in which the light can shine. So it is our responsibility, as the people of God, to let the light so shine before men, that the darkness will seem darker and the light will seem more glorious because the grace of God has come into our lives to make a difference. Paul goes on in this chapter after describing the society in which he was living and these Corinthians, certainly he knew what he was talking about from observation and probably some of them from practice, said such were some of you, such were some of you. I thank God from the depths of sin Christ can take us. He can reach down to the very depths of iniquity and transform the lives of people.

James T. Jeremiah:

And some of you are here this morning. You say, well, I never went down that far in sin, and I thank God you didn't. But I want to say to you, no matter who you are and no matter the home from which you come, the society from which you've traveled, God tells you, as he tells all of us, that we are lost for by one man's sin of the world and death by sin so death passed upon all men for all have sinned. If we're saved, we've been dug out of the pit of iniquity, such were some of you. Then he goes on to say about your washed, but you're sanctified, but you're justified. You see this tells us what God can do in the lives of men like that, in the lives of women like that. If you read some books on this passage, especially if they have some relationship to the reformers, you'll find out that the washing has to do with baptism. Well, frankly, I don't know of anybody who's ever had his sins washed away by going down in the baptistry.

James T. Jeremiah:

I believe that it has reference to regeneration, the washing of regeneration by the word of God and the Holy spirit. This is something God does in us. Salvation from iniquity and from sin and from all of these awful practices that we read about in the scriptures. Salvation comes about because God imparts his very life to us in regenerating us as the word of God is preached, as the spirit of God uses it. He brings life to men who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we have Christ working in us.

James T. Jeremiah:

Then he said, you're sanctified. That's a good word for such a society. It means to be set apart. This is something he wants to do through us. God wants to sanctify us so that living in this kind of a society, we can tell the world that there is some meaning to godliness. And the world out yonder can see the difference between what we are in Christ and what they are out of Christ, in their iniquity on the way to a Christ-less hell without hope and without God. Sanctified, set apart, God working through us. This is the outward manifestation of what God does in us. But then he says, you're justified. God declares us righteous by his grace through his son because the son of God paid the complete price. This is what he does for us. It's interesting to note the order. Regenerated. Sanctified. Justified.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

Dr. Harry Ironside, great preacher, the early part of this generation, pastor at one time at the Moody Memorial church, in his early days was holding a meeting and a mission. When his turn came to preach that day, he stood up and preached on this text. And when he finished a man came to him after the service and said, sir, I want to tell you that you really violated the scriptures today. He said, well, how did I do it? And the man said, well, you preach that you were sanctified before you were justified. Well, he said, I read it out of the Bible. Such were some of you, but you're washed, but you're sanctified, but you're justified. He said, but it must be the wrong version. So he got another version, revised version, same order. And finally, he came to the conclusion, this man did, that the apostle Paul was not clear on the holiness question. Apostle Paul had some problems.

James T. Jeremiah:

Some people live their Christian lives with the anticipation that one day they are going to get the old nature eradicated. I have news for you, friend, you are going to take it with you to the grave. The order here is interesting. God separates us unto himself. And the work he does in salvation is instantaneous. He regenerates, sanctifies, justifies. And in the mind of God, believe it or not, glorifies. It is a complete salvation out of the condemned society. What a God we have to save us out of that kind of a life.

James T. Jeremiah:

And some of you say, well, I never lived that kind of a life. Thank God you didn't. And some of you said, well, I lived in sin like that. Thank God you're not now because of the grace of God. I'm not so foolish just to stand here and say that it's going to be easy to live for God in this kind of a society. It's going to take some doing. It is going to take some trusting. It is going to take some application. Some determination. Some want to.

James T. Jeremiah:

You can drift with the times, drift with a crowd, go the direction of the world and be in a Christian college. Go through academics theologically, know all the answers. Live like the devil. This is no way for God's people to live.

James T. Jeremiah:

How can we live right? What are the rules for the living? Notice this, Paul concludes goes on in the chapter and he's dealing with these Christians and their problems with the law incidentally. He said, all things are lawful for me. What does he mean by that? That mean I can do anything now that I'm a Christian. That doesn't mean any such thing. One commentator, Lenski, makes this comment here that's very appropriate. He said, What God forbids is never allowed. What God commands, no man is allowed to set aside. God isn't saying now that you're a Christian, you don't need to worry about the ten commandments. It's just as wrong to have, in fact, it's a little more wrong, it seems to me to have other gods before the true God, when you're a Christian. God says thou shall not steal. That doesn't give you a privilege to steal because you've got saved. You can read the scripture, I guess, let him that stole steal, but that's not the right way to put the punctuation. God says, thou shall not commit adultery. It's wrong for a Christian to do that.

James T. Jeremiah:

What does he say? Well, he's saying that there are certain things about which the word of God does not particularly comment. And there is liberty in this. Within the restrictions of the biblical truth, as it's

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

outlined in the principles and the precepts of scripture. Now though things that follow, give you some guidelines as to how that can operate in this pagan society. All things are not expedient. Paul said not everything is profitable. Not everything is advantageous. Moses learned that in Egypt. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. What an opportunity he missed. He turned down wealth and riches and prestige and power. Walked out on it because it wasn't expedient to do what he could have done normally. He refused to stay with the crowd.

James T. Jeremiah:

Paul said, I'm not going to do anything that's enslaving. I will not be brought under the power of any. You want a rule to follow on how to live for God... Don't let anything or anybody enslave you, but the Lord who saved you.

James T. Jeremiah:

Then in another scripture, on through the rest of the chapter, the rest of the book, he said not all things edify. In chapter 12, not all things build up or profit. So if we would take these matters into consideration and as Christians, we live that which is profitable, advantageous, that which does not enslave us, that which edifies, we will have no problem knowing what we're going to do with our time. Let me illustrate. One of the reasons why a Christian ought not to use tobacco because it isn't profitable. I don't know what the price of cigarettes is today, but I have a sneaking suspicion that they've suffered inflation. Profitable? Cancer is profitable? Enslaving? Oh yeah. Dope, drink, sex...enslaving?

James T. Jeremiah:

Edify. Does it buildup spiritually. You won't have trouble with rules. If you take God's rules and put them into practice over against the rules that you have to think about to live in a society like this. But somebody had said, how in the world can I do it? I don't have the enablement. But you do. Go on in the chapter in verse 15, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" Bodies, B O D I E S, bodies, members of Christ. If our bodies are the members of Christ, then we will be careful what we do with our bodies, who are the members of Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Verse 19, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy spirit." My body, God's temple. Yes. Your body God's temple. Yes. Verse 20, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Listen now, enabled to do his will in a society like this. We are members of the Son, united to him. Indwelt by the spirit, owned by the father. And the God who owns us will enable us to live in this day of opportunity, in the midst of a godless society, with all kinds of pagan philosophies that permeate the air and live like Christians ought to live in a day when that world needs us, as it has never needed us before. You can count on it. None of us can ever be the light of the world, if we do not take a stand to be separated from its practices.

James T. Jeremiah:

And if we are unwilling to do this, then we can never reach the world we want to reach. As men and women plod on their hopeless way to a Christ-less eternity, following the practices of iniquity that are so prevalent. Unbelievers who live in this kind of way. God wants to use you. And he wants to use me. In this kind of a first century, 20th century society and be a light for the glory of God. May this quarter be

James T. Jeremiah
Guidelines for Godliness
January 5, 1977

that for each one of us as we serve him. And as we go forth by living as well as lipping the gospel of Jesus Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Our father, we pray for any who are in this audience this morning who have never been saved. Help them to recognize that they do not need to be in the depths of open sin to be lost and go to hell. They rejected Jesus Christ or have never received him. Convict them of their sin and bring them to Christ. We pray for each of us Lord in these days that are so filled with challenge and opportunity that we may let the Lord live through us, and we will find the formula of Paul in Corinthians to let our lives be guided by the guidelines of godliness that he has placed here by the Holy spirit. Give us a great time studying the scriptures and studying our courses, preparing to serve God in all these various fields of opportunity. Challenge us, help us, encourage us to be what we ought to be. In Jesus name. Amen.