

James T. Jeremiah
Purpose of Chapel Fellowship
February 2, 1977

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Remain standing for prayer. I'm going to ask Ms. Jean Fisher of our Bible department to come and lead us in prayer. Before she comes, I'd like to ask all of you to pray for a young lady who's just recently been saved. Her name is Pat Lemming. She's in Greene Memorial Hospital and will be going through some testing today, and will appreciate you praying for her in this time of need. And I'm sure we'll pray together as Ms. Fisher leads us.

Jean Fisher:

Our father, we do thank you for the beauty that you've given us to enjoy today. We pray that we might have grateful hearts for all of your blessings to us. We do pray for this young woman in Greene Memorial Hospital. We thank you for her profession of salvation. We pray that there would be those who could counsel with her from the Word of God, could provide that strength and help that she needs as she begins her walk with you. We do thank you, Father, for the opportunity of hearing your Word, if you're in Christian ministries, explained to us. And we do pray for the speaker this morning. That you would direct as he shares with us the ministry of his camp. If there are those students whom you would have to serve you in that capacity, we pray that you would make it clear to them. So bless during this time, we do pray in Christ's name. Amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

This past summer, I had the privilege of spending a week in Montana at a family camp near Billings, Montana. That's a beautiful part of the country, and they tell me it is much warmer than it is in Ohio. I remember the camp very well for several reasons. First of all, I was told by Pastor Max Tucker that the road led directly there, but he didn't tell me how many miles of dirt road was at the end of the blacktop. Finally arrived in time for camp all together, the automobile, the motor home still in one piece.

James T. Jeremiah:

While I was there, I became very well acquainted with the director, Mr. Wayne Brownson, who is with us today. He's going to sing for us, and then I've asked him to take some time to tell you about this camp. He is interested in obtaining information from any of you who would like to go there to work during the summer. And if you would like to do so and would like to talk to him today, you can make arrangements or appointments by contacting my secretary. He's going to be speaking in the meeting tonight, showing pictures. And once you see the pictures of that part of the country, you'll all want to go. But in the meantime, in case you want to get ahead of those who get excited about the pictures, you better see him this afternoon. It's good to have Mr. and Mrs. Brownson with us. Mrs. Brownson's down here in the front seat. Make her welcome too. And listen as Wayne comes to sing for us now.

Wayne Brownson:

(singing)

Wayne Brownson:

It's indeed a pleasure to be here at Cedarville College. I have never been here before in my life. I have been in Ohio one other time many years ago. And I am your typical tourist this morning, looking around,

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enjoying myself very much. I am a genuine hick from the sticks and I'm really glad to be here this morning.

Wayne Brownson:

I am here, first of all, to represent Jesus Christ. I do believe in a hill called Mount Calvary, and I have trusted Jesus Christ as my personal savior. And I would secondly like to represent the Clydehurst Christian Ranch. I don't have the time this morning, nor would I want to take the time, to tell you all of the history of Clydehurst Christian Ranch. But I will, in just a few moments time, give you some information about what I will be talking about and showing you in picture this evening. As Dr. Jeremiah mentioned, if you would like to see some beautiful pictures of Montana, I have them. And backwoods country, mountains and fishing streams and horses and so on. If you're interested in that kind of thing, I'm sure that you will want to attend this evening.

Wayne Brownson:

Now, the Clydehurst Christian Ranch is a unique ministry. We are owned by one single church. It is owned by the Billings Bible Church, which is a non-denominational, fundamental, Bible-believing, New Testament church. Our pastor is Pastor Max Tucker. He has been here before. He has spoken here in this chapel. He has spoken on this campus many times. And I don't know all of his background, but I understand he has pastored several churches in this area.

Wayne Brownson:

Now, our purpose at Clydehurst Christian Ranch is a missionary arm of our local church. And our single purpose at the camp itself is to lead boys and girls and adults to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior. We do this through various methods. We have a teaching ministry as well as a ministry to lead children to Christ. We also have a growth ministry and our Bible speakers, our family camp speakers, family conference speakers, if that's what you call them here, are geared to strengthen people in their faith, to encourage them to grow and be a testimony when they go back into their own community.

Wayne Brownson:

Many of the people that attend our family camps are not from the Billings, Montana area, nor even the state of Montana. Many come from all over the United States and Canada, and they come to our camp to get away from the hustle and bustle of city and urban living. We have no telephones, we have no radio, we have no television. We do have electricity and we do have propane cooking stoves, but the rest of our heating is done with wood. And as I listened to the early morning news, you may be in that same shape here in not too long. We'll send you some propane and some natural gas. I think we have quite a little there. We've had an extremely mild winter.

Wayne Brownson:

Another thing that may be interesting to you is that we do have many activities at our camps, such as real... Pastor Tucker told me to say it just this way and so I'm doing what I've been told. We have real genuine live horses. And I know that it's not like he says it is here, but we do have 15 horses that we use at the camp continually. And we have a swimming pool, we have archery range, riflery range, much opportunity for backpacking and trail work. And also, of course, regular game activities and things that we can do on our grounds itself.

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Wayne Brownson:

Now, another opportunity that we have in camp ministry, and then I'll be finished here, is I believe, and it has been proven if you have studied at all, that I'm sure a majority of Christian people today have come to know Jesus Christ in their first decision, or else they have made a major decision to follow the Lord into Christian service, perhaps, or full-time service of some type at a Christian camp. It seems like the atmosphere in the beautiful scenery that God has provided for us when we're away from towns, automobiles, smog, fog, what have you, seems to be a place very conducive to thinking about the claims of Jesus Christ and to making a decision, perhaps away from parents if it's a child, or away from friends and influences from the outside world. And for this reason, many of you, I'm sure, and myself have made decisions that have been long lasting for Christ in our own lives made at a Christian camp.

Wayne Brownson:

This is one of the reasons why I'm interested in it. And my wife, Judy, and I will be in the library or around on the campus all day long today. We will be here for the evening service and we will be here as long afterward as we can contact people.

Wayne Brownson:

I did neglect to say one thing. One of my purposes of being here is not to take you away from your camps that are here in Ohio. I'm sure you're doing a fine work here. But our problem is a very simple problem. The people in Montana are not quite as impressed with Montana because they're there all the time as you may be with the scenery. It seems like the kids from Ohio like to come to Montana to work. The kids from Montana want to go to Ohio. And so we're working a little backwards there at that, but whatever suits your fancy will suit mine. Thank you for this opportunity to talk this short moment to you this morning.

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you, Wayne. We're glad to have you here. This camp is located 50 miles North of Yellowstone, but you can't get there from there, but you'd go over the mountains. It's a great country and a great place to serve the Lord during the summer, and maybe some of you would like to do that.

James T. Jeremiah:

We remember very definitely that the men who came there in the camp, that is, the visitors, the guests who were there, went out and caught I don't know how many hundred trout. And they had a big fish fry the night I had to come back to Cedarville for summer commencement. That was not very nice of them. They could have arranged it at least the night before, but they didn't. But it's a great place to go and I think you'll enjoy visiting or going to work there.

James T. Jeremiah:

In the few minutes we have today in chapel, first of all, I'd like to start out and talk a little bit about the purpose of chapel and what we hope to do and what we try to do here. Sometimes we have questions about this. This college has had a chapel service every day since the beginning of our Bible Institute in Cleveland. We've carried on the process and the program here ever since it's been in Cedarville College. And we have some real reasons for this. I think it can be demonstrated that the colleges that started out as Christian colleges that dismissed or removed the daily chapel are no longer what they started out to

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be. Now, this doesn't mean that they went that way because they didn't have chapel. It means they went that way and dismissed chapel.

James T. Jeremiah:

It is imperative in a Christian college that we have opportunities meeting together, sing, pray, hear the Word of God. We put a lot of money in the chapel program, bringing people here from distant places. I'm sure that there are those on the campus who have the impression that the chapel service ought to be another class. And I'd like to say very definitely, that's the last thing we want it to be. We do not want to bypass the matter of the intellectual. We want to have people come here who can challenge all of us.

James T. Jeremiah:

But we are people who have three parts to our personality. We have an intellect, we have emotions, and we have a will. We are made in the image of God, and God uses his Word to get to our emotions, our love and so on, through our minds. That's true. We don't find any kind of arrangements whereby God has a funnel that he opens through a special heart operation and pours it in without going through the intellect and the mind. And then God has made us with a decision-making apparatus so that when we hear and we're moved by the spirit of God, we make decisions. Life is filled with decisions, and we're going to make some for good or ill in our walk here on this campus.

James T. Jeremiah:

I do not always get the same blessing out of every chapel speaker that I should, I'm sure. And every time someone comes, there may be something, or not every time but frequently, there are some things said I don't always accept. But I don't feel that that's my responsibility to sit in judgment, and I don't think it's your responsibility to do that either if you want to get something out of chapel. I trust you come to the meetings with an open heart. If you come expecting something from God and his Word, you're going to leave with something from God and his Word. If you come in the attitude of a lot of modern day church members, trying to take everything apart and being critical of everything that's said, you'll never get a blessing out of it.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm saying this not because we have a whole lot of criticism on this, but because I've wanted for some time to make some statement about the purpose of chapel. We want this chapel service to be a challenge, a source of instruction, a blessing, an encouragement to you. And it's our objective to do that, and I trust that it is to a great measure.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, if you're coming in here, you super intellectuals, you're way out and you can't bring yourself to the simplicity of the Gospel, and you are so far gone that the only thing you can digest is the deep meat of the Word and you no longer like the milk of the Word, and you just have to be intellectually inspired every time you move, well, that's something you probably want in chapel and you don't have every other place. So why be so particular about that? Come to chapel with the expectation of getting something for your soul, that you might grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

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By the way, I've been thinking a great deal about that verse in Peter, where he said "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby." An interesting thing for some of you people who have problems along this line to study the context of that verse, especially 1 Peter 1, and see how much of the sincere milk of the word is found in that chapter. So filled with depths concerning the person and work of Christ. Essentially, I presume the purpose of chapel is that our people may preach the Word of God and they may hear the Word of God, and we may obey the Word of God in our lives here and in the days that lie ahead out in the work of God, wherever it may be.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to close this morning with a verse, because I wanted to give Mr. Brownson time to speak about the camp and I don't want to prolong the chapel, but I want to refer to a verse of Scripture. Now, this will not likely be an exposition and it will not delve into the depths of all things, but it's a verse that I trust you can take seriously and make a part of it in your life. It's found in the great 119th Psalm, verse 11. The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Here, we have a problem. None of us want sin. Here, we have a solution we altogether do seldom use, the Word of God. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."

James T. Jeremiah:

There are some observations we ought to make about sin here in relation to the Christian. I haven't met anybody yet that has not sinned, who does not sin, nor who will not sin. I met a few people who professionally haven't sinned in word, thought, or deed for the last 40 years. They boasted about their perfection, and by their pride, they've already committed the first sin they ever had in 40 years. But one thing about sin we can be sure about, and that is, it is always against God. Could be against your neighbor, could be against your friend, could be against the school, could be against your church. But it's always against God.

James T. Jeremiah:

And when you read about it in the scriptures, take the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Adultery is sin against someone else, but it's against God. Take for a while the thought of modern day pornography on television and in the books and the magazines. The Word of God says, "Out of the heart of man proceeds evil thoughts." It is a sin against God. We could go down the list and demonstrate that sin is always against God.

James T. Jeremiah:

Christians are told not to sin. John said, "I write unto you that you sin not." And the idea in the scriptures that we have an old nature, and therefore, we have to practice sin because we have it, is contrary to the Scriptures. We are not to sin. Sin is a reality, we have to face it, we have to know the solution as God gives it in his Word. There is a remedy for the Christian and your sin. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and that advocate is taught and presented, exalted and honored, in the Word of God that we're to hide in our hearts, that we might not sin against God. Christ is sin's cure. He is the answer to sin past, present, and future. And when we're right with him, the sin question is already cared for. God has given us a wonderful instrument to be used in having victory over sin.

James T. Jeremiah:

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Periodically, some of us have the unfortunate responsibility of dealing with college students. Instead of walking in the ways with God, walk in the ways of sin, and their sin finds them out. And we have to discipline them, send them home. This is not an easy experience for anybody involved. What a tragedy it is. How it could be avoided if somehow or other, we would take seriously what God says. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." The word hid means stored as a personal and jealously guarded treasure. That we really horde, guard, store the Word of God in our hearts as something that is the most priceless treasure.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's more than an outward rule of conduct. We have rules in this school we have to have, we intend to have. We don't tend to have daily revisions of them. Well, let me tell you that rules are not the source of godliness. The Word of God is. Walk in the direction of the book and you won't be consciously wondering whether you're breaking the rules or wondering what's going to happen.

James T. Jeremiah:

How does the Word of God keep us from sinning? Well, in three minutes, I'm going to talk about one side of this. First thing it does, it warns us of sin's character and consequence. In Psalm 19:11, we're taking as our text Psalm 119:11, but in Psalm 19:11, it says, "Moreover by them is thy servant warned." What does the Bible say about sin? It says it's deceitful. "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," we read in the Word of God, Hebrews 3:13, deceitful. You know how it deceives. Seem so attractive, so nice, so appealing, so rewarding, so much fun. And we walk into it, follow it deceived. Sin is deceitful. It's like playing with a stick of dynamite, experimenting with a fuse and a stick of dynamite, lighting it to see how far the fuse can go before you cut it off and you're deceived by sin. God warns us against this.

James T. Jeremiah:

Sin is deadening. The Word of God speaks at least on one occasion of a seared conscience. One of the tragedies of our time is to find people who profess to be Christians who are so deadened by their frequent association with iniquity and sin that their consciences are no longer disturbed, and they can walk in the pathway of iniquity without being disturbed at all. It deadens. What God puts in us is a conscience. The Word of God tells us of the dangers of having our consciences seared.

James T. Jeremiah:

Sin is destructive. Proverbs 16:18, out of the Word of God, we read, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." You'll read the Bible and see how it warns of sin's character. You find it in verses, in chapters, in biographies. See how it affected Cain, whose heart was filled with jealousy and pride. It killed him. Sin killed him, destroyed him. See Saul, a man who was head and shoulders above all around him, deal with animosity and hatred, self will and pride. Sin killed him. You think of Judas, the man who carried the collection, whose ambitions were won away from Christ because of those who would pay him more. It killed him. Ananias and Sapphira, sin destroyed them. Sin will destroy you, it'll destroy me.

James T. Jeremiah:

You say, "Well, I'm a Christian. I can't lose my salvation." That's right. If God has given you eternal life, you shall never perish. But there have been a great number of premature funerals on the part of

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Christians who persisted walking in the way of sin. God has a way of taking us to the woodshed to begin with. If that won't work, he'll take us to the mortuary. The Word of God has a way of keeping us clean by its warnings.

James T. Jeremiah:

Second thing is, it has a way of keeping us clean by causing us to love the Savior. You read the book, you love the Lord. Your heart is filled with the Scriptures and the truths of it, you'll be in love with the Savior. In all the Scriptures, he gave them the truth concerning himself, we read in Luke 24. And then they said, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way?" We come to chapel and want to be blessed by the Word of God and we want to see the Savior in the book. And we anxiously wait to hear him speak with an open heart, to go away with a desire to love him.

James T. Jeremiah:

I haven't time this morning, but I'd like to take you to 1 Peter 1, Ephesians 1, Hebrews 1, Revelation 1. Give you some glimpses of the lovely Savior, what a wonderful one he is, how glorious he is, how holy he is, you'd fall in love with Christ. People won't have problems wallowing in the gutter if they keep their minds on the Savior, and the Word of God is God's instrument in keeping our minds on him. We don't keep our minds on the Savior by visions and dreams and hallucinations and all manner of manufactured ideas. We keep our eyes on the Savior in the book.

James T. Jeremiah:

Last of all, the Bible is God's instrument to keep us walking in the right way because it challenges us to follow in the paths of righteousness. I want to suggest that David may have written the 23rd Psalm while he was resting by the brooks of En Gedi. It's a beautiful sight to see in the middle of a desert next to the Dead Sea, where the waterfalls come tumbling out of what seems to be absolute chaos and desert. What a restful picture it is. But in that wonderful Psalm, David said, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." He never leads us into any other kind of path.

James T. Jeremiah:

Don't you talk about being led of God to walk in sin. Don't you talk about being led of God to follow a profession that will dishonor him. Don't you talk about being led of God and deliberately do his will, go about doing his will, disobey his will. He never leads in any other kind of paths but righteous paths. How do you know that? Out of this book. "Thy word have I treasured, stored up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." If you believe and practice and obey the Word of God, you will be a separatist, separating your life from the sin of the corrupted world. Living in it as a light, but living apart of it, away from it, separated from it, as a witness for the savior. Hide it in your heart. Count it a greater and more precious meaning than any thing you will ever learn in this institution. Make it a part of your life from now on until the day you see him face to face.

James T. Jeremiah:

Father in heaven, there is a problem that we don't want, sin. There is a solution, dear Lord, that we want to use, thy Word. Help us to do it today. In Jesus' name. Amen.