

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you, Mr. Matson, for that message that makes us think of the Lord Jesus Christ today. Would you open your Bibles with me please, to the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians. And let me read beginning with verse 25 for our Bible lesson this morning. I'd like to read more of the chapter than this, but this will contain the verse we want to emphasize. Ephesians 4:25, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

James T. Jeremiah:

Yesterday, we mentioned the fact that the Epistles deal with many of the potential sins of the believer. Here's another reading, one yesterday in Colossians, this one in Ephesians reminding us of the very same thing. In discussing the subject yesterday, we talked about be ye holy as God has commanded, "Be ye holy for I am holy." And we sought to relate that to the believer's body. Our bodies are the temples, the tools and the treasure, that God desires to use, and they are important. They are not sinful, the flesh is, but that is not a synonym for the believer's body.

James T. Jeremiah:

Today we want to think about not only the plea for godliness, but we want to talk about the power for godliness or the enablement to live a life that will please God. Christians, certainly, one of the marks of being a Christian is that we ought to be sensitive to the awfulness of sin. And we ought to be willing when we know that sin is in our lives to deal with it. Now, the devil is a very clever person and he camouflages it. And we have an old nature which tries to justify it. But as believers in Christ, we ought to be sensitive to the awful character and the deceitful character of sin.

James T. Jeremiah:

I like to read stories about bees. I don't know very much about them. I've always tried to stay away from them as far as possible, because I don't know whether I could handle them or not. But I read an interesting story about some bees. They tell me that bees are some of the cleanest creatures God has ever made. They will remove specks of dirt from their hive because they do not want dirt around where they are. And someone told a story one day about finding a beehive with a very strange thing in it. Inside of the beehive there was a snake, a dead snake. It found its way into the place where the bees were, they stung it to death and then covered the body of the snake with bees wax in order to eliminate the dirt and defilement and the filth from a dead snake.

James T. Jeremiah:

There is a serpent called the devil, who seeks to do everything he can to defile the believer's life. He will help us to rationalize our sins, so that sin seems good. He will help us to minimize righteousness so that

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

righteousness is really not worth anything at all. But we as believers have a secret way of taking care of that problem, if we will recognize it. And that way, of course, is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's body. It's a very interesting thing that the book in the New Testament that has so much to say about carnality has more to say about the indwelling spirit than any other one, probably in all of the New Testament.

James T. Jeremiah:

I speak of the book of Corinthians. You don't find very many people by the way, naming their church, The First Corinthian Baptist Church, do you? It's a rather strange reason, I suppose, but I was in a church the other day in another state. When I walked in, I was utterly amazed for someone had called their Bible class, The Corinthian Bible Class. I would say that it needs some revision and at least ought to get over into Colossians or Ephesians and out of Corinthians.

James T. Jeremiah:

But nonetheless, the Bible teaches that these people who were given over to all kinds of difficulties in their lives, sin, and carnality, at least twice, and probably in other places, it is said that the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The word of God teaches a lot about the Holy Spirit. And we ought to as Christians be concerned because in this scripture that we read this morning, it says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

James T. Jeremiah:

His ministry and his person is presented many ways in many parts of the Bible. For example, in the Gospel of John, you see him in his incoming, when he comes to live in the believer. For the Lord Jesus said, "Except a man be born of the spirit, he cannot inherit the kingdom of God. He cannot see the kingdom of God." And so in regeneration, the Holy Spirit comes in. He has an incoming, when he comes, when we're saved. And there is no person living who is a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." John also talks about his up springing. John 4:14, it refers to the well of water springing up into everlasting life. And then in John 7:37-39, he talks about his outflowing, "From his innermost being, shall flow rivers of living water." And in that passage of scripture, the Lord Jesus identifies the typology of water, signifying the ministry and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

James T. Jeremiah:

As I mentioned, every believer possesses the Holy Spirit, but unfortunately not every one of us all the time, at least, have him possessing us. And that's another story. That's something else that we ought to be thinking about in these days. To many, he is a guest, the Holy Spirit is a guest. He's come to live, but he's not the Lord of the manor. He's not the Lord of the house. He's not the sovereign of the life. We possess him, but he does not possess us. And that's a tragedy. And I would appeal to you today, as I speak to you students, as I speak to my heart and to the faculty, that we, as believers in Christ, ought to recognize the presence of the spirit of God. And when we do, one thing will happen, we will see the awful character of sin and we'll see what it does in the life.

James T. Jeremiah:

To recognize his presence. I recognize today that this doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been taken to extremes in two directions. First of all, dead orthodoxy has its extreme. The teaching on the Holy Spirit

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

is, as someone has put it, the lost gospel, you'll never hear anything about him. Nobody says anything about the Holy Spirit. And then of course there's the charismatic heresy, which takes it to the other extreme, where all one hears is who the Holy Spirit is and what he's done and what miracles he's performed and how he's done the spectacular.

James T. Jeremiah:

But we ought always to remember that when Jesus was teaching about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, he said that there were two things that he did. First of all, in John 15:26 and 16:14, he tells us that the Holy Spirit testifies of him and he will come to glorify Christ. And when he doesn't testify of Christ and when he doesn't glorify Christ, but there is an evidence in which man is glorified, experience is glorified, extremes are glorified and Christ is eliminated. You can count on it. The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with it. And so we need to recognize, when we deal with this subject, where we're not dealing in it in a matter of extremes, either to neglect the teaching, nor are we to go beyond what the word of God says about him. When he is given his rightful place, as we read in the scripture before us, in this passage in Ephesians 4, when we give him his rightful place, he will produce godliness in the life, keeping us from the sin we've found listed in the scriptures. He will also lead us into righteousness, producing the things that follow this particular reference here in Ephesians.

James T. Jeremiah:

One of the interesting ways to study the Bible is to study it topically within a book. Now, I believe with all my heart in the doctrine of the preaching of the word in the expository fashion, but the expository preaching doesn't need necessarily to be, find yourself in trouble in one verse and get persecuted to another one. It means to explain, to expose the scripture. And there are several ways to do it. Maybe you'd be interested in having your own study in Ephesians and see how many topics you can find that are characteristic of this book. And I do not have time to do very much with this, this morning, but I want to emphasize some of the teaching in Ephesians on the presence of the spirit of God, who is the enablement for the believer to live a godly life.

James T. Jeremiah:

First of all, in chapter four, verse 30, there is an inference of the teaching that is found in Corinthians, of the presence of the spirit, the Holy Spirit, whereby you're sealed, 1st Corinthians 3:16, makes it clear your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Not that it will be, but it is now the temple of the Holy Spirit, if you are one of his. That's something you believe, my friend, not necessarily feel. One said, "I don't feel his presence." It doesn't make any difference. He's there anyway. "I don't feel any upsurging in my soul." That doesn't have anything to do with it. The Bible says he's there. How did you get saved? By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. You didn't necessarily have any great feeling. But it's a fact of the faith, that when you're saved, the spirit of God comes to live in you, he is present.

James T. Jeremiah:

It means that we acknowledge it and not necessarily understand it. Every once in a while I hear people say, "I don't understand it, so I don't believe it." A student came to me several years ago and said to me, "I am leaving college. I've been here two weeks and don't understand election." I said, "I've been here 15 years and I don't understand it and I'm staying. I believe it, I don't understand it." We understand as God gives us understanding along the way, but there are many things we are told to believe, whether we understand it all after all. He dwelt in those Corinthians, those envious, carnal, divisive, immoral,

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

wicked living people. He lived in them as believers. Think of that. Make any difference what sin may be your particular battle this morning, or my particular battle. Make any difference how we may be discouraged or encouraged, on top or below in the spiritual life. He is present in your body and in my mine.

James T. Jeremiah:

The book of Ephesians talks about the earnest of the spirit, or the sealing of the spirit. Notice the text says, "We're sealed under the day of redemption," but back here to Ephesians 1:13 and 14, where we find the same thing, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of the truth of the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." You know what that means? The Holy Spirit in you today is the down payment of something better coming. He is the down payment. God sent him into your body and into mine that we might be sure of a redeemed body.

James T. Jeremiah:

For you see the apostle Paul in another place refers to the subject. In Romans 8:24, the redemption of your body and the earnest of the spirit is the down payment that the body will be redeemed. I believe the seal of the Holy Spirit is upon the body of the believer. He takes care of it. It suggests his possession. He owns it. What, know you now that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, which you had of God. And you're not your own. You're bought with a price. He owns your body. He owns my body. They are his by right of purchase. He sent his son to die that he might possess them.

James T. Jeremiah:

And then there's the thought here, also of protection, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." I know this can be a comfort to some in sorrow, but I like to think of this seal being put upon the believer. The Holy Spirit is the seal in some miraculous wonderful way. And God is the outside agent who puts that seal upon us. And when in the providence and plan of God, these bodies are laid away until the resurrection day, the Lord Jesus Christ has guaranteed in his word that the Holy Spirit has sealed those bodies unto the day of redemption. And one day these bodies with their weaknesses and with their problems and with their sins and all the things we face, with our sicknesses and our infirmities and all that this human body can have. One day, it's going to be resurrected and made like unto the body of his glory. How do I know that? Because he has given me the earnest, the down payment of his Holy Spirit, sealing the believer's body.

James T. Jeremiah:

Oh young people and staff people, and faculty people, and all of us, what it ought to do to us as believers to recognize that within us dwells the spirit of God and have sealed these bodies unto that day, I'm looking forward to the day of redemption. I'm going to get rid of... I went the other day to get my eyes examined and I have to have trifocals now, they're three times as bad as they used to be. I'm going to be able to see without this junk on the front of my face. And I'm too old to remind myself of how proud I ought to be, to get these things that stick in your eyes that nobody can see you. But one day it's going to be different. One day, it's going to be different because the spirit of God who lives in the believer is that seal, he is the substance. God is the sealer.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

Let's look at another thing in the book of Ephesians chapter three, verse 16. And we haven't time to do a lot with this, but I want to mention it because it is a part of what I want to emphasize this morning. Verse 16 of chapter three, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." In the inner man, the spiritual life. We could debate, I suppose, about what he means here. But let's take for granted that he's talking about the spiritual life. "Be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man." What happens when that comes to pass? Well in verse 17, Christ is made at home in our hearts. The Holy Spirit's responsibility is to testify of him and glorify him and make him at home in the believers hearts. Ain't that wonderful to know that Christ is in you, the hope of glory. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make that a reality.

James T. Jeremiah:

He also helps us to grasp the idea of his four dimensional love. Think of that, to know as the scriptures tell us here, the height and the depth and the breadth and the length of his love. He came from the farthest distance to go to the lowest depths, to reach out to the farthest distance in lives and take us to the longest time into eternity, the love of the Lord Jesus. He also helps us to know the humanly unknowable, who can comprehend the love of Christ. The love of Christ, who went to a cross and took the scars of our sins with the nails, as he died. And as his side was punctured with a spear and the blood came gushing out and he gave his life. And when we describe the cross, there is no way of describing the agony of his death because the Bible says that God made his soul an offering for sin. And you can't see that on a cross. The awful agony of his death manifesting his love to us.

James T. Jeremiah:

And then in verse 19, he lives to strengthen us that we might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. To know that when you are saved, God, God comes to live in your body and in mine. The enablement of the spirit to understand. Chapter two, verse 18, the access of the spirit. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the father." The word access means to secure the privilege of an interview with a sovereign. Jew and Gentile in Christ both have access to the father in the spirit. The spirit maketh intercession for us.

James T. Jeremiah:

You see, it's very difficult to pray when the Holy Spirit who lives in us is grieved. There's something wrong with the access. Now, it's never easy to pray, if we think of it from the natural side. You bring yourself to the place where you pray, but to say that it's easy always to do it is a misnomer, but when you come to pray and the heavens are [inaudible 00:19:47] and the heart is cold, it will do us well to stop a moment and think, why? Because the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us. He has access to the father and we come then by his enablement.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to close my message and spend a little more time on this day and talk about the love of the spirit. You say, "Well, I don't read anything like that in Ephesians." Well, maybe I'm going to read something into it, but you'll permit me to do it this one time. We come back to the text we started with. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." The love of the spirit.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

You see the word grieve, refers to love. Love can be grieved. The devil never is grieved. Did you know that? He gets mad and angry, stirred up maybe, but he doesn't get grieved. He hates, but he doesn't love. The Holy Spirit can be grieved. In Colossians we read, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Colossians 3:15, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." And when he's grieved the peace of God doesn't rule in our hearts. And you know what I'm talking about, well as I know, you know it from the scriptures and you know it from experience. When we grieve the Holy Spirit, there's something in us because of his presence, where the peace, not the peace with God, thank God for that. But the peace of God sort of departs or gets weak or fades out. And we have a little difficulty.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, there's an interesting thing about this verse concerning the grieving of the Holy Spirit. It's a word that refers to love, and he's a very tender person, a very tender presence, and he can be easily grieved. But will you notice he is not grieved away? It doesn't say that he's going to get grieved and get up and leave. It says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you're sealed unto the day of redemption." And that day of redemption hasn't come to pass yet. And so we're sealed. He's there to live, to stay, to abide, never to forsake us.

James T. Jeremiah:

Years ago I heard a man tell a story about his early childhood that never has left me. The story is very interesting to me because I knew the brother who told it, respected his testimony. He said, as a youngster, he went to the country school, that interested me because that's where I started. And he told about coming home from the country school that day and went into the kitchen and started for the cookie jar. Just exactly what he always had done. But in going across the old country kitchen floor, he had his eye on the cookie jar, but he saw his mother standing there. He looked at her and there were tears stains on her face. And she had been crying. He said, "When I saw my mother weeping or saw the evidence of her weeping, I knew that she'd been grieved. For some reason, cookies didn't have an interest in me or for me."

James T. Jeremiah:

He said that afternoon went on, the rest of the day. And we came around the old kitchen table for our evening meal. We sat around it and nobody said anything. Dad didn't say a thing. The rest of the children were silent. Mother put the food on the table and served the rest of us. But she didn't say a thing. And the whole household was filled with grief. He said, "I never did know what happened. Whether someone had said something to her that had broken her heart, or somebody had done something that had caused her to weep." But he said, "There's one thing I do know, that though mother was grieving and her face was stained with tears, she didn't go upstairs and pack her things and leave. She stayed."

James T. Jeremiah:

And young people, we can easily grieve the Holy Spirit. Someone has said that when we stand in the presence of God and we have an opportunity to look back over what we faced and what we lived, we will be utterly amazed as to how many times unintentionally we grieved the Holy Spirit. And when he's grieved, we have no peace. And when he's grieved, we have little strength to meet the tempter and the temptation because somehow or other, the lack of peace takes away our interest in praying. And when

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

we don't pray, we don't read the word of God. And all of this is involved. We can get ourselves into serious spiritual trouble.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to close by reminding you of something in the scripture, that the verse that we've taken as a text for the enablement to God the living is surrounded by some very black verses. There are certain things that we do or can do that can grieve him. And I must in all faithfulness to the preaching of the word, remind you at least in outline form what they are. Number one in verse 25 is false living, false living, lying. "Wherefore putting away lying..." That has to do with deception, hypocrisy, misrepresentation, artificiality, sham, half-truths. It has to do with making promises we don't keep. It has to do with making a commitment to God and straightway walking out from where we made it and forget it. It's lying.

James T. Jeremiah:

Sinful anger, 26, "Be angry and sin not." Does that mean we never get angry or should never be angry? Well, the Lord Jesus was angry, he was angry at sin. Anger is sinful when self moves in. And all of us have within us a temper, and we wouldn't be worth much if we didn't, who wants to live a blah life? But that very factor within us, in the part of temper, reduce anger. A woman said to Billy Sunday, one day, she said, "I have a very quick temper, but it's over in a minute." He said, "Yeah, like a shotgun blast that blows everything to pieces. And when a shot gun blast blows it all to pieces, it's hard to put it back together." Anger will grieve him. Lying will grieve him.

James T. Jeremiah:

Verse 28, planned, premeditated stealing. "Let him that stole steal no more, let him labour." You say, you mean to say that within a Christian community, we ought to talk about stealing. I've been around here long enough to know that that has happened. Stealing is another form of cheating. When you look over your shoulder to where that buddy of yours is seated, taking a test and you write down on your paper what he has. There're two things about it I ought to warn you about. First of all, that's stealing. Secondly, he may be wrong. Stealing, taking somebody else's things, possessions. Taking and using someone else's term paper with your name on it, with a different typewriter, or maybe you thought you could get by with it without even retyping it. Stealing, that grieves him.

James T. Jeremiah:

Verse 29, worthless talking, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." We can steal time and money from him as we've mentioned, but this corrupt worthless speech can be traced to one source. When you have a dirty tongue and your ambition is to tell dirty stories and to walk in a dirty path, it's because all of this comes from a dirty source, a heart that needs cleansing by the presence of the spirit who wants to do it.

James T. Jeremiah:

Last of all, worthless or rather personal bitterness. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." A bitter spirit. Young people, if you have a bitter spirit in your heart today, the only person that ever hurts is you. You get bitter about somebody and you get jealous about somebody and you get full of hatred about somebody. And the only person it

James T. Jeremiah
Enablement for Christian Living
October 26, 1977

hurts is you because maybe the very person that you hate and have bitterness about, doesn't even know it.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's very interesting that this verse of scripture in this text seems almost isolated, surrounded by these things that bring grief to the Holy Spirit. It's something worth our consideration. You're not your own, neither am I. We are commanded by God to, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." God never commands anything that he doesn't enable us to do. And he's put the Holy Spirit within us that he may teach us the word, and we may obey it and walk in a way that's pleasing to him.

James T. Jeremiah:

God has a right to you and to me, God has a right to a definite part of your time. He has a right to a definite part of your time. He has the power to take all of it. God has a right to a definite part of your money. He has the power to take all of it. God has a right to be glorified through your tongue. He has the power to take all of it. God has a right to be honored through your influence. He has the power to take all of it. God has a right to your life and my life. He has the power to take all of it. He hasn't taken you out of this world, nor me, as yet, because he has a purpose for us here. Let's never do anything to frustrate that purpose in our lives by foolish, foolish sinning. The Holy Spirit lives in our bodies.

James T. Jeremiah:

Father, take the truth of scripture today and apply it to our hearts so that we might not only talk about this and listen to it, but oh God, enable us today to live what we've heard in scripture this morning. In Jesus' name. Amen.