

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

We'll take a brief look at this and that prayer and pray for us as we take off in a few minutes, an hour or so maybe toward the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Just to have the mountains of Colorado with the snow on top and the temperatures in Florida, I think that's going to be what heaven's going to be like. Something like that, with all those beautiful things appropriately arranged. Let's look to the Lord in prayer.

James T. Jeremiah:

Father. We pray this morning to bless the pastors and their wives and their churches represented in this conference. Bless the sessions this morning. And we ask Lord to direct the people who travel, give them a safe journey over the highway. And we ask thee now as we look into the word of God, that the spirit of the Lord will encourage us as we study a little bit of what we can anticipate, because of the grace of our blessed Lord and savior. Pray in Jesus name. Amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

This fifth chapter of first Peter talks about the call of the ministry, because we have been chosen to shepherd the flock and take oversight thereof. Talks about the conflict in the ministry because we have an enemy, an adversary, the devil, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. And then we have reference to the crown for the ministry, for there is a Shepherd's crown for the believer one day yet in the future. It deals with our enlistment, our enemy, and our expectation.

James T. Jeremiah:

The trust that he's given us, putting us into the ministry, the temptations we face as we respond and the triumph that awaits us at the end of the journey. Has to do with what we do, why we do it, or why we should do it. What we do, how we do it, why we should do it. Our privilege, our problems, and our payment. How are we going to face all of this? Well, in this passage of scripture, it would appear to me that there are five things that the holy spirit, through Peter, has given to us to help us in the overcoming of the opposition.

James T. Jeremiah:

And they are as follows. First of all, we need to serve with assurance in verse five. God giveth grace to the humble. At verse seven there's a verse I like, casting all your care upon him, all your anxiety upon him for he careth for you. And the Baxter interlinear translation of this verse, and I'm sure that this is a good translation of the text, there's something about this that thrills me, that reminds us that it matters to God about you. The assurance that God gives to his people, to his servants. The grace of our God is with us to perfect, to confirm, to strengthen, to establish us. That is to say, if we have assurance in our call and assurance in the one who called us, we don't need to play ourselves down. We ought not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but we ought to think of ourselves.

James T. Jeremiah:

We ought to think of ourselves as to what God has given us and what we are in him. We all have a tendency, I think, to do that. Well, we look out and we see somebody is greatly successful, and we say to

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

ourselves, "Well, now if I could just be that way?" Well, God put us where he put us, but it's there for a reason. Think of what he has given to us and what we are. We're his sons, we're his servants, we're priests, and you take the Bible someday and just list what you are. We don't need to play ourselves down. We are his servants. We can have assurance. God giveth grace to the humble, and humility is not necessarily demonstrated by how you poor mouth yourself.

James T. Jeremiah:

God doesn't expect us to go around excusing ourselves for living. We ought to thank God we're living. Thank God we have the opportunity to serve. Thank God we're his children, thank God we're called. Assurance. Now, the next one is an interesting one, I've named it abstinence. And it says be sober. And someone said, "Well, that is sober-minded." Well, one of the necessities to be sober-minded is to be sober.

James T. Jeremiah:

Strong defines this word, meaning to stay from wine. To abstain, or keep yourself sober. Now the latest authority in all Greek word studies, I suppose, is the dictionary of New Testament Theology. And in defining this word, the dictionary says, this word carries with it the idea of sobriety, the opposite of intoxication. In Hellenistic Greek the words can be used literally of a state of abstinence from wine, but also figuratively indicating complete clarity of mind and it's resulting in good judgment.

James T. Jeremiah:

So, why do you suppose Paul put that in there? Is it conceivable that preachers might need an exhortation to be sober? I'll never forget one preacher that I knew years ago. My family and I were home for a change one night, and we were sitting there and listening to, in those days, to the radio. My brother-in-law was there and he had one of these wild detective stories on. If you remember radio, you remember what they were like. All the background noises and the screams, and the yells and everything that went with it. I was half asleep when all of a sudden I heard somebody pounding on the front door.

James T. Jeremiah:

I went to the front door and there stood a bleary-eyed fellow. And I asked what I could do for him, and in his drunken stupor, isn't going to do much for me. Well, I said, come on in and we'll talk about it. So I started dealing about the Lord. I said, 'you know, the Bible says God so loved you and so loved the world he gave his only begotten son, and whosoever believes in him shall not perish.'

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, I said, "Do you know anything about that?" He says, "I'm a Christian." I said, "Then certainly you need to recognize the Bible when it says, if we can easily say we confess our sins, he's faithful and just forgives us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And I prayed briefly, "Lord, where do I go from here?" And I began to talk to this old boy and I found out that he was part Baptist. He was a Plymouth brethren. And he'd gotten into sin up in Canada and found himself in deep sin with a woman. And he'd taken the way out to get drunk. And he was an alcoholic.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

Now you say, "It couldn't happen to anybody but a PB." Oh yeah. The only person I know who's ever been an alcoholic has been the guy or the gal who took the first drink. You say, "What's that got to do with us?" Let me whisper something to you. I've heard of preachers, not all out of the Baptist ranks, who are not looking too much askance these days about having social drinking with some of their people, and that's a sin to me. And I tell you friend, we live in a godless drunken day. I believe God put these things in there for a good reason. We need to recognize that we're made of the same stuff. And the best way to be sober is to see to it we keep that way. I'm not a Lutheran. I don't believe in drinking moderately. I don't believe in drinking the stuff at all.

James T. Jeremiah:

And I believe we ought to preach against it. Sin. I'm sick and tired of hearing drunkenness described as a disease. It's sin. We oughta preach against it, the Bible does. I'm not out with the WCTU this morning, but it's in the text and I try to hit everything that's there as I go along. Assurance is needed if we're going to overcome, abstinence, sober-mindedness certainly all that goes with it. A spirit of alertness, be vigilant, be on alert. Matthew 24:42, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. May have application in that passage to the great tribulation anticipation of the revelation of Christ. But if it's true there in that passage, it's true now. We do not know when he's coming.

James T. Jeremiah:

I like what I read somewhere about George Whitfield. One day someone asked him, "What would you be doing if the Lord would come tomorrow or the day after tomorrow," he picked up his date book, looked through the pages and said, "I'd planned to be doing then what I planned to do anyway." It's good to have your plans in gear with the coming of Christ, isn't it. To be alert, to be on guard, to be vigilant, watching, waiting, watching our steps, redeeming the time, walking circumspectly with care and so on. Being alert.

James T. Jeremiah:

The other thing we find here, I think, is the spirit of aggressiveness. We ought not to be running in the sense of fearing the enemy, in the sense that we're going to flee, there is no armor for the back of the Saint to the back of the soldier. So we find it described in Ephesians six, but in verse nine, we're told to resist the devil. Resist the devil, resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. We're told to resist the devil in James and we're to resist evil as believers today. I think it's an interesting exhortation in Ephesians 4:27, that we need not to give place to the devil, not give him an opportunity, and we're to strive, or work against, or fight off, withstand that which is related to the enemy and related to opposition to the gospel.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's a battle. And I don't think we can get away from that in the scriptures. I think of Paul, as he comes to the end of the journey, I fought a good fight. Finished the course, have kept the faith. Paul had a battle to fight, a war to win. He had a race to run and a possession to keep. And he didn't do that by just looking piously, being religious. He was a man of strong conviction, a man who had an aggressive spirit against evil, not to go with it, go against it. Not to be in cahoots with the devil, but be against him. Whatever the devil swore, we ought to be against. That's a pretty good way of deciding where we stand, I think, as we realize the enemy and what he's seeking to do. And then last of all, the passage that helps me to see something about anticipation. Verses four and 10.

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

James T. Jeremiah:

When the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. We have reason to expect much from our God as we faithfully serve him. And it always brings joy to me that no man yet has gone to his reward. DL Moody has gone to heaven, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, gone to heaven. Neither of them have been rewarded yet, because the work isn't done yet. DL Moody's testimony still goes forth, some of the things he started became corrupted by liberalism, but many things he did still going forth. You read his sermons. I don't think there's a Baptist preacher that hasn't preached half of Spurgeon sermons. And think about all the grandchildren Spurgeon has.

James T. Jeremiah:

Through the preaching of man through the years. His rewards are not yet, because the work is not yet done. Anticipation of what? Well in verse 10, the God of all grace would call us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. After that, you have suffered a while. Aren't you glad with that? That word, a while. It's not going to be long before it's all over and we will be with him and the suffering will be over. make you perfect, complete established, strengthened.

James T. Jeremiah:

Settle you. Great to be settled. And God wants us to anticipate what he's going to do for us. He will personally come and pick you up, and he will firmly give you a place, give you the reward that he's offered for his people. For his preachers. On the basis of what? Well on the basis, first of all, of what we do. Shepherd the flock. That's a reward given especially to preachers. Crown of glory, shepherd the flock. Not shepherd somebody else's flock, yours. Not be involved in everything else, but shepherding, shepherd the flock.

James T. Jeremiah:

And there is one shepherd for one flock. And however he divides it among his assistants is his business, but we're to shepherd the flock, it's our responsibility. What we do. We aren't going to stand before the Lord and say, "Lord, you know, I should've been shepherding the flock, but you understand how important it is that I spend my lifetime in getting an education." We ought to be working a lifetime and preparing, that's for sure. We cannot neglect the flock, that we're called to pastor the flock by doing a lot of other things that may be good things. Maybe fine things, whether we miss the calling to shepherd the flock.

James T. Jeremiah:

Is part of the reward, you see. How we do it, not under compulsion, willingly it says. That is to say, we ought to be doing it because we have a burden in our hearts to do it, a willingness to do it. And I don't think that has reference to the idea of God not forcing us in by his call, but do we do the work for God because we have to, because we want to. Do we shepherd the flock because, well, this is my job? Well, if that's all it is you better get one that's better paying.

James T. Jeremiah:

Not under compulsion and why we do it. Not for sordid gain. I believe the servant is worthy of his hire. And some of you brethren that are here, and they're not paying you what they ought to. And they ought to be doing better and get some of us to come and speak and say a speech, we'd probably would like to.

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

Maybe the last time we ever preached for you. But anyhow, we could do that. Paul Dixon's great on raising money. He could do that.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's not the matter of what we get, but are we doing it because we love him? God put us there. I can think back over the days when I didn't know where the next dollar was coming from, we started preaching at \$11.50 a week. There was such an improvement over a year that I got to \$12.50. But you see that was in the old days. That's right, a long time ago, 43 years ago. But the thing that really thrilled me was, and I've never forgotten this, God and his wonderful grace provided equally as much money from other sources as he did from that church. Great to see God provide. And I'll tell you when we came to Cedarville in those early days, was many weeks without salaries. Only time I can ever remember paying two car payments at one time was when I was president of Cedarville college and no salary.

James T. Jeremiah:

That was wonderful. That was better than getting the check from the treasurer, because God supplied it in such a remarkable way. See friend, if we're only serving for money we're in the wrong business. That's not to say we ought not to be paid adequately. And some of you're facing some real problems here, I know that. Every time you turn around something wrong with the car, every time you turn around, one of the kids has to go to the hospital. Something's wrong at home and you have to fix the house. You have to pay your own rent. I know.

James T. Jeremiah:

But thank God there's a better payment coming. And there's a day coming when all that we've paid out and what we didn't have, God's going to make up. How we do it, why we do it, crown of glory. I don't want to work for crowns somebody said, don't want to have any crowns. What good if I'm up in heaven, running around with all of those crowns? Well, if that's your attitude, don't worry. You won't have any. It'd be nice to have one at least. And a glorious day when we can put it at the feet of the savior. And I believe it's legitimate and right, God put in his word that we ought to strive to be victorious and have that crown on that day when he comes.

James T. Jeremiah:

An old lady went to heaven, she'd been used to living in luxury. She had everything going for her down here. Finally got to heaven and she saw her cottage. It was not much. Didn't look like it had been painted. Not only were the roof tiles coming off, the boards were rotted. She looked inside and it didn't have a carpet, only had rough floorboards, not much there. And she was complaining. She complained to whoever was in charge of the residence halls.

James T. Jeremiah:

And finally, somebody said to her, "You see, it's all we could build with what you sent ahead. The only scanty materials you sent are in that building. That's all you sent, that's all we could use." Let's send some good materials on ahead friend. Some good materials. But our reservation's in heaven where moth nor rust do not corrupt. Nor thieves do not break through and steal. Thank God, what we're doing for him to the glory of his name, does not pass away. Thank the Lord.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 13, 1979

Aren't you glad that God put you in the ministry? Aren't you glad you have an enemy to face with victory in your heart, because God provides it? Aren't you glad there's a hope beyond this day. Wonderful hope and a reward awaiting his people.

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, it's time to pray. We wanted to have your request this morning. Some of you are going to be going home very shortly. I hope you stay for the morning sessions. I'll have to get a tape to find out what he said to see whether or not he's Orthodox, but I'll do that. You stay if you can, and then let's pray. So, who'll remember the folks who are going to be traveling home from this conference today? Somebody pray for these people. All of you, let's pray for everybody. Anybody take that request this morning? Okay. Thank you, Hugh. What other requests? Continue to pray for Dr. Dollard, who would remember him this morning?