

James T. Jeremiah
Devotional Session
September 12, 1979

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

And we want to think about one verse out of that passage this morning. I don't know how you'll feel about it, but I think it's a privilege, a thrill, and a high honor to be called of God to preach. Now, that doesn't mean that having been called of God to preach that we have any reason to boast over those who have not been called. I get weary with people who give the impression to our young people in this college or any college that unless you've been called to the mission field or the pastorate, you really missed it. The only time when we've missed it is when we're not doing the will of God. But nonetheless, God has given some of us the privilege of announcing the good news.

James T. Jeremiah:

And in this passage of scripture, as we mentioned, we have been called to shepherd God's allotment to us. The thing about the Israelis as they came across the Jordan River to occupy the land, or at least supposedly to do so, they had an allotment, and yet they didn't claim it. And maybe there are some cases in our experience where we have an allotment too, and we're not claiming all the God has provided for us.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, there's one thing to have the opportunity, but no opportunity comes without opposition. Somebody said, "Well, in my church, the devil is fighting me." You name the church where he isn't. We have to battle the world, the flesh, and the devil. And the devil seems to be doing pretty well using the world and the flesh. Sometimes we think we have gotten the victory, just about that time we have another attack. Sometimes I think we're like the old deacon who was praying every Wednesday night. He was the one who closed it with his ritualistic prayer. You know, there are Baptists who are ritualists. He prayed, "Oh Lord, clean away the cobwebs." The preacher stood as long as he could and when he finished the preacher prayed, "Oh Lord, stop cleaning away the cobwebs, kill the spider." And there are a lot of spiders that need executing.

James T. Jeremiah:

There's one verse this morning I want to talk about, as we think about the opposition in the ministry of the word. Verse eight. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Let's pray together. Father, use the word today in our hearts to encourage us, to challenge us, to live for the Lord. Bless the meetings this day and the fellowship we have together. May this be a time of great blessing as we serve the Lord these hours. In Jesus' name, amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to give you six things this verse says about the devil, what he's doing, what he's trying to do. Satan attacks elders, pastors, bishops. That means you, you're a pastor and it's me and the preaching of the gospel. How does he do it? He does it by deceiving. Number one, by deceiving. The verse says he's our adversary. And this word is used to describe an opponent in a lawsuit who seeks in every way he can to build his case in his propositions that he presents to the court.

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James T. Jeremiah:

Satan seeks to deceive us by imitation, by seduction. He makes his way seem to be right when it's dead wrong. And he makes his wrong way to seem right when it isn't. As we well know, he has his ministers. His ministers are transformed into the ministers of righteousness. In Second Corinthians 11:15. He has his message. Paul warns those of his time and ours. Those who depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing doctrines or seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. He has his meeting place, the synagogue of Satan. And we've lived to see the day when the church of Satan has its meeting places. And there are some meeting places of Satan that wouldn't be bold enough to say they are, but they are nonetheless. He has his miracles. We read and as the Lord comes back, the antichrist will show forth his power with signs and lying wonders.

James T. Jeremiah:

And may I suggest to you this morning that some of the so-called miracles we hear reported today are not necessarily the miracles performed by the God of heaven. We're living in a day when this we can expect to happen, he's deceiving. And don't let us suppose that because we went through a Bible college or a seminary or a Christian college and we seem to have our theological cap on right that we are those who can be eliminated from the possibility of deception. He's a pretty clever character. This verse also says that he opposes the pastor by defaming, he's the devil and the word devil means slanderer. Interestingly enough, in some places where the word is used to translate gossip, it's diabolos, slander. He will seek to accuse by insinuation, by lying, by gossiping. And some of us have seen pastors, Christian workers go down to ruin by the defaming enemy called the devil. He's a slanderer.

James T. Jeremiah:

How many pastors, Christian workers we've known, you have known whose ministries have been ruined and they have gone out in shame because the devil defamed them? I remember when I was a young preacher, someone referring to some people in the church having tongues so long, they could sit in the living room and lick the skillet in the kitchen. And there are some of them in Baptist churches like that, defame the character of a preacher. And I think it's a wicked, devilish, satanic thing when that happens. I'm not talking now about those who make genuine fools of themselves by getting out into sin, but I'm talking about somebody who's trying to live for God and the enemy, the slanderer, comes and defames his character. He does it also by disturbing. We find out in the roaring lion aspect of the devil, refers to the howling of a beast in fierce anger.

James T. Jeremiah:

F. B. Meyer said he makes up in noise what he's lost in power. Gustin made this statement about the enemy. "Christ is called a lion because of his courage. The devil, because of his ferocity. One lion comes to conquer, the other to hurt." He seeks to disturb us sometimes by flaunting his power. We look out on the scene of the world and we see the chaos and the corruption, the filth and the rottenness. And we recognize the god of this world as the one in back of it. He seems to try to sometimes defeat us by disturbing us by somehow giving us the idea that the great success in the world is always satanic. And he has a lot of disciples who go around like roaring lions sometimes and would put fright in our hearts. He has methods like that too.

James T. Jeremiah:

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You know, the Bible calls the devil, the serpent, and there are some characteristics of the snake that make it appropriate type, or a picture of the devil. They say that a rattlesnake two minutes old can strike. They say that snakes can engulf prey on the ground or as they travel through the water. And they are built and made so they afford perfect camouflage and they are difficult to detect. This is an interesting thing. I never knew about a snake. I don't study them too much. They have pupils that are vertical, like cats, enabling them to see in the dark, which is to say that the enemy who goes about to disturb you is one who can see farther than you can or I can and it behooves us to be on guard as we go forth in the service of the Lord. He opposes the Bishop, the elder, the pastor by deceiving, defaming, disturbing, and also by detaining.

James T. Jeremiah:

It speaks here about the enemy who walks about. He is a peripatetic. I'm not to say that he is a disciple of Aristotle, but Aristotle was a peripatetic, a philosopher who walked about while he was teaching. And we think of the enemy, Paul referring to him in another place as he sought to go out in the ministry of the gospel. But he reminded us in that passage in First Thessalonians 2:18 that he had been hindered. He goes about to hinder. He goes about to detain us. That word in the passage of scripture or hindered means to thwart or to cut a roadway or cut a ditch across the road, or put it in bank [inaudible 00:10:25], in the road to stop us from progress. He detains. How does he do that?

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, as I look back over my life and think a little bit about the battle of the enemy, I discovered that he's tried to do it by getting me to emphasize minors and neglect majors. It's possible to do that and do it sincerely. He wants us to be occupied with a poor or simply the good to the neglect of the best. And so doing, he detains us. He puts a roadblock in our way. Sometimes we find ourselves doing good things, necessary things, neglecting the most important things. I remember one time in my pastorate, I got involved in learning offset printing. And at a later day, when I came to this school, that printing knowledge came in handy because we had then a broken down typewriter. And I think we got the mimeograph out of Noah's Ark and we had no way of communicating a message. So I went out and bought a lithograph, offset press. But a good many times when I was doing that, I thought I was doing something great when I should have been studying and winning souls and doing other things. I was detained. Good things. The devil is a detainer.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's interesting to read in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew that he sows seed, he infiltrates, detained by infiltration. And in the same passage, he talks about catching away seed. He intercepts. So as we go out to serve the Lord, and sow the seed, he also sows some. And one of the great problems we have even in fundamentalist churches is the infiltration of unregenerated people. Infiltration, in opposition, throwing a roadblock in the front of anyone who would progress. And then while we're preaching, he intercepts, believe me. Sometimes he does that early in the morning, late in the afternoon, late at night, whenever we're preaching. You can always count on the devil, filling the hearer's heart with something else than what he ought to hear. And so he detains.

James T. Jeremiah:

The fifth thing that we find in this verse about the enemy is he's demanding. He's seeking. In Luke 21:31, the word of God says, "Satan hath demanded to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. He will oppose

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us by seeking to discourage or defeat us." He sought to do that with Job, you remember. He went up and down on the earth, walking to and fro in it and finally he found his way in the presence of God to demand that he do something about Job, demanding. He has a lot more power than some of us think he has. Somebody said to a lady one day, "I believe you would have something to speak good about the devil. She wouldn't speak any evil about anybody. I think you'd speaking well about the devil." She said, "You have to admit, he's persistent."

James T. Jeremiah:

So you see, I suppose, that's to his credit and ought to be to our warning. Demanding. I guess what I'm trying to say, brother and sisters in Christ, we have to do with an enemy that the world has ridiculed, they made him look like a monster when he's a pretty clever deceiver demanding, demanding of God that we be sifted, maybe, did with Peter. Demanding things of us. Yes, demanding. He is seeking. The sixth thing about him in this verse is, he's destroying. Seeking whom he may devour, that is swallow down, literally, is what it means. Seeking whom he may swallow down. That's the concept of the snake going across the water, you know, reaching out with his mouth, taking in what he can get. I don't need to stand here and say this, but I'm going to say it anyhow. It is the devil's objective to destroy our ministry and he's doing it today in many places in many ways. Sometimes he does it by ruining the testimony of the pastor.

James T. Jeremiah:

I tell you, there are some things about living a while that you can rejoice in and think of the blessings and God gives you a sort of a forgetter, forget a lot of the trials. But some things I can't forget are the men whom I've loved in Christ. I've seen them go down the drain because they foolishly flaunted with sin as the devil destroyed them, destroyed their ministry. Change the biblical emphasis of the pastor, that's one thing he likes to do. Instead of getting us preaching the word of God and teaching people what the book says, the devil can direct us so that we're out somewhere talking about things that are never going to bring blessing and help and encouragement to the hearts of people.

James T. Jeremiah:

My father was not saved until just before he died. And I'm trusting God that he did a work in his heart. He was a good man. He was a good dad. And there was a death in our family and I was home and he wanted me to stay over the weekend. And I made arrangements to do it under one condition, that he'd go to church with me. I asked him where he wanted to go. He told me where he wanted to go and I was surprised because he was not exactly happy about some of the things there, but we went. And I sat in that meeting and I'll never forget it, for all I heard in that meeting that day was something about the world council, something about somebody who was off some other direction was doing nothing. All it had to do was to denounce and denounce and denounce, but not a single word in that fundamentalist Baptist church did I hear that would have pointed my dad to Jesus Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm not opposed to speaking against the issues now, but my brethren in Christ, we have a message to proclaim to the hearts of people. And they're not going to heaven by hearing what's wrong with the world council of churches and all the rest of that goes along with it. And I believe we ought to denounce it in the proper place, in the proper time. I came away heartsick. And I'll tell you, frankly, I've been

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heartsick about it ever since I saw it. And I've asked God never to let me be like that. And I'm not going to go into that any further, but it breaks your heart.

James T. Jeremiah:

Listen to me. Out there in that war, wild, awful world, there are people with broken hearts going to hell. Let it be said of us that somebody said of Spurgeon the other day. He never preached anywhere, anytime as they read the sermons, without getting back to that old time message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the shed blood of the savior. Now you'll go out of here and say, Jeremiah is getting soft in his old age. Well, I don't care about that long as you don't think I'm in my old age. I'm not soft and I believe we ought to stand against these things, but let's not make that our major emphasis, the devil will take us to ruin. It'll swallow us up. Sometimes it's done by corrupting the doctrine of the pastor. And I've seen fundamentalists with their doctrines corrupted. They started out with a good, solid, balanced ministry and end up somewhere out on the periphery, emphasizing something that nobody ought to emphasize.

James T. Jeremiah:

The devil's in that, dabbling the courage of the pastor, making cowards out of us. He can do that. Sometimes he can do it by controlling our temper. I heard of a preacher several years ago had a fight with his deacons and socked one of them in the ear and broke his eardrum. Sufficient to say that was the termination of his pastorate and it should have been. And sometimes it happens that we let the devil create jealousy within our hearts, instead of recognizing God as a place for us, occupy that place and be grateful, God put us there.

James T. Jeremiah:

We have green eyes. We forget that the grass may be greener on the other side, but it always needs cutting. It's not as good as it seems. And there's no reason to be jealous of anybody else, if you're doing what God gave you to do, when he gave you to do it. The devil is a wicked enemy, gentlemen, ladies. You women need to pray for your husbands and you husbands need to pray for your wives in this godless day. We're facing an enemy, not just some kind of a dressed up sissy out there that can be knocked over with one swell swoop, just hit him and that's it. We got an enemy. He's out to devour, destroy, deceive, to defame. May God help us to recognize it as his pastors, his elders, his bishops. I hope you're getting that message about the elders and the bishops and the pastors.

James T. Jeremiah:

Okay, well, I'm going to quit. I don't want to, but I'm going to because we want to pray. Doctor Dixon was telling me today what a frustrating experience it is to have all these kids come in and no place to put them. And I feel for him, I've been through that and we need to pray for him. It's not easy when you have all of this happening in the later days of the summer. And I told him if he had to put any of them on mattresses on the floor, put the sophomores, juniors and seniors because the freshmen always bring their mamas with them. And mama was going to get terribly homesick anyhow.

James T. Jeremiah:

Let's pray for these young people are coming and pray for Dr. Dixon. Don't forget. Who will pray for the president of the school this morning? Somebody raise your hand. Come on. Oh, right here. Thank you.

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All right. Let's have some other requests. The preacher of the morning isn't here anyhow. He's out there, maybe out in the lobby, but we'll pray until he gets here. What other requests do you have?

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:21:49].

James T. Jeremiah:

There's a lady 80 years old who is going to have surgery this morning. She didn't want the preacher to stay away from the conference because she felt he could pray just as well at the conference as he could at home. That's our sweet spirit, isn't it? Who will pray for this lady? Somebody raise your hand, please. I can't see too well. So raise it high. Thank you, brother. Is this conference getting old or are you getting tired? What's the matter with you? What else? Who else now? Anybody else with a request?

James T. Jeremiah:

Over here? I'm sorry.

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:22:39]

James T. Jeremiah:

Okay. And mother-in-law needs prayer. Who'll pray for this lady going through a difficult time in life? Somebody take that. You ladies can pray too, you know? I can't think of any rules that prohibit that in this church building. Who'll pray for this woman? Thank you. Now, someone else over here, I think had a request, if I'm not mistaken. Anybody else? Yes. Yeah. We ought to pray for Truman Dollar. God is going to give him complete recovery. Who will remember Truman Dollar this morning? Thank you, brother. Who'll pray this morning for the meetings, for the speaking this morning and today, singing, music. Who'll pray for the services? Who'll remember that today? Thank you, brother. Let's pray as the Lord directs you.