

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you brother Robey for this message today. I couldn't help but think this morning as he was singing this, that during the last week or so some scholars, I suppose they would class themselves as that, who are affiliated with and supporting the World Council of Churches decided to put out a Bible in which they eliminate any concept God being father or Jesus Christ being God's son. They're going to have a unisex theology. Jesus is going to be the child of God. They don't even read the text, but when you have a perverted spiritual mentality, things get all messed up and that's what's happening in our day.

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, I suppose it's customary to say I'm glad to be here this morning, and I'm glad you came too. Voluntary, of course. There isn't a place in all the world like the chapel in Cedarville College. I've been in some others and always enjoy talking to young people, but this has a special place in my heart because of your love and your concern for the Lord and for your friendship to us. It was shown the other day and I haven't been able quite to know how to say thank you, but we certainly want you to know we appreciate your love.

James T. Jeremiah:

I sat here the other day on this platform and looked out over this audience and said to myself, "I must be dreaming. It can't be like this, but it is." When you look back and think of having 100 people in chapel, and then think of this, something for which we all ought to be very grateful. Sure you are. We need to be very grateful to God for the leadership he has given us through Dr. Dixon and the administrators of this college who labor long hours. The teachers who give themselves constantly to this work and to a great group of people called trustees who've had vision beyond anything that some of us could ever imagine. We're grateful to God for what's happened and what's happening in this place.

James T. Jeremiah:

These mornings, I want to think with you about the Book of Joshua. We won't be studying all of it, but I'd like to think with you about some verses in the first chapter this morning, and I think we're going to take time to read the first nine verses. Very familiar, but I want you to get the background, what is going on before I try to bring the message.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the Son of Nun, Moses' minister saying, "Moses, my servant, is dead. Now, therefore arise. Go over this Jordan, thou and all this people unto the land, which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even under the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites and under the Great Sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

James T. Jeremiah:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shall have good success. Have not I commanded thee be strong and of good courage? Be not afraid. Neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Our father in heaven, thank you for your word today, for this historical record given to us by the Holy Spirit concerning a man who stood for something, obeyed thee, and who saw great victories. We pray that we might see in his life something that will challenge and encourage us today. In Jesus name Amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

Joshua is a picture in the Old Testament of what we learned in the New Testament in the Book of Ephesians. Joshua pictures the Christian's experience where battles are fought and where battles are won. At this point in Israel's history, had they failed to follow Joshua, having been brought out of the land of Egypt, they would have been a people with no place to go, but God had a plan. He had a man, and Joshua was called of the Lord to take over in this great capacity of leading these people. Joshua is a chosen man. If you'll read the Old Testament story, you'll discover many things about him. God presents him in his word as a slave. He was born in Egypt. He and Caleb are the only two survivors at this particular point in history. He is seen in the Old Testament as a slave, as a spy sent out with Caleb to spy out the land. He is pictured as a servant referred to many times as Moses' minister.

James T. Jeremiah:

He is seen as a soldier when he leads the battle against the Amalekites, and when we read about him in the fifth chapter of Joshua, as going out to see the captain of the Lord's host. He divided the land and so he is pictured as a statesman, and the Bible says of him that he was a man in whom the spirit of the Lord was. He was seen as a saint. He is also pictured here in a very real sense as a savior, for his name has that significance. Moses brought them to the land. Joshua takes them in. The law brings us to the place where we see the need of a savior. Jesus brings us in to rest. You will find that taught in the Book of Hebrews chapters three and four, as the writer of that book refers to many of the events of this Book of Joshua. The absence of great mountain peaks, of character or experience, constitute Joshua as an illustration of the consistent man.

James T. Jeremiah:

He is consistent in his living. Consistent in his practice. He is an illustration for all of us as he leads the people of God. It says in the scriptures that God said to him, "Be strong and of a good courage." He was facing some impossible task that we'll discuss in just a minute. Be strong and stand against the evil one, be strong and stand against the devil. Ephesians six fits here very well as we think of God's command to

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

this man, Joshua, to go on and win battles. There is a word in this passage of scripture used only once in the King James Bible. It is the word success. How to have success. Then thou shalt have good success. Verse eight. It's the same word, comes from the same background as the word prosper or be prosperous. What is the secret in your life and mine as illustrated in the experience of Joshua?

James T. Jeremiah:

How being successful in our spiritual walk, being prosperous in the things God wants us to do. Is it to live without opposition? To live without problems? To live without difficulties? Of course not. Here is a man who knew difficulties, problems probably more than most of us will ever even face or think about. I want to mention several things about this passage in relation to Joshua's call and his introduction into the battle that spells success and prosperity, and applying it in a spiritual way. First of all, I think we need to understand if we're going to be prosperous in the things of God, we have to follow the plan of God. Notice in the scriptures, there are certain things. There was a land there outlined for him to take in verses two, three, four, and six.

James T. Jeremiah:

I have given you the land. Not something he's going to do for himself. Not something he's outlined for his own views. You know, it's great to have a vision, but you better have your vision in cooperation with the vision of God. The plan was given. The victory was guaranteed. He said, "No man will be able to stand against you all the days of your life." The fulfillment was illustrated. As I was with Moses. How did he know anything? He traveled with him. He knew what God had done for him, and now God is saying to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you." The fulfillment of what God was going to do was illustrated. The plan was outlined. Notice it involves action. Arise. Go, tread, divide. All of these words are in the text. Action. It had to do with obedience. "Keep practicing the whole law of God," says the word.

James T. Jeremiah:

It had something to do with determination. Be resolute and strong. I have discovered, knowing a little bit about college life, that there are times in the history of a college student and even those who are not college students but involved in college work, where it takes a whole lot of God-inspired determination to keep at it. There's no time to quit. No time to turn back. If these people had turned back at this point, as I mentioned a bit ago, they would have had no place to go. When you turn back and I turn back from what God has for us to do, there is no place to go. Determination. So many are like the old timer out in the country. Somebody was driving along. They saw him sitting alongside the road and they said to him, "How are things going?"

James T. Jeremiah:

Oh he said, "They're going quite well." He said, "You know, I had some trees I had to cut down and a tornado came along and blew them down. I trimmed the branches off, piled it up in a pile." Then he said, "It even got better. Lightning hit the thing and they burned up. All the branches burned. I didn't even have to start a fire." He was sitting there very peacefully and said, "Well, what are you waiting for now?" He said, "I'm waiting for an earthquake to turn out the potatoes." I know a lot of folks in Christian life like that. They just wait. Their philosophy of life is what's to be will be, whether it happens or not.

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

Don't have any action. Don't have any determination, no obedience, but here's a man who knew what it meant in his day at least to follow the plan of God.

James T. Jeremiah:

Another thing in the scriptures that I think is important is he accepted the priority of God. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shall do according to all that is written. In Ephesians. We have a counterpart to this. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "You heard the word of truth. You believed it. You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. As the truth is in Jesus," Paul writes to the believers, "We ought to walk in that, our loins should be gird about with truth, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." Word of God is God's priority. God's priority in your life and mine. Oh, the tragedy of trying to live a life for God without God's word. Something interesting about Joshua. He is the first man in Bible history who [inaudible 00:13:17] in the Christian Church. He wasn't in it, but he is the first one in the history down through the years who received orders to regulate his life by a book.

James T. Jeremiah:

If God did that to Joshua, this new unprecedented operation, then we stand in the same place. We all hear a lot about the will of God. Somebody said, "If I just knew the will of God." Most of us know more about the will of God than we want to practice. There's so much about the stated revealed will of God in that book that will keep us on the pathway of progress. We don't have to wait for a dream, or a vision, or some kind of an experience. If we're going to be prosperous in the plan of God, we'd better stay with the book of God.

James T. Jeremiah:

Oh, how easy it is to argue our way out of things, get around it. Rationalize. Here's a scripture that speaks so clearly about what we ought to do, and we can rationalize ourselves all around it. It's like the fellow I heard sometime ago. Was in a shop and they were trying to get a health insurance program. They came to this fellow and they had to have a complete sign-up of everybody in the shop. They cajoled this fellow, they argued with him. They found fault with him. "Why don't you sign up? Man, you need to sign up." He wouldn't do it. So one day he went to work and he had a call from the boss.

James T. Jeremiah:

The boss said, "Here is the plan and here is a pen. Sign it or you're fired." He signed it. The boss said, "Why didn't you do that before?" He said, "Nobody explained it so clearly." I want to tell you friend, this whole book explains very clearly where Joshua was to go and how he was to walk. It explains it very clearly how we should go. Our president of our country, Ronald Reagan, has declared this to be the Year of the Bible, and I understand that mad Madalyn Murray O'Hair is trying to sue him. That's a very interesting thing. I should never forget one of our students one day saying to her in a Phil Donahue show program, "Mrs. O'Hare, I want to tell you how much you've done for me and what you mean to me today." She was upset about that because she hadn't thought of doing anything good for him. I'm sure.

James T. Jeremiah:

"What did I do for you?" He said, "I've never appreciated my Bible, my salvation, and my savior more than I have today." I want to tell you, I could have shouted like a Methodist for the rest of the day when I heard that. That was great. This is the Year of the Bible, but in this school, every year is the Year of the

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

Bible. From the beginning of the other school in 1887, it was the Year of the Bible. They founded it on the Bible, and we've carried it on. Listen, young people. I can't emphasize it too much. Get your instruction for living, and for your home, and for your family out of this book. That's the priority. God's priority to follow. I'd like to speak about God's presence. We will try to do that in a minute. I'd like to close today by emphasizing the fact that if we're going to follow God in prosperity, and to win the battle, and be victorious, then there must be an acknowledgement of the providence of God.

James T. Jeremiah:

In the Book of Ephesians, it speaks about the wiles of the devil. Wrestling against these things in the evil day. The first of the fiery darts of the wicked, and one thing you can count on as surely as you're here, you take a stand for God and for God's book, you're going to have opposition. If you haven't found it, you better find out what's wrong because you have it. There is a battle there. The providence of God. What did this man have to face? Well to begin with, here is a man who faced a woeful loss. Moses, my servant, is dead. You get older, you think of some of the people you've walked with in the things of God and you've been with them, and then all of a sudden they take off to heaven.

James T. Jeremiah:

There's a loss, and I'm sure that this man Joshua faced a loss, but there was victory for God said, "Joshua, it's your time. It's your turn. I'll be with you." God will change hands to show that whatever instruments he uses, he is not tied to any. We may find ourselves indispensable until it's demonstrated that we're not, and it'll come to pass one day that we will see ourselves dependent totally on him. A woeful loss. He had to face a willful people. All these people, Moses knew them. He called them rebellious, stiff necked, and he said to Joshua and all the Israelites, "After I'm dead, they'll even be worse. That was quite a thing to start with, but you read on in chapter five and verse 12, you'll see the victory for God brought them together as a unit and led them in to the land. They had to face a wide river, this Jordan. They didn't go over Jordan when the, when the water was the least but when it was the greatest.

James T. Jeremiah:

You'll find that in chapter three, verse 15 and 4:18, they went over to Jordan when it overflowed its banks. You know, God delights to give victory when the opposition is the greatest. If we didn't have any battles of faith and the opposition of faith, there wouldn't be much significance in the victory, but here's a wide river. They had to face a walled city. Chapter two, verse one. He said, "View Jericho, tightly shut up. No one went out. No one came in. You find the victory in chapter six, when the walls came tumbling down by the hand of God. Don't try to explain that. One of the first things I faced as a young pastor was a man in a Bible class who was teaching that the wall fell down by the vibration of the feet of the marches around the city.

James T. Jeremiah:

Isn't that amazing? He didn't teach long after that. Isn't it amazing how those men had such heavy feet? Walled city. Wicked land, all the land of the Hittites, spiritual wickedness in high places, a woeful loss, a willful people to lead, a wide river to cross, a walled city to conquer, a wicked land to occupy. This is the providence of God. We live in the land of Kettering. Boss Kettering. Who in the world was he? Well, he's the fellow that kept you from breaking your arm this morning when you started your car. He invented

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

the self-starter in the automobile. That don't mean anything to you. Well, when it first was invented, it meant something to some of us. He had a young man come to work for him. He assigned him to a problem. He said to this young fellow, "I don't want you to go to the library. I don't want you to read anything that's there about this subject."

James T. Jeremiah:

The young fellow wondered why it was all so secret. Finally, he went ahead and did it, and came back, and the problem was solved. He discovered the reason why he shouldn't read the library books. Because, there had been people before him who had worked on the problem, many of them, and they had written reams of paper, pages telling why it couldn't be done. He didn't want that young man tainted with their inability. When he didn't know it couldn't be done, he found out it could be, and he did it. Michelangelo was ordered to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and he refused, and knowing from whence he got his command, his refusal was refused. He painted that beautiful ceiling that some of us have seen. I'm glad he was refused. He didn't quit. He wasn't permitted to quit.

James T. Jeremiah:

Young people, the thing I'd like to leave with you this morning is, there may be losses and there may be cities to conquer. There may be walls too big for you to crawl over, and rivers too wide to cross, but God puts those things in our lives that we might see him work. He might bring us to new heights and spiritual blessings. Most of you know that we have a son, in fact two sons, in California pastoring the same church. They [inaudible 00:23:16] to keep the other one straight I guess. I've been out there several times and I've listened to illustrations that I've heard before on radio programs, and this last week I heard one from my son and I thought it was only fair that I use it. So I'm going to use one this morning. Here's a poem that fits in here.

James T. Jeremiah:

Opposition, difficulty, disappointment, problems. Do you think we [inaudible 00:23:46]? Oh yes. Rivers, cities, walls too great to conquer. God puts them there and brings victory out of it. Here's a delightful, but a sad poem. It's not probably the kind that you'd find in the English department, but it's a good lesson. During the Vietnam War, this poem was found on the body of a dead soldier, that he had written for his mother. It shows how God meets the crises in our lives. This is what it said. With this, I'll close the message.

James T. Jeremiah:

"Lord, God, I have never spoken to you but now I want to say, how do you do? You see, God, they told me you didn't exist and like a fool, I believed all this. Last night from a shell hole, I saw your sky. I figured right then they'd told me a lie. Had I taken the time to see things you made, I'd have known they weren't calling a spade, a spade. I wonder God, if you'll take my hand, somehow I feel that you'll understand. Funny, I had to come to this hellish place before I came to see your face. Well, I guess there isn't much more to say, but I'm sure glad God, I met you today. I guess zero hour will soon be here, but I'm not afraid since I know you're near. The signal! Well, God I'll have to go. I love you a lot, so I want you to know. Look now, this will be a horrible fight. Who knows? I may come to your house tonight, but I wasn't friendly to you before. I wonder God, if you'd wait at the door. Look, I'm crying. Me, shedding

James T. Jeremiah
Joshua: The Streams of Life, Part 1
October 18, 1983

tears. I wish I had known you these many years. Well, I'll have to go now, God. Goodbye. Strange how since I've met you, I'm not afraid to die."

James T. Jeremiah:

A man facing an impossible situation found God in a personal way. May God help you, help me today, facing the walls, the wicked land, and all the rest, find victory for his glory. Father in Heaven, thank you for this morning hour and the time to be together. Bless these students, these faculty members, staff members, and as we face problems, help us to do so with a consciousness that as you went with Joshua, you go with us. Even in a more realistic way than he knew because the Holy Spirit lives and abides in each believer. In Jesus name, Amen. You're dismissed.