

Standing Strong in the Midst of the Fire (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 May 2021

Preacher: Willard Lyons

[0 : 00] We jumped to Jeremiah chapter 26 last week and that's where we're at tonight.

! We only got about halfway through that and so we'll pick up there where we left off. Just as a reminder now, in the first three verses of chapter 26, God gives Jeremiah some new instructions here.

And as we look at those instructions, remember now that one of the reasons we see such a resistance and even anger to Jeremiah's message to the kingdom of Judah was because of the two-fold security they felt they had. One of those aspects was that they are the covenant nation of God, the only nation that God has entered a covenant with and made them His.

And so they felt safe in that, but also the fact that His dwelling place, the temple, was there with them in Jerusalem. Now remember Judah, the two-tribe kingdom of Judah, remained in Jerusalem. And that's where the temple is and that's where God says my presence will be with my people. So those two aspects of it gave them inward security, so they thought.

[1 : 34] Add to that now, remember Isaiah had prophesied earlier that God would spare Jerusalem and the temple would not let his dwelling place be destroyed by any Gentile power.

They misunderstood or misinterpreted really what Isaiah said. They believed, remember, that God was saying then forever, God will never ever let any Gentile power destroy the temple or the city. When Isaiah was just simply saying it was only for that particular episode or event in the history of the kingdom that he was prophesying about.

So misunderstanding, misquoting, misinterpreting, whatever you want to call it, that passage fed into that false sense of security. Now here comes Jeremiah, remember, now beginning to talk about the destruction of the temple, the ravaging of the city, and they're going to just go bananas, if you will, over what he says.

So remember now, in the first three verses of chapter 26, God gives instruction to Jeremiah, and here's what he says. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this word from the Lord.

[3 : 01] Thus says the Lord, stand in the court of the Lord's house and speak to all the people, all the cities of Judah, who come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them.

Subtract not a word. It may be that they will listen and turn every man from his evil way, that I may relent and reverse my decision concerning the evil which I purpose to do to them because of their evil doings.

Now notice, God not only speaks of the fact that this is what I'm going to do if they don't repent, but he's also saying to them, perhaps, of course, God knows really what's going to happen, but he gives the idea here that there's a possibility of mercy because he says, perhaps they will relent and return back to me so that I don't have to do this.

So there's a picture of the mercy of God. Now, so that's what Jeremiah does. God says to Jeremiah, don't leave out a word. Speak exactly the things that I say to you.

So over in verses 4 through 6 now, here's what God says, Jeremiah's message is going to be to the kingdom of Judah. And you will say to them, thus says the Lord, if you will not listen to and obey me to walk in my law, which I have set before you, and to hear and obey the words of my servant, the prophets, whom I have sent you urgently and persistently, though you have not listened and obeyed, then will I make this house, that's the temple, like Shiloh, and I will make this city subject to the curses of all nations of the earth, so vile in their sight will it be.

[4 : 55] So that's what he says is going to happen. He said, I'm going to make this temple just like Shiloh. You remember, Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle dwelt.

Philistines came in, ravaged that place, stole the Ark of the Covenant, and then tabernacle then was vacated.

It was later destroyed. And God says, that's what's going to happen here if you don't change your ways. All right? And the city will be the curse of all nations of the earth.

So, that's the message that he gives to the people. So, in verses number 7 through 11, where we left off last week, we see Jeremiah's message and the response that it brings from, in particular, the leadership, the religious leadership of the kingdom of Judah.

Notice what he says. Verse 7 through 11, after Jeremiah had spoken those words, the verses 4 through 6 that we just read. And the priests and the false prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord.

[6 : 11] Now when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the false prophets, and all the people seized him, saying, Ye shall surely die.

Now notice that. After he spoke, they seized him. They grabbed a hold of him. They captured him. All right? And they said to him, Ye shall surely die.

Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh? That's after the ark's been taken. All right? And this city, Jerusalem, shall be desolate without inhabitant.

And all the people were gathered around Jeremiah in the outer area of the house of the Lord. And when the princess of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the Lord and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the house of the Lord.

Then the priests and the prophets said to the princesses and to all the people, This man is deserving of death, for he has prophesied against the city, as you have heard, with your own ears.

[7 : 23] Now, quite a drastic response, is it not? But not really surprising, considering how contrary it is to what Isaiah had to say.

Now, Jeremiah's message again, threefold. All right? The temple's going to be destroyed.

Jerusalem is going to become desolate.

And also, the people of the kingdom are going to go into exile, just like the northern kingdom. Same thing's going to happen to them. How many years did we say?

A hundred years that Judah had to watch the northern kingdom, saw what they did in their rebellion against God, and were taken captive? But they learned no lesson from that.

And so, add to that anger, the cry that they said, This man is worthy of death. Literally, worthy of a sentence of death, condemnation to death, is due to this man.

[8 : 26] Boy, you talk about jumping into the fire right away. Amen? Jeremiah didn't have any time to just kind of ease into this. God just thrust him right into it.

And here's what he's facing now. They said, He is to be put to death. He's worthy of that.

Remember, we said earlier that God had promised to Jeremiah when he called him to ministry, that he would promise to protect him, to watch over him.

And that, you know, no, I'm not going to say no hurt will come to him, but the end result will not be that he'll die. He'll be able to conclude his ministry as God brings that to him.

All right? So, in verses 12 through 15, look what God does. Isn't it amazing? Then Jeremiah said, first of all, his defense. Then Jeremiah said to all the princesses and the people, The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard.

Again here. Again, Jehovah has sent me to do this, is what he's saying. Therefore now, amend your ways and your doings and obey the voice of Jehovah your God.

[9 : 41] Then he will relent and reverse the decision concerning the evil which he has pronounced against you. Now look at this. As for me, behold, I'm in your hands.

Do with me as seems good and suitable to you. Hmm. Wow. But, know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and upon its inhabitants.

For in truth, Jehovah has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing. What a defense, huh? Go ahead and do with me what you want.

God's the one that sent me. Those are the words he sent me to give you. All right. But, just remember, if you put me to death, there's consequences to pay.

And there's serious consequences. What courage there is that we see here in the life of Jeremiah. His reaction's not one of anger.

[10 : 46] It's not one of disgust at the people. It is simply grounded. Well, let me ask you. Here's question number one. What is Jeremiah's courage grounded in?

He just simply trusted God and knew he was in God's hands because God told him he was. And so he could courageously just go on and do what it is that God's called him to do, say what God told him to say, and inwardly, I guess, could laugh in their face.

Amen. Yeah. No matter what they said because he knew God was able to be trusted with his life.

So it was the knowledge that he was commissioned by God to preach and that the message that he preached was exactly and precisely what God had given him to preach.

All right. Now, you and I remember and realize are to operate the same way, are we not? Yeah.

Yeah. Oh, that we would.

[11 : 53] Amen. Yeah. Remember what the Apostle Paul said in Philippians chapter 2, verses 12 through 13. Here's what he says. Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed my suggestions, so now not only with enthusiasm you would show in my presence, but much more because I am absent, work out your own salvation and reverence and awe with reverence and awe and trembling, not in your own strength.

For it is God who is all the while effectually at work in you, energizing, creating in you the power and desire both to will and to work for his good pleasure and delight.

Work out your own salvation. Again, we've seen it before, but let me remind you, he's not saying here you've got to work to be saved. But what he's saying is this. When God saved you, he saved you for a purpose.

And that purpose was not just to get you to heaven. He has a design and a purpose for your life that he wants to use for his kingdom purposes.

So what he's literally saying here is work out. The word work out here literally means to bring to its accomplished purpose. All right. Bring to its accomplished purpose the salvation that God has given you.

[13 : 20] In other words, find out what it is that God has saved you for other than going to heaven. How does he want to use you? What does he want to do to produce through your life?

Remember, it's the same thing in essence that the Apostle Paul says later on to the Church of Philippi in his letter. In chapter 3, this is the passage where Paul says, what things were gained for me, those I counted lost for Christ.

And the reason why he counted lost in essence was so that he could know as perfectly as is possible for human beings to know the person of Christ Jesus and have his power at operation with him and through him.

But here's what he says. Verse 12, he says, not as though I had already attained or reached that place of completion, either were already perfect or complete, mature.

But I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ. Now, the word apprehend, that Greek word literally means to reach up and pull down.

[14 : 34] All right? And Paul is saying here, my desire is to reach up and pull down whatever it is Christ has reached up and pulled me down for.

Okay? He apprehended me. He reached down or reached a hold of me and pulled me to himself for a purpose. And he said, I want to grab a hold of that purpose, pull it down so I can find out what it is so I can complete that in my life.

So, he said, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do. Okay? Forgetting those things which are behind and looking forth to the things that are ahead, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

All right? So, I'm always looking ahead, looking at Christ, looking at that finish line to see what it is or to see where it reaches. Amen? Where it goes.

And what all God has in store in the midst of all of that. That's the picture that he has here. And that's the picture that we find over in chapter 2 that we just read.

[15 : 51] That we work out. Bring to its accomplished purpose. Literally, if you want to say, that we reach up and grab a hold of and pull down whatever it is Christ has saved us for.

And make that a reality within the life. All right? So, that's how, that's how we are to respond. And in doing that, we trust God with it all.

Amen? Just like, remember, when we went through our study in the book of Esther. What did Esther do? She finally came to the point where she surrendered it all and just obeyed God and left

the consequences to Him.

Amen? Amen? That's the way we're to do. Leave the consequences to our Heavenly Father who loves us and cares for us. Now, God's provision then for Jeremiah we find in verses 16 through 19. Notice what it says. Then said the princesses. I hate having to say that word. Princesses.

[16:58] Yeah. Then, yeah. Then, how do y'all say it? Say it with me. Officials. Of officials. Okay. Then said the princesses and all the people to the priests and to the prophets.

Now, I want you to take notice here. The people are joining in here with the princesses now. I don't know if they're just that wishy-washy or whoever says the last thing first they agree with.

But anyway, here's what they said. Here's what the princesses said. This man is not deserving of death for he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God or Jehovah our God.

Then certain of the elders of the land arose and said to all the assembly of the people, Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins and the mountain of the house of the Lord, that's Mount Moriah on which the temple stands, shall be covered not with buildings but like a densely wooded height.

Did Hezekiah, king of Judah and all Judah, put Micah to death? Did he not reverentially fear the Lord and entreat the Lord? And did not the Lord relent and reverse the decision concerning the evil which He had pronounced against them?

[18:29] But here we are thinking of committing what will be a great evil against ourselves. Wow. Wow.

Some of the elders pop up. somebody's got to take the lead in this, right? The princesses did. They said, hold on a minute. Wait a minute. Look what He's done.

He's brought to us the word of Jehovah. How dare we put Him to death? And then the elders pop up and say, remember the time. I think God at that point stirred their minds to remember what happened in the past.

Yeah. Micah prophesied the same thing, fellas. Did Hezekiah put him to death? No. What did Hezekiah do? He entreated the Lord.

What are we to do? And Hezekiah prayed and as a result, remember, a great Assyrian invasion was thwarted by the Lord through that praying because of them turning to the Lord.

[19:41] And of course, a great revival broke out in the midst of the kingdom. What an amazing thing to see God at work.

Here we see Him protecting His man, Jeremiah. And the thing to me that's so amazing, it's not really amazing, He's done it so many times. But the outstanding aspect of all of this is that He does this from sources that no one would have thought would have happened.

These are the civil leaders, the leaders of the civil government that stand up. First of all, the princesses that stand up on behalf of Jeremiah.

You see, God has, again, resources at His hand that are innumerable. We never know where they're coming from. Why is that?

Remember, God is the God of hosts, Jehovah of hosts. Remember, 1 Samuel 17, 45 says, Then said David to the Philistines, You come with me or come to me with a sword and spear and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts or Jehovah of hosts, the God of the ranks of Israel.

[21:03] Remember, that's when He's standing there in the middle of that battlefield to give upcomings to Goliath. Yeah. Yeah. Speaking to that great, humongous stature of a man saying, How dare you?

How dare you mock and defy the armies of the living God? I'm coming to you in the name of Jehovah of hosts whom you have defied.

Jehovah Zabaoth. Jehovah as the God of the universe who governs all the powers of heaven, visible and invisible, ruling heaven and earth.

He has everything at His disposal He needs for any circumstance whatsoever. Amen? I mean, after all, consider it, folks.

Even in the stuff we go through, which pales in comparison to what Jeremiah is facing here, we serve, we know and serve the God of heaven.

[22:13] The God as S.M. Lockridge said, toe hung the stars in space, hung them in the middle of nothing and told it to stay there. Yeah.

The one that has that power is the God of hosts. And anything that comes our way, He has everything that's necessary to complete the task that needs to be done in our behalf. Now, again, the example used in verse 18, Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, said to the people of Judah, thus says the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house of the Lord on which the temple stands shall become covered not with buildings, but like a densely wooded height. Micah prophesied, what, 70 to 85 years prior to Jeremiah's prophecy. Same prophecy. Michael 3.12 says, Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the highest place of the forest. So, again, he was not put to death by Hezekiah because Hezekiah turned to prayer. Now, verses 20 through 24 of Jeremiah 26.

[23 : 47] Though the princesses stand in defense of Jeremiah as did some of the others, and they remembered Micah, Jehoiachim, still remains steadfast in his anger and hatred of God, the things of God, and His prophet.

Here's what he says in verses 20 through 24. He says, But there was also a man who prophesied in the name of Jehovah, Uriah, the son of Shemiah, of Kirjith-Jerim, who prophesied against this city and against this land in words similar to those of Jeremiah.

And when Jehoiachim, the king, with all his mighty men and all his princesses, heard his words, the king sought to put Uriah to death. But when Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt.

And Jehoiachim, the king, sent men into Egypt, namely Elnathan, son of Archbor, and certain other men who went with him into Egypt.

And they fetched Uriah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiachim, the king, who slew him, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body among the graves of the common people.

[25 : 13] All right? So that's what he reminds them about another prophet that came. All right? But the hand of Jehoiachim, the son of Saphon, was with Jeremiah that he might not be given into the hands of the people to put him also to death.

Jeremiah wasn't alone. Other men have prophesied as we just saw. The same message. He stood firm. Stood his ground. Again, on the basis of the promise that God said his life would always be spared.

Uriah fled for his life. Jeremiah stood his ground. Uriah died. Jeremiah lived. Amen? Stand the ground. Trust God.

Now, God's provision, first prophet again, clearly seen in verse 24. But the hand of Ahicham, son of Saphon, was with Jeremiah that he might not be given into the hands of the people to put him also to death.

Now, where does that leave us? What's that say to us? Trusting God? Yeah. Now, another question, number two. You're answering number one well.

[26 : 34] Question number two. Based on the fact that Jeremiah's courage is based upon what God had promised him, what is the basis of our being able to trust God in the midst of any circumstance?

what's the basis of that? What he has made us. What he has made us. Look at Romans chapter 5. Very, very, very, what should I say? Prominent, but tremendous picture of what God has made us and what he's done for us.

Romans chapter 5. King James Version says, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have what? Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience and patience experience, experience hope and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

[27 : 58] Now, take notice. We have peace with God. Peace, you know, you have a two-fold idea of peace. You have peace with God and the peace of God. All right?

Peace with God comes from that idea of us being placed into a relationship with Him through our faith since we're justified. All right?

There's nothing that stands between us and the Father positionally. Peace with God or the peace of God. All right? Peace of God.

How could we identify or give a meaning to the idea of the peace of God? Somebody says something about that in one of his letters in the New Testament.

King James Version says, Be careful for nothing, literally worry about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and what?

[29 : 04] The peace of God will mount its guard around your heart and mind. That's having peace with God. That's the peace of God.

It's peace we have with God. Having a restless spirit because of concerns or worry is the opposite of having peace or having the peace of God.

In that case, the peace of God, the peace of God would speak to us about the fact that we know and we understand and we recognize that no matter what the circumstance of our life is, he's in control of all of it.

We not only know that intellectually, but we know that in our heart so that we can rest in that. Okay? That's having the peace with God.

All right? Knowing everything, everything is okay. Now in this, in this particular instance here in Romans 5, we have peace with God. The word peace there is that old Greek word that gives us the idea of bringing back or binding back together that which at one time had been broken.

[30 : 17] So here it talks about the broken relationship being brought back into a positive relationship. All right? By whom also we have access by faith.

We've looked at that word before, access. It's the old French word entree. Remember what entree is? Entree is the idea of someone having gained an audience with the king on behalf of a friend.

So it's the gaining of entrance, access to the royalty. Those that have gained access for the friend have to make sure the friend is appropriately dressed.

All right? You don't go in sloppy. All right? Oh, was it on Fox app today? I saw a little clip. Didn't say where, I don't remember where it was.

It's a judge. It was one of these video things at court where this guy was standing in front of the screen, you know, and the judge on his screen.

[31 : 25] being tried for whatever and the guy just had a t-shirt on. The guy was a welder and just had a t-shirt on and the judge just ripped him up one side and down the other for having the t-shirt.

He said, that's not the appropriate dress for my court. But here the guy is sitting in his living room. Amen? But nonetheless, you get the idea here.

So, entree, be dressed appropriately. The friend that's gained us entrance has made sure that we have the appropriate attire to enter into the presence of the king.

Our appropriate attire is what? Closed in Christ. Yeah. The righteousness of Christ, which is Christ himself.

All right? We have peace with God. we have access into the grace of God by faith. So, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[32 : 29] All right? Hope is an earnest expectation of what we know is going to happen. So, we have that hope of the glory of God that we'll share in. Now, but look at this.

Again, not only do we glory in tribulations, tribulations, they literally means oppressing or oppressing together, opposition, affliction, distress, straits.

Those are things naturally experienced and expected in the life of a believer. So, those tribulations that we go through were patience or steadfastness, constancy, endurance.

It's the characteristic, now catch this, it's the characteristic of a person a Christian who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest of trials and sufferings.

Alright? Unswerved. Doesn't push you off your course. Amen? When it comes to your faith and your trust in the Lord Jesus.

[33 : 40] Alright? So, patience then, well, literally, the verb form of that word means to remain under. So, it's the idea of remaining under trials but doing so in a God honoring way so as to learn the lesson that they are sent to teach rather than attempting to get out from underneath it.

It's the idea there. Okay? It's the idea here of being willing to stay under those trials. Alright?

So that you can learn the lesson. How many of you when you were a small little kid, which was a little while ago, ever got taken to or behind the woodshed with a switch?

A few of you. Okay. Or a belt. Yeah, yeah. When you, when your dad probably, maybe your mom, was applying the switch of education to the seat of learning, when you were undergoing that

experience, did you for one moment say to yourself, okay, what am I learning from this? What am I learning from this? No. Yeah, I wish I had got caught. I wish I wouldn't have been so stupid. Yeah. But, but under the trials that we face and come under as God's people, serving Him, instead of trying to find our best way to get out of this as quick as we can, we need to be sure that we are willing to stay under those so that we can find out what the lesson is that God's trying to teach us in the midst of that.

[35 : 34] All right? So, stay under it. Cry if you want to, but stay under it. Yeah. Then patience leads to experience, it's tried integrity, literally a state of mind that has stood the test.

And again, the verb form is to put to the test for the purpose of approving and finding that the person tested meets the specifications so that you can put one's approval upon him.

All right. Tried integrity. And then the hope. Experience produces hope. That's the experience of what God can do, more so what he has done for the justified.

Amid the tribulations of this life, it animates into new vigor the hope with which we began our Christian experience. All right. Yeah.

And then it does not, we're not ashamed in that it doesn't disappoint. And the reason being is because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

[36 : 41] And that is the love of God for us. It's shed abroad, literally, it is poured out. poured out and still floods our hearts is the idea here.

The love that God has for us. So that's the work of the Spirit of God flooding our heart with God's love and with the assurance of His love.

Again, the bottom line basis of everything God does is agape love. His love for us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. So, the Apostle Paul then writes in 1 Corinthians 15, 58, Therefore, beloved brethren, be firm, that's steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that's always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord, knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile.

It is never wasted or to no purpose. So just keep on keeping on. Amen? And doing as God directs to do. Let's pray together.

[38 : 08] Father, again, thank you for your goodness and grace to us tonight and your love for us. Father, we thank you that you continually give us opportunity to look together in your word to allow you to teach us and show us the things that are needful for our lives and so appropriate for us.

And so I pray that you'll continue to enable us to catch a sense of your work within us because you love us of drawing us further and further into the relationship, the fellowship with you that will give us that courage and that boldness to be able to follow you and the things you inspire us to do for your kingdom purposes.

And we'll thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.