



OHBC MEMORY VERSE

WEEK #33

THIS WEEK'S VERSE: MICAH 6:8

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Why Micah 6:8?

Because it points to "the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3)!

One of Satan's definite strategies against us is to overload us and overwhelm us beneath the weight of what sometimes seems to be a tractor trailer load of duties, responsibilities, and priorities in the Christian life. We forget that Jesus said that His yoke was easy and His burden light (Matthew 11:30).

In several strategic places in the Scripture, however, the Lord brings us back to the "easiness" of His "yoke," the "lightness" of His "burden," and "the simplicity that is in Christ."

He did so in Ecclesiastes 12:13 – "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

He did so in Mark 12:29-31 – "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

And He did so in this week's memory verse, Micah 6:8 – "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

As you hide this verse in your heart, may it be used of the Lord to free you up, and simplify your life!

DAY 161

TODAY'S READING: JEREMIAH 5-8

OVERVIEW:

God's instruction for Jeremiah to search for the righteous (5:1-9); God's promise to judge the wicked (5:10-6:30); Jeremiah's first message to the people concerning their faith in the temple and external religion (7:1-8:3); Jeremiah's message concerning rejecting the truth of God's Word (8:4-22).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Before God actually begins to EMPOWER Jeremiah to preach against the people in chapter 7, He takes the events recorded in the first six chapters to IMPASSION him. As chapter 5 begins, God doesn't send Jeremiah on a "search and destroy mission," but a "search so I won't destroy mission"!

God wants Jeremiah to understand the depth to which His people had apostatized, and why His judgment against them was so deserved. Just as Ezekiel went looking for one single man in his day to make up the hedge and stand in the gap, God tells Jeremiah to see if he, too, could just find one man somewhere in the land who simply sought truth and executed judgment. Just as Ezekiel's search ended with the pitiful words, "But I found none," (Ezek. 22:30), Jeremiah's search produced the same result. The people were so incredibly perverted in their thinking, they even viewed God's mercy as weakness (5:11-13). Through the "fiery" preaching of Jeremiah (5:14), God promises the invasion of a mighty army to destroy them. Allow verse 31 of chapter 5 not only to acquaint you with the horrific spiritual climate of Jeremiah's day, but our own day: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." It is simply another way of saying what Paul wrote concerning our day: "After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3-4).

As we move into chapter 6, it becomes clear why Judah had become so debauched that God says that “from the least of them even to the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest every one dealeth falsely” (6:13). The key is in verse 10. Very simply, the people had come to the place that the Word of God held no delight or significance in their hearts. It is a great commentary on how America has gotten to the place it has, and where things are heading for churches where week after week, from the pulpit, and in the personal lives of the people, truth sits forsaken. It’s a great time to be reminded that the goal of our 365 Days of Pursuit isn’t simply to get through the Word of God, but to so delight ourselves in the God of the Word, that we allow His Word to get through us, and find a resting place everywhere it “reproves, rebukes, and/or exhorts” us (II Tim. 4:2).

As we come into chapter 7, God now takes the things He revealed to Jeremiah in chapters 1-6, and turns him loose to carry out the six-fold ministry he described in chapter 1 and verse 10. God strategically places Jeremiah at the entrance to the Temple so he can specifically confront those who thought that because of their great Temple (7:4) and their activity there, that they were doing fine spiritually. Never confuse “blessings” and busyness at church with spirituality. God’s words through Jeremiah are just as pertinent today as they were then: “For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.” The New Testament equivalent might be II Cor. 7:1 – “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” The entire chapter emphasizes the fact that our personal and holy God is neither impressed nor the least bit interested in external religion.

In chapter 8, Jeremiah’s message to the people was similar to his message in chapter 7. The same attitude the people had about themselves spiritually because they were in possession of the Temple (7:4), they also had about themselves because they were in possession of the Law of Moses (8:8).

Again, it is such a reminder that God is interested in so much more than that we go to church and read our Bible. Obviously, those things have their place, but God is interested in holding His rightful place as Lord in our lives!

Because of the Laodicean implications and applications, notice that much of Judah’s problem was that their spiritual leaders did not properly proclaim the truth of God’s Word (8:8-12). Their prophets turned the truth of God into lies (II Tim. 4:4), telling the people that it was no problem for them to continue living the lives they were living, everything was going to be all right. The question today is not, “where is the Lord God of Jeremiah?” But, “where are the Jeremiah’s of the Lord God?” Pray that God would use your pastors as “Jeremiahs” in these spiritually dark Laodicean days.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE ONE WHO DEMANDED A CLEANSED TEMPLE – Jer. 7:1-11 (Mark 11:17)

DAY 162

TODAY’S READING: JEREMIAH 9-12

OVERVIEW: Jeremiah’s life amid a deceitful people (9:1-9); Jeremiah’s grief over Judah (9:10-26); Judah’s idolatry and exile (10:1-25); Israel’s history of covenant breaking (11:1-17); Jeremiah’s enemies plot against him (11:18-23); Jeremiah’s complaint concerning the wicked (12:1-4); God’s challenge to Jeremiah (12:5-13); God’s promise to restore Israel (12:14-17).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Jeremiah was definitely the right man for the job! What was needed was a prophet that would not only clearly communicate God’s MESSAGE, but God’s HEART! Jeremiah gave the people both. We saw God’s heart in Jeremiah as chapter 8 came to a close in yesterday’s reading (8:18-22), as Jeremiah said that because of Judah’s refusal of her King and Healer, he was unable to find comfort for the sorrow and pain in his heart. As chapter 9 begins today, we hear Jeremiah cry out, “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people” (9:1). What Jeremiah provided the people of Judah, giving God’s message and God’s heart, is exactly what Laodicea needs of its pastors. Sadly, it seems that it is most generally one extreme or the

other. Either a pastor is all heart and no truth, or all truth and no heart. Pray earnestly that God will allow your pastor to have both! Pray that he will give the message just as God gave it, and with God's heart! Pray that although he must preach a message of rebuke in these Laodicean days, that he will have a heart that loves and breaks for the people.

The more Jeremiah began to understand just how devastating God's judgment would be (9:9-26), the more earnestly he preached, and the more he longed for God's people to repent. In the context, verses 23 and 24 let us know that God's judgment could have been stayed if the people, rather than glory in everything but God, would simply have sought to "understand" and "know" Him! These are also two great verses to meditate upon to bring us into the glorious wonder of our God! Jeremiah said, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer. 9:23-24). That is exactly why Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). It is only through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that we can "understand" anything about God (I Cor. 2:14), or "know" Him at all. It was through the cross that our Lord "exercised lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth" (9:24)!

As Jeremiah preaches his heart out in chapter 10, he declares the greatness of the one true God (10:10) saying, "There is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might" (10:6). His point is to confront Israel with the fact that God is not just their national deity, but the Creator (10:11-12), the only "living God," the "everlasting King," and the One who will unleash His judgment upon the whole world (10:10). He also shows how that when God's people bow to the gods of other nations, the Lord turns them over to be consumed by those nations (10:25).

As we move into chapters 11-12, we find that even though God had warned Jeremiah of the opposition and adversity that would inevitably come his way (1:17-19; 9:1-3), it is apparent that Jeremiah somehow thought that it might happen otherwise. It is the same syndrome that continues today. Though God clearly told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33), and "Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12), somehow it seems to take us off guard when it actually happens to us. Even though God said through Peter, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (I Pet. 4:12), again, it is amazing how amazed we are when it actually unfolds in our lives! The Lord reveals to Jeremiah in 11:18-23 a plot to take his life by the men of Jeremiah's hometown, and in chapter 12, tells Jeremiah to prepare for even worse times (12:5-13).

One of the beautiful things that continues to surface through the Book of Jeremiah is that God's ultimate purpose behind exercising His judgment is to restore and renew. Chapter 12:14-17 points to the compassion of the Lord, and His willingness to not only deliver Israel, but all nations.

SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO "THE DAY OF THE LORD":

10:10 – "at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation"

11:11 – "I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape"

11:12 – "the time of their trouble"

12:12 – "the sword of the Lord shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land"

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the ONE WHOSE JUDGMENT IS INESCAPABLE – Jer. 11:11 (II Thess. 1:7-9)

As the ONE WHO WILL DEVOUR WITH HIS SWORD – Jer. 12:12 (Rev. 19:19-21)

DAY 163

TODAY'S READING: JEREMIAH 13-17

OVERVIEW: The object lesson of the ruin of Judah (13:1-11); Israel described as a drunken nation (13:12-14); Jeremiah pleading to the nation (13:15-27); Judah's drought and Jeremiah's intercession (14:1-22); God's refusal to answer Jeremiah's prayers (15:1-9); Jeremiah's complaint against God (15:10-

18); God's call for Jeremiah's repentance (15:19-21); Jeremiah's personal renewal (16:1-17:18); God's message through Jeremiah's concerning the Sabbath (17:19-27).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As chapter 13 begins, God wants to give Jeremiah an object lesson concerning the people of Judah. He instructs him to get a "linen girdle," what we would call today a linen belt or waistband, and put it around his "loins" or waist. He then told him to remove it, and to hide it in a hole of a rock near the Euphrates. After many days, God told him to go back to retrieve it, only to find that the belt was totally ruined and "good for nothing." God explained to Jeremiah that, like the belt, Judah would become "good for nothing" because of her pride, her refusal to hear the Word of God, her wicked imagination, and her idolatry (13:9-10). God's desire for Judah was for them to "be unto [him] for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory" (13:11), but sadly, verse 11 ends by saying, "but they would not hear." As God's people in a different dispensation, His desire for us is that we also "be unto [him] for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory." Are you hearing Him?

Even after God had revealed to Jeremiah all He had about Judah's inevitable fate, Jeremiah's heart still caused him to plead, to weep, and to yearn for Judah to repent and give glory to God once again. Would to God we had Jeremiah's passion for the glory of God and the souls of men!

God's punishment first manifested itself in chapter 14 with a terrible "death" or drought. Jeremiah's heart led him to ask God to be merciful to them and remove the drought, but God told Jeremiah that they were getting what they deserved (14:10), and even told him to stop praying for them (14:11)! Even then, Jeremiah continued to pray on their behalf. As chapter 15 begins, God tells Jeremiah that it wouldn't matter who was interceding on Judah's behalf, even if it were Moses or Samuel (that's some pretty major props for those two fellas!), His judgment was going to be unleashed. In 15:10-18, Jeremiah becomes rather upset with God about his role. He complains that all he had ever done was what God wanted him to do, but all it had ever gotten him was pain and heartache (15:15-18a). He even charges God at the end of 18 with being a liar! Jeremiah was beginning to sound like the people to whom he was called to minister. In verses 19-21, basically, God tells Jeremiah that he better sort things out in his head and in his heart, and get back to the task God had intended for him. Jeremiah was going to have to find a way to carry out his mission, even though he would never receive any encouragement from the people to whom he was seeking to minister. Imagine, in Jeremiah's entire ministry, a 40 year span, (627-587 B.C.), he never saw one convert!

In chapter 16:1-8, once again, God gives an object lesson. Jeremiah is given a series of three strange commands in order for God to make His point. First, he is told not to marry (16:1-4), because wives and children would be mercilessly killed by the armies God would use to punish Israel's sin. Second, God tells Jeremiah not to mourn for the dead (16:5-7), because in light of what was about to happen in Judah, they would be better off than the living. And third, he was not to participate in feasts of any kind, because all it produced was just wishful thinking in a land that was without hope. God tells Jeremiah that these three things would provide him the opportunity to warn them of the impending judgment to come, and the need to repent. At the end of chapter 16 (16:14-18), God points to a time following His judgment upon them, when He would deliver Israel out of her oppression and bondage, just like He did in delivering them out of Egypt.

In chapter 17, God affirms to Jeremiah once again, that Israel's idolatry was etched in their hearts with "a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" (17:1). Because of their unfaithfulness to Him, God warns Jeremiah against trusting them for anything, and urges him to only trust in Him alone. Verse 9 is a classic, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Who can know it?" Meditate on that for about the next 20 years!

In 17:12-18, Jeremiah offers an incredibly humble and powerful prayer for renewal, asking God for spiritual healing, deliverance from his oppressors, and for courage. Immediately, God charges Jeremiah to stand at the gates where all who came in or out of Jerusalem could hear, and confront them about observing the Sabbath. He tells them that if they don't stop carrying things in and out of the city on the Sabbath, God would allow an invading army to see to it that all activity in the city ceased!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the HOPE OF ISRAEL – Jeremiah 14:8 (Titus 2:13)

OVERVIEW:

God's lesson to Jeremiah at the potter's house (18:1-10); Jeremiah's message to Judah based on the lessons from the potter (18:11-17); Israel's opposition to Jeremiah (18:18-23); Jeremiah fights his calling (19:1-20:18); Jeremiah's message of opposition to kings (21:1-22:30).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

God is most certainly the Master Illustrator. He has masterful ways of using things in His physical creation to teach us spiritual truth, just as Romans 1:20 says He does. As we move into chapter 18, God is employing this teaching technique in the ministry of Jeremiah just as He had done in the two previous occasions in 13:1-7 and 16:1-9. This time God takes Jeremiah on a little "field trip" to the potter's house to make this point. God shows Jeremiah that He (God) is as the Potter, and Israel is as the clay, and He can do with them whatever He jolly-well wants! The real point He wants Jeremiah to see is that if Israel would repent, He would instantaneously fashion them into a beautiful and usable vessel, but if they choose to remain rebellious and obstinate, He can mar them in an instant with His powerful hands, and as the Potter, it is perfectly within His right to so!

Based on what God showed Jeremiah in his object lesson in 18:1-10, He then tells him to get out there and call the nation to repentance (18:11). Obviously, knowing and understanding God's sovereignty ("as seemed good to the potter to make it" - 18:4) and omnipotence ("as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in mine hand" - 18:6) puts a whole different "umph!" behind a preacher's message! As you can see in 18:18, the "umph!" of the message wasn't well received, and as it has consistently done throughout Jeremiah's ministry, it only brought more hatred and opposition from the people to whom he ministered. As chapter 18 comes to a close, you can see that Jeremiah has gotten fed up with the people, and calls upon God to go ahead and give them what they deserved.

In chapter 19, God wants to use an object lesson in making a point to the people, that was similar to the one He used in 18:1-10 to make His point to Jeremiah. He tells Jeremiah to take "a potter's earthen bottle" and go preach to Judah's king and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He was to preach a strong message about God's judgment that would come upon them because of their idolatry and rebellion. In effect, Jeremiah said, "You're kind of like this jar," and then he smashed it to smithereens right in their face (19:10-12). "God is going to smash you into a million tiny pieces, and you won't be able to glue yourself back together!"

Well, needless to say, the message didn't go over real well with the supposed religious leaders, much less the people in general! In chapter 20, Pashur, "the chief governor in the house of the Lord" smacks Jeremiah right in his face and slams him right into stocks in the city jail. Jeremiah tells him, "Just for that, God just changed your name from Pashur ("freedom") to Magormissabib" ("terror on every side"), and Jeremiah prophesied the "terror" that would soon come upon him and all those who believed his lies (20:6).

But once again, the opposition was wearing on Jeremiah. He registers his complaint against God for calling him to such a long, difficult, and painful ministry. He even felt that God had deceived him. In effect he tells God, "You may be able to take this because you're stronger than me, but I can't take it anymore!" (20:7-8). He even vows that he's never going to preach again, and never even mentions the name of the Lord to anybody (20:9), but he found that God's Word was so in him, that it burned like a fire in his bones, and that the only remedy was through preaching! The message was in him, and he just couldn't help but letting it out. Would to God that His Word would be that deeply embedded in us!

So, Jeremiah preached on. He had come to grips with the fact that it was the right thing to do, but just because it was right, didn't make it easy. In fact, biblically, it might be better stated, if it's right it won't be easy! Paul, most certainly, could vouch for that!

As we move into chapters 21 and 22 in today's reading, it becomes apparent that Jeremiah had nailed some things in his relationship with God, and concerning the ministry to which he had been called. You can see that he has matured as a believer and a prophet. Just as God told Jeremiah back in 1:17-19, that he would be called to preach to and receive opposition from kings, princes, priests, and the people of the land, in this next section (chapters 21-29), Jeremiah preaches to each of these groups of people, and likewise receives retaliation from each. Each time, however, the more seasoned and matured Jeremiah is able to hand the opposition over to God, rather than blame Him for it.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ONE WHO PRONOUNCES JUDGMENT UPON THOSE WHO REFUSE TO OBEY HIS WORD - Jer. 19:15 (John 5:22).

DAY 165

TODAY'S READING: JEREMIAH 23-26

OVERVIEW:

Jeremiah preaches about the Righteous King who would rise to the throne (23:1-8); Jeremiah preaches against the false prophets (23:9-40); Jeremiah preaches against the people (24:1-25:38); Jeremiah preaches against false worship and false prophecy (26:1-29:32).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As was mentioned in the previous day's reading, in chapters 21-29, Jeremiah is called on by God to preach to those to whom God said He would preach back in chapter one, verses 17-19: kings, princes, priests, and the people of the land. Beginning in 21:1, all the way into chapter 23 and verse 8 in today's reading, Jeremiah has been preaching against the kings. Though God pronounced "woe" upon these wretched shepherds ("pastors") who were leading Judah to destruction, God begins to point to a different day, when a righteous King from David's line would rise to the throne! "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (23:5-6). Of course, that righteous Lord, and King from David's Branch (i.e. line or ancestry) is none other than the King of kings Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ! Little did Jeremiah or those to whom he was preaching realize that he was actually preaching about what would happen 2000 years after our Lord's first coming.

In the remainder of chapter 23 (23:9-40), Jeremiah turns from preaching against the kings, to preaching against the prophets. It is amazing how history repeats itself. So many of the things Jeremiah preached as he opposed the prophets of his day, he could come and preach in opposition to many of the preachers in our day! Check out verses 16 and 17: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you". Again, much like in Laodicea, the words that are so often spoken in the name of the Lord, or in the name of "preaching," leave people void of the truth of God (II Tim. 4:4). Preachers are to preach a message "out of the mouth of the LORD" (i.e. the Word of God!!!), not out "of their own heart." God has already given His commentary on men's hearts through Jeremiah back in 17:9.

Our hearts are so deceitful and desperately wicked it is near nigh impossible to even know what's actually going on in them! Spare us the message you feel the Lord has laid on your heart, preachers, and just give us the Lord's heart as it has been revealed in His Word ("out of the mouth of the LORD" – 23:16)! The message from the prophets in Jeremiah's day (23:17), like many of the preachers in our own day, was void of judgment. The people were told that they were "going to be all right" (i.e. "No evil shall come upon you"), even though they willfully and blatantly lived for self, self-satisfaction, and self-gratification (i.e. "after the imagination of his own heart").

In 23:22, God says that if those given the responsibility of heralding His Words would have "stood in his counsel" so that the people would have actually heard the Words of the Lord, the people would have turned from "their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." Note that evil is described not simply because of the evil things we "do", but a "way" we are in!

Would to God that every preacher in Laodicea would read 23:31 just before they walk out to preach: "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith."

In chapters 24 and 25, Jeremiah turns the focus of his preaching against the people. Something you don't want to miss out of this section is that though the people had horrific spiritual leadership, God still held them responsible for their actions. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, God will not receive the argument, "But my pastor didn't preach the Word! But I didn't know!" He has given all of us His Word, and has placed the resident Truth Teacher (the Holy Spirit) inside each one of us (I John 2:27). Note again, that just like in Laodicea (II Tim. 4:3), one of the reasons that Judah had such terrible leadership, is that the people didn't

want godly counsel or leadership! The way Jeremiah was treated is more than proof of that. God says of our day, that the people do “not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts... heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they... turn away their ears from the truth ... and unto fables” (II Tim. 4:3-4).

In chapter 26, Jeremiah begins to preach against, not only the prophets and the people, but the priests as well. In verses 7-15, the priests and the prophets actually call for Jeremiah’s death. Notice in verses 2 and 8 of this chapter that carrying out the Lord’s perfect will, will cost you. “Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12). Yes, it’ll cost you, but the rewards are out of this world!

SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO “THE DAY OF THE LORD”:

25:29 – “For I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth.”

25:30 – “The Lord shall roar from on high.”

25:31 – “He will give them that are wicked to the sword.”

25:33 – “At that day”

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE KING RAISED UNTO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH – Jer. 23:5 (Matt. 2:1; Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:31-33).

As THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS – Jer. 23:6 (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21).