

Jeremiah 48: 1-47; “Putting All Sin to Death”, Sermon #55 in the series – “Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 17th, 2021, in the Morning Worship Service.

This is a very dark passage of God’s judgment upon Moab for their exalting themselves against the Lord, it says in verse 26. They saw the judgment that God had been bringing upon Israel for their many sins of idolatry and unfaithfulness, and instead of praying for them, remembering that they were related to God’s chosen people, though their being descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham; instead, they thought of themselves as much better people than Israel. They did not love them, they did not sympathize with their plight. Instead, they derided them; that is, they mockingly said that Israel deserved this. In doing this, the Moabites did not see the greatness of their own sins, most of all, their pride. And so God was going to bring this great judgment upon them that we have read about in this chapter.

I am going to use this passage now, to show you what the work of the Chaldeans was, in bringing judgment upon Moab. The prophet Jeremiah calls it – “The work of the Lord”, and he says that it would be their work to utterly destroy Moab, their nation, their cities and their people. Jeremiah was declaring that God hated the sins of the Moabites so much, that the Chaldeans who He was sending to destroy them, would fall under a curse if they did their work of destroying Moab negligently; that is, if they kept back their sword from blood. If they did not make a thorough work of destroying Moab, they would be cursed. The parallel that I want to draw is that you and I who know the Lord must hate sin and evil so much, when we see it in ourselves, that we must work diligently at putting it to death. That is doing the work of the Lord. So let me now describe for you this holy work which the Lord would have us do.

1st of all – It is the work of the Lord, in relation to ourselves, to hate evil, and to determine to put all sin to death. (verses 1-5)

In verse 1, we see that the Chaldeans have taken Nebo and plundered it. Kirjathaim is shamed and taken. Her high stronghold is shamed and dismayed. The Chaldean army has devised evil against Heshbon, and they were saying – Come, let us cut her off as a nation. Let us always remember that our God is a God who brings judgments upon nations. He will sometimes bring one nation against another nation to destroy it. This is what He was doing in judging Moab. He was using the Chaldeans as his instrument of judgment upon the Moabites. This is not a work which we are called to do, in our days. We are not being commanded by God to wage war against the many proud and sinful nations of people who deserve God’s judgment. But I believe that there is a reason that these words are here in the Bible for us to learn from them, even now, in New Testament times.

It is, that we too, have a work to do, and it is a work which is given to all believers. And so we must not do this work negligently or deceitfully. We are told in Colossians 3: 1, that since we were raised with Christ, that we should seek those things which are above, where Christ is. We are told that we have died and that our life is hidden with Christ in God. And therefore, we are to put to death our members which are on the earth. In the first few verses of our text here, cities are mentioned – Kirjathaim and Heshbon, Madmen, and Horonaim. Luhith is mentioned in verse 5. These cities are mentioned as the most prominent places where sin was being seen, by God, in Moab. There are also many other smaller cities mentioned in verse 18 to the end of the chapter.

In applying this to ourselves, we need to see that remaining indwelling sin in our hearts and lives, is seen very clearly by our God, and it should be seen better by ourselves, and war waged against it. God sees our hearts perfectly. He sees what we are doing which is good and right. He knows the predicament which we find ourselves in, when we become a Christian; that our sin is not entirely eradicated, and will not be until our death. What would he have us to do? He knows what

any known toleration of thoughts of sin, or actions of sin will do to us, and how it will dishonor Him. And so, He teaches us by and through our remembrance of Christ and by the working of the Holy Spirit, how we should think about sin, and what we should do to mortify sin. God will teach you very practically, in relation to your thoughts and your deeds in His sight, the truth of the evil of sin, and how you can put it to death in your mind and heart.

Sin plunders our lives of the good things that God has given to us in relation to His common grace. And it brings shame and dismay to Christians in light of all the spiritual blessings which He daily bestows upon us through Christ's special grace. The Christian who knows his own heart, can identify with the apostle Paul's words in Romans 7: 18 – "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find." "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice." "Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." So, indwelling remaining corruption in the true believer is called "sin dwelling in me". This is the flesh. Sin, although it is broken in its reigning power in the life of a Christian, is still present with the believer, putting forth motions in our hearts.

And in doing so its tendency will be to defile your minds if you tolerate it. It will bring shame and dismay to you, through the working of your renewed conscience, and it will attempt to weaken your will in relation to your doing what is good and right, in terms of God's commandments. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make you see the evil of sin, and the glory of Christ's righteousness, and your own being and becoming more righteous. It is His blessed work in your life to strive with you so that you will take action against these sins of your heart. Your response to sin ought to be that of verse 2. No more praise of Moab. No more praise of sin. Come and let us cut her off as a nation, the Chaldeans say. We who are true Christians know that we were unworthy of the least of His mercies in receiving the gift of salvation in Christ. But having trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, you find that our Old Man has been crucified with Christ, and it has been crucified with Him so that the whole body of your sin might eventually be done away with.

Christ's good work on your behalf, as the Captain of your salvation, has made it sure that you should no longer be a slave of sin. (Romans 6: 6) "Knowing this – that our Old Man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin." When you realize what Christ has done for you on the cross, your language, the language of your heart is like that of the Chaldeans towards Moab – Come and let us cut her off; that is, you want to get rid of all of your sin. You want to do the work of the Lord in putting sin off, and putting it to death. Upon sins great and small you will have no pity. Your little sins will cry to be pitied; your deeply entrenched sins will continually weep to think that they must die, as it says in verses 4 and 5. But you must not spare them. They must be put to death.

Romans 8: 12 and 13 – "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh" "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." So, as a Christian you have believed in Christ. You have been freely justified by faith. And so, because you have received the Holy Spirit, you should begin asking yourself this question – What can I do to please God? You want to become involved in the work of the Lord. Then listen to Colossians 3: 5-10. "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."

So, the beginning of putting sin to death is the putting of it off. The picture is of taking off dirty and filthy garments, and putting on clean ones. This is what you are going to wear now that you are a Christian. You are going to walk with Christ in white. This is something which God would

have each one who believes in Jesus, do at the beginning of the Christian life, but also then to learn to do, all through the Christian life. God wants you to learn to hate sin, and to hate evil so much, that you want to put it to death. You not only confess your sins to God and ask forgiveness for them, but you take deliberate steps to put the motions of sin to death in your heart. This is something that the Lord knows must be taking place in your heart for you to make progress in holiness. The Holy Spirit will work powerfully in your heart and life to bring this good work to success, as much success as can be expected in this life; even maturity, godliness, and usefulness in living your life to God and making progress in holiness.

2nd – It is the work of the Lord to hate evil and turn from idols. (verses 6-25)

I will not re-read all of these verses again, but I will point out what is being indicated in a few of them. Verse 6 – “Flee, save your lives!” “And be like the juniper in the wilderness.” “For because you have trusted in your works and your treasures, you also shall be taken.” “And Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, his priests and his princes together.” “And the plunderer shall come against every city; no one shall escape.” “The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord has spoken.” What we have here is the judgment against Moab’s idolatry; their worship of their false god Chemosh. Chemosh was called – The destroyer, the subduer, or the fish god. In verse 13 of our text, it is said that Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, having their confidence in the golden calves that were set up there. It was because of this false worship that Moab would be taken into captivity, it says in verse 46.

So too, when a person comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ, they need to repent of all of their false worship, and turn away from it, and destroy all of their idols. You would think that people who know the Lord would not need to be told to do this, but really it is very needful. It says in 1st Thessalonians 1, verse 9 – “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to god from idols to serve the living and true God.” This is the expectation God has of everyone who comes to Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation. If you want to be saved, you need to give up your false gods and your false worship. These people needed to repent of their trusting in the works of their hands, and in their treasures, especially their tolerating, promoting and engaging in, false worship. This leads me to say a few words about the peculiar problem that we face here in the United States of America concerning idols and false worship.

Because we have freedom of religion and first amendment rights, we also have had, over the past few years, the widespread acceptance by many Christians, of the idea that the false worship of people around us, is not something to be hated; that somehow it is not to be seen as God-dishonoring, evil, and destructive of everything good in our society, but rather it is to be affirmed and accepted. It is to be accepted because it is what these people have personally chosen to do. That is what supposedly makes it right. And so, Christians are expected to respect that decision without any question; without any question that those people who are worshiping these false gods might be wrong in their beliefs. Christians are now supposed to fall in line with this falsehood, or they will be guilty of hate speech for saying that another person’s religion is false.

The Bible says that our accepting this lie is sinful compromise on our parts. We do not hate any person who holds to false religion. But we do hate what is false, and the actions taken by people to teach and promote false worship, for it dishonors God and is harmful in many ways to our society. It obscures the glory of the only true and living God for us to not hate what is false. Turn with me to Psalm 97, verses 1-9. “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad!” “Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.” “A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.” “His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles.” “The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.” “The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.” “Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, who boast of idols.” “Worship Him, all you gods.” “Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of

Your judgments, O Lord.” “For You, Lord, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.”

Now, that is the way that a Christian is to think about their Lord God. He is sovereign over all the earth. God is Light, but in His great plans and purposes for all men and nations, it says that clouds and darkness surround Him. That is, people cannot see Him very clearly in His ordering of all things after the counsel of His own will. They do not understand His providence. But even though they cannot understand Him, He is righteous and He is just in all of His ways. His rule is founded upon His essential righteousness, holiness, justice and truth. He is very precise in what He has written in His word, and He is very precise in the use of His power. A fire of justice is always before Him, and He is well able to burn up His enemies round about Him.

When He exerts His power, in His flashing of lightning, the earth sees and trembles. He can make the mountains melt like wax at His presence. He is Lord of all the earth. Not one Lord among many lords, but the only true and living God before whom all men should fear. He is most high above all the earth, He is exalted far above all gods; that is above all people who are called “gods” in the Scripture, and above all false gods, those idols made by the hands of men, those gods who have no power and no life; they are figments of men’s imaginations.

But look at verse 10 – “You who love the Lord, hate evil!” “He preserves the lives of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.” “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.” Oh, do you see it, brethren? These are the truths that we must live by and promote with our words and with our lives! We must begin to do a much better job of preaching that our God as the only true and living God. We must speak much more to people around us, of God’s wisdom, His strength, and His power, and His love in sending Christ to be our Savior.

There is every reason to hate false gods and false religions which people in other nations have made up, and then brought here to our country. We will not persecute people in this country who are held by Satan in false religions, but we should hate evil, and do everything that we can to maintain a right view of our nation’s founding fathers and our Constitution. When we were founded we were one nation under God. There were many different denominations of Christians, but there was not the acceptance or promotion of false gods. This is the glory of that time period and the graciousness of our God, to give us such leaders as wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. And as long as we were one nation under God; that is, one nation under the one true and living God, we were indivisible, having liberty and justice shown toward all.

But now we are one nation; part under God, and part denying this truth, that there is only one God and that He is the judge of all men and nations, and that it is His righteous rule that determines what shall come and go, what shall stand and not stand, in the affairs of men. If our leaders compromise this truth, our nation will continue to fall under His mighty judgments, and be led to a very low place, where we will hardly be recognized as a great nation at all, in relation to the greatness of what we once were.

Let’s think together about Solomon’s great and sinful compromise in his worship of false gods. He was a man who knew the Lord. And yet it was true, that the worship of this false god, “the abomination of Moab,” was actually introduced by King Solomon, as a god to be acknowledged and worshiped by the people of Israel. Turn with me to 1st Kings 11, verses 1-10. “But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites – from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you.’” “Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” “Solomon clung to these in love.” “And he had seven hundred wives princesses and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

In other words, this was a violation of the first and second commandments; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make a graven image or likeness of God. “For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal

to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.” “For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.” “Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and he did not follow the Lord fully as did his father David.” “Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.” “And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.”

“So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.” Now, we would see here that this was what led to the divided kingdom in Israel. As a part of the disciplinary action which God took against Solomon, God said to him in verse 11 – “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.” “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.” “However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.

So this was the sin which Solomon had to put to death. And he did so, as it is recorded for us in Ecclesiastes chapter 7, verses 20-26. “For there is not a just man upon the earth who does good and does not sin.” “Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you.” “For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.” “All this I have proved by wisdom.” “I said, ‘I will be wise’; but it was far from me.” As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?” “I applied my heart to know, to search and seek out wisdom and the reason of things, to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.” “And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters.” “He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her.” Now, Solomon may be referring to the snares and nets of the harlot who he warns against in several places in the book of Proverbs. I believe that he is referring to his wives who turned his heart away from the Lord, which was a form of spiritual harlotry.

For, listen to what he says now in verse 27. “Here is what I have found, says the Preacher, adding one thing to the other to find out the reason, which my soul still seeks but I cannot find: One man among a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found.” “Truly, this only I have found: that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.” One man among a thousand he found to be faithful to his soul, and to the purity of worship which is found in following the word of God, and being faithful to God, to worship Him only. Among the thousand women whom he married, he did not find one who was his true friend and companion, and would direct him in the right way. Who then was the one man who would direct him in the right way? I would think that it was his father David who did follow the Lord faithfully. His Psalms would direct Solomon in the right way, and these pointing to the Messiah, the Promised one, the Righteous One, the only perfectly faithful Man who has ever lived, who has never sinned. This is who I think that Solomon is referring to.

Sins of Idolatry and sins of the flesh go hand in hand. They are both to be put to death by the Christian. Listen to Colossians 3: 5-7. “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” “Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.” Covetousness is idolatry, Paul says here. Covetousness is your desiring to have someone else’s wife or husband, or things for yourself that belong to someone else, or things that God has made forbidden through his word and His commandments, things that He has not chosen to give to you. Covetousness was the hardest sin for Paul to repent of, and put to death. He says in Romans 7: 7 – “For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’” “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all

manner of evil desire.” For apart from the law sin was dead.” “I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” “And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.” This was why Paul, and all sinners need Christ. He alone could fulfill the law on their behalf, so that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

But it is more than that. Paul and all Christians need the gift of the Spirit, and His good working in their life, so that they will have the ability and the power to put sin to death. Thanks be to God! Who will deliver me from the body of this death; all of the remaining corruption of my flesh, and give me the power to put individual sins that I commit to death, and subdue my iniquities? It is from the Father and the Lord Jesus, God the Son, that proceeds the Holy Spirit. And He is given so that you will be able to put all sin to death. Romans 8: 2 – “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” A great part of our not walking according to the flesh, is being able to put all sin to death. Remember this, dear Christian, and glory in this.

3rd – The sin of pride must be put to death by all who would do the work of the Lord faithfully. (verses 26-47)

I will not be long here, but I want you to see that Moab’s chief sin was pride. Verse 29 says – “We have heard of the pride of Moab (He is exceedingly proud), of his loftiness and arrogance and pride, and of the haughtiness of his heart.” “I know His wrath’, says the Lord, but it is not right; his lies have made nothing right.” Now this was a very proud nation indeed. Pride is a sinful conception that a person has about themselves, that they are much greater in their reasoning power, much greater in their mental strength or even physical strength, and so they have a lofty view of themselves. Mirror, Mirror, on the wall. Who is the fairest of them all? Who is the smartest of them all; who is the strongest of them all? Pride is a very great sin of the mind and heart, and it also affects many things that are done with the body.

It evidences itself in a person’s exalting themselves in their own mind, and doing it against the Lord. Verse 26 – Make him drunk because he exalted himself against the Lord. In other words, he would be driven to drink and be drunk when finally sees the greatness of this sin that he has committed and he doesn’t repent of it, and he won’t put it to death. As a drunk he would wallow in his vomit, and also be Himself in derision. Moab had had Israel in derision. Now she would be repaid in kind. Pride often leads to anger because the proud person thinks that they see what is true in a situation better than anyone else. And since others do not recognize what they see, or they do not agree with their analysis of the situation, then they will become angry at the other person, and want to take action against them.

A proud person who is has unrighteous anger in their heart cannot be a loving person. They cannot sympathize with others who have sinful weaknesses. They cannot show compassion to sinners, but must always conclude that their faults and their sins are all due to their irresponsibility. But are you not glad, beloved, that our Savior is not this way? He is not proud, but gentle and humble in heart. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” And the strength to put all sin to death.