



## Reflections on a Sad Anniversary Jer. 22:1-9

NKJ Jeremiah 22:1 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word,

2 "and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates!

3 'Thus says the LORD: "Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.

4 "For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David.

5 "But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself," says the LORD, "that this house shall become a desolation." ' ' "

6 For thus says the LORD to the house of the king of Judah: "You are Gilead to Me, The head of Lebanon; Yet I surely will make you a wilderness, Cities which are not inhabited.

7 I will prepare destroyers against you, Everyone with his weapons; They shall cut down your choice cedars And cast them into the fire.

8 "And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, 'Why has the LORD done so to this great city?'

9 "Then they will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.' "

It's interesting that this sermon that Jeremiah was instructed by God to deliver to the king of Judah was actually preached *before* the events detailed in the preceding chapter. In the previous chapter, chapter 21, Jerusalem is being threatened by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and a delegation had been sent from the king of Judah to ask Jeremiah if the Lord might possibly intervene to turn back the Babylonians just as he had turned back the Assyrians when it seemed certain that they would take Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah. Jeremiah had given the Lord's answer saying "No" and assuring them that Babylon would indeed be taken. Now in chapter 22 we have a flashback that shows that the Lord had directly warned that this disaster would befall Jerusalem if the King and the people did not hear His Word and repent.

You see before they even entered into the Promised Land, the Lord had told His people that after they entered in, their happiness would depend upon their Love for God and one another, they were told in Deut 6:5 "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*" And in Lev. 19:18 "*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*" But they had forsaken the Lord who loved them and delivered them, and had gone after false gods, and they also entered into a pattern of abominable wickedness. In fact, by the time Jeremiah was preaching to them, they had become completely desensitized to sin. They didn't think twice about putting the altars and images of false gods in the temple in Jerusalem, and oppression, injustice, and bloodshed had become the norm in their society. Worse Jerusalem was full of false prophets and priests who assured them that they were doing just fine and that God still loved them and would always protect them. These men preached for money and

popularity and found that they could do very well simply telling people what they wanted to hear, no matter how it contradicted reality.

Then in comes Jeremiah to tell them the truth, and make them mad. All kings and authorities have been raised up by God as Paul tells us in Romans 13:1 and it is God's desire that Rulers would be ministers to the people for good, they are to promote good and be God's avenger against those who practice evil. But unfortunately, the Kings of Judah had become exactly the opposite, they promoted and protected idolatry and evil, they did not protect the weakest members of society, but rather allowed them to be plundered and even killed. The people who endured the most evil in this society were the defenseless, in particular the elderly, the widows, and the children. They even promoted child sacrifice, encouraging the people to sacrifice their children, whom the Lord had given to them as His gift to be raised up in His nurture and admonition, in fire to the Baals. The Lord rebukes them again and again for this, especially for how *lightly* they did it. It was as nothing to them, to murder these infants who were created in the image of God.

***Ezek 16:20 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter,  
21 "that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?"***

So God had warned them, He had sent His prophets making offers like the one in this sermon telling them that although men are not saved by obedience to the moral law of God, their happiness and the peace, prosperity and continuance of their society depended upon it. And warning them saying, you are my people who are called by my name, you are precious to me like Gilead beautiful and fertile, and although you have been prodigal sons, if you will but return to me and keep my commandments, you will be blessed as David was blessed. Blessed in a way you haven't experienced in generations. But be assured if you will not. If you go on in your wickedness, I swear I will raise up forces that will destroy you and leave you desolate, so that even the surrounding nations will know this was my judgment even as the world knew of my judgment on Egypt. All your chariots and walls and horsemen will no more stop the destroyers than the walls of Jericho stopped you.

God was telling them, that though he is longsuffering and patient, he would not let the current evil situation continue indefinitely. How could He brothers and sisters and be the only Just and Good God? The blood of the innocent was crying out to Him for justice day by day and the sins of Jerusalem were rising like a stench before the whole world. But they didn't believe it, they would not choose his blessings and in their pride refused to believe He would bring judgment.

Now we read this and we say, how sad, how crazy, how could a nation become so desensitized that they would do those things, sacrificing their children year after year and think nothing of it? And think God would not hear from heaven? How could the rulers allow that to happen?

A little while ago, Joy and I forgot the hypersensitive little ears rule, namely that if you are calling your children to do a chore they are deaf as a post even if they are in the same room. But if you are having a conversation they probably shouldn't be privy to, they can hear it from across the house. So a while back Joy mentioned that someone we know who is not a believer was pregnant, and I asked if she knew if she was going to have an abortion. Suddenly we hear Margaret's little voice, "*What's an Abortion?*" Oh no. Well Margaret, we said, you know what a pregnancy is, an abortion is when a pregnant woman pays someone to kill her baby before it is born.

Her eyes opened wide and she asked "***Has someone called the police?***"

Our hearts broke at that moment, how do you tell your daughter that she is the citizen of a country where the police help people to do that, not stop them?

But brothers and sisters, more than that, what struck me so profoundly was that my seven year old daughter could clearly see the moral evil, the horror, of abortion, and I never want her to lose that, never. And my great fear is that she will, that she will become desensitized. As not only we have as a country, but God forgive me, I have. Somewhere we've lost that sense of the sheer horror of abortion and brothers and sisters. We are approaching the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the legalization of Abortion on Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. 34 years, that number doesn't mean much to us. It should. Let me try to give you some numbers that perhaps will have more meaning.

Let us talk about populations. Let's start with two countries where we are struggling desperately to do some good.

Population of Iraq: 26,074,906

I didn't expect it, but the population of Afghanistan is actually larger...

Population of Afghanistan: 29,928,987

Our neighbors to the north have just slightly more people than that Canada: 31,006,347

Which while large than most European nations is actually less than that of California, our most populous state: 35,484,453

Remember those populations when I give you the next figure. Over the past 34 years there have been 48,589,993 Legal Abortions in the United States of America.

Brothers and Sisters, if we continue, in less than a decade we will have topped the death toll for the costliest conflict in human history, the Second World War, which killed 54 million people. Americans, will have legally conducted the greatest bloodletting in human history right here in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. It's a sad irony that the killing itself is actually being done by individuals with Post-Graduate educations.

Do you think people might do something if we decided we decided we were going fix the ever-present Afghanistan problem simply by killing 1 million Afghans every year for the next 30 years? I suspect the world community would go ballistic before we even finished year one, and yet even if we were to complete the program we wouldn't have come close to the death toll from legalized abortion here in the USA.

That is desensitization on a monumental scale, one that puts Judah's to shame. And yet by comparison it is hardly even an issue, whereas rightly understood it should be *the issue for our nation*. I was watching *Amazing Grace*, the story of the life of William Wilberforce, and I was struck by the thought *where are our Wilberforces?* The horrors of the middle passage of the slave trade he strove so valiantly to eliminate from the British empire, probably claimed around 3 million lives over a 300 year period. The abortion trade claims 4,000 victims a day.

What is our number one concern this election season; the economy. We are more concerned about how much it costs to drive to the abortion clinic, than what happens there. He makes the trains run on time. People disappear in the night, but...

How any people could hear those figures and then just shrug their shoulders and go on, is beyond me. But perhaps even more disturbing is that a Los Angeles Los Angeles Times poll conducted in Jan, 2000 showed that a majority of Americans believe that abortion is murder, but the majority of respondents to

that particular poll also indicated that that they still felt that abortion should be legal. Now that is desensitization.

Some might say we should be happy that at least the majority sees abortion for what it really is – legalized murder. But I believe we should be horrified that we have become a nation so desensitized to this issue that we can see it for what it is – the stripping away of the God given right to life all people are created with and the killing of a child created in the image of God – and yet still insist on our "right" to practice it.

When I started preaching on Abortion it was 5 million lost lives ago.

But I realized that in spite of all that, I simply cannot conceive of this great evil going on for ever.

Can God not do mighty things? There was time when the remnant of faithful believers resisting idolatry consisted of a few young men in Babylon, and by his grace he carried them through the fire furnace, and caused their faith to prevail over the will of the mightiest of earthly kings

There was a time brothers and sisters, when the entire Christian faith consisted of a few frightened men in an upper room, a time when the entire world had been submerged in the darkness of popery and sacerdotalism, a time when the British empire approved of and even depended upon the triangle trade!

He can and does raise men up, and I know this, one way or another God will end this. I hope that unlike the Judah it will end because God mercifully causes the American people to choose the blessings of the gospel, rather than the curses of continuing on.

- 1) So pray, pray he would raise up another Daniel, a Wilberforce for our time
- 2) Evangelize, I am convinced that this is a course we will not turn from willingly until and unless God grants that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would come sweeping our land. It was that that turned me.
- 3) Avoid Compromise and Muddled Language

4) Do not forget, do not become complacent, do not become desensitized.

*Prov. 31:8 Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die.*

Remember, that as you stand against abortion, you are not only standing for unborn, you are standing for the good of this nation. Remember the innocent blood that is crying out to God and that he is just and good.

Lastly, one of the things that we are constantly warned of is that we mustn't speak of this subject, or preach about it, because there may be someone who has already gotten an abortion listening to us. This logic is so flawed, I hardly know where to begin. It is like saying, don't speak about lying, because you might have liars in the congregation. Don't speak about sin, because someone might have sinned? Friends, those are directions from the pit of hell, not the lover of men's souls. The gospel is precisely about forgiveness of sins! I simply will not speak and preach to men and women and not offer them the true forgiveness that Christ freely offers. Every Sunday, I stand here and preach as a forgiven murderer, sent to give assurance to other forgiven murderers and imploring others no better or worse than I to come to Christ, and to know Him not as judge, but as Lord and Savior, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the King whose rule shall never end.