

Jeremiah 9: 1-26; “Valiant for Truth”, Sermon # 9 in the series –
“Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God,”
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 12, 2013,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The verse that I would like to open this this text up with this afternoon is verse 3 – “And like their bow, they have bent their tongues for lies.” “They are not valiant for the truth on the earth.” My son Benjamin and I, many years ago, used to go to an archery club on Saturday mornings and it was great to learn to shoot a compound bow. But some of the young men there were using the old-fashioned bows called re-curve bows. And these bows were strung by putting your leg over the bow itself and bending the bow down, to bring the looped string to the notch at the top of the bow.

But the compound bows were strung with a machine because the tension was so much greater that it could not be done in the old-fashioned way. With a compound bow, when you shoot it, if the tension pressure is 50 pounds or more the arrow flies much straighter to the target. These people in Jeremiah’s day had strung their bows for lies, our text says. The tension was great because they were going to shoot at the righteous. They were not going to love their neighbor. Verse 5 says they would, “everyone deceive his neighbor and they had taught their tongue to speak lies”.

Verse 8 says, “Their tongue is an arrow shot out.” “It speaks deceit.” “One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait.” (He sets an ambush) The person who is valiant for truth is one striving to be strong in the battle for the prevailing of truth; that is, God’s truth over falsehood. It is to be mighty to establish and apply God’s truth to our own heart first, and then to speak and live out that truth in love to other men.

In order to be valiant for truth a person must know and understand the God who is the source of absolute truth; and then there will be definite indications of that love for truth in their life. I am going to use Jeremiah himself to show us 3 indications of what it is like to be valiant for truth.

1st – If you are valiant for truth you will feel a deep sorrow and detestation over what sin does to people around you. (verses 1-11)

The prophet Jeremiah is known to many people as the weeping prophet. And it is from this 1st verse that he receives this name. “Oh that my head were as waters and my eyes a fountain of tears; that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.” Some people have the wrong impression that Jeremiah was really a super-sensitive soul, always crying over things when they were bad. But I would assert to you that Jeremiah’s weeping was no sign of weakness. Rather it was an indication of great spiritual strength to mourn over what sin did to people around him.

Listen to Charles Spurgeon on the subject of tears: “Sometimes tears are base things; the offspring of a cowardly spirit.” “Many of those briny drops are but an expression of childlike weakness.” “It were well if we could wipe such tears away and face a frowning world with a constant countenance.” “But oft-times tears are an index of strength.” “There are periods in which they are the noblest things in the world.” “It is no sign of weakness when a man weeps for sin, it shows that he hath strength of mind; nay more that he hath strength imparted by God, which enables him to forswear his lusts and overcome his passions, and to turn to God with full purpose of heart.”

“And there are other tears too, which are the evidences, not of weakness, but of might; the tears of tender sympathy are the children of strong affection, and they are strong like their parents.” “He that loveth much will weep much; much love and much sorrow must go together in this vale of tears.” (Vol. 3 – Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon 150)

Jeremiah’s sorrow was a deep sorrow, for many good people had been slain already. I wonder if we think enough of the preciousness of good men? And what an awful thing it is when they are lacking. The people at Ephesus knew what the Apostle Paul meant to them. In Acts 20, we find the record of it. In verse 36, after he had commended them to God, it says – “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.” “Then they all wept freely and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more.”

A mature Christian knows how to love and to express that love. A mature Christian will sorrow over the departure of good men; godly men. It is not a good thing if we believe so much in God’s sovereignty that we do not feel deeply about the loss of good men, the loss of great men, the loss of godly men. When we say, “Oh that just the way it is”; we must be stoical about these things, I believe that we are insensitive to the Spirit of God.

It is not a good thing, either, if we believe so much in the sovereignty of God that we cannot feel deeply about the loss of the unsaved people around us. Think about the deep sorrow and unceasing grief that the Apostle Paul had in his heart for his brethren, his countrymen, his relatives according to the flesh; the Israelites to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises. He wished that he could be accursed from Christ for their sakes.

Think, as well, of his statement in Acts 20, verse 31. He says to the elders of Ephesus – “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.” He was warning them about those who would come in, speaking perverse things, and draw away the flock after them. Brethren, this kind of sorrow and tears are the exhibition of real love, born out of a great desire that men would be saved, and that God’s love would be recognized in

the gift of life, the gift of leaders, the gift of godly men and women. Oh Lord, let us feel more, in the right way!

If we would feel deeply the sorrow of what sin does to people, we must look at our Savior weeping over Jerusalem in Luke 19. He wept because they did not recognize the time of their visitation; they didn't recognize the things which made for their peace. And now it was too late, and judgment had come; the days had come when the city would be leveled to the ground with them and their children inside it! This is what made the Savior weep; it was the refusal on the part of many people to recognize the fact that God's greatest gifts are bound up in the salvation of the soul from sin.

When we see people who refuse to repent, when we see them proceed from evil to evil, when in our society we realize that we cannot trust one another because of lies, when we see people slandering each other with their tongues, like arrows shot from a bow, when people refuse to believe that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, and they do not wish to know God or have the knowledge of His ways, then it is time for us to weep. When we are truly valiant for truth, we feel a deep sorrow for the loss of good men and we long for the salvation of people's souls.

But we also feel deeply, a detestation of what sin does to people, and we wish to separate ourselves from it, and run away from it. "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for travelers, that I might leave my people, and go from them." "For they are all adulterers and an assembly of treacherous men." (verse 2) Oh, the vileness of men's hearts, the treachery, the unkindness, the willful perversity of men in sin.

They will actually teach themselves to speak lies and weary themselves to commit iniquity. The heart of a true Christian is made sorrowful by this plunging into sin. They might be tempted to think: Why stay in society at all when truth has fallen in the streets and no one can be trusted to do good? But the man who is valiant for truth cannot run away. There is still something left for him to do.

2nd – A person who would be valiant for truth will teach others concerning sin and repentance. (verse 12)

"Who is the wise man who may understand this?" "And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it?" "Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness so that no one can pass through?" A person who would be valiant for truth knows that the question must be asked and the answer must be given. We are living in a day in which no one wants to believe that man's greatest problem is sin. And we who are true Christians, must set forth before every segment of society the fact that it is; we must define it and show them its connection with judgment.

We must begin with this, but not stop there. For a wise and loving Christian will also know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the very next thing that they should speak of. Who is the wise man who will declare it? The Lord Jesus Christ is the only answer for the sinful hearts of all men. Many people do not see how

deep the dye of sin is in their hearts, or in our society. Sin is the breaking of God's holy law, and forsaking it once we know it. It is not just that God's commandments are broken in sin, but there is a refusal to acknowledge the authority of God's Word, and thus the authority of God Himself. God does have a right to speak to men by His Word, and we must declare that right. That is being valiant for truth. Sin is walking according to the dictates of your own heart; walking after false gods and false worship which our fathers taught us, if they did not know God.

The true Christian sees why Jesus Christ had to die for him. This is why, after he is saved, he takes dictation from God's Word. Grace has changed his heart in the way that he thinks about God's Word. God's Word speaks to him and he doesn't speak back to it. In his heart the truth of God's Word is being written down by the hand of the Holy Spirit so that God's will, His commands, His precepts, His promises, and His principles, are all written down there.

They are written down in such a way that they can be referred to there in the heart of the believer. Then, over time, the believer's obedience is evaluated by God and by the Christian himself. The unbeliever and the false professing Christian, because their heart has not been changed by grace, take dictation, ultimately, only from their own hearts.

Turn over to Psalm 36, verse 1 and you will see this. This is how the NASB reads: "Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes." "For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it." Transgression in this first verse, speaks to the ungodly in his heart. Or, as the King James Version renders it: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no fear of God before his eyes." It is an oracle that ought to speak to our hearts.

If we do not fear God, transgression speaks to us and makes us take dictation. We write it down; that sin is somehow profitable and it will bring us good things. The one who is valiant for truth must show people around him that sin dishonors God. It ruins all the good things which God makes, and it prevents the greatest of blessings from coming to the sinful soul. God is not honored when people engage in sin. And people bring dishonor to Him, and to themselves, by the sinful ways that they use their bodies.

The person who is valiant for truth must show that the sin of uncleanness not only leads to venereal disease and AIDS, it leads to sorrow, misery, and ultimately to the punishment of eternal misery in hell. He must show the connection between spiritual carelessness and eternal ruin. Some people think that they can go to heaven and be a Roman Catholic or a Liberal Protestant in their doctrinal beliefs.

But the one who is valiant for truth must attempt to show those involved in those churches that sacramental works cannot save the nicest of people; that taking the mass and frequenting the confessional are dishonoring to God, and to

Christ. Why? Because they are re-offering and sacrificing Christ again, who was sacrificed once-for-all. And further, in confession of sin to an earthly priest a person will not find forgiveness from God. The person who truly would find forgiveness for all of their sins will come directly to the great high priest of our confession; our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only High Priest of His order; the order of Melchizedec. No Roman Catholic priest is of that order. Therefore, his is no true priestly ministry; for there is only one Mediator between God and man.

Let me take just a minute now, and tell you why I think that the Papal system is the Antichrist which is spoken of in the book of Revelation. I want you to see that if you are valiant for truth you will be willing to point out what is false and damning in this church and in its system of worship. It is because the Popes, even in assuming their office, have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts, and have not walked according to the voice of God speaking through the Scriptures of truth. They have added their own doctrines to the pure word of God.

We only need mention the office of the Pope himself, to see that there is a gross violation of the Scriptures which is taking place here. There is only one head of the Church of Jesus Christ, and that is our Lord Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The head of the Church on earth is not Pope Francis, but the living Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, anyone who tries to take Christ's place on earth as the Church's head is an Antichrist, he is a usurper to Christ's throne and a traitor to His government.

Jesus Christ is the only One who can truly be called, "The Holy One of Israel"; not the man at Rome who insists on being called, "His holiness", and has taken his place in the temple of God, the Church, portraying himself as Christ's vicar. Many Roman Catholics who claim to be true Christians say that it is possible to be a true Christian and to stay in that false system; that false Babylon, the mother of harlots. They say, "I grew up in it; it is hard for me to leave." "My parents taught me this way."

But the one who is valiant for truth must say, "It may be the case that you are a true Christian, and you are presently in the Roman Catholic church, but if you are true you will come out of her as it says in Revelation 18: 4. "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, lest you receive of her plagues." "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." I hope that you will not be timid, but be valiant for truth, and tell you dear loved ones who are in that false system to "come out of her".

Now 3rd – If you would be valiant for truth, you must have an intense desire to promote God's glory. (verses 23-26)

"Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.'" "For in these things I delight." The one who would be valiant for truth will boast in His

God. He has come to see that the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. Man's earthly wisdom never changes his heart to glorify God; only God's wisdom and His power can do this. When a person is converted, the work in their heart is done in connection with the foolishness of preaching, and the exposition of the Scriptures. The foolishness of God is wiser than men. And the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Men boast in their basketball heroes, their baseball heroes, their football heroes, their soldier heroes, their political heroes. But the true Christian is content to have Christ be His Hero, and emulate all those godly people who have lived for Him; those who have done great things by His grace, for the glory of God. They are valiant for the truth that God exercises judgment on the wicked, but also valiant for the truth that He shows mercy to thousands in Jesus Christ our Lord.

No, it is not at all necessary for a Christian to glory in his own wisdom, his might or his riches. All of these things have been given to him by God, and can easily be taken away if the gifts are pursued more than the Giver. All wisdom is found in Christ, not in ourselves. All spiritual power is found in Christ, and not in yourself. All spiritual riches are found in Christ, and not in possessing the things of this world. Let me close by asking you whether you glory in the fact that you understand and know God?

Do you glory in understanding that God is sovereign in His exercise of lovingkindness, and judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; that He is a great King over all the earth? Can you say with the Psalmist in Psalm 36, verse 5 – “Your lovingkindness, O lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.” “Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like a great deep.” “O Lord, You preserve man and beast.” “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!” “And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.” “They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and you give them to drink of the river of Your delights.” This is what we boast in, if we are wise.