

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message One : Jeremiah, the Tenderhearted Prophet of the Tenderhearted God

I. Overview:

Jeremiah was born a priest, but he was called by God to be a prophet not only to the nation of Israel but also to all the nations. Jehovah is the tenderhearted God, with which Jeremiah was absolutely one with God; his weeping expressed God's weeping. Jeremiah's weeping emotion had been disciplined and restricted so that God could use him to express the feelings of His heart. Jehovah made Jeremiah into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into bronze walls against the whole land with its people. Because Israel had fallen into such a befuddled situation, Jeremiah, an overcomer, was an anti-testimony. Our God is the tenderhearted and righteous God; and Jeremiah, a timid young man, was raised up by God to be His mouthpiece to speak for Him and express Him. In order that God may be fully expressed through us, we need to have spiritual emotions. The apostle Paul served the Lord with tears and admonished the saints with tears; his expression was tender and filled with intimate concern, it had power and impact to be able to touch the believers deeply. When, in the church life, we pass through the valley of weeping, God makes this valley a spring; this spring is the Spirit.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound how Jehovah encouraged Jeremiah though he is a timid young man.

God called Jeremiah and commissioned him to speak for Him. When Jeremiah excused himself by saying that he was a youth, Jehovah said to him, "... For everywhere I send you, you shall go; / And everything I command you, you shall speak. / Do not be afraid of their faces, / For I am with you to deliver you" Jehovah would make Jeremiah into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into walls of brass against the whole land.

B. Why had God to make Jeremiah into a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls?

This was necessary because a battle was raging. The kings, the princes, the priests, and the people of the land as enemies being fighting against God, Jeremiah was sent to represent God and fight for Him. Those who fought against Jeremiah fought against Jehovah because Jeremiah and Jehovah were one. For this reason, God wanted Jeremiah to be made into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into brass walls.

Day 2 —

A. Explain because the church is desolate, God has always raised up overcomes.

The church of God is desolate, and the majority of God's people have failed, have lost their position, and are unable to meet God's need. However, throughout the past two thousand years a small number of overcomers have always been raised up to be God's faithful witnesses to maintain His testimony. Throughout the ages the line of the overcomers has never ceased.

B. Explain what the differences between Elijah's and Jeremiah's testimonies were.

Elijah was a condemning anti-testimony; Jeremiah was a weeping anti-testimony. Elijah told the Israelites that they were serving Baal, not Jehovah; this needs to be condemned. However, the anti-testimony of Jeremiah was different. He told them that they would be handed over to the enemy, but they believed that God would save them. Therefore, Jeremiah wept for them and did not condemn.

Day 3 —

A. Explain that Jeremiah's weeping emotion had been restricted.

Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. Although he wept, his emotion had been disciplined. His weeping emotion had been restricted so that God could come to him and use him to express the sorrowful feelings that were in God's heart. Although God was grieved and hurt because of His people, He had to find someone who had these feelings. Then he would express the sorrowful feeling of God out of his emotion.

B. Expound that Jeremiah is absolutely one with God in being tenderhearted.

Jehovah is the tenderhearted God, and in being tenderhearted Jeremiah is absolutely one with God. In his weeping Jeremiah represented God. Thus, God could use a prophet like Jeremiah to express Him, speak for Him, and represent Him on earth. We may say that God wept within Jeremiah's weeping, for in his weeping Jeremiah was one with God.

Day 4 —

A. Why do we say that those whose hearts are in the Lord's work surely weep?

No proper worker of the Lord can be without tears. All those who have a heart for their work cannot help weeping. We should ache for sinners to the point of weeping for them. Tears are a good way to work. I say again, no one can be complete without tears. A person may be good at many things, but if he does not weep, he cannot be considered as complete. In serving the Lord, we must have tears.

B. Explain Paul serving the Lord in tears for his work in Acts 20:31.

In Acts 20:31, Paul said that for three years he was in tears for them night and day. In serving the Lord, we will say that without tears no work can become prosperous. If we do not do this one thing in secret, the progress of our work will be hindered. The more spiritual we are, the more emotional we are; if we do not know how to weep or shed tears, we are not very spiritual.

Day 5 —

A. Why will our work be fruitless as we lack an intimate concern?

If we have ability to carry on a work but lack an intimate concern, our work will be fruitless. What is needed to establish a good family life and church life is intimate concern. How fruitful we are, how much fruit we bear, it depends on whether or not we have an intimate concern. As long as we have the proper concern for people, we are well on our way to be qualified to be used of God for their salvation.

B. How are we touched by Paul's word to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 2:4 ?

Second Corinthians 2:4 says, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you through many tears,..." Paul, in the first Corinthians, pointed out all their mistakes and rebuked them with the most severe and frank word. Now in the second Epistle he told them how he wrote the first Epistle. Here we did see how severe Paul's words to the Corinthians were; they were like sharp knives.

Day 6 —

A. Expound Paul's words with an intimate concern for the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 7:2.

In 2 Corinthians 7:2 and 3 Paul says, "Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together." Paul's word here reveals his deep, intimate concern for the Corinthians. This utterance is not merely something ethical, religious, spiritual, or even loving.

B. State what the spiritual significance of "Baca" in Psalm 84:6 reveals.

In Psalm 84:6a, "Baca" means "weeping." The trouble and persecution caused by Satan can make our highway a valley of weeping. Verse 6b says, "Indeed the early rain covers it with blessings." According to our experience, this means that our tears become a spring and that this spring becomes the early rain that covers the valley with blessings. This early rain is the Spirit, and the Spirit is our blessing.

III. Conclusion:

Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet. At that time God's chosen people, from the priests, kings, to all the people, would turn away from God to idols. Their stubbornness, wickedness, and corruption really hurt God. God raised up Jeremiah as a young man, though he was a timid, fearful person. But he was full of tenderheartedness with emotions, and also full of deep concern and compassions for God's chosen people, so that God could express His love for His chosen people fully through his prophesying. Jeremiah wept on God's behalf; his weeping had really expressed the feeling of God. We may say that God wept within Jeremiah's weeping, for in his weeping Jeremiah was one with God. The Lord can be compared to a mother who weeps as she disciplines her children as she loves them.