

JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)
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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)

TITLE: Program 28 – Confession, Restoration, Healing

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Are you in trouble? Are you feeling absolutely desperate? And what are you going to do? You say, “I don’t know what to do. I’m trying to do this and I’m trying to do that, but I’m not sure it’s going to work and I am desperate.” I understand and God has an answer, a solution to your desperation, and that is that you cling to Him. Don’t try to handle it yourself; cling to God. We’ll talk about it today as we look at God’s precepts for life.

PART ONE

When I was growing up, I had a wonderful aunt and uncle, Aunt Dutchie and Uncle Scott. And Aunt Dutchie and Uncle Scott never had children; they were unable to. And yet, they kind of adopted my mother so that really Aunt Dutchie became like a mother to my mother, although she had a mother. Her mother was divorced, had been married a couple of times. I loved my grandma Elsie, loved her dearly and she was a precious, precious woman,

but she had some rough years in there. And my mother had rough years, but there was Aunt Dutchie and Uncle Scott. They lived in a little, tiny, cracker box of a house. It didn't matter to me because I just loved being there. I loved the yard, I loved the weeping willow, but it wasn't much of a house. As a matter of fact, it used to be an old garage, but then they added on. But you had to go down the steps to the kitchen, and off the kitchen was the bedroom of Aunt Dutchie and Uncle Scott. They bought that place because they lost their home in the Great Depression. They only had two more payments to make and instead of going to the family and saying to the family, "We only have two more payments to make. Can you help us right now?" They took it into their own hands and they ended up selling that house and moving into this small, small, little cracker box where they lived for the rest of their lives. What do you do when you lose your home? What do you do when you lose your job? What do you do when all of a sudden you are in a desperate situation? Well, Jeremiah, in Jeremiah chapter 13 is saying, [Listen, I want you to understand this visual aid of a waistband, a linen waistband to be put around your waist and then later he tells Jeremiah take it off, go down to the Euphrates, and dig a hole, and put the linen band there, go home and then come back. And He sent him back again. He says, "Dig it up." And he digs it up and it's absolutely worthless. And he says, "This worthless linen band is like the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Because of their pride they will not cling to Me as the waistband clings to the waist of a man. If they had, I would have made them a people for praise and renown and glory, but they wouldn't listen.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 13:4-11) What happened? They thought that they could take care of the situation themselves. They had a problem and the problem was pride. The problem was they were not going to listen to God. They were going to do it their way. In Jeremiah chapter 13, he says, when he shows them the ruined waistband which he says is totally worthless, says, "**Then...**" in verse 8, "**...the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD,**

““...so [I will] destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words....””

(Jeremiah 13:8-10) Now I’m not saying that Aunt Dutchie and Uncle Scott were wicked, I’m just using the illustration of losing a home. It says,

““This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have gone after other gods....””

(Jeremiah 13:10) Instead of running to God, instead of clinging to God, they wanted to be like all the nations. They wanted to have gods from all the different nations to make sure that they had their bases covered. They didn’t want to be caught short. Oh foolish, foolish people, the only time you’re caught short is when you refuse to cling to God. You say, “Turning to idols? How stupid.” Listen to this. This is an article that came out in the Chattanooga Times Free Press on Sunday February the 15th in the year 2009. It’s by Sam Wood. It says, “PHILADELPHIA—Faith might move mountains, but can a small piece of plastic move a four-bedroom house? In this dismal real estate market, lots of people think so, provided that the plastic is a figurine of St. Joseph.” Now who was St. Joseph? Well, St. Joseph is a saint that is supposed to watch over the house, that is supposed to take care of your property. And what has happened in Pennsylvania is, all of a sudden they have gone from selling these figurines of St. Joseph to having super records of sales. Why? Ever since the mortgages became a problem, all of a sudden, they’re selling all these figurines. It says, “‘We have over 5,000 items in our store,’ Norma DiCocco, who owns the St. Jude shop in Havertown, Pennsylvania. ‘And you know what the No. 1 item is? The St. Joseph statue.’” She buys figurines by the gross now. She estimated that she has sold six to eight thousand in the last year. What was a good seller has become a super-best seller. They only cost a dollar thirty-nine, she’s not making a lot of money. But, “‘It was not until the real estate market really tanked that St. Joseph took off the way that it did.’” You know who bought one? A Jewish woman, a Jewish real estate agent conceded that she needed a

small miracle. “As she walked with a shovel to a four-bedroom home,” she dug a hole, just like Jeremiah dug a hole and buried the waist band, but she didn’t bury a waistband, she took the figure of St. Joseph and she put it in the ground. “Head down, feet pointing towards the heavens, face pointed towards the house.” This was the ritual; this is the way that she was supposed to bury so that a miracle could happen. You know what? She sold that four-bedroom house. Now, she says, ““It really does help. It seems to work no matter what faith you have. Recently we planted one, and in three weeks the house sold.”” Are you turning to even religious statues instead of turning to God? You know, if we would be clinging to God as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, if we would be holding onto Him, gripping Him, then no matter what happened then we would be able to be in the long run, through the trial, a people for praise and renown and glory. But what do you have to do to cling to Him? You have to listen to Him. And the problem is, is we’re so busy, we’re working so hard, we’ve got to get ourselves out of this situation, we’ve got to get ourselves out of this trauma. And so instead of clinging to God, what we do is we take the Word of God and we close the Book and we set it aside because “I’ve got to do this, I’ve gotta do this, I’ve gotta do this.” And instead of clinging to Him, instead of falling to our knees, instead of hanging on to Him and saying, [God, you said ‘Seek first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness and you would take care of what I eat, and you would take care of shelter over my head,’ you’ve promised it to me in Matthew chapter 6. All these things will be added to you, be anxious for nothing.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:31-33) God I’m going to cling to you. Instead of clinging to Him, we set Him aside because we’ve got our pride and we think, in a sense, that we can pull ourselves out of this situation; that we can get ourselves out of it. That is pride. Everything that comes into your life, good or bad, is filtered through God’s fingers of love. And He has a purpose and that purpose is to train you. That purpose is to make you strong. Remember He says, [If you faint in the land of peace

when you're running with the footmen, what are you going to do, how are you going to compete with horses in the thicket of the Jordan?]
(PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 12:5) Let's go to Jeremiah chapter 13 because in Jeremiah chapter 13 he then turns to the waistband and this is what he says, **"Therefore you [shall]...speak this word to them, 'Thus says the LORD...God of Israel, 'Every jug is to be filled with wine.'"**
(Jeremiah 13:12) Don't tell us that. We know that. **"...do we not...[know well] that every jug is to be filled with wine?' then say to them, 'Thus says the LORD, '...I am about to fill all the inhabitants of [the] land—the kings that sit for David on his throne...,'"** evil kings but they're sitting for David on his throne, **"...priests, the prophets and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness! I will dash them against each other, both the fathers...the sons together...I will not show pity nor be sorry nor have compassion so as not to destroy them.'"**
(Jeremiah 13:13-14) What's going to happen? They're going to be filled with wine, they're going to get drunk. They're going to trip over one another because they would not listen to Him. They're going to fight against one another and they're not going to survive. We'll come back to this in just a minute and you don't want to miss the answer.

PART TWO

Welcome back, Beloved. I'm so excited about—well, I'm excited every week, but I'm excited about this week's lesson because it is so imperative that you and I know what to do when things, all of a sudden, move from peace to turmoil. When they move to destruction, when they move to a shattering experience, what are we to do? We are to cling to Him. And if we don't cling to Him, then what's going to happen? If we do not listen, we're going to be like a bunch of drunks. We're going to be walking around and we aren't sure where we are. And we are bumping into everybody all over and we can't handle it. I've never been drunk in my life, but I've watched a

lot of drunks and I've been with people that have gotten drunk. They don't know what's going on. And sometimes they wake up and they don't know who they've slept with. Sometimes they wake up and their body is bruised and they don't know what happened to them. Sometimes they don't wake up. Well, in this life. And many times, they wake up in hell. God is speaking to His people and He wants them to understand: You have moved from a time of peace now to a time of turmoil. [And in the thicket of the Jordan you better be able to compete with horses.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 12:5) Watch what He says, I'm in Jeremiah 13, verse 15, **"Listen and give heed, do not be haughty...." (Jeremiah 13:15)** Now remember, He said you wouldn't cling to me, that's why it's a worthless waistband because of the pride of Judah, because of the pride of Jerusalem. He says, "Listen, don't be haughty, don't be full of pride." **"...For the LORD has spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before He brings darkness...,**" He says **"...and before your feet stumble on the dusky mountains...,**" (Jeremiah 13:15-16) It is getting dark, you can't see where you're going. **"...And while you are hoping for light He makes it into [a] deep darkness, and turns it into gloom."** (Jeremiah 13:16) What does he mean when he says, give glory to God? Well, if you and I were to go to Joshua chapter 7 and verse 19 through 26, what you and I would find is that when they went in and they took Jericho, they were not to take any spoils, but Achan did. Achan went in and he saw those beautiful things and he took those spoils. And he took them home and he buried them and the family knew about it. So then when the children of Israel, go up against Achan and they cannot defeat the enemy and they're crying out to God, 'Why?' And God says, "Because there is sin in the camp." And they find out that Achan did it. And then they say, before they stone him to death and his family, "Give glory to God." In other words, confess your sin. Don't die without being what God wants you to be. I'm going to punish you, I'm going to take your life, I'm going to take the family, but give glory to God. (See Joshua 7:19-26) You see this same

statement used in John chapter 9 when the blind man is healed and the Pharisees are just so upset and he's giving glory to Jesus and they say to him, "Hey, tell us who did this. Give glory to God, confess." (See John 9:15-24) So what God is saying is, "When you mess up confess. Because if you don't confess it's like a mist coming up and you're walking this perilous path and you can't see it. You're going to stumble. You're going to fall. The light that you had is all of a sudden going to be gone and you're going to be in darkness." So he says, "Give glory to God." He says, **"But if you will not listen to it..."**, and Jeremiah is speaking and he says, **"...My soul [is going to] sob in secret..."**, he says, **"...and my eyes will [weep bitterly] and flow down with tears, because the flock of the LORD has been taken captive."** (Jeremiah 13:17) I'm going to weep because you went into captivity and you didn't have to go into captivity. If only you had listened. If only you had clung to Me, then you wouldn't be like this drunken person out of control. If only you would have confessed, the darkness would have become light. But you won't listen, and so I am going to weep bitterly for you. Now watch what He says, He says, **"Say to the king and the queen mother...."** (Jeremiah 13:18) So here's the king and the queen mother standing there in their crown, in their glory, ruling and he's saying, "Say to them 'Take a lowly seat, because the crown has fallen from your head.'" Now watch what it says because this gives you a cue to the time of the writing, because Jeremiah is not going to get terribly chronological until the end of the book, until the second part of the book, then he's going to start telling us chronology, but now we have to pick it up by just little words and phrases like this, so watch what he says. **"Say to the king and the queen mother, 'Take a lowly seat, for your beautiful crown has come down from your head.' The cities of the Negev...,** that's of the south, **"...have been locked up, and there is no one to open [them up]; all Judah has been carried into exile, wholly carried into exile."** (Jeremiah 13:18-19) When Nebuchadnezzar came down, he didn't come down and attack them

from the north, he came up from the south, great strategy. The land of peace that Jeremiah was growing weary in has now been overrun with the horsemen. And Jeremiah is having to compete with the horses. And so from here we go back to 2 Kings chapter 24 and there we see hey, **“In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, [in the days of]...Jehoiakim [and he] became [a] servant for three years....” (2 Kings 24:1) “[And] the LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, [and] bands of Arameans, [and] bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD....” (2 Kings 24:2)** But they wouldn’t repent. They wouldn’t cling. They wouldn’t listen to God. And it says, **“Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done.” (2 Kings 24:3)** And what had Manasseh done? **“...[Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with] innocent blood...and the LORD would not forgive.” (2 Kings 24:4)** So Jehoiakim dies, and **“The king of Egypt did not come out of his land again, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates. [And] Jehoiachin...,”** this is the king with his mother, **“...was eighteen years old when he became king...he reigned three months in Jerusalem...he did evil in the sight of the LORD....” (2 Kings 24:7-9)** And he was carried away into captivity; the crown fell from their head. Why? Because they did not run to the Lord. What about you? Where are you going to run in the time of trouble?