

Not Saved? Not much Time!

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[0 : 0 0] although I would like us to be thinking about the general message of the whole of this chapter 8 this morning two verses in particular you could say might sum up the entire chapter first of all verse 11 they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying peace, peace when there is no peace and then verse 20 this iconic verse the harvest is passed, the summer is ended and we are not saved now the context of this chapter 8 is not talking primarily or in the first instance about eternal salvation that is implied and in and through it but what Jeremiah is addressing is the fact that the nation of Judah is being under the judgment of God is being approached by the enemy that is the Babylonian armies are in the process of descending from Babylonia if you think of a map of the Middle East of Mesopotamia and they give where the two rivers the Tigris and Euphrates slope sort of from right to left upwards in the map and that's the route the Babylonian armies would take up the river so they've always got the water supply and then like a little sharp curve at the top and then they'd come down through into the Holy Land from the north now this is one reason why for example there's talk about verse 16 the snorting of his horses was heard from Dan

Dan was taken as being the sort of northern extremity of the Holy Land and once the enemy army appeared in Dan then there was no stopping them they were coming to sweep through the whole country the reason the Babylonians were coming was because the king of Judah Zedekiah had rebelled against the king of Babylon but one reason he'd rebelled against Babylon was because the kings of Judah were in the habit of rebelling against God and against their earthly overlords and against anyone that got in their way and as were the kings so likewise for the people and because the Babylonians were coming now an army you would think what does an army need?

you would think well an army needs weapons it needs swords it needs chariots it needs shields and armour and helmets it needs all the machinery of war yes that is true but an army will stand or fall largely on the supply not of these things although they are to an extent given but on the presence or absence of food food that will be needed to read thousands of men thousands who are not normally there in the land not normally consuming the resources of a not large country and there's all them there's all their horses there's all their camp followers there's all the horse and the horse of the Babylonians when they come they are not going to be bringing their own packed lunches with them they are going to be living off the land if they sweep through a city or a town or a village and there's livestock there or there's crops in the barn or whatever they're going to take it they're going to take it and they're going to burn whatever else they don't take and anybody's in a way they're just going to kill them this is the army that is coming and the people of Judah have all this time not only rebelled against the Lord but patted themselves on the back that nothing bad was going to happen to them because after all they had the temple of the Lord in their midst

God was amongst them God kind of owed them and so it didn't matter if they disobeyed him it didn't matter if they turned their back on him it didn't matter if they worshipped other gods as well as him because God was always going to be there and come through for that but what Jeremiah is warning them is look you've got to worship these other gods so the Lord has withdrawn from you you don't want him and he doesn't go where he isn't wanted and you turn away from him he will allow you to turn away from him if you withdraw from him he will allow you to withdraw from him but the further you withdraw from him the further his help is taken away from you so this is one reason why even though the prophets the false prophets in Judah will say oh it's okay it's alright there's nothing wrong that's like going to the doctor when you've got a tumour and you think there's something wrong but he says that's alright no you've just got a bit of indigestion nothing wrong and it gets worse it gets bigger and it's getting painful and he says no no it's okay take these these will be a wee bit of painkiller that will help and so on there's nothing wrong and by the time you get a second opinion he says look this is actually cancer this should have been dealt with ages ago if you had surgery if you dealt with it if you had the radiotherapy the chemotherapy you can still be fine you can be looking at months years of a comparatively normal life but it's been left and somebody has told you it's okay it's fine it doesn't matter so it has grown and grown and grown and now there's nothing to look forward to but death and a painful one of that this is the problem in verse 11 the prophets have said to the people it's okay

God's a little shit it doesn't matter it doesn't matter what you've done it doesn't matter how you've turned against him God loves you God is always going to support you they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying peace peace when there is no peace now there's no getting away from the fact that there is a certain comfort in being told what we want to hear if the Titanic is going down and you start being worried as people are panicking for the lifeboats somebody says look it's okay look at this shit look at how marvellous it is look at all the fixtures and the quality and the riches this is never going down these idiots running for the lifeboats don't be saddaft everything's going to be fine and you think oh obviously maybe I was just panicking this person must know what they're talking about and then it begins to tilt more and more and it's beginning to go lower are you sure no no it's fine it's fine absolutely it's no problem and by the time it's too late your prophet is nowhere to be seen by the time it's too late either they're already dead and gone or you can't find them at all all the time that could have been used to improve your situation to find a lifeboat to get to safety all the time that could have been used to treat the cancer that is seeking to kill you that's been wasted because somebody's told you it's alright there's no problem they have said peace peace when there is no peace because there's no peace with the

[7 : 03] Babylonians because there's no peace with God because the people of Judah have thought it doesn't matter what we do God's always going to bless us God's always going to be nice to us God's good he's our God that means we can do whatever we like and of course God's covenant with his people is that of a relationship and relationships can be broken and relationships can be damaged sometimes irreparably and for those who say that's okay it doesn't matter then all the time that could have been used has somehow just slipped through their fingers until it is too late we look for peace verse 15 but no good came and for a time of health and behold trouble and then it says verse 10 there therefore will I give their wives unto others their fields to them that shall inherit them for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely what they have sought to do is to gain and to amass this world's goods at the expense of their relationship with the Lord so that which is dearest and most precious than their wives will be given to others now it's bad enough if your nearest and dearest is taken away from you that's what happened to ezekeil in chapter 24 he had to prophesy about you know how when disaster came to them they weren't to mourn they weren't to sort of a wail and everything and to illustrate that harsh as it seems to illustrate that the Lord took his own wife away from him at a stroke he prophesied to the people in the morning that even his wife died the desire of his eyes taken away in a moment and he wouldn't have been an old man probably only his 30s maybe early 40s by that stage and his wife just taken away but that's bad enough but to see your wife or your loved given to someone else who may ill treat them who may be bad them therefore will I give their wives unto others their fields to them that shall inherit them we think well a field just a piece of ground with sheep grazing and maybe a dry stone diet round it no a field to people in those days and in that culture was wealth it was not just wealth it was a food supply it was the difference often between life and death a field represented ground that had been worked it represented ground where the stones had been painfully gathered out by hand remember it had been dug with the foot and with the hands to break up the earth the weeds had been torn out the dike had been built around it it had been ploughed it had been sown and any crops that were in it they had been brought forth by the sweat of their brow if that was a productive field then it didn't happen by accident it was because blood sweat and tears had gone into making it a fruitful field and that field just given away to somebody else they didn't do the work for it they didn't bring forth a fruitful result but no they weren't going to get it

I will give your fields to others you see we read a little verse like that okay it's just a field but a field in that day and in that time represents backbreaking labour hard toil fruitfulness yes but wrong from the earth by all the labour and toil of hand tools and personal individual work this is what has just been taken away destroyed but the people say oh well it's okay things will get better peace peace and you know we'll have plenty of fruit because the fruits that grow on the trees themselves and the fruit trees they'll give us food and so on well this is what he says verse 20 the harvest has passed summer has ended the time when the fruits would have been ripening the times when there would have been hope but we're not saved you know we haven't got the fruit supply that's the original context we don't have anyone to deliver us we don't have anyone to save us now there's nothing to face us but slow starvation because the army of the

Babylonians in the original context if they don't slaughter the people they will simply besiege them and they will starve to death because they will have eaten everything that is there in the land there is nothing but starvation the harvest is passed the summer has ended and we are not saved but the people have cried to the moon to the stars so there are all these other gods they worship but they weren't gods like plastic soldiers they can't deliver they can't defend they can't save the moon is real of course as a celestial body the stars are real but they're not real gods they're real as heavenly bodies they're real as stars they're real as planets but they're not real as gods there's no power in them to save and to deliver only the living god is the power to save and to deliver and what we see here for Jeremiah and the context here of how he laments he sees all this disaster coming to his people he looks for them this is what he says the cry of the daughter of my people verse 19 has come to me because of them that were in the far country is not the lord in Zion is not her king enough why have they provoked anger with their grave images and with strange vanities for the heart of the daughter of my people and I hurt

I am black astonishment that they behold me is there no pain and kill you I just there no physician there why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered because the good physician the only one that they can have help from they have turned away from and rejected all the summer will come all the fruits will grow all there'll be better times peace peace when there is no peace and then suddenly too late the time that should could have been used for remedy could have been used to get to the lifeboats could have been used for the life saving surgeon time the time is gone it's been fretted away and the fields that we so love are given to others and the loved ones into which we poured our hearts and our lives are given to others and the life that we sought to live to the foolish taken away from us fretted away like sand through a glass and it breaks

Jeremiah's heart to see what is happening to his land and to his country and to the daughter of his people why because he loves his land he loves his nation he loves his people but he doesn't love what they have become and he doesn't love the fact they have turned against the Lord because he loves the Lord more we were to go on into chapter 9 we read there oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people now what Jeremiah feels for Judah and Jerusalem we might justifiably feel for Scotland and for our islands the blessings that have been ours in the past the covenant mercies in which our nation was built and strengthened we've turned away from that and we've turned to vanities and we've turned to empty things that cannot save us it's okay God bless us whatever we do

[14 : 50] God's in the middle we've still got our churches we've still got our buildings we've still got the church organization God God loves us God wants us to enjoy our lives he wants us to have the best he wants me to be happy so of course God is here to bless whatever I do peace peace but there is no peace there is no peace between God and man when sin reigns supreme that is the condition into which we are born and it's the condition into which sadly we all too often choose to continue the only way that peace is made between God and man is by the son of man peace on earth goodwill to man when he was born and the trust in that Messiah saves us it delivers us because he alone is able to make the peace between God and man sinned against God just as in Jeremiah they had sinned against

God they didn't think they were that bad they thought they were pretty good they thought surely things will come back in the end and nobody in their natural state thinks they are that bad they look around at the world and they think well I'm not too bad I'm not a other people I'm not a rapist I'm not a murderer I'm not a drug dealer I'm not a criminal I'm not a child abuser I'm a pretty good person I pay my taxes I help my neighbours I try to be kind to other people I'm a nice person so God should love me God should bless me because I deserve it but what's your definition of good what's your definition of righteous we compare ourselves with other people and we think yeah I'm not too bad compared to other people I said I had the little plastic soldiers on the table and compared to them a great big gun that I brought I'd look huge I'd look fat I'd look massive fantastic but it's still just a toy on a different scale and so often our so-called righteousnesses they're not just filthy rags they're toys they're pretending we're not righteous before

God you want to see what righteousness is like you look at Jesus oh well none of us could be like that we can't be we can't be perfect like him but that's what you've got to be how much sin do you think there's going to be in heaven how much foulness how much lasciviousness how much immorality do you think is going to be before God's face in heaven how much theft how much swearing and profanity how much cheating or lying is going to go on there oh yes but these are bad things yeah bad things well when you and I look at your heart and say I've never told a lie you can't say that I have never cheated anyone I've never tricked anyone I've never never tried to deceive anybody you can't say that either you have lied in your heart you will have lied in your lips you will have taken that which is not right for yours you will have stolen time from your boss or time from your business or time from your loved ones you will have stolen things which were not yours, you will have cheated, you will have lied, you will have deceived, and if you're not an adulterer physically, there'll be plenty amongst us who will be adulterers in our hearts, which Jesus says is just the same as doing it.

So, we can list half a dozen sins that are major breaches of the commandments, and remember, one sin is enough to send you to hell. So, where do we stand now? Oh, well, there's going to be a few things that are wrong, you know, more, it's not that bad, but you can't have any. This is an example which you need 100%, you need perfection, you need absolute purity, and you and I, we don't have it.

And he wanted in Jeremiah's day, we're going to have righteousness, but it must be, as he says in chapter 6, in Genesis, chapter 6, or 23, verse 6, where he says, the Lord is our righteousness. The Lord is the only one who is righteous, the only one who is pure, if we are going to stand before him at the last day, and not be condemned, then somehow, our sin must be covered.

[19 : 11] Somehow, it must be paid for. Somehow, it must be washed away. And the only way that happens, friends, is if the death, the judgment, the wrath, that likely is to fall upon the sins that you and I have committed, that wrath is going to fall. I'll say that again.

That wrath is going to fall on the sins that you and I have committed. And it will either fall on us, or it must fall on somebody else.

Now, the only somebody else it's ever going to fall on, other than you and me, who actually did it, it's not going to fall on your neighbors. It's not going to fall on your mom and dad, or your kids. It's not going to fall on your brothers and sisters, or your next door neighbors, that this is something you did.

It's going to fall on you and me, unless it falls on somebody else willing to take that place for us. And the only person able, never mind willing, to take that place for us is Christ.

And you cannot be saved by one in whom you have not believed. And you cannot say that you believe in one in whom you have not trusted.

[20 : 24] And you can't just trust partially in him a wee bit. You know, you can't keep one foot in the lifeboat, and one foot on the deck of the Titanic, and hope that somehow you'll be okay, regardless of which one ends up staying afloat.

You've got to get clear, or you're going to be sucked down. You've got to completely, wholly trust Christ, with all of your life, and heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, or it's nothing.

Any doubts, any equivocation, any questioning, thinking, oh, well, maybe the world's got the answers after all. You wait, and wait, and wait for the world to bring its answers.

You and I, and you wait and think, well, life is going to get, but things can only get better, and then suddenly you find, you meet up with a friend you knew from school, and what are you finding?

My goodness, they've got old. And then you look at them and think, well, actually, I've got pretty old too. And then what do you talk about? Well, if you're in Christ, you know, you want to talk about the future.

[21 : 26] You know, you want to talk about him. You want to talk about where it's going to go, and what you have to look forward to. But if you don't have Christ, then you find that all the talk is about when you were young, when you were at school, the days that are gone, the old days that seemed only, only yesterday, in fact, or 30, 40 years ago, or more.

And it seems just like the blink of an eye. But that's what you do if you have nothing to look forward to. You look back when the days seem to be good.

When you were young, when you had it all before you, when you were young men and young women setting out your career, wasn't it great? Yes, well, you had those careers now. You had those lives. You had those years now.

Was it good? Yeah, it was great. Well, that's great. Now, what are you going to do? The summer has passed. The harvest was ended. And we are not saved. And nothing in those past years is going to save you.

And nothing that you and I have done is going to save us. Except and unless we put our trust in the only person who could take our sin for us.

[22 : 32] Because for your sin and mine, wrath will fall. There will be a reckoning. And that reckoning is closer than you imagine. I don't know what age you are.

I hit 55 much so long ago. And I said to someone in my phone, that's me halfway to 110. Great. Except I don't honestly expect to see 110.

Which means far more of my life is now behind me than is in front of me. I'm not halfway through my life. I'm well through my life.

And I don't know how many years or decades there may be or may not be. But the point is I know whom I have believed. And I'm not going to be saved because I wear a collar or because I was ordained to the ministry or because I go to church or because I think I'm a good person.

I'm going to be saved because of what Christ has done for me. And that is the same for every single soul who is saved. It's not who they are or what they've done or what job they do or how many times have they been in church.

[23 : 38] It's what Christ has done for them. Whatever it is you're waiting for the likelihood it's already been. Whatever you're pinning your hopes on the harvest is past.

The summer has ended and we are not saved. The summer of your life is probably past. When you meet your school pals when you have your reunions do you look forward?

Do you talk about the future do you have a future to hope for? Is it all just always about the past? That's where the good times were. That's where the fun times were.

Yeah but what about the future? What about the hope? If you're in Christ the future extends before you like a vista that opens up with a field of gold and the glory that is there.

This chapter is about what to expect when people turn their backs upon the Lord because just as Zedekiah and the other kings of Judah had betrayed the Lord and turned their backs and if you prepare to turn your back on the Lord then you're soon to be quite content to turn your back on your fellow men and women.

[24 : 51] And so they cheated and they lied and he betrayed the king of Babylon just like he betrayed the Lord except the Lord's judgment waits. The king of Babylon doesn't wait.

You mess with him he comes and gets you right away and that's what's happening there in chapter 8 in Jeremiah. The Babylonians are coming and when they come they consume everything even without killing even without violence they eat up everything every field every person they take for a slave every piece of livestock every bit of wealth you had it consumes it and that's really like what this world does is that the ongoing march of the years is like the ongoing march of the Babylonian army it takes your youth it takes your money it takes your wealth it takes all your hopes and consumes it if you want to say I wonder how much I've spent in the past year and sometimes you might make your credit card this is what you spent in the past year what I spent that much even though I had that much money how can I spend it and you pay it off and you spend it and you pay it off and all the food you've eaten in a year and all the money you've spent in a year and all the time you've spent in a year and what has happened to it's just got consumed that's what this life does it consumes away like the

Babylonian army it eats up everything but what have you got to show for the years the Lord has given you the harvest has passed the summer has ended and we are not saved there is no virtue in me standing here today and say it's okay don't worry peace peace when there is no saying God loves you you'll be fine no matter what God does love you that's the good news because God loves you he has come himself that's even better news to take the price of sin for sinners who will trust and believe in him and what is he requiring you he says that you put your faith and your trust in him and when you do that will change your life you see so often people put it the other way around they think well if I'm a good person and if I try to keep God's commandments and be nice to my neighbors go to church and do good God will be pleased he'll tick the box he'll say yep this one can get into heaven because he's done enough good things and so Jesus will pat him on the head and be pleased with the the other way around because you have Jesus because you have Christ for your savior then it is him that you desire him that you want sometimes the example I use is if you happen to meet one of my own children the person they met they married and so on they met and what were they doing they were doing dishes in the kitchen after everybody else was through in the other room chatting away or shaving guests and they were doing the dirty dishes and because you're doing the dirty dishes with somebody that you love or are falling in love with or are besotted with there's nothing you'd rather be doing there you are scrubbing away the dirty water and so on down the dishes and standing away and you're just hoping against hope that nobody else comes in to spoil this dynamic you've got because here you are with the person you're crazy about and they're busy doing dishes you're done with them and chatting away and you just want to be with them that's all you want to do somebody else will look in the door and say they must be quiet why are they going to do dishes oh jigs

I'd rather be through here with a month of coffee and chatting away and warm for the fire they must be mad no quiet's not they love doing dishes but they love being with the person that they are besotted with and when you are in Christ and you love Christ as your personal saviour then the things that Christ loves you come to love and to be with him is where you want to be and to be with his people is where the people you want to be with and the day that he treasures you want to you want to treasure it too the things that are in Christ are the things that become your heart's desire and the things that seemed so exciting before they're just boring they're just empty they're very not vaguely interesting yeah maybe you still have a passing interest but they're not the obsession they once were because Christ has become everything you see once you have Christ everything else falls in behind him all the other priorities are ordered according to the position of Christ in your life and it is

Christ who alone is going to stand for you at the last night day and take the wrath that your sin deserves in fact that's what he's already done upon the cross for everyone who believes and trusts in him the wrath of God against sin for all who believe in Christ fell upon him there he descended into hell which is what you and I are going to do if we're not saved by Christ he went for us he went for those who trust and believe in him nobody else did that for you nobody else is able to do that for you your neighbours can't do it your mum your dad your granny your grandpa your sons your daughters your friends your brothers your sisters even if they all wanted to do it yeah let's go to hell so that so and so can't let's save them they can't do it only Christ can do it and only Christ has he has descended into hell he has taken the eternity's worth of punishment that your sin deserves and mine and if we ask him and trust in him and believe in him then that price that has been paid is applied to us and his righteousness becomes our righteousness and our sinfulness becomes the sin that he bears upon the cross this is the wonderful exchange you see but we only want this and only have this if we recognise yeah I need this

[31 : 04] I need to be saved I need to be delivered this is not going to happen and somebody just says it's ok no don't worry you're not a bad person God loves your peace peace when there is no peace between you and God and all your years have been consumed all your fields have been consumed all your money is getting consumed year by year you can't stack if everything you had ever earned in your life was all in the bank and not a penny had been touched you'd be a millionaire but the fact is he keeps getting eaten away bills need food needs transport pestle all the day to day requirements it's all consumed away this life is consumed away your years are consumed away by the Babylonian army of the years and what do you have to show for it what if you have Christ then all of these things have purpose have meaning have a blessing become a blessed memory and are utilized for good with God nothing shall be lost nothing shall be in vain he can restore the years that the locusts have eaten but if we're out of Christ there's just like sand running through our eyes and all you're looking forward to well maybe in due course when I'm older

I'll think about these things maybe in the autumn of my life or whatever you know how close the autumn is as you all know I look after Garibust as well as here just now while we're vacant and some of you will know about the old gentleman who walking with his son on the side of the road at the end of last year he's going for a walk like he went twice a day every single day in life only this time he was knocked down and killed this time he didn't get back home he set off to go that walk just another walk like any other day any other time the fact he was whatever age he was that's neither here nor there whatever he made him do he's neither here nor there none of us lose the day or the hour we can't say well maybe in ten years maybe in the autumn of my life friend the harvest is past the summer is ending and we won't say whatever it was you were trusting in to be your deliverance it's not going to be little plastic soldiers are no defense against a real live enemy only the

Lord can take your life and if that life has to end at the hand of an aggressor he will take your soul and bring it to glory your life will not have been in vain your death will not have been in vain your blood will not have been in vain the Lord can deliver or he can condemn remember what Shadrach Bishap and Abednego said as we were hearing last week on the Lord's day our God who we trust can deliver us and he will deliver us but if he doesn't we're not going to bow down and worship any idol of God we're not going to pour our efforts into the things that cannot save peace peace when there is no peace friend you and I we have eternal illness and that illness is worse than any cancer it is an illness that will kill us in the end it is called sin sin brings death it did at the very first and it still does that's why unless the

Lord comes back first you and I are going to die it's because death is in the world but sin is in the world but there is a remedy for that and there is a cure for that and the sooner we lay hold upon that cure the sooner we can begin to rejoice not only in the future but giving thanks for the past and all the years the Lord has given and how he was preparing us for that very thing there is man in Gilead there is a good physician who alone is able to heal who alone is able to help the hurt of the daughter of my people it hurts us too the disgrace of our nation hurts us too the darkness of this land and now of these islands yes it pains us but rather if we build upon that which the Lord has given upon the rock of his salvation as Jesus said a wise man built his house upon the rock and the idiot built his house on the sand and it went up much quicker and it thought look at my lovely house wasn't it much of a idiot working away at the rock foundation he could be sitting in a good house but he could be enjoying all the fruits of his life but the winds came and the floods rose and the wind blew and the house fell not because it was badly built but because the foundation was rubbish what's the foundation of your life then is it

Christ or is it the world let me rephrase that is it Christ or is it anything else anything other than Christ when Jesus made that teaching about the wise man building his house on the rock where was it positioned you look you'll find it at the end of Matthew chapter 7 and other places too at the end of Matthew chapter 7 is the conclusion to the sermon on the mount which is often taken as being the block of teaching par excellence that Jesus gave the sermon on the mount do you want to know the teaching of Jesus the sermon on the mount how does he conclude that sermon on the mount says those who hear what he has said those who listen to his words are like a wise man who builds his house on the foundation of the rock and the one who hears but doesn't listen doesn't pay any attention he builds his house on the sand it's not about the quality of the house the one on the sand might have been a far more beautiful house it might have been much better built it might have been more beautiful it might have been more spectacular but the foundation was rubbish and it fell the one on the rock might have been pretty stubby and not exactly the best the most beautiful architecture it might not have been that well built but it was on a rock and so it stood whatever you're waiting for stop waiting start acting start seeking the Lord start looking to him because the harvest has passed and the summer has ended and if we are not saved then

[37 : 51] God in his mercy has still given us time to do so he's still given us this day don't make the foolish mistake and say oh well give us this day give us plenty of other days there will always be more days and yes there will keep being more days until the very last one look at that and read it more tonight but the thing we need to recognize here in this chapter is it's describing yes a physical reality with the Babylonian army coming into Judah which is the symptom of a spiritual problem and whatever the reality in your life the spiritual reality will be what's behind it either we are in Christ or we're not and if we are we need to feed that and nurture that and work in it and if we're not we need to fix that we need to get to that and we need to address it now once there is the opportunity it's not yet the winter the snows have not yet come in life it's not yet the case that the ground is dead and barren and there is no hope but the harvest is passed and the summer is ended and if we're not saved then we need to be blessed prayer