

# Exposition of Jeremiah - Lesson 45

## *"Woe is Me Now!"*

By:

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**Applicational Text: Hebrews 4:1** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it.*

**Expositional Text: Jeremiah 45:3** *Thou didst say, woe is me now! For the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.*

### Introduction:

Our expositional text, **Jeremiah 45:3**, *Thou didst say, woe is me now! For the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.* introduces our message for today. And, our Applicational Text, **Hebrews 4:1** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it.*, introduces the reason for the title of our message, *"Woe Is Me Now!"*

The forty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah is not located in chronological order. It is the beginning of what amounts to an appendix in which we have others of Jeremiah's prophecies as well as additional information concerning events he has previously written about.

The historical setting for the message from the Lord to Baruch, by way of the Prophet Jeremiah, is the thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah. That was when Jeremiah had Baruch write in a book the sermons the Lord had previously given him, Jeremiah spoke them and Baruch wrote them down. It was at a time when Jeremiah was under house arrest, so he sent Baruch, his secretary, to read the sermons in public. As we saw in that previous study, King Jehoiakim cut out the pages of the Book of Jeremiah's sermons page by page and burned them in the fire. Then he commanded Je-rah-meel the son of Ham-me-lech, and Se-raiah the son of Az-reil, and She-le-miah the son of Ab-deel to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah the prophet: But the Lord hid them. (Jeremiah 36:26)

These three men were high ranking officials that were serving with King Jehoiakim who was the second son of good king Josiah but led the nation deeply into idolatry and immorality. These three officials were sent to arrest and bring Jeremiah and Baruch to the king.

*"...But the Lord hid them..."* I'm sure there is an interesting story here related to the Lord hiding them, but all we have in the text is a brief personal word from a personal God.

**Jeremiah 45:1** *The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,*

Understanding the Word of God and its proper application is vital to our dealing with the issues of life. As we have noted in our continuing studies, it is nice to have a directive, “Thou Shalt” or “Thou Shalt Not” from the Lord, but for the most part we must rely upon the principles and mechanics that are found in the Bible in order to understand what we are to do and how we are to do it. God has addressed all the issues of life through principles and mechanics, but in our humanity, we can occasionally be heard to say, “Woe is me!”

## **I. The Man and the Occasion:**

This is a personal message the Lord sends to Baruch by the prophet Jeremiah. It occupies an interesting place in the Book of Jeremiah at the end of the chronological historical account Jeremiah adds this personal note – a message from the Lord to Baruch.

Jeremiah’s first recorded account of his relationship with Baruch was when Jeremiah bought that property from his cousin, Baruch was the secretary Jeremiah hired to take care of the legal transaction. Later Jeremiah enlisted Baruch to write down the sermons the Lord had given him. As Jeremiah dictated them, Baruch wrote them down. Then, you may recall, Jeremiah was under house-arrest and so he asked Baruch to take the book of sermons and read it in public. Baruch was a young man, whose brother was the Chief Chamberlain for King Zedekiah and jumped at the chance to have such a public role. However (there is that pesky “however,”) now the king became angry and sent men to arrest both Jeremiah and Baruch. So, Baruch cries out, “Woe is me now!” The Lord hears Baruch and sends him a personal message by the prophet. That is where our message begins today.

## **II. God Hears You When You Say, Woe Is Me:**

Be assured God hears you when you say, Woe is me

**Jeremiah 45:2-3** *<sup>2</sup>Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch: <sup>3</sup> Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.*

The Lord informs Baruch that He heard him say *Woe is me now!* The word “*woe*” is from the Hebrew “*oo-ee*” which is **an audible expression of frustration in a plea for help.** The word “*now*” is from the Hebrew particle “*naw*” and is **an added plea of urgent entreaty.**

We have all been there and experienced the “**woe is me syndrome**” whether we uttered it aloud or simply sulked in private. Therefore, there is a personal application in today’s message. Yes! It does have to do with our Application Text concerning developing the

Faith Rest Technique. But let us look at Baruch's situation and God's view of it before we get personal with our own woes.

Baruch had said, *for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.*

Baruch's Woe is me is prompted by his belief that *for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow*; Ah! You see! The Lord gets the blame. Baruch says *the Lord had added grief to his sorrow.*

The word "*grief*" is translated from the Hebrew word "**yaw-gohn**" which identifies **a deep abiding despair.**

The word "*sorrow*" is from the Hebrew word "**mak-obe**" which means **severe mental or physical pain**

Notice, Baruch said the Lord had "**added**" deep abiding despair to his already existing mental pain.

He then states *I fainted in my sighing.* The word "*fainted*" is from the Hebrew word "**yaw-gah**" which means to **gasp for breath** while the word "*sighing*" is from the Hebrew word "**an-aw-khaw**" which means to **emit a long deep breath.** Baruch said **he gasped for breath while emitting a long deep breath.**

Then Baruch said, *I find no rest.* Ah, Baruch has identified his problem. (Could be our problem as well) The word "*rest*" is translated here from the Hebrew word "**men-oo-khaw**" which refers to "**one's abode.**" The word **abode** emphasizes the comfort and safety of one's dwelling place. It is no wonder the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews has written, *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it.* See, the reason for our "*Woe is me*" is that we come short of entering into "**the comfort and safety of our abode**" the dwelling place God has designed for us – sitting on the promises – living the Faith Rest Life!

Mark this place! This is where our sermon is! But first let us finish this short chapter to understand God's involvement. Remember, Baruch placed the blame for his "Woe is me" on God, *"for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow..."* Hear the Lord's answer...

### III. The Lord Said, Tell Baruch This...

**Jeremiah 45:4** *Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.*

God is the author of the "Tough Love" philosophy. He had chosen this people to bless them and through them to provide blessings for "Whosoever Will." He chose to use them

to be His means of communicating with humanity to reveal His plan for mankind and His redemption for mankind. But they would not be faithful. He not only taught them of His amazing grace but modeled it for them. He gave them cities they had not built; he gave them vineyards and crops they had not planted. He fought their battles for them and gave them victories and blessings they did not deserve. But, now, He had to discipline them for their own good and for the good of the human race. So, He tells Baruch about his plan. *“...Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land...”*

**Solomon had written concerning such a time: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** *<sup>1</sup>To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: <sup>2</sup>A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; <sup>3</sup>A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; <sup>4</sup>A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; <sup>5</sup>A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; <sup>6</sup>A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; <sup>7</sup>A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; <sup>8</sup>A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

Through prayer God has provided us with an open line to Him 24/7, and we are assured that He hears us and considers our request. In our study of the doctrine of prayer we are told He answers every prayer. He has to consider everyone else involved as He answers prayer or brings discipline or judgment. Because He is absolutely righteous, we are assured that while His dealings with others may affect us He will always be righteous and fair to us. So, we may come under affliction when others are being disciplined but the assurance is that He will be righteous and fair to us.

#### **IV. Our Objectives Must Fit Into The Plan of God:**

Sometimes our own objectives must be set aside for the greater plan of God. Baruch was affected by God's discipline and judgment of the nation, but he was given the promise of provision and blessing.

**Jeremiah 45:5** *And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.*

Apparently, Baruch had some ambitions and aspirations of great things for himself. The word *“seekest”* is from the Hebrew word *“yaw-dole”* which means **honorable** and *“great things”* is translated from *“daw-bawr”* meaning **“great spoken words.”** So, the Lord told Baruch although he had been seeking honor and flattery for himself, he is to stop seeking that because, God has a different plan, *“...behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord:”*

But the Lord went on to say, *but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.* The word life is the Hebrew word “**neh-fesh**” which identifies an **air breather** and is used for **the soul** – God will give him his soul “*...for a prey...*” The word “*prey*” is the Hebrew word “**shaw-lawl**” which means “**booty**” or **reward – the spoils of war.**”

God tells Baruch that although He is going to bring death and destruction to the children of Israel, He will spare Baruch’s life as a battle reward for his effort with Jeremiah.

## V. Abiding in The Faith Rest Life:

We can eliminate the “Woe is Me Syndrome,” or should we identify it as a “Sindrome?” Worry is a sin, anxiety is a sin, fear is a sin. Anything that robs us of our peace and joy is sin. Because our peace and joy is based on faith. Worry, anxiety, and fear are all the result of a lack of faith. We need to rest in the faith rest – live the faith rest life in order to please God and to experience the fulness of what God has for us.

In order to accomplish this objective of resting in faith we have to view our circumstances through the filter of God's Word - we have to consider our circumstances the way God considers them - in other words we have to replace our Human View-Point with Divine View-Point.

Developing The Faith-Rest life requires understanding, accepting and applying the Promises, Principles, and Doctrines of the Bible to one's life. Our ability to live a life in which we are resting in faith will be directly in proportion to the degree we understand, accept, and apply these promises, principles, and doctrine to our daily lives. The Crown of Life we receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be in exact proportion to our development of this lifestyle. However, the real benefit of developing this lifestyle is the peace and joy - the lack of frustration and anxiety as we live out our designed ministries - the degree to which we rest upon the promises, principles, and doctrines of the Word of God is exhibited by the degree of peace and joy we have in our daily walk.

The ability to rid ourselves of the “Woe is Me Syndrome” is dependent upon the understanding, the acceptance, and the application of God's Word. Therefore, the 'How To' of acquiring this life style is: Getting Understanding; Our Personal Acceptance; and, Our Personal Application. This results in the believer being able to rest in faith and receive the Crown of Life at the Judgment Seat of Christ. However, the real value of living the Faith-Rest Life is not the crown but what the crown represents, the peace and satisfaction experienced as a result of "resting in faith" regardless of the circumstances.

The Faith-Rest life can be described as having peace and contentment as a result of understanding, accepting, and applying the promises, principles and doctrines of God's Word to one's experiences and circumstances.

So, Let's look at the "How To." You will observe that there is a tremendous overlap in the process of developing the Four Basic Techniques of the Christian Life. (1). *Developing The Spirit Controlled Life*, (2). *Developing Spiritual Maturity*, (3). *Developing the Faith-Rest Life*, and (4). *Developing Faithful Stewardship*, are all united around the concept of understanding it, accepting it as a norm or standard for one's life, and making application of it to one's circumstances. The distinction between the four techniques is found in the focus on specific doctrines which are related to each of the techniques.

Developing Maturity is dependent upon our developing the Spirit Controlled Life. Developing the Faith Rest Technique is dependent upon our developing Maturity and all three of these are foundational to our Developing Faithful Stewardship. So, allow me to briefly review the basics of this three-step process.

## **A. Get Understanding: (communication and comprehension)**

We must get two things according to Proverbs 4:5-9:

### **Proverbs 4:5-9**

- 5** *Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.*
- 6** *Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.*
- 7** *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*
- 8** *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.*
- 9** *She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.*

In this text from Proverbs the focus is on two key words, **"Wisdom"** and **"Understanding."** The word **"wisdom"** is a translation of the Hebrew word **"khokmaw"** which means - **the ability to understand how to apply** the Scripture to your circumstances. The word **"understanding"** is from the Hebrew word **"binah"** and it means **comprehension of information** - in the context, comprehension of Scripture. We need both **wisdom** and **understanding** in order to rest in faith.

### **James 1:5 says**

*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

The word **"wisdom"** is from the Greek word **"sophias"** which means the ability to understand how to apply the Scripture to your circumstances. We must understand the



Word and we must understand how to apply it to our circumstances We have frequently identified this process as occurring in the left frontal lobe: both communication and comprehension occur in the left frontal lobe of the human brain.

## **B. Our Personal Acceptance: (Faith/Transfer)**

It is not what we know that dictates our behavior, but what we believe. While communication is received in the left frontal lobe and that is where comprehension also takes place, our behavior is dictated from our frame of reference and our conscience which are located in the right frontal lobe. In order to program our behavior we must move that which we have comprehended from the left frontal lobe to the right frontal lobe and we do that by granting acceptance of that information to our norms and standards to our conscience. I call that process Faith/Transfer.

While we claim to believe the Word of God, our actions often indicate that we do not always mix what the Word says in faith. That is, we do not practice what we say we believe. In order for our behavior to be in conformity with what we have learned from the Word of God we must personally accept it as truth and as a norm or standard for ourselves. If we accept it as a standard for our own personal behavior it is programmed into our frame of reference of right and wrong and programs our conscience. It is only what we have agreed to and granted acceptance to as a norm or standard for ourselves that dictates our behavior. In personally accepting what the Word says to be a norm or standard for our lives we develop a Divine View-Point - we look at things from God's point of view.

## **C. Making Application (Applying Scripture to Circumstances)**

Although we cannot control all our circumstances, we can control our response to those circumstances. However, our response will only be that which is in accordance with what we believe and have accepted as a standard for ourselves. The response to any given situation is dictated by what we believe - I mean what we truly believe. Our response is dictated by the beliefs we have established in our norms and standards. As a matter of fact if you want to know what you really believe, inventory your behavior. If you behave in a manner that contradicts what you say you believe you have not faith/transferred that to your right frontal lobe- you have not accepted it as a norm or standard for yourself. It may be that you truly believe what God has said is factually true, but you have not surrendered your will to His - you know what He has promised, but you don't like what He is doing or allowing in your circumstances. While you believe that God *"...causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to His purpose."* as stated in Romans 8:28, you don't like the way He is doing it, you would prefer He work it for your good in a different manner. You have not accepted it as a reality.

When we have that "Woe is Me Syndrome" and we want God to manipulate our circumstances in a different way, it becomes evident that we have not surrendered our will to His and do not really believe that He always does that which is the best for us.

## Conclusion:

If we are to experience peace and joy in our time here on earth as Sojourners -foreigners not living in our own country but living alongside the locals to do business for our King, we must abandon our “Woe is Me” parties and develop this technique of resting in faith and living the Faith/Rest Life.

The process we have described in this study (Get Understanding; Accepting What God allows in our lives; and Applying His Word to our circumstances.) is the way to eliminate the Woe from our lives. This is the basic method for living the Faith-Rest Life, but in order for us to be consistent in living according to that lifestyle we must replace our Human View-Point (Viewing circumstances and situations from a human perspective) with Divine View-Point (Viewing circumstances and situations from God's perspective.) Faith/Transfer of the Word of God to our personal circumstances is the process.

Remember, Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17). As we learn the Word of God, we must accept it as a norm or standard for ourselves in order for it to be transferred to our right frontal lobe where our norms and standards dictate our behavior and to enable us to Rest in Faith – No more Woe is Me!

## But it begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

*Let Us Learn From The Failure of Others and Avoid  
The Pain, Loss, or Suffering of  
Personal Discipline!*