

# Jeremiah

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject in Jeremiah, chapter 45, and the fifth verse.

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.

Chapter 45, the book of Jeremiah, and the fifth verse. This word was spoken by godly Jeremiah to one who was much younger than he was, but who served him, whose name was Barak.

And it was a word designed to be a word in season to Barak. Jeremiah, at the time, was in prison, and therefore could not go forth to announce his prophecies which the Lord made known to him.

And the opening word of this little chapter is the word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Barak, 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.

[ 2 : 15 ] Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel unto thee, O Barak. Thou didst say, Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow.

I fainted in my sorrow. I fainted in my sorrow, and I find no rest. There is a sidelight, as it were, on what was Barak's character according to what he was by nature.

He was a godly man. And he was, in that sense, a brother to Jeremiah, in that which God ordained that he should be in serving Jeremiah.

But there was something welling up in Barak's breast that did not arise from godliness.

Jeremiah gave him instructions to take the words which he had written as he heard them from Jeremiah's mouth.

[ 3 : 34 ] And, as you read, in an earlier chapter, his instructions were to read them. Then Jeremiah called Barak the son of Neriah, and Barak wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him upon a roll of a book.

And Jeremiah commanded Barak, saying, I am shut up. I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth the words of the Lord in the ears of all the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day.

And also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way.

For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people. And Barak the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.

And now these words were all to do with the judgment of God, being shortly to be poured out upon the people in the land.

[ 5 : 11 ] And the judgments of God were heavy tidings to tell out. And these things that were proclaimed by Jeremiah and read by Barak, later on, all came to pass.

The judgments of God befell the land of promise, and Israel as a nation were carried into Babylon's captivity. But while all this was in being and coming to pass, Barak had treasured up something in his breast to do with great things for himself.

And now that brings us to the text. And the word before the text is striking. Jeremiah was commanded to say to Barak, 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.

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.

Something had welled up in Barak's breast that he much desired. And they come in the category of great things for himself.

[ 6 : 59 ] And yet, when the judgments of God were poured out, those great things which he sought to possess in the land of promise, would have no value whatever.

Nor would he be dwelling in the land to enjoy any great things that he might gather together. And now, this is a word which we might call a caution.

You and I need it. Not only Barak, long ago in Jeremiah's day, there is that in us as we are born. And you are learning every day how sad our state by nature is, a tendency to seek great things.

You must weigh it up before God as the Lord shall help you. I'm not fitting any caps on. I'm just telling you what is the truth concerning you and I as we were born.

They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. And, as we are by nature, there is a tendency to seek great things.

[ 8 : 25 ] You can meet with many folk and find that they are not at all contented with what their present lot in life is, even though God has ordained it that they should be where they are.

but they entertain thoughts if they could only be this or that and make a move elsewhere and always to go up higher still in regard to the things of this life.

That is how the flesh works, lives and moves in us and it is a great mercy when where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound.

And so Jeremiah gives this word of caution to Baruch and encourages him not to seek great things for himself, but to be thankful that he is what he is, a sinner born again, one who does fear the Lord and that God has guaranteed safety for him wherever his lot in life may be until his journey through life is ended.

And now, leaving Baruch, I want to come to how this word is a word in season, as I said, a word of caution for poor sinners like you and I and seekest thou great things for thyself.

[ 10 : 12 ] It must be said, when you think of life's mourning, a teenage life and then going on, there is that which is lawful to seek, that you shall fill a sphere in life, but it needs to be weighed up in the balances of the sanctuary, that you do not go beyond that which is lawful and your ambitions, if you are a sinner born again, are inimical to your soul's peace and prosperity.

I know that is a very narrow line, a very close question to consider, but that is what the Savior said, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you, and that is things which God seeks to be good for you and sufficient for you where your lot in life is to be.

The lot is cast into the lap and the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. And this seeking great things is not only to do with everyday life and any sphere we may fill, it does come very much into everyday life and you may look round your home and wish it could be otherwise than it is, but always with this thought uppermost that you could heap yet more comforts therein than God has already provided for you.

and there is sometimes a vying with each other that even people taught of God if they see other people taught of God of God this or that which they do not possess yet something lives and moves in their breast and they begin to desire that they might possess it too and yet it may not be the will of God that they should possess it seekest thou great things now mark what it says for thyself and now that reminds me of another scripture and whatever you do do all to the glory of God and now you cannot be seeking great things which will be for the exalting of the great eye inside you great things for yourself and at the same time be seeking to do all that you are doing for the glory of

God what you do for the glory of God as you can read in the word of God in many instances you do those things for his glory in strange places dens caves caves of the earth the old testament worthies live their lives to the glory of God there and they could not seek great things for themselves but their great concern was to have matters right between their souls and God and that is what I am aiming at and what I desire to bring before you but I must make this plain I said these great things that you may seek are not only to do with you and yours you may seek great things for your children but what you should seek is what the will of

[ 14 : 20 ] God is concerning your children and the spheres in life that they may fill you must wait on God that these things may be made manifest to have his approbation resting upon them for your children and plead let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children but it reaches closer and yet closer if you weigh this matter up there can be that about us that we shall be left to fall or pray to seek great things for ourselves even in regard to the church of Christ to which we belong you may see to have gifts that you feel you do not possess but you hear others it may be speaking in public prayer and it is evident they have got a gift to put into words what they feel but you do not possess it and you wish you did possess it but when all is said and done when you try to pray the beginning is

Lord teach us to pray and that is nothing whatever to do with gifts it is the grace of supplication the spirit of prayer the spirit itself help with our infirmities for we know not otherwise how to pray or what to pray for as we ought but sometimes people taught of God can be much tempted and wish that they could pray like they hear some other people pray it may be but this is the truth of the matter the Lord requireth the truth in the inward parts out of the abundance of the heart the mouth shall speak and then it can be that in filling an office in the church of

Christ there is this tendency to fall or pray to seek great things for yourself that you may fill it not so much for the glory of God for the admiration of other people observing you filling it those of us who try to preach we have to be instructed and warned by God and sometimes chastened if we fall or pray to seek in great things that we could preach like some other preachers do but each one God ordains to preach has got to tell the truth as God unfolds it to him and be what he is before God and not envy other people who may have gifts seek is thou great things for thyself seek them not it reaches any office in the church that which a deacon fills or any other office seek is thou great things for thyself mark the word in the emphasis is there for thyself seek them now you may think oh if I only possessed this and that which

I see other people do oh what I could do then in serving the Lord you wait on the Lord regarding that matter and ask him to fit you for any work that he has laid up in store for you to do and you will be helped to do that to his honor and glory seek thou great things for thyself seek them not you see dear friends this is a caution and you and I need to be on our watch tower in everyday life that we may not fall or pray to seeking great things in any direction whatever as they seem to be desirable to us according to what we are by nature and now look at it from another viewpoint have you been given great things do you fill an office say a preacher who has to be made manifest as being the pastor of a church of

Christ and fill that office when you come down toward the end of life's journey and think of what it is it is required in a steward that a man be found faithful and that you have to give an account unto God whose you are and whom you serve you look at things then in a very different way to seeking great things for yourself that you might be someone outstanding in our denominational life and rise above others who go up into the pulpit seekest thou great things for thyself seek them not and now there is just one thing ere I go on to another viewpoint of the subject one thing

[ 20 : 35 ] I say which will help you regarding these great things you might be prospered and you might gather much together in a state live in a house of your own and have many earthly comforts but when you look at the balances of the sanctuary I was going to say and I will you put a coffin on one side of the scale and all these great things which for a little while maybe till you were old and grey headed you were living in the midst of them and to a great extent enjoying them but put them in the other side of the scale and see what happens if you are a sinner taught of God the scale will go down very heavily on the side where the coffin is in the scale and that will bring you to a right place before God with whom you have to do

Jesus is the one thing needful I without him perish must gracious spirit make me heedful help me in his name to trust and with pleasure in him as my portion boast and now we come to this consideration and seek thou great things for things for to behold I will bring evil upon all flesh saith the Lord think of the world as it is at the present time with hell itself let loose in it and every day wickedness seems to increase the wicked keep doing yet more wickedly and things in our own national life get more and more complicated so that if you view things as they appear in the world round about you there is no prospect which will help you to be of good cheer whichever way you look and that brings us back to that starting point as I have said seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things as God sees good for you to receive shall be added unto you they that in the

Lord confide and shelter in his wounded side shall see all dangers overpassed stand every storm and live at last seekest thou great things the things you and I are to seek as grace is given are not great things to do with a time stay you and I are to seek real things things that in their nature will abide for time and eternity too you and I if we are following on to know the Lord are to seek the things of God and oh that you and I might have more grace to do it they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit you see these things real things things which a man cannot receive except they be given him from heaven they will help you whatever your earthly circumstances may be if you come down to scrape the bottom of the barrel see just a drop of oil in a cruise these things will still guarantee you that tomorrow you will do the same and all the tomorrows for they that seek the

Lord shall not want any good thing and you will enter into what one writer says if you will help to seek the spirit the things of the spirit his oath his promise and his blood oh that will safeguard you dear friends support you in every whelming flood when all around my soul gives way he then is all my help my stay great things things of God and now I just look at some of these things which you will desire to seek if you are taught of God and many of you are I would like to feel every one of you was it would very much cheer and gladden the pastor's heart seekest thou great things for thyself seek them not and now the first thing to seek is that your soul may be kept lively in these things which as I have said abide for time and eternity too seek to have a lively interest therein it seems to me in our denominational life as I view it being in touch sometimes with people from varied quarters of it that many people you can believe are indeed alive alive unto

God but you do not meet many people who are lively in things divine so that they know what it is to rejoice in the Lord and to live near to God and realize the preciousness of Jesus Christ and to be able to declare my beloved is mine and I am his and his desire is toward me all but these things are all important I do like that word of John in his epistle that which we have tasted handled and felt of the good word of life declare we unto you and you see dear friends if you and

[ 28 : 20 ] I can be engaged in this great business to do with our soul's eternal good and to seek those things which are of God and which will help us by his grace to live right and at the last to die right and bring us to feel that wonderful mercy Christ in you the hope of glory what a favour that will be and you will not have your time taken up with seeking great things to do with this life what shall we eat what shall we drink where with all shall we be clothed but you will learn a lesson very necessary to learn and not much heard about nowadays amongst people taught of

God even be content with such things as ye have and the margin reading be content with mean things mean things the apostle Paul said I have learned in whatsoever state I am there with to be content maybe you have felt content at times when the goodness of God has surrounded you but after a while you have felt what you are by nature rising again desiring this and that to be altered and rearranged but when you tell the truth about it it is great things for thyself as it was with Baruch long ago seek them not is the word of God another thing very desirable is to have sure evidence that you are numbered with the people of

God remember me oh Lord with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people oh visit me with thy salvation and now it may be it was this thing which brought you along to worship God at this time the Lord bless you in coming and if you do not get what your soul desires desires the Lord will not overlook what you have desired but in his time his way you will learn the desire of the righteous shall be granted those feeble desires and wishes so weak as Jesus inspires and bids you still see you see one thing stands out with people taught of God and that is they do want reality in the dealings of

God with their souls and they cannot be content with a name to live or just a form of godliness and no power attending it or they cannot be content with outside show and just chapel going they want to get in touch with God and realize my lord and my god you look on the people of God and you feel with them numbered I would be now and in eternity there is another thing very desirable and that is that your hope in God shall be made manifest as a good hope through grace a hope that will not fail in that hour when heart and flesh shall fail and you will need its comfort most what you want is this my hope is built on nothing less than

Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name and when you come to worship God in his earthly courts it is that your hope in God might be strengthened established a great thing to seek for that is establishment in the truth to feel that you have got your feet the feet of your faith on a firm foundation as regards your standing before God good hope through grace and then you will want grace to help in time of need and what a good thing that is but you will find as you journey on in seeking these things that day by day the manor fell and ought to learn that lesson well you dwell often in your thoughts about tomorrow and there may be some things planned if all is well that on the moral you have got to attend to and you know you will need divine aid to engage therein but when all is said and done you will get grace for each succeeding day as that day shall open before you as thy days so shall thy strength be and then there is one thing that will rise up in your mind your spiritual mind as you ponder these things in your heart and that is you do want to obtain forgiveness of sins oh that is one thing you will see and you will not be able to feel as you want to feel that matters are right between the

[ 35 : 14 ] Lord and you until you do receive that inestimable mercy and you can feel for me oh miracle of grace for me the Savior bled and remember there is every encouragement for you regarding it Jesus will not your cry forget you shall obtain the blessing yet through this man there is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and then another thing very desirable to be seeking and that in everyday life day by day and that is to know what is the will of God for you to be and to do and then to do that will willingly remember that word in Hebrews for ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of

God ye might receive the promise you see the will of God is to be done you think if God would give you the promise then you would do it no it is not for you to as it were seek to bargain with God about it it is what saith the scriptures and that is after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise in keeping his commandments there is great reward not for keeping in keeping but they are to be kept first of all and after that comes the reward not before remember that and then we do desire to do the will of

God in our everyday lives whether it be to suffer or to serve ye serve the Lord Christ and everyone taught of God is put in a sphere to be able to do so whatever that sphere may be and there you must be aware of the caution not to seek great things and to have a great sphere because a great sphere entails great responsibility I remember reading many years ago it comes to my mind to tell you and that will illustrate this a godly minister named George Burder who was one of our type of ministers and had a very large cause and was well known and much esteemed and he had a godly son who likewise

God made to be a minister and he was filling a pastorate where there were very few people but as he had much grace and great ability he was given a call to another church with quite a large congregation and he wrote to his godly father to ask him for some counsel regarding him and his godly father in his reply to his request he said i want you to weigh one thing up especially and that is the congregation over which god has now placed you though they are but a few you will find it a very solemn thing to answer for that small congregation in the day of judgment and keep that in your mind before you venture to take a larger congregation to be the overseer thereof and now that is how it is with the will of god seek is thou great things for thyself seek them not the great thing is to know what is the will of god and then to seek grace to do that will willingly my people shall be willing in the day of my power another thing very desirable to seek is what the apostle

Paul sets forth that I may know him and the power of his resurrection the fellowship of his sufferings and be made conformable to his death that I may know him oh what blessed knowledge that is you read about it in John's epistle we know that the son of god is come and that he hath given us an understanding and we are in him that is true and then says John this is the true god and eternal life you may not have much knowledge as yet some of you but the little that you know will help you to be in earnest to seek yet for a deeper knowledge to know my

[ 41 : 20 ] Jesus crucified by far excels all things beside but all these things can be summed up to seek to live unto God whose you are and whom you desire to serve this prayer and this ambition mine living and dying to be dying and then in this subject there is also comfort that was given to Baruch and it is given to all people down through the ages who were taught of God for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh saith the Lord but thy life will I give unto thee for a pray in all places whither thou goest oh that must have been the help to

Baruch wherever he went in life's journey afterwards and he did go in strange places and especially in Babylonish captivity yet God had guaranteed him his life and if you and I are sinners born again there is the life of God which is in us to make us to be such characters and that life it will labor under load but though damped it never dies and you can look back over many places that you have been in in journeying on through life strange places some places you would not like to put down in black and white or to tell out to the people of God to hear it when you have been tossed with tempest and not comforted when you have been found at the ends of the earth and far off from

God when you have been in places where your soul has known barrenness and desolation and you have been guilty before God and sometimes walking in darkness and having no light upon his dealings with you for a long while and in trials not a few and yet God has given you thy life thy life will I give thee for a pray earth and hell conspire together to pray upon that life and what you are by nature opposes it the carnal mind is enmity against God is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be but there is this great word I am the

Lord I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed and as you were here before God in the attitude of worship maybe you do not feel lively as you would like to do in your soul's exercises but by the grace of God you are what you are and where you are and you are you humbly hope alive unto God and as dying and behold we live the apostle Paul tells us is a line of things that people taught of God enter into but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him and them that hope in his mercy to deliver them from death and to keep them alive in a time of famine and all these things

I have just given you hints about that are indeed worthwhile to be seeking the great thing is to feel it is well living and dying and to know that whatever comes upon us along life's way God is in it to overrule it for our good and that we may say with Hezekiah oh Lord by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit 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 pray in all places whither thou goest you can discern in the world as it is at the present time

[ 46 : 56 ] God as a righteous judge is bringing evil upon all flesh but this word remains a sweet blessed reality you sang about it it shall be well with them that fear God let that be our chief concern oh cry we to heaven with one loud accord that to us be given the fear of the Lord amen power to