

Jeremiah (Quality good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 April 1986

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [0 : 00] In dependence upon thee, Lord, for all needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Jeremiah chapter 48 and verse 28.
- Jeremiah chapter 48 verse 28.
- O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.
- Dwelling signifies the place which we inhabit our residence.
- By nature, we are in the world, we are of the world.
- [1 : 41] And as our text declares, dwelling in Moab. This world is as a Moab.
- A land of darkness. A land of sin. A land of idolatry.
- And there we dwell. And there we live. And there we walk.
- And there we would die. But for the grace of God.
- Where, beloved friend, is your dwelling. The psalmist could speak as he did this one thing.
- [2 : 53] Have I desired of the Lord that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for all the days of my life, to inquire in the house of the Lord and to behold his beauty.
- Another place, surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- Has grace brought us out of Moab?
- When we speak of dwelling in God's house, being found under the ministry of the word, and gathered with the dear people of God, we need there to exercise great care and caution.
- Physical presence in the means of grace is not the alone assurance of being brought out of dwelling in Moab.
- [4 : 30] For we read in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ of the wise and the foolish virgins that dwell together, and as I view it, the wise unaware of the sad state and condition of the foolish.
- Externally, they look the same, and they were together in company. But with the foolish, there was no oil in their vessel, with their land, no work of grace begun in their heart, a form of godliness, denying the power thereof, a name that they lived, and yet destitute of spiritual life in the soul.
- We might then ask, who do we love? What is our company?
- The dear woman in the days of Elisha, the Shunammite, who with her husband made such loving preparations and provision for the prophet as he passed by, when asked as to what she would seek and that the prophet would do for her, for all her great care, that she said, among other things, I dwell among my own people.
- I am oft encouraged with that word in the Acts of the Apostles being let go.

[6 : 48] They went to their own company. Again, that word in of the two on the Emmaus Road and two of them, distinctly different, lovers of Jesus, disciples of the Savior, they, speaking to the Redeemer, not knowing him at that time, said, and certain women of our company.

O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, flee from the wrath to come, you may say, and rightly so, that I have no power to flee of myself.

My friend, we preach the word that declares this solemn truth. Flee from the wrath to come, praying that the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the word may work with divine power, awaken any that may be dead in trespasses and in sin, and cause them to leave the cities, and to dwell in the rock.

So then, we ask ourselves, where are we to be found? There are but two ways.

There is a broad way. There is that way in which many walk, not only the heathen, but all how solemn to say it, many that sit under the truth, many that have a artificial, homemade, man-made religion.

[9 : 07] But there is a straight gate that leads to a narrow path, a way that is indeed narrow, and that leads to heaven.

Now, has the Lord brought us, and I speak to our younger friends as well, has the Lord brought us to flee from the warth to come, to turn from dwelling in this world, and to leave the cities, and to turn unto the stronghold, unto the throne of grace, to seek for mercy, to cry for pardon.

There is a very vivid description in this chapter concerning Moab. And Moab hath been at ease from his youth, he hath settled on his lease, hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath gone into captivity, therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

At ease from our youth, even sitting under the ministry, even under the solemn warnings of the word of God, not being emptied, still resting in self, still as the proud Pharisee, God, I thank thee, I'm not as other men are, still not being emptied.

Oh, what a mercy when the Holy Spirit begins the work of grace and makes a sinner uneasy, disturbs, brings into concern, starts to empty, and keeps empty, empty, takes away this, takes away that, and when I say take away all false hope and trust, to bring us as a poor needy sinner to the throne of grace, to plead for mercy, to come in the language of one, nothing, in my hand I bring, but simply to thy cross I cling, and his taste remain in him, and his scent is not changed.

[12 : 20] When the Lord begins a work of grace in a sinner's heart, there is the change of our taste. there is a spiritual appetite, there is a hunger and a thirst, there is a longing for spiritual blessings.

How well do I remember in the days of my youth what I believed was the beginning of the work of grace in my heart.

Oh my younger friends, is it so with you? I used to go to chapel, I used to be interested to see who was there, if something unusual happened in the service, well, that fascinated me, but I had no ear really for the truth, no understanding of it, until the Lord began, brought me to a concern about my soul, showed me that I was a sinner, emptied, and brought me to his house praying and longing and hoping for a word, something that would encourage me, something that would give some sweet hope that the Lord had mercy upon me, oh, when the taste is changed, when there's this work of grace, it's a new creature, a spiritual appetite, a hunger and a thirst after spiritual blessings, crumbs of mercy, and a blessing for the soul.

O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, true indeed, we still, even with the work of grace, even with the taste change, yet there is still this sinful flesh, and this is in opposition to that work of grace in the heart, soul.

[14 : 47] It may be an unfolding of something mysterious through a young believer as that he cannot, she cannot understand herself.

There's a part, as it were, that hungers for Christ, longs for mercy, seeks the Savior, loves the word, would pray to God, and yet against it comes the flesh that wants the things of the world, wants an easy life, wants the pleasures of this perishing world, all the great conflict that there is, yet, an aching void.

Have you got it? An aching void. You know, we can be perhaps a little bit hungry, but it wouldn't really worry us if we didn't eat.

we're not very hungry, or we might have just a little thirst and we perhaps appreciate a drink of water, but if that hunger is great, if that thirst is intense, you've got an ache within, just longing, particularly with thirst.

Hunger can be born easier than thirst. If you are thirsty, how you long is like an ache within your very body for something to drink, for something to alleviate that thirst.

[16 : 18] What is your ache? What is it? Is it, oh, give me Christ, or else I die? Is it this, oh, is this blessing mine?

Did Jesus die for me? Are my sins forgiven? Was that blood shed for me? Oh, beloved, what a wonderful word that is in Isaiah, ho, everyone that thirsteth.

That little word, ho, it's the word of God. It's the word of heaven. It's the word for poor, thirsting souls.

It's a word of provision. It's a word of encouragement. It shows an open door. I do not know whether I have named this to you before, but in eastern lands, in Bible days particularly, there were water carriers, maybe even today for all my knowledge, but they would go with their skin carriers containing water, and people would go to the water carrier, and purchase a drink.

Now, at times, a person of wealth and of compassion would go to the water carrier, and purchase, and pay for as much water as that man could carry, and then bid him to go to go up to the byways and the lanes of the poor part of the city or the country, and to shout, ho, that is, come, there's nothing to pay, here's a provision, if you're thirsty, however so poor, however so vile, if you're in the ditch, if you're far off, if you're the worst of the sinners, yet there is this provision, and it's free.

[18 : 38] The provision for sinners, yes, through the riches of God's grace, we think, as I've just used the illustration of the kindness, compassion, and price paid of the person in wealth to make that provision, but the provision of the fountain open of water of life flows through the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

Let us then just take one more scripture illustration of what we're trying to set forth, and I would pray that the Holy Spirit may use it to encourage, for the moment I speak to the seeking soul, and yet when we speak to the seeking soul, what about the saint?

We're never so great in grace that we can't sit down at the feet of Christ and still receive the sincere milk of the word. I know there's growth in grace.

I know that there is the strong meat of the word, but my friend, more as the more we grow, the more humble we shall be, and I have often observed this, as I've seen saints approach the hour of death, it's a coming back to the sweet simplicity of the gospel.

How often, for example, has Psalm 23 been a comfort to the saints as they departed this life and entered into glory.

[20 : 39] It's a confirming of the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that it is through much tribulation that we shall enter into the kingdom.

And the saint looks back with wonder, Lord, why did I not perish in my sin? Why am I not on that path to hell?

Why didst thou look down in thy mercy, compassion, power, and grace, and pluck such a filthy, charred, black brand from the fire, a sheep that wandered so far, so far from God?

Why? Why, Lord, oh, mystery of mistress, why was I not left to perish in my sin? How could it be that I, filthy sinner, should find grace in thy sight?

Oh, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me? I once was lost, but now am found was blind, but now I see, and another line, Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, he to save my soul from danger, interposed his precious blood.

[22 : 13] Just go with me to the land of Moab in our meditation, and there as we have read that dear Naomi hears that the Lord has visited his people, the famine is past, and she's resolved to return.

I shall not dwell on dear Naomi. Oh, the bitterness, oh, the sorrow, oh, the folly of choosing a path or trying to get out of trouble without the blessing of God.

Though all is overruled, yet mark the graves, the hand of death in the land of Moab. Now, the time of party, she has two daughters in law, daughters of Moab, born, grown up, in the land of idolatry and sin and evil.

Orpah, Ruth, and there's no doubt whatsoever of the natural love and respect of Orpah for Naomi.

I don't think those tears were false. I don't think that love that was faint, that is a natural love. You see, we may love with a natural love, the people of God.

[23 : 40] But, my friend, do we walk with them? Do we seek to deny ourselves, to take up the cross, and to follow Jesus?

Orpah, she had tears, she had kisses, she had love, she had respect. The witness of Naomi in the path of death and of suffering doubtless impressed her, but it never turned her.

Moab was her dwelling, the land of darkness her home, the gods of Moab were her gods, but with Ruth, there was love, affection, and a deep root, a desire, whatever the cost, I'm willing to part with all, I must part with it, I must turn my back on this man that cannot give me life, hope, joy, peace, these gods of Moab, they're nothing, they cannot save my soul.

I see in Naomi the possession of the work of grace, something that Moab cannot give me, something that my soul longs for, something that I'm after, and something that I'm, yes, I'm venturing, as Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee, and so forth, thy people, thy people shall be my people, thy God, my God, and she was steadfastly minded, our mind directs our feet, and our walk.

Put it this way, if somebody is high minded, you'll see somebody walk very proudly. If you see somebody that is of a doubtful mind, you'll see hesitance in the walk.

[25 : 40] If you see somebody steadfastly minded, you'll see a gracious, providing his good, a determination not to be turned back. And so it was.

steadfastly minded, and steadfastly walking. Ruth, you're a fool, giving up all the prospects that you have, all the pleasures of this world.

You're going out with a poor widow that's lost everything. You're going to people you don't know. You, you, you, you, you, but she says, there's something there.

Something there that I want. Something there that I seek after. Something there that my spirit craves for. And so my friend, the text declares, O ye that dwell in Moab, and leave the cities, and dwell in the rock.

just a further word about Ruth there, and you see the hand of God. And I do pray that this may be a word of encouragement.

[26 : 47] I do love to speak to seeking souls. You know, the hand of God directed. You may say, well, am I a Ruth?

Am I a Ruth? Right. Well, let's just ask you another question or two. When you come to God's house, what do you come for?

What do you come for? Just because you have to come? Or is it, Lord, speak to me. Could there be something for my soul? Is there a prayer before you come to chapel?

Lord, speak to me. Help thy servant. may there be something for me. You're a gleaner there. And why don't you go somewhere where is an easy-going religion, where they've got all sorts of fleshly attractions?

You say, it cannot feed my soul. I want spiritual food. I want pure food. That's the dove in the text. The dove eats pure grain.

[27 : 55] Come to that a moment as we may be held. That's it, friend. So then, you come to God's house. Now, has there been something for you?

A handful of purpose, God's hand, God's word, God's voice, as though somebody had told the minister just what you've been praying for, and the minister knows nothing of it at all, and it's for you.

and I'll tell you what, the devil will try and take it from you. You wouldn't give it up for all the world, would you? It's yours. You hold on to it.

Just a handful. It's very small. Many years ago, I stood in a large field of wheat on the farm of my beloved friends in Wiltshire, and I just took a grain or two from an ear of corn, and I looked at it in my hand, and I looked at this vast field in front of me, and yet that was real grain.

It was very small, but it was real. And I thought, yes, Lord, I believe though the field is great, the truth is profound, yet I believe there's been a few grains for this poor sinner.

[29 : 22] and so beloved, pray on, glean on, press on, seek pure food for your soul.

You may say, oh, I look at these great truths, I know so little. I think of election, I think of salvation, redemption, justification, adoption, regeneration.

Ah, friend, they're like sheaves in the field, but is there just a gleaning of a handful here, and a handful there, a blessing here, then this is the evidence, friend, that you've left, Moab, and that your back is therefore on the things of the world, and you have, by the spirit work in your soul, that spiritual life, in the spiritual appetite, and that food from heaven, that blessing for your soul, and press on, I didn't think of tarrying in Ruth, but I must just for another moment, think of two further great blessings, one, was at the threshing floor, and lying at the feet of Boaz, that's where you long to be, to sit at his dear feet, to hear the words of Jesus, and then further still, you remember that Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley, and I believe,

I don't know the exact weight, but I have a feeling, that that was as much as the dear soul could carry, now what about you dear saints, when, and just perhaps once in life, twice, there's been a blessing, that is as much as your soul could carry, a blessing, when the cup has run over, and then again, later, you remember there was the, she became the bride of Boaz, the marriage bond, Ruth of Moabites, whom, says Boaz, I have purchased to be my wife, Jesus has purchased the church, he loved the church, he gave himself for the church, for this church he poured out his life, and that precious blood on the cross, friend, this is the provision, then all, what a mercy, to be sheltered in it as we have here, dwell in the rock, the rock of ages,

Christ Jesus the Lord, a rock immovable, a rock that shall never be overthrown, or destroyed, impregnable, and a rock that is a cleft, has a shelter within it, and that rock was Christ, and the blessings that flow from it, and the protection that is in it, the rock, dwell in the rock, there is a standing by faith on the rock, and that will never fail you, the storm may blow against you, as the shipwrecked sailors said, found clean to the rock, weren't you afraid, yes, I shook, but the rock never shook, friend, are you on the rock, or on the sand, in Moan, or is it in Christ,

[32 : 58] I say, on the rock, 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, on Christ, the solid rock I stand, all other ground, is sinking, Sam, and this rock, your standing is on it, your standing is in it, because this rock is a cleft rock, and the soldier with a spear pierced, the side of Christ, and forthwith flowed blood and water, oh, that's just what the thirsting soul is seeking after, just what their poor and needy sinner is praying for, the blood, the water, my sin, my guilt, my defilement, oh, what protection there is under the blood, who can harm, who can condemn, who can cast that soul to hell, beloved friend, here is that provision, here is that cleft of the rock, art thou sheltered within it, as we've read concerning

Moses, there is a place by me, and I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, cover thee with my hand, thou shalt just get a glimpse of my glory, not to consume thee, oh, friend, what a resting place, what secure abode, rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee, let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flow, be of sin, the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power, never lose sight of this rock, it's a smitten rock, without the smiting of that rock there could be no flowing of the water in the days of the wilderness, and the precious blood of Jesus Christ as he hung and died on Calvary's cross, there is full salvation, there is pardon, there is peace, oh, ye that dwell in

Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the side of the hole's mouth, nest, and just think of something, hadn't thought of it for some long time, one year in Cornwall, on those lovely sands of massive rocks, I was sitting there and I watched a bird, it may have been a gull, high on that rock, and there was a small hole on the side of the rock and in it was the stuff that maketh her nest in the sides of the holes, a nest is a dwelling isn't it, an abiding place, a resting, I know, we use that word guardedly, the Lord won't permit us to make a nest on earth, he'll break that one up, but there's an abiding in Christ, on a dove, what does that signify?

No one's afraid of a dove, are they afraid of you? Do people tremble when they meet you and think what kind of mood he's going to be in? What kind of a temper they're going to be in?

What kind of a spirit? I speak to myself, friend, you know, if we're that dove, we should be that meek and harmless one, even as God's word declares, that you may be blameless and harmless without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in this world.

[36 : 56] A dove is meek and harmless and it is attacked by birds of prey. A believer will be an attacked person by the devil, by the world, by sin, and yet preserved in Jesus Christ.

his defense, it has no need to defend itself, but his defense is in flight. And our defense, friend, is to flee to Christ, to the throne of grace, to seek his mercy, to pray for his help, to take the sword of which is the word of God, to plead that, to seek that shelter in Christ.

Like the conies that make their house in the rock. A conie has no means of defense, it's poor, it's weak, it's feeble, it's fearing, it's unclean by the law, it's of no value, and yet, in his fear, it has safety and preservation in the cleft of the rock.

The dove that maketh her nest in the side of the hole's mouth. A dove is also known because it is chased, it is faithful to its mate.

It is also that which keeps company with each other, like that cloud that we read of, I think, in Isaiah of the doves, who are these that fly as a cloud to their windows, either the Psalms or Isaiah, I can't just place the reference for the moment.

[38 : 49] Fly, and united together in love, bearing reproach, and scorn for the Saviour's sake.

A dove-like spirit doesn't mean lacking in faithfulness and contending for truth. God forbid, but it's the spirit in which truth is contended for.

And a dove is noted for its mourning, the doves that are in the valleys mourning. Oh, friend, have you nothing to mourn over? You dear saints, have you nothing to mourn over?

Don't we mourn the hardness of our heart, the worldliness of our spirit? Don't we mourn and have found absent God? We know that God is ever with his people, but in our feeling, where is our God?

Oh, where is our Saviour? Have we nothing to mourn over as we look on Zion, over the nation? Blessed are they that mourn, and they shall be their comforting.

[39 : 54] Oh, ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, dwell in the rock, be like the dove that maketh her nest, in the sides of the hole's mouth, and nothing shall harm thee there, no beast of prey shall come upon thee that may attack, but there is preservation, and the dove is noted for beauty.

I can't see it in myself. One sees oneself as a sinner, deformed and vile, but may the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

May men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Oh, that my friend, we may be clothed with humanity.

And then, and I haven't considered this before, the dove, I believe I'm right in saying, or turtle dove, was the only bird that was used in the Levitical sacrifices.

I think there were sparrows for the cleansing of the leper, certainly, but it was a dove by the way of sacrifice. At least it teaches us this.

[41 : 12] First, under the sacrifice of Christ, then what of God's children? I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.

O that the Lord may so bless his word, and pardon all of this. Amen. Amen. Amen.