

ONE OF THE SADDEST VERSES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

6-3-17

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Jeremiah 8:15 We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

Jeremiah 8:16 The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

Jeremiah 8:17 For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 8:18 When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

Jeremiah 8:19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?

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This morning I want to share a message on what I label as one of the saddest verses in all the Old Testament. Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. He prophesied during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of God's people. Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations. The occasion of writing the book was upon the death of Josiah.

II Chronicles 35:25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.

Imagine Jeremiah witnessing a short revival of the nation under the leadership of Josiah. It was after his death that Pharaoh Necho put the city under tribute and then Nebuchadnezzar came in and took many captives to Babylon, and it was only a short time after this that Zedekiah was taken captive and the city was destroyed and burned. What sad days these were.

Jeremiah was called to be a witness and a voice of warning to the nation. And all the time of his ministry the people rejected his voice and persecuted him. Even at the beginning of his ministry the Lord warned him.

Jeremiah 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

You have to be a preacher to understand this verse. People who are under conviction make sometimes the most miserable faces. Because they hate God often their faces will show it towards God's preacher. Any preacher who really preaches will have witnessed this. However, Jeremiah ministered to his people at a time when they were truly hardened to the point of no return.

It is with this backdrop in mind that we now look at our text:

Jeremiah writes:

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

This morning I say to you that this is one of the saddest verses in all the Old Testament. It is sad for many reasons. This morning I want you to consider why I believe it is so so very sad.

I. IT IS SAD BECAUSE IT DECLARES THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLESSINGS HAVE BEEN MISSED

The harvest is past.

II. IT IS SAD BECAUSE HOPE OF FUTURE BLESSINGS HAVE ENDED FOR THAT GENERATION... The Summer is Ended.

III. IT IS SO VERY SAD BECAUSE HOPE OF THE NATIONS SALVATION IS GONE

I. IT IS SAD BECAUSE IT DECLARES THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLESSINGS HAVE BEEN MISSED

The harvest is past.

Could you imagine living in a day when your very life depended on having a good harvest? Imagine if you needed to live for the whole year based on what you were able to grow in the summer.

Most of us depend on the grocery store for our harvest.

The Bible is filled with spiritual applications and lessons about the harvest. Jesus said:

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

The Bible in the book of proverbs warns about being slothful during the harvest.

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Proverbs 6:7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

Proverbs 6:8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

We live in time, and time waits for no one, if you do not take advantage of the harvest, you will weep over lost opportunities.

This verse is sad because Jeremiah saw that his people wasted their spiritual opportunity for blessings. The Harvest represents God's blessings.

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

John 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Harvest time is a time of joy, a time of reaping and rejoicing, but if you don't gather during the harvest, you will lose out on the blessing. There will be no rejoicing.

Jeremiah lamented for his people. THE HARVEST WAS PAST.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Sometimes you can get an early harvest and plant a mid summer crop. There is still hope for a late harvest as long as it is still summer.

But Jeremiah shows the hopelessness of the condition of the nation when he says,

THE HARVEST IS PAST AND THE SUMMER IS ENDED.

NOW LET ME SUGGEST THAT THIS IS THE SADDEST VERSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BECAUSE NOT ONLY IS THE HARVEST TIME ENDED FOR THE NATION, BUT ALSO THE SUMMER IS ENDED, AND ALL HOPE FOR ANOTHER HARVEST IS GONE!

II. IT IS SAD BECAUSE HOPE OF FUTURE BLESSINGS HAVE ENDED FOR THAT GENERATION. The summer is ended.

Summer is past, it is late fall, and all that was before them was the deadness of winter.

The summer is ended and all hope for the blessing of the harvest or a future harvest is ended for that generation.

A while back I preached about the seasons of a person's life. I took this from the temple tax, the evaluation of a person's life.

Estimation of proper singular vow. Lev. 27:3 - 7

Leviticus 27:3-7 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

PROPER ESTIMATION

1 month 5 years 5 shekels silver.

5-20 Appropriate estimation for singular vow was 20 shekels silver.

20-60 Estimation is 50 shekels silver.

60 and above estimation is 15 shekels.

The amounts of money were probably based on the estimated value of a person's ability to work and get gain. Just as a tithe was based on the amount of money or increase of a person's wealth, so too, as a person gets older he can't work as hard.

So I thought it interesting that we might call it a senior discount. Anyone over 60 could pay less than a 5 year old. I likened these 4 age groups to what I call the 4 seasons of a persons life.

Spring	5 years and younger.
Summer	5 years to 20 years.
Fall (Harvest)	20 - 60 years old.
Winter	Over 60 years old.

Jeremiah was saying summer is gone, harvest is gone, and all that is left is the winter.

It amazes me to see older people making plans as if they will be around for 20 - 30 years? The time to get right with God, the time to serve God, is in the Summer time of your life. Some things you can't do for God when you get older. Not that you should stop serving God when you get older, it is just so many people let the Summer of their life slip away without having ever done anything for God. There will be many regrets in eternity because of lost opportunities to serve your creator.

THE HARVEST IS GONE.
THE SUMMER IS GONE.

What is left?

Jeremiah was weeping for his nation. There is no hope for another harvest. They wasted the harvest and summer of their lives. What hope is there?

I SAY THIS IS ONE OF THE SADDEST VERSES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BECAUSE OF THE NEXT POINT JEREMIAH SHARES FROM THIS PASSAGE:

III. IT IS SO VERY SAD BECAUSE HOPE OF THE NATION'S SALVATION IS GONE

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Reading in Jeremiah how the children of Israel rebelled and hardened their hearts. THEY WOULD NOT HEAR. THEY WOULD NOT LET GOD MOLD THEM.

Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet because he had to minister to a people that just would not listen. God is longsuffering toward us.

BUT NOTE: You can say this rope is long, but remember there is an end to the rope. Finally one day Israel came to the end of the line so to speak, of God's longsuffering. God is longsuffering, His rope may be long, but there is an end. And when you use up all the slack He has allotted you and the grace He has extended, there comes an end.

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART TO HIS CHASTENING.

Poor Jeremiah had to minister to a people who sinned away their day of Grace.
A people who spent up all the mercy allotted to them.
A people who came to the end of the road, so to speak.

When he understood this, he penned these sad words:

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

If you miss the Harvest.
If you miss the summer.
If you miss the opportunity that God has given.
There comes a point where there is no hope.

Winter sets in when you can no longer plant.
There is no time to harvest again.

Saw a fellow at the fair I had been witnessing to for 32 years. He is a neighbour. He said, you must think there is no hope for me.
I said there is hope as long as there is breath in your lungs..
But for all of us, all hope is lost when you stop breathing. However, not too long after I saw him, that fellow passed away, and sad to say as far as I know, he died never getting right with God, never receiving salvation. So it could be said of him:

Jeremiah 8:20 THE HARVEST TIME OF HIS LIFE WAS ENDED. HIS SUMMER WAS ENDED AND HE DIED UNSAVED.

OUR SUMMER WILL PASS.
OUR HARVEST WILL END.
IT WILL BE THE END AND THERE IS NO SALVATION AFTER THAT.
THERE WILL BE NO TIME TO WORK FOR GOD AFTER THAT.

NOW IS THE TIME TO WORK.
NOT IS THE TIME TO GET SAVED.
NOT IS THE TIME TO SERVE GOD.

How many times in the Bible has God said to his people, that is it, I have had enough with you ..

The Old timers used to call this sinning away your day of grace.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

HOW SAD IT IS.. AND WE ARE NOT SAVED.. JEREMIAH CRIED OUT..

Now Jeremiah was talking about the dispersion of his people.
He was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction.
In his mind all he could think of is that all hope for the salvation, the saving of his nation, was gone.

But is there not a spiritual application for us today?

Hebrews 4:7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

It could be said:

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Was this not true of that generation that died in the wilderness because of their sin?

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Could this not be said of so many individuals who provoked God so much that it led to their demise and spiritual destruction?

Though this verse is not directly talking about our eternal salvation, the principle of being neglectful of God's mercy and graciousness and longsuffering towards you could be applied to that area as well.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE LET THE SUMMER AND HARVEST TIME OF THEIR LIFE FADE AWAY AND WHEN THEY STAND BEFORE GOD? THEY WILL REALIZE THEY SQUANDERED THEIR OPPORTUNITY ON EARTH TO BE SAVED.

I Corinthians 10:6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

I Corinthians 10:7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

I Corinthians 10:8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

I Corinthians 10:9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

I Corinthians 10:10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

I Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

The Bible teaches that there should be a sense of urgency in our lives to get right with God as soon as possible. Don't delay, because to delay is to let the Harvest Slip through your fingertips. To delay is to let the summer fade away leaving no time for another harvest. To delay is to possibly face the this sad appraisal of ones life.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Picture Jeremiah sitting in the ashes of his city and weeping saying.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Picture the people gone into captivity because of the hardness of their hearts as he sees the dead corpses lying in the street, the smoke of burned buildings rising in the sky, the armies leading captive men and women bound in chains and they are paraded to Babylon, and all this could have been averted if they had only repented and listened to the Word of God.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

This verse is so sad because it leaves no room for hope for that backslidden nation. It was so bad God said:

Jeremiah 14:11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

It was so bad God said to Jeremiah's secretary:

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,

Jeremiah 45:2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch;

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.

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.

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.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION FOR YOU AND ME?

We serve the same God that Jeremiah served.

He wants us to serve Him.

He wants us to obey Him.

He wants us to love Him.

AND HE WILL CHASTEN THOSE HE LOVES.

Does not God chasten His children today like He did back then?

Will God not?

Jeremiah says these sad words:

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Serve Him while it is still summer.

Serve Him while there is still hope for harvest.

Get saved while you have breath in your lungs.

But it is sad. Do you realize there is an element of truth for this in each of our lives?

Jeremiah was not talking about heaven or hell, he was talking about the death of his nation. The nation, for all intents and purposes, died.

For our physical body there is no salvation.

But for our spirits there is.

It is so sad seeing young people wasting away their lives not serving the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Many years ago I when I was in Bible college I was visiting some teens in my home church. I was in my early 20's. When I finally caught up to the young teenagers, I began to witness to them and challenge them to give their lives to Christ. They looked at me and said.. "you lived

your life, you had your fun we want to have our's also. How sad, imagine they looked at me as if I were an old man? I wonder what they would say now that I am 64?

There will be a time when there will be no turning back. What you did is what you did. The harvest is over, the summer is ended. Here we had young people in the summer of their lives refusing to serve God. There will be regrets someday! And many will cry out because there is no getting right now, no making up for lost time.

Oh how few will be able to say with Paul,

II Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
II Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
II Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

If in the flesh alone we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.
Each of us physically have the spring, summer, harvest And winter of our lives.

The seasons should illustrate what happens to us.

There is a springtime in our life.
There is a summertime.
There is a harvest time.
There is a wintertime.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Better get saved before winter comes.
Better serve the Lord in spring, summer, and harvest time.
Serve him before it is too late.

Either in that day you will say I am glad for serving Him, or there will be regrets for wasting away the harvest and summer years of your life.

WHICH WILL IT BE?

Life is like a final exam and God is the great school master. Right now we are in that final exam and the clock is ticking away. We are being perplexed by questions and problems that we try to face and answer to the best of our ability. As the clock ticks away we hurry to get everything right. But someday the bell will ring and our great school master will say hand it all in and now I will grade you. A good student does their best right up to the last minute. Our study guide is the Bible. The test is our walk in this life.

Look, there will be a day for each of us when the final bell will ring and we will hand in our very lives to God for his grading.

Dwight L Moody fell sick when He preached his last sermon on November 16, 1899, in Kansas City, Missouri. Becoming ill, he returned home by train to Northfield. During the preceding several months, friends had observed he had added some 30 pounds to his already ample

frame. Although his illness was never diagnosed, it has been speculated that he suffered from congestive heart failure. He died on December 22, 1899, at age 62 surrounded by his family.

While convalescing at home he thought God would heal him. He Exclaimed, "I am not at all sure but that God may perform a miracle and raise me up. I am going to get up. If God wants to heal me by a miracle that way all right, and if not I can meet death in my chair as well as here." Then turning to one of the attendants who was applying warm cloths he said, Here, take these away take those away. If God is going to perform a miracle I do not need them.

He sat up and did a little work, and then slipped back into a weak state, gathered his children around him and gave them charge concerning his church and Bible institute, and other aspects of his work.

He realized it was no use. He had reached the end of the line so to speak.

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

What is the purpose of this message:

James 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

How sad it is when a soul refuses to be saved from the error of his way!

This is what Jeremiah lamented about his nation, when he said:

Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.