Guest Preacher - Rev Roddy John Campbell (Retired)

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Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

[0:00] Seeking the help and blessing of the Lord, let us turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the book of Jeremiah and chapter 6 and we'll read again at verse 16.

Thus says the Lord, stand by the roads and look and ask for the ancient paths, for the good way is, and walk in it and find rest for your souls.
But they said, we will not walk in it. I set watchmen over you saying, pay attention to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, we will not pay attention.
Now God did many wonderful things for Jeremiah. Even before he was born, we are told the Lord had set him apart and appointed him as a prophet to the nations.
Now Jeremiah's ministry was not going to be an easy one. In fact, it would be quite difficult, dangerous and very depressing. But God promised to be with him and God kept his promise.
[1:17] The nation has turned its back upon God and Jeremiah is given the task to bring rebuke, warning, pleas and words of hope to his people.

And during the life of Jeremiah, Israel was tossed around by three great superpowers. There was Assyria to the north, Egypt to the south and Babylon to the east.
And chapter 6 begins with a warning to flee or to run. He prophesies once again that if Jerusalem refuses to repent and to turn to the Lord, that they will become a city surrounded by their enemies.
Jeremiah makes clear that Jerusalem is receiving only what she desires because of her wickedness. This is a city that must be punished.
God must punish Jerusalem. God's holiness and justice requires him to punish sin. It is against God's very nature to overlook sin.
[2:34] And we see that even as we come to try and find an explanation for the cross of Golgotha. Jerusalem was not a pagan city, but a city that had many privileges and that had known many blessings from God.

But Jerusalem had openly sinned against the Lord. And now the prophet comes to warn them and to instruct them or teach them and explain to them the reason why he must visit them and punish them unless they repent and turn to the Lord.
And then the Lord. Peter, in the first letter, chapter 4, after writing about the fiery trials of Christians, which is actually a refining fire of God's judgment, he writes, Now the word judgment there is a very broad term.
It does not necessarily mean judgment of condemnation, but it's a word that can also mean a judgment which may bring discipline. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.
That is a judgment that will bring discipline in the church of God. The picture that Peter gives us is that God has begun judging those within the church with a judgment of discipline.
[4:36] Then he moves outside the church and says, If it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

The judgment which begins at God's house will move from there to unbelievers, no longer as a purifying fire, as it were, but as a judgment of condemnation.
If the purifying fire is so intense and causes such anguish to believers, what will it be like for those who obey not the gospel as they receive it?
Not the fire of purification, but the fire of condemnation, because they have rejected God's gospel.
They have rejected the way of salvation. If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will it become of the ungodly and the sinner?

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[5:47] Paul, writing to the persecuted and troubled church of the Thessalonians, writes to them and says to them, When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and away from the glory of his might.

To Jerusalem the Lord says, Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I turn from you in disgust, lest I make you a desolation, an inhabited land.
The Lord here exhorts Jerusalem to take instructions, as he says to me and you this morning, to take instruction. And where do we find his instruction?
His instruction is in his word. The trouble with Jerusalem was their ears and heart was closed to the word of God.
They even doubted that God judges sin, or that God even rules in history. In the previous chapter, they said, They have spoken falsely of the Lord and have said, He will do nothing.
[7:23] No disaster will come upon us. Nor shall we see the sword or famine. The prophets will become wind. The word is not in them.

They were showing complete defiance to the word of God. Showing complete defiance to the instruction that they were given through God's word.
They were showing defiance to the warnings of the word of God. Are things any different this morning? How many people in our villages, in our towns and cities, will not receive instruction through the word of God, but openly show defiance to the word of God's judgment?
Is that yourself today? Have you closed your ears, even now, to the word of instruction that comes to me and you through the word of God this morning?
The words through the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah's ministry was not an easy ministry.
[8:44] But we also face the same frustration within the ministry today. To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear?

Behold, their ears are uncircumcised. They cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn. They take no pleasure in it.
To whom shall I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so that they cannot hear.
The word of the Lord is offensive to them. They find no pleasure in it. He could tell that his warning was falling on deaf ears.
One of the temptations that make people close their ears to the gospel, warning that, well, you know, we have heard it all before.
[9:49] They remain unconvinced of their sin. They remain unconvinced that they are sinners. They are unmoved by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

It means nothing to them. They remain unconcerned about the final judgment. The fact that God is going to judge the sinner.
They keep saying, He will do nothing. No judgment will come upon us.
The prophets, the preachers have become wind. The word is not in them. You know, the gospel is offered more than it is accepted.
But what about yourself this morning? What is your relationship with the gospel? Are you still unconvinced, unmoved, and unconcerned?
[10:59] We ourselves, who are involved in the ministry, may be tempted to conclude, well, what's the point? What's the point of preaching? What's the point of going forth and preaching the word?

We can get so frustrated when people fail to accept or even understand the gospel. Nevertheless, like Jeremiah, we must continue to preach.
And we must continue to remind people that God will punish the sinner unless he repents and turns to the Lord.
Many of the people who heard the greatest preacher of all, who was Jesus Christ, they rejected his words.
They rejected his message. Jeremiah here, he speaks of the false prophet. From prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.
[12:05] They have healed the wound of my people, lightly saying, peace, peace, where there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed.

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They did not know how to blush. Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall. At the time that I punishment, they shall be overthrown, says the Lord.
They were sinning openly. They didn't even know how to blush when they were caught in their sin. Are things any different today? Today.
In the previous chapter, where he brings our attention to false prophet, he writes, an appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction.
And then comes the most appalling words, the most strange words. My people love to have it so. Here is that thing that is shocking.
[13:15] And my people love to have it so. Despite their false teaching, the people of Jerusalem were happy and delighted with their ministry, with the ministry of the false prophets.

False preachers of the word in our day are nothing better than the false prophets of Jeremiah's day. However unpopular it may make us, we are not going to lie and hide the wrath and judgment of God from people.
We are not going to preach what is popular among people. We are going to preach the word of God. The word that says that God must punish sin.
That the sinner is open to the wrath and to the condemnation of God. That the sinner is on the way to hell unless he repents or she repents and embraces the salvation that God is offering through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
will you come this morning and trust in Jesus Christ.
[14:52] the Lord speaks to them and says, stand by the roads and look and ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it and find rest for your sores.

They have arrived at a crossroads and they are offered two choices. Now this is not something new in the Bible. you will remember that when Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel as recorded for us in 1 Kings chapter 18 the people were offered two choices.
And he says, how long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God follow him but if Baal then follow him.
and then we are told and the people did not answer him a word. In the New Testament we find that when many that had followed Jesus found his saints too hard they went back and Jesus said to his disciples will you also go away?
Then Simon Peter answered him Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.
You see, crossroads whether to choose Jesus to remain silent or to walk away.
[16:25] Also in the New Testament in the ministry of Jesus often referred to us the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many for the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few.

This morning you are found my friend at crossroads. You must choose whether to trust in Jesus for salvation or to walk away.
Whether to take the wide gate or the straight gate the broad or the narrow way. You see there are many crossroads in our personal lives.
we are confronted with two choices where we can go in one of two directions whether it is in our careers in our work or in something else.
But this morning you are standing at crossroads and the solemn thing that belongs to that this morning is that your eternal destiny depends on which road you will take.
[17:36] the advice of the Lord by Jeremiah is first of all look that is to realise that we are at crossroads and being found there that we need direction.

So the Lord through Jeremiah advises us ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it and find rest for your souls.
we are asked to ask for the ancient paths which is a good way for there could have been many ancient paths that were not good. Ancient paths here mean those paths that we can trace as far back as possible.
But the ancient path is the biblical way the good way that is marked out by the word of God. Up to this point Jerusalem had rejected the good way.
They had not listened to instruction. They had not followed the ancient path or the good way for they have rejected the word of God. Now they are advised to ask for the ancient path and the good

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way.
[18:50] The word of God says the psalmist in Psalm 119 was a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. In the same psalms it says order or direct my steps in thy word.

The advice that is given is to ask for the ancient path of biblical truth. And where will this path lead us? It will lead us to Jesus Christ.
It will lead us to the cross. It will lead us to where salvation was worked out for sinners like me and you.
Jesus told the disciples I am the way the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the father but by me. Jesus is the way the ancient path and the good way and the only way that leads to salvation. He is the ancient path. He is the good way to eternal life. But you know it is not enough to know which way leads to the destination of eternal life.
[20:08] We must walk in it. Ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it.

It is not enough to know but we must walk in it. And we walk this path by faith.
So it is the path of faith. We are told that Enoch by faith walked with God. And two other times in scripture it is also said of Noah and of Malachi that they walked with God.
What is the significance of this phrase? To walk with God. To go on the ancient path and the good way is to walk with God.
Well when one walks with God he has a delight in the company of God. It cannot be said of anyone that they walk with God unless God himself becomes their chief delight.
[21:15] can you imagine Enoch walking with God for 300 years unless he found delight in God's company. And when God becomes our delight it is more than just a word that we take on our lips.

It affects our whole being. All controversy with God comes to an end. You find yourself attracted to God.
You find yourself attracted to the things of God. God's revelation of himself and his son Jesus Christ and him crucified becomes your delight.
The gospel becomes your delight. Gathering with God's people becomes your delight. You will be determined to follow the path that God hath marked out for you because you know that the only way to enjoy God's companionship is to walk in his path.
And when we are in the way that God has marked out for his children we enjoy companionship with God. We enjoy companionship with one another.
[22:32] It will mean that your life, your conversation, your conduct is regulated by a hatred of anything that will take you away from that path.

As you walk this path there are many voices shouting out to you that will try to make you divert from the path. We must struggle with the remaining sin, the sin that is still in our body.
We have to face many temptations that confronts us in our day. How many things we have in our day to stir up our unclean desires to sin, to try and induce us to sin mentally and in thought, if not in deed.
We live in a wicked society where we are open to all the pressures that such a society imposes upon us. The devil is out like a roaring lion seeking to devour us.
There are many crunch times in our life as we walk this old path, as we walk this path of faith.
Jeremiah writes, ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it.
[23:58] And then he says, rest for your souls. It is only in Jesus Christ that there is rest for our souls.

Having committed ourselves to the ancient path and the good way of faith and trust in God and walking therein, we shall find total satisfaction as we enjoy all the blessings that come from the covenant into which we have entered.
it is a path of faith. It is a path of obedience. It is said of Abraham, by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.
You see, faith and obedience cannot be separated. it. So, Jerusalem was asked to seek the ancient paths.
Stand by the roads and look and ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it and find rest for your souls. And the same is for me and you today.
[25:12] to ask for the good path, where the good way is, in Jesus Christ, the path of faith, and to walk in it, and to find rest and satisfaction for our souls.

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But what was Jerusalem's response in Jeremiah's days? And is it any different from your own response this morning to the gospel? They said, we will not walk in it.
They refused to be obedient because, obviously, they found other paths more attractive than the path of faith that leads to Jesus Christ, that leads to salvation.
You know, the way of wickedness is always attractive. Sin is very attractive. And sin is very pleasurable.
Remember what is said of Moses. Choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.
[26:20] This morning, my friend, if you choose the pleasure of sin, remember it is only for a season. And it worketh out eternal destruction.

Remember that the wages of sin are death, both physically and eternal. And remember that sin will pay its wages.
They said, and do you say this morning, we will not walk in it. The longsuffering and graciousness of God is seen here.
Even though they said, we will not walk in it, the Lord says, I set watchmen over you, saying, pay attention to the sound of the trumpet. And they said, we will not pay attention.
The watchmen were the prophets like Jeremiah, who were sent to warn the people with a trumpet of prophecy, to repent and to return to the Lord.
[27:26] And you may ask, well, how does that apply to me in the 21st century? Well, we do not take a trumpet to warn the people of impending physical danger. But we do warn the people of impending eternal danger.

And we do so through the preaching of the gospel. And the preaching of the gospel is Christ and him crucified. We can refer to it as the trumpet of the gospel.
So we do blow the trumpet of the gospel. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the late Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, way back in the 1960s, and in one of his sermons, he made this comment, we are living in days when preaching is not as popular as it once was.
And when people do not believe in it as they once did. I wonder what his evaluation would be today in 2026.
And that among those who are not Christians, but even among Christians. The Lord puts a great emphasis upon preaching. How shall they hear without a preacher?
[28:41] Preaching is that which has been ordained by God. It is God that has ordained that by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I know that God is not tied to preaching as the only means to bring people to salvation.

He can do things directly if he so wills. But his usual manner is by preaching. And how did the people respond?
They chose not to listen. We will not pay any attention to the trumpet. That may be you today. Even sitting here in this place today.
You may be not placing any attention or paying any attention to the preaching of the Lord. Maybe you're looking at your watch and saying, Well, he's nearly coming to an end now.
Surely it'll soon be over. Surely soon I'll get home. Surely soon I'll get home to my dinner. Surely this is closing to, coming to a close. Surely this is near closing.
[29:45] Why have you such thoughts? Because you do not want to pay attention to the preaching of the word. Because you do not want to pay attention to the trumpet of the gospel.

You are like those in Jeremiah's day who chose not to listen. And there cannot be anything more solemn in this parish today than those who refuse to listen to the preaching of the word.
Whether present or not present in this hall today. There is nothing more solemn in this parish today than those who reject and refuse to listen.
Or pay any attention to the preaching of the gospel. To the word of God. We are here this morning to warn you with the trumpet of the gospel.
To repent and to return to the Lord in faith and trust and obedience. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul writes regarding the New Testament ministry.
[30:52] Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ. Be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin who you know sin. So that we might become the righteousness of God. The Lord says pay attention to the sound of the trumpet.

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And to pay attention here means to give attention with a view to action. As the trumpet was used to call attention and a call for people to act. So the trumpet of the gospel requires our attention and calls us to act and to act now.
The trumpet in the days of Jeremiah very often warned the people of impending ginger. So the trumpet of the gospel warns people of what they lie ahead of them.
If they do not obey the gospel. If they do not obey the gospel command. If they do not obey the gospel command. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a most profound serious warning for those who hear the gospel and who heed not the warning.
[32:06] How did Jerusalem respond? But they said we will not pay attention. Jerusalem completely refused to take notice of the warning given to them. And your response to the preaching of the gospel.

It affects your ultimate eternal destiny. The more you close your heart. And harden your heart. The less you will be able to receive and respond to the gospel.
Everyone in hell is responsible for their own destiny. They were warned. But they chose to ignore the warning. The theme of this chapter now turns from crossroads.
To the calls for witnesses to note. That the judgment God is bringing on Jerusalem is because of choosing the wrong path. Therefore hear O nations and O congregation.
What will happen to them. Hear O earth. Behold I am bringing disaster upon this people. The fruit of their devices. Because they have not paid attention to my words.
[33:17] And as for my law. They have rejected it. He calls witnesses. He calls the nations. He calls the congregation. He calls the earth. To be witnesses of what he is now going to do.

In bringing judgment. For those who said this will not happen. The prophets will be like the wind. This will not happen to us. Soon in Babylon. Ask them. Has the judgment of God come?
Has the judgment of God come? Well what is your response to the trumpet of the gospel? How long have you been hearing it?
Have you become deaf to it? Are you saying this morning we will not walk in it? We will not pay attention? On that day there will be witnesses to note that the judgment of God is springing on you.
[34:20] It's because of the wrong path that you have chosen. The other path seems broad and easy. But it's a station.

It's eternal life. Therefore hear O nations. And O congregation what will happen to them. Hear O earth because I bring disaster upon the people.
The fruit of their devices. Because they have not paid attention to my words. And for my laws. They have rejected it.
May the Lord bless these thoughts to us this morning. As we bring our service to a close. By singing from Psalm 85 in the Scottish Psalter. And at verse 8.
I'll hear what God the Lord will speak. To his folk he'll speak peace. And to his saints. But let them not return to foolishness. To them that fear him. Surely near is his salvation.
[35:20] That glory in our land may have her habitation. We shall sing down to the end of the psalm. That is Psalm 85 in the Scottish Psalter. Verse 8 to the end of the psalm.

I'll hear what God the Lord will speak. To his folk he'll speak peace. I'll hear what God the Lord will speak.
To his folk he'll speak peace. But do his saints.
But let them not return to foolishness.
Do them not fear him surely near. This is salvation.
[36:27] That glory in our land may have her habitation.

To his Son. To his spirit of sin. To his faith of sin. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate.
To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate.
To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To his soul and hate. To start from heaven high.
Give what is good the Lord shall give. Our love shall yield in peace.
[37:38] Justice who set us in this place shall go before his face.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.
Amen.

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