

What3words - Still.Not.Saved

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Date: 13 August 2023

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Jeremiah chapter 8.

Jeremiah chapter 8, page 771 in the Pew Bible. Bible 771, Jeremiah chapter 8, and our text this morning is from verse 20.

Jeremiah chapter 8 at verse 20. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we, or you, are not saved.

As you know, it's that time of year again. The summer holidays are almost over, and it has been a longer summer holiday this year where the schools closed for not six, but seven weeks this year. Amazingly, and thankfully, those seven weeks have passed quite quickly, and the summer holidays are almost over. Because on Thursday morning, on Thursday morning, boys and girls, it's back to school or back to scolari.

[1 : 21] It's back to early mornings, back to school uniform, back to packed lunches, back to homework, back to parents being taxi to all the after-school clubs that they go to.

And of course, some will be starting in scolari. Some will be starting in primary school or secondary school, or others will be thinking about university. But you know, what's highlighted to us in this passage is that even though the summer holidays are a great time of rest and relaxation, there may be someone that you've forgotten about over the summer.

There may be someone that you've forgotten about over the summer. And that someone is who Jeremiah reminds us about in this passage. And Jeremiah sets before us, very simply in this passage that we are reading, two things.

He talks about your diagnosis and your doctor. Your diagnosis and your doctor. That's what Jeremiah reminds us this morning. Your diagnosis and your doctor.

So first of all, your diagnosis. Your diagnosis. He says there in verse 20, The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we or you are not saved. For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart.

[2 : 40] My heart is wounded. I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me. You know, the book of Jeremiah, it's all about an emotional prophet and his evangelistic preaching.

The book of Jeremiah is about an emotional prophet and his evangelistic preaching. Jeremiah was born around the year 650 BC. He lived during the reign of about five kings in Judah.

But Jeremiah, you could say, he was brought up in a day and generation very similar to our own. Because in his day and generation, there were foolish people and there were foolish prophets who claimed that there's no such thing as absolute truth.

And as Jeremiah describes, they preached and they proclaimed truth, truth, when there is no truth. And from a very young age, boys and girls, probably in his 20s, Jeremiah was called to the Lord's people, called by the Lord to preach and proclaim to the Lord's people.

In fact, in the opening chapter in Jeremiah chapter 1, when Jeremiah there, he's so young, he's in his 20s, he's doubting his call to the ministry, and the Lord reassures him.

[3 : 53] He says, But the thing is, Jeremiah wasn't the first prophet in Israel.

Jeremiah was actually one of the last in a long line of prophets who were sent to preach powerfully to the people of Israel. Because throughout the generations, the Lord had raised up prophet after prophet after prophet to remind the Israelites, to remind the Lord's people that if they refused to repent of their sinful and selfish idolatry, the Lord would bring judgment upon them.

The Lord would send them into exile in Babylon. And down throughout the years, many of these prophets, they preached and they proclaimed to the people, and they preached the same message, the same warning that judgment is coming.

You need to repent, because judgment is coming. And yet, you know, it didn't matter how many prophets were set apart and sent to the people.

It didn't matter how many preachers and proclamations were given. It didn't matter how many openings and how many opportunities were held out to the people so faithfully, despite all the declarations of judgment, the people weren't listening.

[5 : 19] They weren't listening. They were hearing it, but they weren't listening. They were casually and carelessly just carrying on with life.

They were ignoring all the warnings. They were putting them to the back of their mind. They were thinking, well, I've got plenty of time, and surely it will be okay in the end.

And you know, you come to an Old Testament passage like this, and you think, well, in over two and a half thousand years of history since this was first written, nothing has changed.

Nothing has changed. The human heart is still the same. The mindset of mankind is still the same. Because like it was for Israel, so it has been for Barvis.

The Lord has set apart. The Lord has sent many preachers to you over the years. Many men have stood in this pulpit proclaiming God's Word to you.

[6 : 17] They've preached and proclaimed God's Word to you. They've challenged and confronted you about your soul. They've reminded you and reaffirmed to you of your need to turn from your sin and turn to the Savior for salvation.

And yet, like it was in Jeremiah's day, like it was for ancient Israel, you refuse to repent. You continue to casually and carelessly carry on with your life, ignoring the warnings, putting them to the back of your mind, thinking that you have plenty of time and it will be okay in the end.

And you know, my friend, and I say this to you wholeheartedly, don't be slothful with your soul.

Don't be slothful with your soul.

It is a precious soul. That's why the Bible says to you, seek the Lord while, while He is to be found.

And you are living in the while. And you know, the glory of the gospel is that the Lord isn't done with you, just like the Lord wasn't done with Israel.

[7 : 36] Because when the Lord set apart and sent Jeremiah the prophet, when He sent him to preach to the people, He didn't give him a new and a novel message to preach and proclaim. It wasn't something that was different from what was said all these generations earlier.

It wasn't even a watered-down message from before. No, Jeremiah was called to preach and proclaim the solemn message of judgment and just simply call the people to repentance, to call them to turn from their sin and turn to the Savior.

And you know, it didn't take long for the young Jeremiah to deliver this direct message from the Lord. Because he says right in chapter 2, right at the beginning of this book, he says, Thus saith the Lord.

Those words from prophets were common. Thus saith the Lord, My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have hewn out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

And undoubtedly, Jeremiah, he faithfully and he fearlessly preached God's Word. He emphasized and he explained to the people time and time again that the heart of man is deceitful, above all things, desperately wicked, and who can know it?

[8 : 58] And Jeremiah explained to the people, The Lord knows your heart. That's why you need to turn to Him. And Jeremiah, he displayed and he demonstrated to the people the grace of God in the gospel.

Because as he says later in his book, Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 11, maybe well-known words, I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord.

Plans to prosper you, not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future. Then the next verse, Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me.

And I will hear you. You will seek me and you will find me when, when you seek me with all your heart. You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart.

And you know, despite the rejection and the ridicule of the people, despite the persecution of all these false prophets that Jeremiah had to endure, Jeremiah was this prophet who faithfully and fearlessly preached and proclaimed God's word.

[10 : 06] Why did he do it? Why did he do it? Jeremiah loved the people to whom the Lord had called him to serve.

Jeremiah loved the people to whom the Lord had called him to serve. He loved the souls that were in front of him each week.

In fact, Jeremiah was someone who cried at the chaos and the confusion of the people in front of him. He lamented over their lostness.

He, he sobbed over the state of their souls. He even wept at their waywardness. He could see that they weren't listening. He knew that they weren't listening. And yet he wept at their waywardness. That's why he's called, boys and girls, he's called the weeping prophet. He was known to everyone as the weeping prophet because he loved the people to whom the Lord had called him to serve.

[11:02] And he wept over their waywardness. He wept over their willful rebellion and rejection of the word of God. And we see that in this passage. Jeremiah is weeping.

He's weeping as from what the Lord has told him. He's confessing that his heart is heavy. His heart is hurting. He's sorrowing over their sin. He's mourning over the mess of the nation, the community that he's part of.

And he says there at the beginning of chapter 9, Oh, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.

He has this heavy heart. He has this mournful heart that he's burdened for these people in front of him. And so he reminds them, verse 20, the harvest is past, the summer has ended.

And as a people, you can still say we are not saved. The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and you are not saved. And you know, for people living in that day, it was a very apt and very applicable illustration to use.

[12:17] It's an agricultural illustration. It's an agricultural illustration that we're familiar with too, because it emphasizes missed opportunities.

It's an agricultural illustration that emphasizes missed opportunities. As you know, for a farmer or a crofter, the summer harvest is a busy time of year.

So if you're a crofter, you're probably baling just now, or you've just finished baling for the winter.

The summer harvest is a busy time of year where the soil has been prepared, the seed has been planted in the spring, so that when the summer comes, so comes the harvest.

And it's during the summer sunshine of the warmer weather and the longer days that the farmer or the crofter seeks to make use of that window of opportunity to harvest what he has sown.

And the summer harvest is a busy season. There's cutting and gathering and storing and even selling. It's a busy season of opportunity, preparing for the long, cold, dark nights of winter that are to come.

[13:27] And here, Jeremiah, he's weeping over the waywardness of his people. He's mourning over all their missed opportunities. And you know, he mourns because he knows them.

He knows them so intimately. He knows them so personally. He's been with them through the reign of five kings. He knows these people. And he knows that others have preached to them before him. He knows that others have ploughed this same furrow before him. He knows that they are also ones who broke up the fallow ground and then fertilized that ground with the preaching of God's Word.

He knows that the seed of the gospel has been preached and proclaimed to them for so many years. And now he says, verse 20, the harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and you're still not saved.

Still not saved. You've missed your season of opportunity. You've missed your season of opportunity. And Jeremiah, this faithful prophet, he's asking them, what were you thinking?

[14:34] What were you thinking? You were being so distracted by all these idols. And why did you delay filling your life with all these other interests? Why did you disregard the message which is of utmost importance?

What were you thinking? Because you knew. You knew, he's saying, you knew that you had an opportunity to repent. You knew that this was all time sensitive.

You knew that this was the opportune time to seek the Lord. And now look, and now look, he says, you've missed your season of opportunity. The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and you're not saved.

You're not saved. And you know, I wonder, my friend, have you wasted your summer holiday? Have you wasted your summer holiday?

Yes, I'm sure it was a lovely holiday. Time for rest and relaxation, time for family and friends. But you know, the summer holiday, it's often a time where there's no disruptions. There's no distractions, there's no demands, school or work.

[15:42] And yet, sadly, when we're on holiday from school or work, we take a holiday from Jesus too. We take a holiday from reading our Bible.

We take a holiday from prayer or coming to church or attending the prayer meeting. We take holidays, and yet, there's no holidays in the Christian life. Which is why the summer season is an opportune time to seek the Lord and be saved.

But Jeremiah's saying, look what you've done. You've missed your opportunity. The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, you're not saved. Jeremiah says, this is your diagnosis.

This is your diagnosis. You're still not saved. Still not saved. Still not saved.

What a diagnosis to have, my friend. That you're still not saved. And you know, with your diagnosis, you need a doctor.

[16:43] You need to see your doctor. because you're still not saved. So that's who I want us to see secondly. I want us to see your doctor.

Jeremiah sets before you your diagnosis, you're still not saved. And secondly, your doctor. Your doctor. Look again at verse 20.

He says, the harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we're not saved. For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded. I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored? When we were on holiday in Keswick, in the Lake District, we were walking back from the lake one afternoon.

When a woman, only a few meters in front of us, maybe even 20 meters in front of us, she slipped off the pavement into the road and was hit by a car that was slowly passing by.

[17:56] We don't know if she recovered. We think she was taken by road to hospital and not flown by helicopter. But we never found out. We hope and pray she made a recovery.

But you know, in that moment when a family member is immediately shouting, call an ambulance, you instinctively take out your phone and dial 999. And so as Auntie Shona, who was with us at the time, she was walking there, she dialed 999.

And she was not only asked, was the woman breathing? What had happened? What service she required? She was also asked by the call handler, what three words? What three words?

What three words? It's something I'd never heard of until this accident took place. Thankfully, there was an off-duty police officer there to help an explain and take the phone call.

Because what three words? It's an amazing piece of satellite technology where the whole world has been divided into this GPS grid that's able to pinpoint our location down to the very meter.

[19:03] And how it works is that there's three random words that have been assigned to each position on the GPS grid. So for example, where I'm standing right now in the pulpit, the grid reference using what three words is drilling, horseshoe, croak.

Where some of you are sitting this morning towards the back, your what three words are audible, very important, luring, and revealing. Those to my right, the what three words are earplugs, don't use them in church, handsets, and flippers.

Those to my left, your what three words are warnings, woods, and skillet. And you know, it might sound strange, but it's actually an amazing piece of technology and I'd encourage you to look it up, get the app for your phone to work out what your three words are for your own home so that you know them in the case of an emergency.

Because in an emergency, using this sophisticated technology, it's able to pinpoint your location right down to the meter. And you know, with this passage, it got me thinking about the fact that the Lord doesn't need sophisticated satellite technology to pinpoint your exact location this morning. Because whether you're sitting here in church or watching online at home this morning, the Lord can see your exact location. The Lord knows exactly what your grid reference is.

[20:30] He knows exactly where you are sitting. That's what we were singing in Psalm 139, that the Lord has searched us. He knows us. He knows our rising up. He knows our sitting down.

He knows all our thoughts. The Lord doesn't need sophisticated satellite technology to pinpoint our location. He knows exactly where we are right here, right now.

More than that, He knows your diagnosis right here. right now. And you know, it got me thinking, what three words would describe your exact location and diagnose your heart this morning? What three words would describe your exact location where you're sitting and diagnose your heart? And Jeremiah says, there are three words either saved by grace or still not saved. What three words describe your exact location and also diagnose your heart this morning? Saved by grace or still not saved.

[21 : 45] And if you've missed your season of opportunity, if the harvest is over, the summer has passed, and you're still not saved, if your diagnosis is that you're still not saved, then you need to see your doctor.

You need to see your doctor. You need to call God's emergency number. You need to call God's emergency number. You know, I remember hearing a children's address. And children's addresses are great just for the adults too. I remember hearing a children's address nearly 20 years ago. And it has always stuck with me that God's emergency number isn't 999 but 333.

God's emergency number is 333 because Jeremiah 33 verse 3 says, call to me and I will answer you.

Call to me and I will answer you. And you know, my friend, if your diagnosis where you're sitting this morning is that you're still not saved, then you need to see the doctor.

[22 : 48] You need to see your doctor. You need to tell him God's, you need to call God's emergency number and tell him your diagnosis. I'm still not saved.

Lord, I'm still not saved. I'm still not saved. The harvest is over, the summer has passed and I'm still not saved. But you know what's so wonderful is that Jeremiah presents to us the glory of the gospel in verse 22 because he asks there in verse 22, is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there? Why then is the health of the daughter of my people not been restored? And you know, what Jeremiah asks is actually so beautiful because the balm of Gilead was said to be a medicinal resin.

It was a rare medicinal ointment that only came from the region of Gilead. And it was known throughout the ancient world as the balm of Gilead. Everybody knew about the balm of Gilead because the balm of Gilead was said to provide help and healing for those in need.

But when Jeremiah asks, is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? He's asking rhetorical questions because he's saying, of course there's balm in Gilead.

[24 : 07] Of course there's a physician there. Everyone knows there's balm in Gilead. Everyone knows there's a physician there because there's always balm in Gilead. That's where it comes from. And everyone knows that there's a physician there to apply it to you because there's always a physician there for you.

And that when you receive this balm of Gilead from the physician there, you will experience and enjoy that help and healing you so desire and so need.

But of course you read it and you see, well, Jeremiah, you're spiritualizing this, of course. He's spiritualizing the balm of Gilead. He's spiritualizing the physician that's there. He's saying to us that the Lord is the balm of Gilead.

He's saying to us that the Lord is the great physician. He is the one who's there for you. He is the great doctor you need to come to with your diagnosis that you're still not saved.

And you know, my friend, like it was for Israel who had heard so much over the years, you know that there's balm of Gilead. You know this. You know that there's a physician there.

[25 : 16] You know that the Lord is able to provide help and healing for your diagnosis because he's your doctor. He's your doctor. But you know, when Jeremiah asks, he says, second half of verse 9, why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

He's asking, well, why is there no recovery? Why are they still sick? Why are they still not saved? And the answer is surely obvious. They haven't made their way to Gilead.

They haven't yet come to the physician there. They've rejected and resisted and refused to come to the great physician. And you know, you look at this passage in the Old Testament and you just hear Jesus speaking, don't you?

Jesus says to the Pharisees in the New Testament, those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

And what Jesus said to the Pharisees is what Jesus says to all of us. It's only when you see your need, it's only when you see that you're sick and you see that you're still not saved that you'll come to Dr. Jesus for help and healing.

[26 : 37] Because you know, you know that Dr. Jesus is the only one who is able to provide for you redemption and restoration and recovery. And you know, the wonderful thing about this doctor, the wonderful thing about this doctor, Dr. Jesus, he's a cardiologist.

Dr. Jesus is a cardiologist who can transplant and transform your heart. As the Bible says, from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh.

The same heart, he can also bind it up. We were singing there in Psalm 147. He binds up the brokenhearted. He heals your wounds. He's a cardiologist.

More than that, Jesus is an optometrist. He can make the blind see. He can make you see the beauty of Jesus and the glory of the gospel. He's also an audiologist.

Dr. Jesus is an audiologist. He can make the deaf hear. You might be able to hear what's said today, but you need to hear it. Hear it as if you've never heard it before.

[27 : 48] And that's what Jesus does. He opens your hearing. He makes the deaf hear. But most importantly, Dr. Jesus, this wonderful doctor, is a savior. He not only transforms the heart and opens the eyes of the blind and unstops the ears of the deaf, but he raises sick sinners from eternal death to eternal life.

He gives you the gift of eternal life. And you know, my unconverted friend here this morning or at home, as Jeremiah preached to his people in his day, I want to say to you this morning, there is Bam and Gilead and there is a physician there and his name is Dr. Jesus.

And this morning, your diagnosis, you know your diagnosis. You know that it's still not saved. Still not saved.

You know your, what, three words? Still not saved. But you also know that your doctor is Dr. Jesus. So whatever you do with Dr. Jesus, don't pass him up.

Don't pass him by. Don't let another opportunity to be saved be wasted. Because the harvest has passed. The summer has ended. And you're still not saved.

[29 : 20] Still not saved. You know, in the 19th century, there was a hymn written by a man called Washington Glass. And he wrote the hymn based upon these few words in the book of Jeremiah.

And the hymn was called The Sinner's Cure. The Sinner's Cure. That's what we all need. The Sinner's Cure. And he simply wrote, There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul. There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

And that's what I want to remind you this morning. That as we return to a routine this week, as the kids go back to school and some of you go back to work, the harvest is over. The summer has passed.

And if you're still not saved, there is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

[30 : 27] And his name, my friend, is Dr. Jesus. So you come to him. Come to him and find life and life more abundantly.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks this morning for reminding us about the beauty of the gospel, that Jesus is our great physician and he promises to us that there is healing when we come to him.

There is help in calling upon his name. And Lord, our prayer is that none of us would have that diagnosis any longer, that we are still not saved, but that we might all be given a full bill of health and told that we are saved by grace, by grace and by grace alone.

Oh, Father, speak to us, we pray, that thy word would truly penetrate our hearts, that it might find lodgment there and bear fruit to thine own glory.

Bless us, Lord, we pray today. We ask that for our friends who are still not saved, that they would seek the Lord while he's to be found and call upon him while he is near.

[31 : 49] And for us who are saved by grace, that we would pray for them and keep praying for them, realizing that thou art the God who saves to the uttermost.

Lord, hear us, we pray. Forgive us, we ask. Cleanse us, we plead, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 34. Psalm 34. It's on page 246 in the Scottish Psalter.

So it's page 246 in the Blue Psalm book. Psalm 34. And we're singing from the beginning down to the verse, Mark 6.

But before we sing, we've got a few questions. You all ready with the questions? Yeah? Okay.

Question one. How old was Jeremiah when he was called to be a prophet?

[32 : 59] In his 20s. Yep. Well done. What nickname was Jeremiah given? The weeping prophet.

Yep. What three words does Jeremiah use to describe the people?

Still not saved. Who is Jeremiah describing as the balm of Gilead? Jesus. Yeah. Of course, Jesus is on every page. Jesus is on every page of the Bible.

Well done. What were the headings? Ooh. And our? Our doctor. Well done. Good job. So we're singing Psalm 34.

We're singing from the beginning down to the verse, Mark 6. You know, I was, just as I was opening this psalm, it always reminds me of, I don't know if I can say it, but I'll say it anyway.

John Murdoch MacDonald. He's an elder in Tolstah. I saw him last Sunday evening when I was preaching down there. It always reminds me of him. 20 years ago or more, he, when he was papering in the manse in Tolstah, before Roddy John came, he wrote on the wall, this poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses.

[34 : 12] 20 years later, when he was, well, maybe this is the previous minister to that. When he was taking the wallpaper off, he found the words that he had written there 20 years earlier. And it means so much to him.

And that's his testimony. And I hope that it's your testimony too. As it says there in verse 6, this poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses.

If you're still not saved, that's the assurance that when you cry to the Lord, he hears and he saves.

So Psalm 34, from the beginning down to the verse, March 6, and we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

God will I bless all times his praise, my mouth shall still express, my soul shall boast in God, the me shall hear with joyfulness.

Exol the Lord with me, let us exalt his name too, together.

[35 : 38] I sought the Lord, he heard and did me from all fears deliver.

They looked to him, enlightened where, not shaped where their faces.

This poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses.

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