Bring Back The Good Old Days

Jer 6:8-17  Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall throughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets. To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

Friends, it comes as no surprise to anyone here to hear a preacher stand and say that our nation is definitely what she was started out to be. Our forefathers came to this continent to enjoy the freedom to worship God as we are taught too from His Precious written word. It was an endeavor of the true church of the living God to make religious freedom available to all who would worship Him in spirit and in truth free to do just that. It was at that time, necessary to leave their homeland and find a place that they could do just this. It was later that our nation began to welcome immigrants from each and every nation in the world into her borders. That is not wrong, it is a good thing. I remember as a child learning of the Great American Melting Pot. This was simply a way of describing to the world that America was a place where each and every one could enjoy the freedom to worship, the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If not for the perversion of modern religious leaders, schools and political affiliations, this nation
would still be able to enjoy the freedom of worship that she once had. Today there is much argument over whether or not our nation is a Christian nation. I have been told that none of our major founding documents have any mention of God anywhere in them. If you read them you have to be blind not to see the many references, directly and indirectly to the God of heaven. If any right were inalienable, it could only come from God. Our forefathers believed in these rights and that they were given by much higher power than the human government that required worship according to a man made standard.

As time has passed, our great nation has grown, for a time, to be anti Christian. Even worse is what is obviously in the future. She seems to be on her way to being non Christian. I am not cruel, nor am I foolish. It is the truth. What this world sees as Christianity is nothing of the kind. The church as a whole in America does not even remotely resemble the church of our forefathers. We are in a land that has forgotten the God that made her great. The God that blessed her through many wars and trials and has built her up into the greatest nation in the world. Today, politicians are trying to make Americans believe that she is not the greatest nation in the world, that America is on the decline. I say yes, she is on a downhill run with no sign of stopping before she hits bottom. But I am an American. I will be till I die, and I will die saying that America is still the greatest nation on the face of this planet. She has done the entire too much good not to be considered thus. She has supported countries on every continent through one crisis after another and never been properly rewarded and thanked. On the international landscape, the highest hilltop in view. If you don’t love it, leave it. I am an American. I am not an Irish American, I am an American. God bless America, and judge her enemies, foreign and domestic, Amen!

Looking at our text, we see an alarming picture of this great nation that we so love. There are many of these pictures throughout scripture but I want you to notice with me here the startling, obvious resemblance that our nation bears to Israel at that time.

In verse 16 we see the shape that we find America in today. Notice what God says through Jeremiah.

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

Notice that first of all there is a call to stand. This plainly means that Israel had sat down on God. They had stopped moving in His behalf. They had gotten comfortable where they were and would go no further.
We have as a nation, ceased to be the kind of nation that our forefathers had in mind when they founded our country. Freedom today is perverted in order to allow perversion to run openly in the streets of our nation. If you want to be embarrassed go for a stroll through the electronics department stores across our nation. There will undoubtedly be some young person there who wants to play their music for all to hear. I can guarantee you that there will be ungodly filth playing there while you are there. We call it freedom of expression. To glorify an ungodly lifestyle is not freedom of expression, IT IS SIN! Sin is permitted in the name of freedom. Pornography is hanging all over our stores, our malls, our billboards. It was once embarrassing to have to go to a public store and buy undergarments and some personal items. Now there is no shame in anything that people see, hear or do. I have heard many times in my pastor’s preaching that what once hid in the back alleys now struts down the aisle in the churches in America. Things people used to be ashamed to do in private, they now do in public view and DARE anyone to say anything. Oh, God! Help us to get back to the place that it meant something to be a Christian, and an American. It would be a wonderful blessing to see our nation turning back to God, but it is too late. She is about as far gone as she can be. The ones in our nation that are Christian are obviously not in the mood for prayer. Churches are not in the habit of ministering any longer. So few that do love God, love people, and seek to see Him glorified before the lost world. What can we do? Are we hopeless? Is there any hope in sight?

Yes, there is something that we can do. We may not be many, but we can be strong. We may not be many, but in Him we are mighty. We can do something for our nation, for our descendents, for the world. We can pray. If we would only get back to good, fervent prayer, we may be shocked what a difference that it can make.

We can also get back to living for God and living like we belong to Him, instead of living like free agents in a world laden with sin and headed for hell. It is with this thought in mind that I say “Bring back the good old days.” I am not asking for the old economy. I know that our nation has come a long way through much sorrow, penury, and hardship. I know that the majority of America suffered in the great depression. That was long ago. I don’t want that to happen again, but even in those times of destitution and difficulty, there was a morality that it seems will never be regained. People respected one another. People respected God, His word, His house, His man, and His people. If a man did not go to church, he still had enough respect to refrain from wicked speech and actions before them that were Christian. Today, people find out that I am a preacher and often they can’t wait to exercise their freedom of speech in my presence, just because they can. No, this is not the America of the past. I say, “Bring back the good old days.” Not the old economy but the heart condition in the population that existed back then. Back when.....
I. **Sunday meant going to church.**

I remember as a boy that my grandmother would get all of her grandchildren together and walk us to church. She could not get her children to go, but no one had the courage to disrespect grandmaw. She was a good woman who did good for and too all that she came in contact with. We will never know, in this lifetime, all the good that she did or all of the lives that she touched in her walk here. Most of all, I am grateful to her that she took us to church every time the doors were open. My grandfather was a drunk, and a calloused, hard man, he would not let her use his vehicle or his gas to go to church. He saw no use in wasting his possessions in such a way. But, rain or shine, maw maw, as we called her, herded her little brood of grandchildren to church. She remembered that when she was a child. Sunday meant going to church. We walked to church many times in the rain or the snow, and in the sweltering humidity of the summer heat of Northeast Mississippi.

She grew up in a day, and many of our church members remember these times, that a person may have only one pair of shoes. Your shoes were for school or church and that was all. Everywhere else you went barefoot. Most folks had two suits of clothes. One for every day and every place, the other was their Sunday-go-to-meeting suit. They were special, and were for a special day, Sunday. There was no wondering what they were going to be doing on Sunday morning. Everyone knew they were going to church. It meant something to go to church. It also meant something when a person was not at church.

In our day, the generation that is, for the most part, raising kids has the attitude that church is something that you do when you have nothing else to do. It is no wonder that the nation has turned from God. The question is often raised. “Is America a Christian nation?” Well, I may emphatically say no. There was a time that she was. That simply means that most of her population was Christian. Today that is not the case. We have a generation that is religious but not saved. They have a form of Godliness yet they deny the power thereof. America has become an anti-Christian nation. The only religions that are being restricted in their public performance of their rites or practices are those that are built upon a faith in the Holy Bible as the Word of God. If you will look at our national holidays, you can see the obvious answer to this question. Christmas is a day set aside to celebrate the birth of the Precious Son of God. Easter is a day set aside to celebrate the death the burial and the resurrection of the Son of God. Thanksgiving was set aside to fast and pray and give thanks to the God of Heaven who had prospered the early settlers. There was once a
law in most of our country that businesses shut down on Sunday. That hellish liquor could not be sold on Sunday. Once upon a time, Wed. night prayer service was a time that school activities and sports were prohibited so that people could be in church. Today, because big money and politics talk, nothing is any longer sacred. Not even the fact that there IS a God and He is real. Only God could have known thousands of years before man made the discovery that the world was round, it says so in His book. Only God knew that every star was different, is was written in His book before the astronomers ever figured it out. Only God could have known thousands of years ago that there were “paths” or currents in the seas. It was written in His book thousands of years before they were discovered. And only God would have been able to know that if Abraham had not waited eight days to circumcise his son Isaac, the child would have bled to death. God knew and had his word written down with men never knowing why until my own life time. I will say that America was once a Christian nation. And should be again. The fact that God’s book proves Himself is reason enough that we should be allowed to continue with our worship. I do not believe in violent action to carry the word of God. But what God called sin thousands of years ago, is still sin today. What was abomination to God thousands of years ago, is still abomination today. Prayer is “commanded” by God, not simply allowed. Homosexuality is condemned by God, not simply disapproved of. And I personally don’t believe in atheism. It is a lie. All men know that there is a God, there are simply many who choose to deny Him in rebellion to the very soul that lives within them. I do not choose to require anyone who does not believe as I do to prove their beliefs to me. I do not feel that we as Christians should continually be required to state our beliefs. It is no new story. It is the oldest story known to man. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, created all things. He made man, watched man throw it all away, and then gave Himself to give man the chance to come back to God. God loved you so much that He showed that He would rather die than see you go to hell. I think we all owe it to Him to read His book and find out how He feels about some things. I am a Christian, I will live by the book. Everyone else has to make their own choice. To be otherwise would make me a hypocrite. Read the book, cover to cover, and you may begin to understand why Christians feel the way they do. Don’t be a hypocrite, as most preachers are today, and try to preach what you are not familiar with. If I must continue to study secular history, and philosophy, poetry, the sciences, and other religions in order to preach. Then others should read the book that I live by to try and understand what I preach. Want to learn of God and what the Word of God says? Get to church. The average community in America doesn’t have a thimble full of bible knowledge in it. People don’t go to church. They can’t know.

Bring back the good old days, when Sunday meant going to church. When most people were at least familiar with some of the word of God and able to be honest in their daily lives about what is right and what is wrong.
And that because they got off their behinds and got to church so they could hear the preaching of the word of God.

**II. Getting Saved Meant a Change.**

It is such a familiar story; you can watch people walk the aisles of the church, weeping and crying out in despair for forgiveness. You see them making professions and commitments before the congregation and going right back out to a devilish lifestyle. There is no change, only an emotional stir and a few confessions to salve a guilty conscience that is unable to stand before God in its sinful state and knowledge of its own lost condition. It is in this way that people are convincing themselves that they are alright. “Oh, I am OK. I am good to everybody that I come in contact with. I don’t steal from anybody, I am generous, and I love my neighbor.” And that is no better report than any of the Pharisees that Jesus condemned could say about themselves. They were faithful to attend the worship services, to give their tithes, to fast and pray. And they were lost and going to hell in their sins. There must be a heart change.

When you become a child of God, you will be a different person. David said “I hate every false way.” You will hate the sin that you once enjoyed. You will love people that you once loathed, and you will loathe people that you once enjoyed keeping company with. You will have new desires, new friends, new hobbies and a new heart. You are not the same person that you once were, and it will show.

So many people are convicted by the preaching of God’s word and hurt by the truth, or angered by it. I have often heard these people say something like, “Well, I have too much wrong in my own life to be judging everybody else. I will judge others when I get my life right.” What a cowardly and foolish way to respond to a preacher who has just walked all over your petty little pride and sin. The problem is not a desire not to be judgmental, the problem is that the preacher hit you square between the eyes when he preached to you. The Holy Ghost pricked your heart and you want to accuse the preacher of being judgmental because you just got raked over the coals in your own conscience. Most church folks can shout the house down over every thing you preach on until your preaching comes in the door of the church. They are not worried about being judgmental, they are angry at being judged. Have you ever been there? I like that way that Dr. Oliver B. Greene said, “If the phone’s ringing, pick it up, I just dialed the number.”

God help us and give us more men of God who will preach on sin and teach the church to live right in the sight of God, according to His word.
Too many people are the very same people they were when they walked the aisle. Too many get up and go back to the pew in the lost condition that they came in the door in. They need preaching. People need to know that you can not live like the devil if you are going to heaven. Some will say, “Well, you say, ‘once saved, always saved,’” That is exactly right. Once saved you are subject to the precepts or the chastisement of God. You will abide by His word or you will be taken to an early grave. “if ye be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” If God does not deal with you about your sin you are not His. “Whom the Father loveth, He chasteneth.” If you are God’, He loves you, and He will discipline you.

Wake up America! You can not live like hell if you are going to heaven!

If you are still drinking the same liquor you did twenty years ago, still shacking up after many years as a church-member, still cursing like a sailor after years of walking the aisle, you are still lost. Note the wording of Paul in his letter to Corinth.

1Co 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

According to this passage of scripture, a saved man is not going to be those things listed. Notice the list,

1. fornicators
2. idolaters
3. adulterers
4. effeminate
5. abusers of themselves with mankind
6. thieves
7. covetous
8. drunkards
9. revilers
10. extortioners

And notice what it says about them. They “shall not inherit the kingdom of God”. That is not difficult. If you have been claiming to be a
III. The Scriptures Were Correct.

There was a time that many an argument could be settled peaceably by looking into the word of God. Today, there are too many educated men that want to tell you that they have discovered that the meaning according to this Greek word or that Hebrew word is dramatically altered from what has been the accepted teaching before.

May I say, as I have said many times before, if your Greek or Hebrew study serves to teach a different doctrine than the English of the King James 1611 Bible, your study is in error. You can not have faith if it is unfounded. I know what I believe because I have God’s perfect, infallible, complete word for man preserved for me in the King James Bible. If God could not get the word to me when I needed it, then God can not keep it for me later, and that would mean that God is not God at all, but a myth. If any part of the Bible is not right, it is all brought into question and therefore it is all doubtful. And that would mean that “We are not saved.”

Today, there is so much argument over this word or that, this phrase or that. What is the problem? The fact that it is so plainly spoken, that is the problem. It is true that God has got to teach you as you study and learn of Him, He must reveal Himself to you. The problem today is that men are so afraid to let guilt lie where it belongs that they can’t take the truth of God’s word. The problem is “Thou shalt not!” Men don’t want to be told what to do.

I remember hearing Bro. Bob Welden tell a story about all of these different versions of the bible. He said that all these men who want to prove themselves by disproving God’s word reminded him of a story of some crows. A meat truck was driving at a high speed between destinations in fear of losing the cargo to the heat of the day. As the truck drove across a long flat area where there was just nothing for miles and miles it hit a bump and an entire stick of bologna fell out the back of the truck. Four crows landed and quickly ate until the entire stick was gone, then they flew a short distance to rest on a pump handle at a nearby farm. After gorging themselves they only rested a couple of minutes and one flew off to the North, only to drop dead after flying a short distance because he had eaten too much. Another took off flying to the East and dropped dead, then one to the South, and the West. What is the moral of this story? When your are full of bologna, it’s best if you don’t fly off the handle.
We would not have the mess we have in the Church today if people would get back to an old fashioned faith in God and His word, accept it as it is and leave it alone. It must be kept just as it is.

I once participated in a forum on the internet. It was the last time I participated in one. The argument was over the KJV. I read one article after another despising the KJV, and insulting anyone who would actually lower themselves to using it. In response to the hateful of the KJV and it’s users, one of the co-conspirators asked the question, “Do you think that the KJV is even the word of God after all?” The reply was, “Of course, I do believe that the King James Bible is the word of God and that we should not discount all the good that has been done with it over the centuries.” And it was then that I decided to speak. I asked the question, “If you willingly admit that the KJV is the word of God, then, Why not use it?” And I was immediately cut off from the forum and could not get back in. I did not need any more evidence of the mentality of the men that I was dealing with. Agree with us or get lost. Well, I can not be lost, I am saved, but I wonder about those who do not even trust the bible. How can they trust a God that they can not see, if they can not trust the word in their hands?

**IV. Sinners Were Concerned.**

In the day when people were faithful to go to church, when sinners got saved and got out of the sinning business, when the word of God was accepted as just that and followed in a fearful, reverential awe of God, there was concern among sinners. Old drunkards would ask for prayer. There was a presence of guilt in sinners who did not live right when they got around those that were children of God and lived like it. The wicked were uncomfortable when the preacher walked into the barber shop and they stopped their dirty joking and cursing out of respect. Oh what a blessing it would be to see that again. It would be refreshing to see that kind of respect from most church people today. What has happened to that aspect of Christianity?

When the church is willing to continue to take a blind eye to the corruption about us in our country and say nothing it can only be expected to continue and worsen. There is not enough being said about pornography, child molestation, homosexuality; there is practically nothing being said about alcohol or drugs, divorce and infidelity. Oh, no! You don’t want to offend anyone, you may drive them away. I want to know how? How can I drive some one away who has never come in? We need revival again in the pulpits. Some good old fashioned preaching on the Holiness of God, the unholliness of man, and the fact that we all deserve to be in hell because we are wicked, vile, sinful, and only able to get back into
fellowship with God because His precious Son suffered our punishment in our place. I recommend that people listen to Ray Comfort’s message, “Hell’s best kept secret”. It is truly enlightening. And it is right. When we get back to the place that you can tell the lost from the saved there will again be some concern in those that know they are not saved. At this time, there is not enough difference between the church and the rest of the world to cause a great deal of concern.

And there will be no chance for revival until there is a return of preaching to the lifting up of Jesus. We must get back to preaching on the Magnificent Holiness of God, The Righteousness of His Judgment, The Justice of His Wrath and the wickedness of man and the fact that every one of us ought to be in hell today. Too long men have offered Christ as the answer to all of our problems, the salve for any wound, the healing ointment that brings with it great relief. No! No! A thousand times No! Jesus Christ Is God. He is the Great Holy God, The Lord of Lords and King of Kings, that is coming back in Great Power and Glory to execute Righteous Judgment upon the wickedness of men in this world in the Fury of His Divine Wrath. Only when men begin to get this picture again burned into their consciences will they ever be repentant. Oh, God! Help us to get back to the truth about sin and judgment.

Remember when Paul preached to Felix? “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,” He preached of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and Felix trembled. Sin must be exposed, and refrained from under consequence of judgment from Almighty God. Preach this, teach this, meditate upon this, pass it out and share it at every meeting and service, and watch the results. The world will not fear a God that the Church does not fear.

V. The Saviour was the Centerpeice

There Can be no true revival until this takes place again. The Saviour must be the center of all that we do. We should be seeking to serve Him for Him, because He is worthy to be served. I heard an old preacher the other day and He shook me to my foundations. He brought out the fact that we rarely have Jesus as the center of our ministry, or our lives. He was a missionary to Africa and when he first went to the mission field he felt that he was going to take the Gospel message to the people of that country because with all the misery that they had to live in, he wanted to give them a chance to get to heaven. That was what he wanted to do. He wanted to give them the gospel that they might be saved. He wanted to go to reach them, to
serve them, to live for and if necessary die for them. Upon leaving for the field, he thought that he was going to a nation of wild, ignorant savages who had little intellect and even less understanding as to their plight without God. Soon after arriving and beginning to work, he found that these were people who were wicked, rebellious, and wanted nothing to do with God or the bible, or him. They were not ignorant yet they possessed a knowledge of God and right and wrong that confounded this missionary and angered him at God. He went to praying in his room and letting God hear his disapproval at his being in this situation. He had no idea that men had a natural God given understanding of the fact of deity and that these had rebelled against that knowledge that they already had. This young man had made up his mind that he wanted to come home and God spoke to his heart in a voice that, though not audible, was much clearer than any audible voice that has ever fallen on human ear. God revealed the truth to him that he had not sent him there for those people. God already knew that they were rebellious and hateful, that they did not want him. But God showed him. He died for them, and He saw them as they went to hell. He had watched as they spurned His love for them. He knew they deserved hell, judgement, damnation. But He had paid the price for them, did God not deserve those for whom He had died, and paid the price for. God said, “I sent you there for me, am I not worthy of that for which I suffered?” And that missionary said that one short time with God in prayer turned all of that around, made it all make sense, and completely changed his life for the Glory of God. It is for Christ’s sake that we do what we do. It is for Christ’s sake that we try and live as He would have us to. It is for Christ’s sake that we seek to see others come to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. If men could get out of the desire to build a mighty work for God, to do some mighty deed, build an enormous church, uncover some truth that has been evading man within the pages of scripture for centuries and just get back to doing what we do for His sake, we might see revival.

I heard another preacher say that he was never really used much of God until he reached the place that he told God, (and he was careful to explain that he was not bargaining with God, but that he had finally reached this point in his walk with God) Lord, I will serve you, I want to serve you, in all of my life with all of my heart and soul. And even if I were to end up in hell at the end of this life, I would serve you anyway, because your are worthy. And he said that when he reached that point in the ministry, God was able then to use him. Maybe God would use us, if we could get past our pride and serve Him for His Glory, because He is worthy.

In looking at the first verse of our text, we see a loving God pleading with His people. “Be thou instructed,” Oh, America, be thou instructed. In reading the next verses you can see an astounding picture of America there in the word of God. And in verse 17 they said, “we will not hearken”. To hearken means simply to give respectful attention. And in America, there is
no respect these days for the things of God. No respect for His house, His people, or His word. Judgment is coming and it is well deserved. God Help America.