

WHAT HAVE I DONE

JEREMIAH 8

Text: Jeremiah 8:6

(Jer 8:6) "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle."

Introduction:

The people among whom Jeremiah dwelt had received a grievous hurt, and felt it for they were invaded by cruel enemies, their goods were plundered, their children were slain, and their cities burned. Jeremiah with true love to his nation and God warned them that the cause of all their trouble was that they had forsaken God and adopted or incorporated the ways of the wicked among whom they dwelt.

In short summary they had backslid. Backsliding is not losing one's salvation, it is breaking fellowship with God, it is becoming at ease in the things of God.

Christ's discourse

(John 5:24) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

A backslider is a person who falls backwards into sin. We have many examples in scripture. Some include Noah, Abraham, Peter, Lot, and David.

Some stay backslidden longer than others. For Peter, it was a matter of days, for David, it was a matter of months, but for Lot, it was a matter of years.

Vance Havner once said, "Most church members live so far below the standard that you'd have to backslide to be in fellowship with them."

Notice

1. CAUSE OF BACKSLIDING

Backsliding happens every day, but why does it happen?

A. The lust of the flesh

(Rom 7:18) "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

1. Paul says there is a war going on in us for loyalty; between the flesh and the Spirit.

Someone once asked “Who wins?” The answer is the one that we feed the most.

Illustration:

The story is told of several men that were shipwrecked drifting on the ocean in a lifeboat. As the days passed under the scorching sun, their rations of food and fresh water gave out. The men grew deliriously thirsty. One night while the others were asleep one man ignored all the previous warning and gulped down some salt water. He quickly died.

Ocean water contains seven times more salt than the human body can safely ingest. Drinking it, a person dehydrates because the kidneys demand extra water to flush the overload of salt. The more salt water someone drinks, the thirstier he gets. He actually dies of thirst.

When we lust, we become like this man. We thirst desperately for something that looks like what we want. We don't realize that it precisely the opposite of what we need. In fact, it can kill us.

B. Light Hearted Love For Christ

(Rev 2:4) "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

Illustration:

There was a young married couple sitting close together in their car one day and another married woman asked her husband, "Why don't we sit like that anymore."

Her husband who was sitting behind the wheel replied, "Which one of us has moved?"

Who has moved in many Christians lives? It is not God, for He loves us with an everlasting love.

Illustration:

Dick Halverson the chaplain of the Senate was once noted:

"In the beginning the church was a fellowship of men and women centering on the living Christ.

Then the church moved to Greece where it became philosophy.

Then it moved to Rome, where it became an institution.

Next, it moved to Europe where it became a culture.

And, finally it moved to America where it became an enterprise.

C. Love of the World

(James 4:4) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

1. Lot was lured by the world, and got into it, but in doing so, the world got into him also.
2. Paul was hurt by Demas who forsook him for the love of the world.

Illustration:

One day a department store manager left all of the windows open in the store and a terrible windstorm blew all the price markers around the store causing them to land in total disarray. The next day the shoppers were confused to find socks for \$149.99, suits for \$1.19, shoes for 5 cents, and a scarf for \$1,299.99!

This is how worldly Christians live every day.

They put low value on spiritual things and high value on things of little or no value.

We need to stop living a life as though the price tags got mixed up.

2. CHARACTER OF BACKSLIDING

A. There is unholy living

(Jer 7:9) "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;"

B. There is uncommitted service

(Prov 14:14) "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself."

Illustration:

The Testimony of a Man Who neglected the Lords Work

I looked upon a farm one day,
That once I used to own;
The barn had fallen to the ground
The fields were overgrown.

The house in which my children grew
Where we had lived for years
I turned to see it broken down
And brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day
To find it too had grown
With thorns and nettled everywhere,
The seed neglect had sown

The years had passed while I cared for things of lesser
worth

The things of Heaven I let go while minding things of
earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears and cried,
“O Lord, forgive!” I have not much time left for Thee
Not many years to live.

The wasted years forever gone
The days I can't recall

If I could live those days again
I'd make Him Lord of all.

C. There is the Unhappy Soul

(Jer 3:25) "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

Illustration:

Robert Robinson had been saved out a life of gross sin through the ministry of George Whitfield in England. Shortly after that, at the age of twenty-three, Robinson wrote the hymn Come Thou Fount.

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Sadly, Robinson wandered far from those streams and like the prodigal son, journeyed into the distant country of carnality. Until one day he was traveling by stagecoach and sitting beside a young woman

engrossed in her book. She ran across a verse she thought was beautiful and ask his what he thought of it.

Prone to wonder Lord I feel it

Prone to leave the God I love.

Bursting into tears, Robinson said, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds if I had them to enjoy the feelings I had then.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF BACKSLIDING

A. A backslider hurts society

(Mat 5:13) "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

1. Jonah's backsliding got him into trouble, but it also caused the sailors to get into trouble.

2. Lot was an upstanding citizen of Sodom but his backsliding caused his children to mock him.

B. A backslider hurts self

(Psa 89:32) "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

C. A backslider hurts the Saviour

(Luke 22:61) "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Illustration:

The story is told of a boy invited who invited a girl to a certain night spot, but she turned him down.

He said, Oh you can't go because your father might hurt you.

No she replied, "I might hurt my Father by my actions.

4. CURE FOR BACKSLIDING

A. Realize that we have sinned.

(Jer 8:6) "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle."

B. Don't try to cover up sin.

(Prov 28:13) "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

C. Confess sin and forsake it.