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Truth on Trial
Series: The Weeping Prophet
The Village Church at Shell Point
Evening Service
August 14, 2022

- I. Trial of the Generation
 - A. 1920's – Scopes (Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan)
 - B. 1930 – Lindbergh
 - C. 1970's – Watergate
 - D. 1990's – OJ
 - E. 600's BC – Jeremiah
- II. **The Crime**
 - A. **Preaching**
 - B. **Jeremiah 26:2–6** (ESV) —
 - 1. 2 “Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word.
 - 2. 3 It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds.
 - 3. 4 You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you,
 - 4. 5 and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened,
 - 5. 6 then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.’ ”
 - C. Condensation of Temple Sermon – Jeremiah 7
 - 1. Location – house of the Lord
 - a. Not disturbing the peace on some residential street corner
 - b. Preaching in the place where you’re supposed to preach
 - 2. Call for repentance
 - a. Turn from evil ways
 - 3. Promise
 - a. God may relent for calamity
 - 4. Warning
 - a. Rooted in Law of God
 - (1) Remember Deuteronomy?
 - b. Consequence – like Shiloh
 - D. Repetition of sermon
 - 1. Ryken: Jeremiah was a good preacher, and good preachers repeat their

sermons as often as they can get away with it.

E. **Temple Sermon – Jeremiah 7**

1. **Jeremiah 7:1–3** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD:
 - b. 2 “Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD.
 - c. 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place.
 - (1) Rooted in curses and promises of Deuteronomy
2. **Jeremiah 7:4–7** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’
 - b. 5 “For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another,
 - c. 6 if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm,
 - d. 7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.
 - (1) Strips away false comforts
 - (2) Sins – horizontal
 - (a) Justice
 - (b) Oppression
 - (c) Murder
 - (3) Sins – vertical
 - (a) Idolatry
3. **Jeremiah 7:8–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 “Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail.
 - b. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known,
 - c. 10 and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?
 - d. 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD.
 - (1) 10 Commandments
 - (a) Stealing
 - (b) Murder
 - (c) Adultery
 - (d) False witness
 - (e) Worship the Lord only
 - (f) Idolatry
4. **Jeremiah 7:12–15** (ESV) —

- a. 12 Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.
- b. 13 And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer,
- c. 14 therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.
- d. 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.
 - (1) Warning – Shiloh
 - (2) Ryken: Shiloh represents the departure of God’s living Spirit. A Shiloh is anyplace where God once lived but lives no longer.

F. **Good sermon**

1. **Good content – Law and Grace**

- a. So-called worshipers practicing lifestyle of lawbreaking
 - (1) Both tables of the Law
 - (a) Transgressions against God
 - (b) Transgressions against men
- b. Grace – promises of God in view
 - (1) Deuteronomy’s blessings for covenant faithfulness
- c. Good sermons always have both law and grace
- d. John Sedgwick (English Puritan): Such as preach not the Law at all may make dead and loose hearers, and such as preach the Law too far may make desperate hearers. The golden mean is to be observed. (1) I would not have the Law to be preached alone by itself, without a mixture of some of the promises of the Gospel. (2) I would have the Law to be preached, as it was published, for evangelical and merciful intentions and purposes; not for destruction and desperation, but for edification.

2. **Good application**

- a. There would be consequences for failure to respond
- b. Shiloh = Jerusalem, temple without repentance

3. **Good source**

- a. 26.2 – God and only God
 - (1) **Jeremiah 26:2** (ESV) — 2 “Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word.
- b. Sermons are not the time to speculate based on personal opinions, views of current events, opine on the current wisdom of contemporary talking heads

- c. Sermons are the time to speak for God
- G. Bad sermons deserve prosecution
 - 1. Example of my home church of Pastor Miller in Morgantown
 - a. Miller preaching through Luke
 - b. Next week attended my home church growing up
 - c. That pastor preached from the lectionary
 - d. That week the lectionary featured the same text as Miller's the week before
 - e. Two sermons on the same text; one week after another
 - f. After hearing Miller's sermon – wept!
 - g. The second sermon never even slightly did justice to the text
 - 2. Today – very least, should leave churches where the sermons are bad (wrong content, human origin)
 - 3. Many people today who leave churches
 - a. Many have left this church in the years I spent in Morgantown
 - b. Known people who have left this church (not often)
 - c. Not one person said it was because of bad preaching
- H. Jeremiah is prosecuted for good preaching
 - 1. **Message – truth**
 - a. Truth – exposes sin
 - b. **John 3:19–20** (ESV) —
 - (1) 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - (2) 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.
- I. When we are put on trial, will it be for speaking the truth?
 - 1. Or for doing good?

III. **The Arrest**

- A. **Jeremiah 26:7–9** (ESV) —
 - 1. 7 The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.
 - 2. 8 And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die!
 - 3. 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.
- B. Caught red-handed
 - 1. Dozens of witnesses to his transgression
 - 2. No need for investigation
- C. Implications of his crime are obvious
 - 1. **Treason – spoke against the house of God**
 - 2. **Blasphemy – spoke in the name of God**

- D. So different than we're used to
 - 1. Greeted at the door: "Great sermon, Pastor"
 - a. Even when it wasn't
 - 2. Story of boy who gave a quarter to preacher on way out the door
 - a. Preacher: "What's this for?"
 - b. Boy: "My dad says you are a poor preacher."
 - 3. Jeremiah's greeting at the end of the great sermon
 - a. "Kill him!"

IV. **The Arraignment and Case Against Jeremiah**

- A. **Jeremiah 26:10–11** (ESV) —
 - 1. 10 When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD.
 - 2. 11 Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."
- B. Authorities were brought in to adjudicate
 - 1. No need to present evidence
 - 2. Everyone heard what he said
- C. So sure are they that they offered the appropriate sentence even before they brought the charge
- D. Remarkable how so many people could have heard the same thing and drawn the absolutely opposite conclusion from the right one
 - 1. **2 Corinthians 4:3–4** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.
 - b. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- E. Is it possible in this day to be so falsely charged?
 - 1. If so, how would you respond?

V. **The Plea and Jeremiah's Defense**

- A. **Jeremiah 26:12** (ESV) —
 - 1. 12 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard.
- B. Ryken: Pleads ... "not guilty be reason of obedience."
 - 1. God told me to do it
 - 2. **Acts 4:18–20** (ESV) —
 - a. 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.
 - b. 19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,
 - c. 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."
- C. Never do what Jeremiah does next

1. Every lawyer will say, don't say anything, especially when it might antagonize the judge and jury
- D. **Jeremiah 26:13–15** (ESV) —
 1. 13 Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you.
 2. 14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you.
 3. 15 Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”
 - a. Repeats the essence of the sermon that got him into trouble!
 - b. Adds to it – warns them about crimes they will commit if they carry out the death sentence against him
- E. When you're on trial for doing what God tells you, will you be able to use the same plea?
 1. Will you have the guts to continue to communicate the same truth?
- VI. **Jury Deliberates** (everyone listening in this case)
 - A. **Jeremiah 26:16–23** (ESV) —
 1. 16 Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.”
 2. 17 And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying,
 3. 18 “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “ ‘Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.’
 4. 19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves.”
 5. 20 There was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city and against this land in words like those of Jeremiah.
 6. 21 And when King Jehoiakim, with all his warriors and all the officials, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt.
 7. 22 Then King Jehoiakim sent to Egypt certain men, Elnathan the son of Achbor and others with him,
 8. 23 and they took Uriah from Egypt and brought him to King Jehoiakim, who struck him down with the sword and dumped his dead body into the burial place of the common people.
 - B. Authorities raise issue of the earlier call for the death sentence
 1. Wrestle with precedents

- a. Micah
 - (1) Days of Hezekiah
 - (2) Said pretty much the same as Jeremiah
 - (a) Jerusalem will be destroyed
 - (3) Hezekiah didn't put him to death
 - (a) He repented
 - (4) Lord relented for the time being
 - (5) Destruction would not come until well after Hezekiah had passed from the scene
- b. Uriah
 - (1) Just happened – contemporary
 - (2) Same message
 - (3) Pressure was on – fled to Egypt
 - (4) Jehoiakim didn't respond the same way Hezekiah did
 - (5) Had Uriah hunted down, killed
- 2. Which precedent?
 - a. Jeremiah is not running away
 - (1) He has placed himself in our hands to do with as we see fit
 - (2) He's the opposite of Uriah
 - (3) He's more like Micah

VII. **The Verdict**

- A. **Jeremiah 26:24** (ESV) —
 - 1. 24 But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that he was not given over to the people to be put to death.
- B. Ahikam, son of Shaphan
 - 1. With Jeremiah
 - a. Advocate
 - b. NT term – paraclete
 - (1) One who comes along beside
 - 2. Godly family involved with the discovery of book of the Law during renovations of the temple under Josiah
 - a. Saw godly repentance in action under Josiah
 - 3. Have a tendency to think we are alone in this
 - a. Elijah
 - b. **1 Kings 19:18** (ESV) — 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”
 - c. **Acts 18:9–10** (ESV) — 9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”
- C. Possibly the greatest closing argument we've never heard
 - 1. **Acts 5:34–39** (ESV) —
 - a. 34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put

the men outside for a little while.

- b. 35 And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.
 - c. 36 For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.
 - d. 37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.
 - e. 38 So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail;
 - f. 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice,
- D. When you are on trial, you will have someone with you
- 1. **1 John 2:1–2** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - b. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- E. When others are on trial, will you be there for them?
- 1. Not like Peter, who denied Jesus
 - 2. **Hebrews 10:32–34** (ESV) —
 - a. 32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,
 - b. 33 sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.
 - c. 34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.