

**JEREMIAH: SHINING AS SPIRITUAL TWILIGHT FALLS**  
**"Part IX: Overcoming The Sense Of Worthlessness About One's Life"**  
**(Jeremiah 45:1-4 et al.)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) While visiting a retired missionary couple several months ago, the wife asked me, "When I look at what I am hindered from doing for the Lord right now, I wonder if there is any value to my life. I feel **guilty** that I'm not serving the Lord more effectively!"

(2) In a Prayer Meeting ninety-eight years ago, a despondent woman, Adelaide Pollard sat down in the pew. Her lifelong dream of serving the Lord in Africa as a missionary have just fallen flat as she had heard news that her support had not come through. She was nearly forty years of age, and had experienced a string of lifelong disappointments prior to this event. Her diabetic condition had also worked to limit her efforts, and this was the last straw.

(3) I have noticed that the same nagging idea plagues us today. Sometimes we come to a fork in life's road where we ask, "If I were to stand before the Lord with what I have done or am doing **now**, what would I have to **show** the Lord for my life and ministry efforts?!" A sense of **uselessness** often accompanies this kind of statement.

**Well, if a Christian feels that his life has really not amounted to that much for the Lord's interests, and wonders WHAT he should do or be that is DIFFERENT, WHAT is he supposed to DO about it? WHY?!"**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section as follows . . . )

***Need: "I am DISMAYED by the idea I may have missed God's 'brass ring' of true spiritual SUCCESS! My life's direction does not seem that impressive to me right now -- I feel I am basically going NO where in a hurry! What should I DO about this?!"***

- I. **Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch, suffered from a feeling that his life was one of missed blessings and success, Jeremiah 45:3-5a.**
  - A. Baruch was Jeremiah's hired secretary, a scribe who wrote down Jeremiah's prophecies on lambskin scrolls, Jeremiah 45:1.
  - B. Well, Jeremiah's words were usually full of woe for the people of his era. Such unpopular words led to harsh reactions from others for both men, and Baruch began to feel despondent over his life's direction:
    1. Baruch expressed woes over his grief and unrest from what was happening in his life due to his association with Jeremiah, Jer. 45:3.
    2. What was **behind** this despondency was Baruch's sense of having missed out on a more fulfilling life as **Baruch** evaluated fulfillment:
      - a. The Lord's message through Jeremiah to Baruch reveals that Baruch had planned to be more famous and wealthy than what had been his lot in working for Jeremiah, Jeremiah 45:5a.
      - b. Since Baruch's **expectations** of fame and fortune had not come to pass, he naturally felt despondent!
- II. **God's message to Baruch through Jeremiah countered this errant VALUE SYSTEM of lifetime fulfillment in Baruch, Jer. 45:2, 4, 5b:**
  - A. Baruch placed fame and fortune above God's righteousness as had the people of Judah, something contrary to God's revealed will in the whole Mosaic Covenant, Jeremiah. 45:4 with Deuteronomy 28:1, 15.
  - B. Thus, Baruch's goal of earthly fame and fortune was errantly **worldly**, running contrary to God's will to remove fame and fortune in punishment for Israel's not valuing God's **righteousness**, Jer. 45:5b.
  - C. God said He would bless Baruch by saving his **earthly life** in keeping with **God's** value system, cf. Jer. 45:5c with Matt. 6:25b & Lk. 12:20.
- III. **HOWEVER, FROM THE LONG-RANGE VIEW, BARUCH'S MINISTRY WAS ENORMOUSLY SIGNIFICANT as follows:**
  - A. Baruch's ministry was his job of **writing down** the **words** that God had given to **Jeremiah** for proclamation, Jeremiah 45:1.
  - B. These **written words** actually **framed all future world history**:
    1. One of Jeremiah's prophecies was the people of Judah would be in captivity for **seventy years** for the land to enjoy its missed Sabbaths, Jer. 25:11-12; 2 Chron. 36:20-21 in light of Lev. 26:14, 33-35. Thus, since Israel's land Sabbaths were to occur every seventh **year** (Lev. 25:3-6), the **seventy land Sabbaths** missed meant that for 70 times 7, or for **490 years**, Israel had not kept the land Sabbaths!
    2. Well, the godly Daniel **read** about the seventy years of captivity and confessed Israel's sins for restoration from captivity, Dan. 9:2-3

3. In answering Daniel's prayer, God used **Jeremiah's prediction** as a **BASE** to **announce ANOTHER SET** of **490 years** to occur. This future time would mark God's workings with the nation Israel until the Messianic Kingdom was begun, Daniel 9:24.
4. Well, we know from that prophecy that 483 years have **since then** elapsed, and we are on "hold" until the last seven years, the **Great Tribulation** will occur after the rapture, Dan. 9:26f; 1 Th. 4:13-18.
5. **Thus, BARUCH wrote out prophecy from Jeremiah's mouth that GOD used in FRAMING future HISTORY, making Baruch's WRITING a turning point in WORLD events!**
6. **In this way, GOD fulfilled His promise to JEREMIAH back in Jeremiah 1:9-10 of putting WORDS into his mouth that would set JEREMIAH over the WORLD'S nations and kingdoms, and announce what groups would be destroyed and what ones would be built up in God's plan! BARUCH WAS GIVEN THE ROLE OF BEING THE WRITER OF THOSE WORDS THAT WOULD SO EFFECTIVELY AFFECT MAN'S HISTORY THAT WAS YET TO OCCUR!**

**Application:** *To handle a sense of dismay at "missing the brass ring of this life", (1) believe on Christ as Savior and be put into God's ETERNAL plan, John 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:9. (2) Then, trusting that God values us as His beloved ones (Eph. 1:6 b), and has a task for us to do on earth that is of enormous ETERNAL value (2 Tim. 1:9; 1 John 2:17), WHETHER His assignment APPEARS to be significant or NOT from MAN'S view, we should DO it by faith that GOD'S will is by far the BEST that could occur ETERNALLY! (3) In eternity, God will reveal the great glory He has achieved in and through us in the process, cf. Ephesians 2:7; 2 Cor. 4:8-10, 17-18.*

**Lesson:** *Baruch's focus on what he missed in his EARTHLY life caused him undo grief, for what God would achieve by his writings was very significant for history that was yet to occur! He did not know that his writings would bring him his GREATEST rewards in ETERNITY!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

(1) We began the sermon with the illustration of Adelaide Pollard, the lady whose dream of going to Africa as a missionary was dashed by a drop in support following a lifelong string of ministry effort disappointments.

Well, in the Prayer Meeting which she attended the day she received her discouraging news, Adelaide sat down next to an elderly woman. In the prayer time, the elderly lady prayed, "It really does not matter just what you do with us, Lord -- have y our way with our lives."

Adelaide could not get this lady's words off of her mind. She realized from these words that she had been trying to fulfill her **own** plans instead of stopping to ask what **GOD** wanted to do with her life.

Arriving at home, she read **Jeremiah's** words (**as penned by BARUCH!**) in Jeremiah 18:1-4: "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

Adelaide saw herself in that passage as the defective pot that needed to be remolded by the Lord to do **God's** will **for** her. As she meditated on this thought, she composed all four verses of the hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" we have in our hymnal today.

**That hymn turned out to be the most significant ministry effort by Adelaide Pollard. Yes, later she went to Africa and served at the Missionary Training School at Nyack-on-the-Hudson in New York, but her LIFETIME achievement was highlighted by the penning of that hymn. The song has been used widely by the Lord to direct and encourage His people for nearly 100 years!**

*(2) Of significance to our message is noting the work of Jeremiah and BARUCH in God's helping Adelaide Pollard by way of Jeremiah 18; 1-4 to formulate this hymn. The EFFECTIVENESS of their work from antiquity CONTINUES to affect people for good in ways that go far beyond what these two men could have imagined!*

*When we yield to the Lord's will, He does things with our lives that go FAR beyond what we could imagine could be done!*