

SERMON FOR JUNE 25, 2023  
TEXT: JEREMIAH 20:7-13  
THEME: THE RELENTLESS LOVE OF GOD

O LORD, you have deceived me,  
and I was deceived;  
you are stronger than I,  
and you have prevailed.

In the name of Jesus:

One day the devil put his tools up for sale. He carefully went through each tool, inspecting it so that he could put a proper price on it. Included were hatred, envy, jealousy, deceit, lying, and pride. Laid aside from these tools was one that looked harmless but was a well worn tool. It had an extremely high price tag attached to it. It was the tool of discouragement. When asked why discouragement carried such a high price tag, the devil answered, " Because it is more useful to me than all of the others. I can pry open a person's heart with that when I can't get near them with the other tools. Once inside, I can make them do whatever I choose. This tool is badly worn because I use it on almost everyone, since few people know it belongs to me."

Discouragement comes when we do the right things the right way but experience poor results. We work hard but don't show any progress. We

show up to practice but we lose every game. We spend time with our child, going out of our way to do things with the child, being the best parent we know how but the child rebels.

Discouragement eats a hole in our hearts and makes us want to quit. It takes the air and life out of us. We say things we don't mean to say and think things we shouldn't think. And discouragement makes us do things we don't want to do.

The prophet Jeremiah has been called the weeping prophet because he wept over the destruction of Jerusalem. He is also a prophet who knew discouragement. God called on him to speak a harsh message of judgment upon the people. Jeremiah did what the Lord told him to do. He obeyed. On one occasion, his obedience was met with anger by Passhur, the high priest. So Passhur had Jeremiah arrested, thrown into prison, locking him up in stocks and he threw away the key. Jeremiah's body was so contorted in prison that his body screamed in pain.

Jeremiah cries out to the Lord: "O Lord, you have deceived me and I was deceived. You are stronger than I and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day, everyone mocks me." (v 7). Jeremiah is so discouraged that he tries to walk away from God. "If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," Jeremiah has had it! He is ready to walk

away from what the Lord has for him to do. But he doesn't. Why? Because God pursues him, God keeps on loving Jeremiah and is relentless in His love for Jeremiah. And this is the RELENTLESS LOVE OF GOD of which Jeremiah speaks of when he says: there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." (v9). While Jeremiah is ready to give up, God is not. God never gives up on Jeremiah, He holds onto Jeremiah because God has good news for Jeremiah, Good News that God will deliver Jeremiah. God knows Jeremiah's struggles, and God's love is more than enough to sustain Jeremiah and to keep him going.

In the struggles and times of discouragement that you are going through, God's Good News for you is that God hasn't given up on you. Instead, He comes to save you. For at the right time in history, God became a man in the person of Jesus. Jesus, God's only Son, knew suffering. He knew discouragement. Even though He had committed no sin, Jesus was treated by His Heavenly Father as the worst sinner known to man. Jesus was betrayed by men and rejected by men and by God, sent to the cross on the mount called Calvary to become the sacrifice for all sin. God poured out upon His Son that punishment that you and I deserve. He who knew no sin became sin, damned on the cross so that all might know the love that God has for sinners. And on

the third day, God delivered His Son by raising Him from the grave to give life, hope, and salvation to all who believe in Jesus as their Savior.

God's Good News for you and for all this day is this, God wants everyone to be saved. And to that end, God will go not only to great length but to any length to make known His love for all. God is relentless in His love for you and for everyone.

The Bible is filled with stories of how God relentlessly pursues sinners with His grace and mercy. The prophet Jonah was given the task to go to Nineveh to proclaim God's love for the people. Jonah ran the other way, but God in love doggedly pursued him to not only save him but to use him to share His love with others. Jonah learned that no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't escape from the love of God. Just listen to the Psalmist when he says:  
Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
**8** If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
**9** If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea  
**10** even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me."

You see, God relentlessly pursues sinners with His love. It just isn't with Jonah, God pursued Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Paul and others. Time and again God by His relentless love sought to save sinners. One day Matthew threw a great dinner party and invited Jesus to be present, and along with

Jesus were other guests, a large company of tax collectors and sinners. When the Pharisees and Scribes saw this, they complained and said to Jesus : “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” **31** And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **32** I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Jesus loves sinners and came to save sinners. And God’s Good News for you today is that Jesus loves you and came to save you! There is no place that He will not go to save you. He will relentlessly pursue you and those around you because He loves you. He loves everyone. He loves sinners. Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose again to make us His children. His promise is for you and for all: He will never leave you nor forsake you. He **RELENTLESSLY PURSUES YOU WITH HIS LOVE**, so that we can say with the Apostle Paul: “I am certain that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present or things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “

Amen