

Stand in the LORD's House

† Do not omit a word. (vv.1,2)

† Repentance is the key. (vv.3-6)

In the name of Jesus Christ, “the LORD Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16), dearly redeemed:

It was somewhat eerie to drive down I-35W into Minneapolis for the first time since the bridge collapse last summer. A Minnesota country road would have more cars than nearly noon on a Friday. But now there is no freeway to cross the mighty Mississippi River, and most traffic has been diverted around the scene of major disaster. Looking from a side street on the north side, however, it's hard to tell where the bridge used to be. Abutments on both sides and a crane or two are all one can see from behind buildings and warehouses. It's a far cry from the sirens and panic of 6:05 PM, on August 1st.

Now reverse the tape. Imagine the LORD God gave you absolute knowledge that the 5th busiest bridge in Minnesota, carrying 140,000 vehicles a day, would plunge into the river in one hour. What would you do? And if the LORD commanded you to sound the alarm from the highway at 5:00 PM, would you go? Would anyone have listened if you did? Such an impossible assignment – so much like the one God gave Jeremiah the prophet when He told him to **Stand in the LORD's House** and...

† Do not omit a word. (vv.1,2)

If the king were God-fearing, you might have half a chance. But this was “*early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, [that] this word came from the LORD.*” It's hard to imagine a good king like Josiah, such a powerful reformer and faithful servant of God, having a son as evil as Jehoiakim. He was the one who sat with a pen knife and cut up twenty years of prophecy, the entire scroll of Jeremiah, and threw it into the fire, then ordered the prophet's execution along with his scribe. (Jeremiah 36) Jehoiakim used a mutual extradition treaty with Egypt to hunt down and destroy another prophet named Uriah who fled from the fanatical king. (26:20-23) Jehoiakim was so evil that he was not even buried but was dragged to the dump and left to rot. Legend says the name of the devil he served could be seen in his rotting flesh. Now, Jeremiah, “*This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word.*”

The most famous preachers of our day keep omitting over and over. Rarely would Billy Graham speak of Baptism and Lord's Supper for fear of offending his Roman Catholic and Protestant crusaders by his Baptist beliefs. Yet our Lord has much to say about baptizing all ethnic groups in the Name of the Triune God and teaching them to guard and treasure everything Christ has commanded, including His clear instructions about the Sacrament of the Altar. Listen to the popular preachers on radio and TV today and see how seldom they mention sin at all, much less get specific about their own sins or those of their hearers. “*The soul that sins shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:20), says the LORD. Thank God for *Time of Grace* on TV with Pastor Jeske, and *Reason for Hope* on the radio with Pastor Patterson. It's so much easier to omit the hard words than to proclaim them. It's so much easier to get on the “global warming” bandwagon, than to warn the world of global burning in the fires of Judgment Day.

Safer for Jeremiah to **Stand in the LORD's House** and not say a word. When he did speak up as commanded, he was condemned to death by the people, priests and prophets, and barely saved by some sanctified laymen. These temple officials remembered Micah of Moresheth a century earlier prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem and her temple. Good King Hezekiah had listened, and when he and all the people repented in prayer to God, they were spared from the terrorist Assyrians.

Our entire existence on earth and in heaven depends on faithful preachers who take God's Word to heart themselves, and **Do not omit a word** to us. Can you do the same with the friends and relatives to whom the LORD sends you? Or do you skip the sin and only talk about the weather? Jesus says, "**You are the light of the world.**" (Matthew 5:14) Yet how often do you and I hide our light under a bushel basket of cowardly silence? We must confess failing to **Stand in the LORD's House and not omit a word.** We have all sinned by our silence when it was time to speak, but...

‡ **Repentance is the key. (vv.3-6)**

God wants each of us to change our mind about Him, our sin and our Savior. His heart longs to be kind and comforting to His creatures much like a good police officer wants peace and stability in the neighborhoods he serves. But what is he supposed to do if someone waves a gun in his face? Good training will warn the criminal to drop the weapon – if possible. But sometimes a split second decision is all that stands between him and death and protecting the innocent. Deadly force is necessary even in human affairs. And God had been warning His people for centuries before He sent Jeremiah to the temple in Jerusalem. Can you hear the yearning heart of God? Can you see what He really wants in this?

"Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done. Say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth.'"

Could you find Shiloh on a map of the Middle East? Probably not. Even if archaeologists did positively identify the site, you could not see it under several millennia of mud and dust. The LORD destroyed Shiloh in the days of young Samuel. It was bad enough that God's chosen people kept worshiping the Baal gods of the pagan Canaanites, but when the high priest Eli failed to discipline his sons from their temple prostitution, they died. After the ark of the covenant was stolen, the conquering Philistines leveled Shiloh and destroyed the tabernacle. Nearly 600 years later the people still remembered Shiloh enough to imagine Jerusalem and her temple devastated under God's curse.

Why does God still insist on obedience to His law? Because God is holy. He can no more tolerate sin than you could sit and worship with a dead animal rotting at to your feet. We give God every reason to dispose of mankind with the garbage of rape and lust, illicit movies and disobedient children, selfish heartbreak and stubborn evolutionists who figure themselves as saviors of the planet. God has the power to end it all. But His love won't let Him because He wants everyone to repent today while there still is time. Scientists, scholars and their benefactors "*deliberately forget*" how God the Creator once destroyed the world with water. They ignore His warnings that "*the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*" But God has mercifully washed away with the blood of His own Son all our lust and greed, our pride and selfish need to glorify our idols of position, power and pleasure. Now He wants us to see that **Repentance is the key** to being prepared when the hammer of God's judgment finally destroys more than the bridges of this world. God keeps on warning through His preaching prophets today because "*He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*" (2 Peter 3:5-9 NIV)

You can't crash down 35W today. Approaching University Avenue, concrete barricades divert traffic off the exit. If Mn/DOT cares that much for citizen safety, imagine the intense, eternal love of God who sent His one and only begotten Son to suffer and die for Jews and Gentiles alike. Can we count on His salvation? Yes! The bridge from earth to heaven is rebuilt, solid and secure on the cross of Christ to the empty tomb, and fully supported by His glorious ascension to God's right hand. One promise yet remains: to come again as Judge of the living and the dead. In God's grace we **Stand.** Amen.