

THE CROSSROADS

Introduction:

- How do I live in an ever-changing world?
 - Values change, governments change, forms change, computer apps change, Centrelink changes, workplace rules change, belief systems change.
- How do I maintain values and beliefs based on truth?
- Jeremiah – the weeping prophet
 - His nation was at the crossroads

Jeremiah 6:16-20 *This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.*

“But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ I appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’

Therefore hear, O nations; observe, O witnesses, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law. What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me.”

1. The Watchman

Jeremiah 6:17; 20 *I appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’.... What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me.”*

- Watchmen are appointed by God (not self-appointed)
- Watchmen look out in the distance
 - Sound the alarm when appropriate.

- The people had:
 - Ritual without worship (v20)
 - Sacrifice without change of heart
 - Schemes / agendas that were not of God.

2. Listen

- “This is what the Lord says...”
- How does God speak to US?
 - Does he speak through creation? How?

Isaiah 42:5 *This is what God the Lord says – He who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it...”*

- Look at the complexity of creation.
 - Both the moon and sun are just the right distance from the earth to sustain life
 - Consider the human body.

Romans 1:20 *For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

- God speaks through:
 - The Bible
 - Other people
 - Whisper of the Holy Spirit.
- Whose voice are you listening to?

ILLUSTRATION: Two men were making their way together through the crowded city streets. One was a city-slicker, and the other was a farmer. Suddenly the farmer stopped in his tracks. *“Hold on,”* he said, *“I hear a cricket!”* His friend replied, *“Are you kidding? Even if there was a cricket around here, which isn’t likely, you’d never be able to hear it over all the noise and traffic!”*

The farmer remained quiet for a few moments, then walked several steps to the corner, where a bush was growing in a large cement planter. He turned several leaves over and found the cricket. The city-slicker was flabbergasted.

“What great ears you have!” he said. *“No,”* the farmer replied, *“It’s a matter of what you’ve been conditioned to listen for. Look, I’ll show you!”*

With that, he pulled a handful of coins from his pocket and let them drop on the footpath. As if on cue, every head on the block turned. *“You see,”* said the farmer, *“you hear what you want to hear. It’s a matter of what you’re listening for.”*

3. Stand and Look

Jeremiah 16:16a *This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look...”*

- Crossroads are where many accidents happen.
- The Bible tells us to “stand firm”
 - Stopped, but ready to go.

ILLUSTRATION:

A pastor was visiting one of the church family in hospital – a man who’d had a car accident. He asked how the patient was, and what happened. The reply was, *“Well, it was raining, and I was at a crossroads. I saw a car coming rather fast, but I moved out, and he hit me...”*

- Some are just standing at the crossroads and not moving

- Others are not looking far enough down the road to see the possible results of their choices.
- Timing is essential.

4. Ask

Jeremiah 6:16b *Ask for the ancient paths; ask where the good way is...*

ILLUSTRATION: A battleship was at sea in bad weather. The captain was on the bridge. It was foggy. Just after dark, the lookout spotted a light on the starboard side. The captain asked if it was steady or moving. The lookout replied that the light was steady – meaning they were on a direct collision course with that ship! The captain ordered the lookout to signal the other ship. *“Change course 20°! We are on a collision course!”*

The signal came back: *“Advisable for you to change course.”* The captain replied, *“I am a Captain. Change course 20°!”*

Back came the answer: *“I am a seaman second class. You had better change course 20°!”* The captain was furious. He sent back, *“I am a battleship! Change course!”*

The seaman second class responded. *“I am a lighthouse!”*

- Not every ancient path is true.
- Not every new way is true
- Ask where the good way is.

James 1:5-7 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord...”*

- God gives generously
 - Without finding fault
- Do not doubt.

5. Find Rest

Jeremiah 6:16c ... *and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.*

- Jesus said:

Matthew 7:13-14 *Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*