

MAKING BAD INVESTMENTS

Jeremiah 2:1-13

Introduction: We have discussed this in the months past but it does not hurt to revisit this because in God's eyes there needs to be an awareness of the problems we face when making poor or bad investments. We can talk about the types of investments like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, gold, real estate and many other items that we try to make a profit. There have been good investments and bad investments. Yet there is an investment that we often overlook and that is the investments of our lives as it impacts those around us.

Recently I watched a show on TV about Archie Manning the long time quarterback for the New Orleans Saints. He played eleven years in the NFL for the Saints and never had a winning season. He could be considered a failure as a Professional Quarterback in the National Football League. Yet, something that is often overlooked is the success of his three sons. Two of them are well known in the National Football League as Payton and Eli Manning. The oldest son had his football career cut short with the prospect of being completely paralyzed if he took a hard hit in the right was. When you look at these sons of Archie Manning it says that Archie made some investments in his sons by teaching them football. That is not the case. He never encouraged them to play football. He wanted to know their dad loved them and would be proud of them no matter what course their life took. Archie had a tragedy take place in his life the summer before he became a sophomore quarterback at Ole Miss in Oxford, Mississippi. While at home before returning to college he came home to find his dad had taken his own life. This was tough on Archie but he had been brought up in an environment where he attended church in Drew, Mississippi every Sunday and grew up with morals and an ethical standard that is seldom seen in a professional football player. Archie wanted to be a dad to his sons and instill in them Christian character and commitment to being successful at whatever they engaged in. It so happens that all three of them chose football and all of them very successful growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana.

My point is that there are some things we can invest in that are more important than how large our portfolio is and how many stocks and bonds we have. There are some things more important than having a large investment so one can take it easy at retirement. Now do not misunderstand what I am saying. There is nothing wrong with making plans for the future so that we can be taken care of in old age. In fact the principle of preparing for the future is part of the message of the Bible.

In our text we find a word that appears several times in the book of Jeremiah. In fact it is found six times. The word "profit" is found in your KJB 43 times. Listen to some of the things the Bible says about "profit."

· The first time the word "profit" is found is [Genesis 25:32](#) (KJV) *And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? Jacob saw his hunger more important that what he had been given for the future.*

- A good question is posed in **Job 35:3** (KJV) For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? *and*, What profit shall I have, *if I be cleansed from my sin?*
- **Proverbs 11:4** (KJV) Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.
- **Mark 8:36** (KJV) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? This is the best known verse in the Bible about profit.
- Jeremiah says something about “profit” in a couple of places in this chapter 2 of Jeremiah. Note: **Jeremiah 2:8** (KJV) The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that do not profit*. AND **Jeremiah 2:11** (KJV) Hath a nation changed *their gods*, which *are yet no gods?* but my people have changed their glory for *that which doth not profit*.

These two verses suggest what we want to address in this message. We can invest in things spiritually that do not profit. In other words God is giving an evaluation of how we can make some bad decisions about our investments and commitments in our spiritual life.

The question is what are the indicators that you have made some bad investments in your spiritual life? What is the focus of your life? What is important to you right now? These are questions that we need to address in our walk with the Lord. There are benefits that we need to evaluate in our life that will help us in our investments of life. Thus we want to explore what Israel had invested in or maybe stated another way, what was important in their life that drew them away from God? What is happening in your life that draws you away from God? These are valid questions in light of this text.

1. **Their Commitment Early, Jeremiah 2:1-4.** Note here that God calls attention to the early days of the life of Israel. They sought the Lord and wanted to have a good relationship with Him in the wilderness. Note how this passage describes the wilderness. (1) A land not sown; (2) Look at **verse 6**, “a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt...” What God is saying is that when God brought them out of bondage they went through some difficult times and found the environment not conducive to a prosperous lifestyle. It was hard and difficult. Yet in the midst of that they followed the Lord and sought to maintain the relationship with Him. The land was not very favorable for life but God was with them and they trusted Him in all the difficulties they faced.

This is a lot like it is with us when we were first saved. Life was not the best and we had to get rid of some of the things that did not please God and were not compatible to being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until a person can learn to trust the Lord for the things in life that are important there are some troubles that will often discourage us.

Israel was this way. There were times in the wilderness they did not have water and God provided it in a supernatural way. They longed for the ways of the old life in bondage. The food was different and the living conditions were much better than in the wilderness. Yet, this was a preparation time for Israel to see if they would trust the Lord and follow Him. You and I go through a similar time when we first get saved. There are a lot of new things to experience and some tough times getting rid of the old lifestyle and the old habits that we often think are normal in life. Yet to God they need to be discarded and the new life incorporated into our behavior.

It is easy to criticize Israel for the behavior they demonstrated while in the wilderness. Yet, you and I are very much the same as we begin our walk with God the early stages are sometimes like the wilderness because the old lifestyle is not friendly to the new lifestyle. The old habits are hard to break and we often enjoy the old habits and want to continue to engage in them. The reason we have this attitude is because the old habits have brought us some sense of satisfaction in life and we are not sure of the new lifestyle and what it will bring. If we expect to be a follower of the Lord, we need to go through the desert/wilderness and begin to allow God to show us the way and provide for us in an unfriendly environment. This is the early period of the Christian life where we need to learn to trust the Lord and walk in the ways he wants us to walk.

Note **Jeremiah 2:3 (KJV)** *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.* The life of Israel was one of a good relationship with God and He was their protector. That is what the last part of that verse indicates. God would “...all that devour him shall offend.” In other words God would come against those who sought to devour/destroy Israel, God would defend Israel. That is suggested in the next part of that verse which says, “...evil shall come upon them...” God will come against those things that attempt to stop one from going where God wants them and being what God wants for them.

Do you remember the innocent days of your Christian life when you were a new Christian? How that the things that sought to discourage you were things that God wanted to purge from your life and you learn to trust Him. This is what God wants to do in your life.

- 2. Their Current Conditions, [Jeremiah 2:5-8](#).** The problem with our understanding of the Christian life is that we do not realize how dangerous the old things we engaged in can be and how they keep drawing us to the ways of old. Something happened to Israel when they arrived in the land. You see the provisions God made for Israel became a satisfied way of life and the mind forgot where they had come from and where they were. Life became so satisfying that there was a sense of leaving the relationship with God behind and trusting in one's self and

ability to sustain life. You see we become complacent and begin to drift away from God and that relationship to the point that we totally forget who brought us to where we are spiritually and what brought us to that place. Look at **Jeremiah 2:5 (KJV)** *Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?* You see what happened to Israel? They began to complain and blame God for the things that became difficult and that made them think that God was not fair and was evil.

I find this attitude often in lost people who encounter difficulties they begin to blame God for the circumstances they find themselves in. When tragedy strikes they ask, “Why did God let this happen?” When there becomes a sickness or cancer, the question is always, “Why did God let this happen to me?” We often forget that sometimes our lifestyle has brought the tragedy or the illness upon us. Alcoholics have no basis for blaming God for cirrhosis of the liver, when it was all along the result of a lifestyle that enjoyed alcoholic beverages. I think you get the idea. We often forget how we got where we are because of a sinful lifestyle.

- a. Their Perception of God, Jeremiah 2:5-6.** We get complacent and begin to drift away from God and when things get tough the attitude is, “Where is God when I need Him?” Yet we forget we have gone after “vanity” (empty activities) and “became vain.” When a person becomes vain they begin to focus on themselves and how important they are. Vanity can be defined as “excessive pride in one’s appearance, qualities, abilities, achievements, etc.” (www.dictionary.com). It usually results in an absence of the understanding what is really valuable in life. This is true when we consider investments. We often forget the value of relationships and begin to place value on things. Look at how successful I am!
- b. Their Prosperity, Jeremiah 2:7.** Often prosperity will take one on a path that forgets God because it causes one to think their prosperity is the result of their intelligence, their hard work, their ability to make wise investments.
- c. Their Poor Profit, Jeremiah 2:8.** Look at the result of this lifestyle that excludes God from their matriculations.
 - 1) The Priests.** There is a great danger in knowing the scripture and not knowing the author of the scripture.
 - 2) The Pastors.** There is a great danger in forgetting the “wages of sin.”
 - 3) The Prophets.** There is a great danger in adding to what God has said or in other words taking something from a false religion and thinking God said it when He said no such thing. This is the problem with some who make the statement, “God told me...!” or “God said...”

3. Their Characteristics Which Indicate a Bad Investment, [Jeremiah 5:9-13](#).

This brings us to the heart of this passage. That is the real reason the people of Israel found themselves in the condition they were in. They had moved away from God and went after false gods and a lifestyle that suited them and not God. This is the result of vanity. We find ourselves in a lifestyle that we have decided was acceptable when it is far from what God expects. God gives two reasons that the people of Israel had gone away from following Him. **First**, they had “forsaken Him, the fountains of living water.” Now do not overlook what it says. God is the “fountain of living water.” Not just the provider of “living water.” Jesus said in **John 4:14 (KJV)** *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* Jesus was not talking about literal water but a relationship with Him. He would satisfy the thirst in a person for something that satisfies. **Second**, they had “...[hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water](#)” (**Jeremiah 2:13**). Do you know what a “cistern” is? It is a means of collecting water when you do not have a well. It usually depends on the roof with a collecting system to gather rain water in a vessel that will provide water. Anyone who knows anything about cisterns knows that the water there is rain water and it has characteristics that ground water does not have. I remember when I was young that my grandmother said she would rather wash her hair in “rain water” than well water. The reason is that it is naturally soft water. Water from the ground has lots of elements in it that make it “hard.” Water from the sky is a pure water without the chemicals and elements that can contaminate it. We have forgotten what is important. We need water from above, not water from the ground.

There is an application that fits this. Water is a type of the “word of God.” **Ephesians 5:26 (KJV)** *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the [washing of water by the word](#).* **Titus 3:5 (KJV)** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, [by the washing of regeneration](#), and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

a. Substituting the Material for the Real, [Jeremiah 5:9-11](#). Here is where we get to the thought of this passage. Look again at **Jeremiah 2:11 (KJV)** *Hath a nation changed [their gods, which are yet no gods?](#) but [my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit](#).* We often invest in things that are temporal and not eternal. One of the best investments a person can make in their children is that they know how to trust God, first for salvation and second for the direction of life. If you have not done that or are not doing that then there is a good chance you have not done that for yourself. We often substitute that which is temporal for that which is eternal. We do not think the eternal is important because we cannot see it. Absence of presence does not diminish its reality.

- b. Satisfaction with the desolate, [Jeremiah 2:12-13](#).** We begin to build our life on those things that will disappear. Desolate had the meaning of “uninhabited, deserted or lonely.” We live in a life of loneliness. Feeling alone is one of the major causes of suicide. People begin to think that they are not important and not valuable. One of the things that struck me about Archie Manning is that he wanted to instill in his children that they were important to him if to no one else. We can put in our children’s minds that there are things that are more important to us than them. It can be a hobby, a job a friend or something else that communicates to them that they are not important.

Conclusion: What is the focus of your life today? Do you seek the Lord or the satisfaction of a lifestyle you would rather have than a relationship with God?