

Title: What Is It to Seek the LORD?

Text: Jeremiah 29: 13

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Jeremiah 29: 13: And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14: And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity,...

As one God has called to preach the word one thing that causes me more sorrow than anything else is when sinners hear the word preached yet go on in their same everyday routine refusing to heed and obey God's word.

Many here do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Some believers are suffering great trials. Others are having difficulty with sin. Some need their faith strengthened with a fresh view of Christ. All these cases are various types of captivity: unbelief, trials, sin, and weakness of the flesh and spirit.

Whatever our case may be, God says "ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity."

Subject: What Is It to Seek the LORD?

Proposition: In this passage, God declares that seeking the LORD is to give him the glory as you seek him alone with all your heart.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

What is it to seek the LORD? It is to be made to do so by God so that we give God all the glory for making us seek him. To see this we have to consider the context of this passage. Notice, how many times God says, "I will."

Jeremiah 29: 10: For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11: For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12: Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13: And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14: And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

God sent Jeremiah to deliver this word the children of Israel at a time when God had turned Israel over to Babylonian captivity due to their sin against God.

Our sin, our captivity, is the reason why God himself must first make all those he saves to seek him. We have sinned against God. Our sins have separated us from God. Only God can bring us back into fellowship with God! Only God can continue to make the believer call on him and have communion with him. If God left us “dead in trespasses and in sins” we would surely perish in our sins because God says “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” (Ephesians 2: 1; Romans 3: 11)

God works all things to make his children call upon him. The good news of the gospel is God declaring what the LORD himself shall bring to pass.

God said, “After seventy years be accomplished.” At God’s appointed set time, God our Savior came to this Babylon and visited his people, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

God said, “I will perform my good word toward you.” Christ performed all God’s good word toward his chosen people. Christ fulfilled every jot and tittle of God’s holy law for his people so that Christ is our only Righteousness. He purged all the sin of his people so that Christ is our Justifier and our Justification. Christ reconciled all his people to God so that Christ is our Reconciler and the one in whom we are reconciled in peace with God.

God said, “I will cause you to return.” At his appointed hour, our sovereign Head sends his gospel, quickens our hearts and causes each of his redeemed to return to him, making us willing to call upon him in the day of his power. (Psalm 110: 3)

All this is according to God’s eternal purpose. God said, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

When God works grace in our hearts, the effectual result is then we shall call upon him with all our hearts. God said, “Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” So it is by God working in the heart that “ye shall search for me with all your heart”

Psalm 27: 8: When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

Then the Lord says when you search for me with all your heart, “And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations,

and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”

Do you see why context is so important? Taken out of context, our verse sounds like it is all up to the sinner. It sounds as if we are the first cause who makes us search for him with all our heart. But in context, God declares he is the first cause. It is God who shall make each of his children call on him with all our heart and then Christ shall be found of each one.

This is the difference in works and grace. Salvation is by grace so that God gets all the glory for every aspect of saving his people. When false preachers glorify the sinner’s will and the sinner’s choice, they are making the sinner to be god, they are giving the flesh room to glory, and they are breaking the very first commandment, “thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” (Exodus 34: 14)

God gets the glory of putting us in Christ, “That no flesh shall glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,…” God gets the glory for making Christ all unto us, “who of God is made unto us…” God gets the glory for being all unto us, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Here is why, “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1: 29-31)

Psalm 65: 4: Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

So “What is it to seek the Lord?” First, it is to be made to seek the LORD by the LORD making us to do so. For this reason all who truly seek the LORD give the Lord all the glory for making us seek him.

ONLY THE LORD

God declares that seeking the LORD is seeking only the LORD—**Jeremiah 29: 13: And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me...**

Most search the scriptures for works to do to save themselves or to obtain God’s favor or to put God in debt to them. Christ said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” (Joh 5:39-40) Indeed, search the scriptures. Indeed, come and hear the gospel preached. But do so seeking Christ alone! God says, “ye shall seek me, search for me!”

We seek the Lord alone only when we know that we are totally helpless, that we cannot save ourselves, that we cannot even add to our salvation. Seeking the Lord only is not seeking Christ plus our righteousness; not Christ plus our piety; not Christ plus our will and works. It is to seek Christ alone, giving up everything else and renouncing all our former vain works! Listen to Paul,

Philippians 3: 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5: Circumcised the

eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

So seeking Christ alone is to find out who Christ is? Paul said, "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Timothy 1: 12) Who is Christ? Christ is the Son of God and the Son of man. He is the GodMan. He is very God and very Man in one person. Christ is the one Mediator, between God and men. He is the only one who brings God and his people together in one, even in him.

Seeking Christ is to find out why Christ came? He came "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just." The justice of God is carried out in full on each one God saves because God poured out his judgment on Christ in our place. Not only does Christ declare that God is just but also that God is "the justifier." Christ is the Justifier of his people from all our sins from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. God in Christ is just and the justifier "of him which believeth in Jesus." Those who believe in Jesus have ceased from our own works to rest in Christ through faith. That is why Christ came. (Romans 3: 26) He came to save his particular people. Christ said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10: 15) His name is Jesus for "he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1: 21) Christ came to declare the righteousness of God as he saved all God's elect.

Seeking Christ is to find what Christ accomplished? Did Christ accomplish the work God the Father sent him to accomplish? Did he declare the righteousness of God? Did he save his people from our sins? Christ prayed to the Father saying "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17: 4) The good news of the gospel is that nothing remains to be done, nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken from Christ's work. It is finished!

Seeking Christ is find out where Christ is now and what Christ is doing now? Christ did not remain in the tomb. On the third day God declared that Christ finished the work when Christ arose from the dead. God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Ephesians 1: 22-23) Not only this, Christ is coming again to bring all his redeemed to glory with him. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9: 28)

Do not merely seek a system of doctrine, seek Christ! Do not merely seek an escape from hell but seek Christ who is the believer's heaven! Do not merely seek the benefits but seek Christ the giver of the benefits! Do not seek a sign or a feeling seek Christ for he is the only sign given! Do not merely seek to join the church seek the Head of the church who purchased the church with

his precious blood! Seek Christ alone for “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4: 12)

So to seek the LORD is, first, to give God all the glory for making us seek the LORD; and, secondly, it is to seek only the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHOLE HEARTED SEARCHING

To seek the LORD involves whole-heartedly searching for him—**Jeremiah 29: 13...when ye shall search for me with your whole heart...**

Take an athlete in a race for example. The race only lasts a few short minutes. But that runner spent hours and months and years conditioning for those few short minutes. The athlete sought the prize with their whole heart.

If a person really wants something, he will seek it with his whole heart.

The woman with issue of blood spent all she had at the hand of many physicians and was none the better. But when she heard of Christ, even in her sick condition, even though the crowd made it difficult, she pressed, she pressed, she searched with her whole heart until she got to Christ. And Christ healed her. (Matthew 5: 25-34)

Blind Bartimeus sat by the highway begging. When he heard Christ passed by, he began to cry out to the Lord. “And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called.” And Christ healed him. (Mark 10: 46-52)

Listen to this important word concerning seeking Christ with the whole heart. Christ says, “Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.” (Mark 4: 24)

As this message was preached, Christ measured out light by sending his gospel to be preached. Now, with what measure will we mete it? Will we go home and download the message and listen again? Will we pull up sermon notes and study and look up the scriptures? Christ says “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.” That is what the Lord says in our text, “And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity.” (Jeremiah 29: 13-14)

But Christ will not be mocked. He said, “and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” (Mark 4: 25) There is no neutral ground when it comes to hearing the gospel and seeking Christ. Everyone who hears the gospel, either seeks the Lord with the whole heart or refuses. Christ is a savor of life or savor of death. God says,

Proverbs 1: 23: Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. 24: Because I have called, and ye refused; I have

stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25: But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28: Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. 32: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. 33: But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Proverbs 2: 1: My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2: So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; 3: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; 5: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6: For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. 7: He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8: He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9: Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path.

Isaiah 55: 6: Seek ye the LORD, while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8: For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9: For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Proverbs 8: 17: I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Believer, this is for you and me as well. Every hour, every day, for every cause, we must be seeking Christ. He says to us “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” (Matthew 6: 33)

Psalms 62:8: Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

So to seek the Lord is to give him all the glory for making me seek him; it is to seek the Lord only with no works of our own; and it is to seek him with the whole heart. God promises “And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29: 13)

Amen!