

During the prophet Jeremiah's time, the people of Judah had fallen far from God. They had shed so much innocent blood in the land that God had determined to remove them from His presence. Time and again, He sent His prophets and His judgments calling them back to Himself, but they would not respond to His voice or to His rebuke.

Yes, Judah was God's chosen instrument through which His blessings and His curses would be administered to the nations. But she had forgotten her responsibilities and duties before God and became proud. She lived as she saw fit. She had become arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned (**Ezekiel 16:49**).

Her most egregious sin was that she **"...did not plead the case of the fatherless to win it."** (**Jeremiah 5:28**). The people were praising God with their mouths, while sacrificing their children to a false god. This was intolerable before Almighty God. But nobody knew it because the prophets and the priests weren't telling. Too judgmental!

The people loved it this way. They wanted – no, they demanded – positive, "seeker friendly" messages, messages that would help them feel more at peace with themselves and with "god." The accommodating priests and prophets of the day, in order to not offend the easily offended, dressed the wound of God's people as though it were not serious. They proclaimed peace, when God was not at all at peace with them.

The people were at war with God, and they knew it not. The reason? They were assured by their lying priests and prophets that things were just fine. Oh yes, they had it all! They could sacrifice their children at Topheth in the valley of Ben Hinnom and, at the same time, worship God in His house. They were safe, so

they thought (**Jeremiah 5:9-11**). But God was watching!

Jeremiah was told by God on three separate occasions (**Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11**) not to even pray for these people. Can you imagine that? Why would God deliver such an incomprehensible command? More than that, God said that even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before Him and plead for these people, His heart would not go out to them (**Jeremiah 15:1**). No mercy would be shown to them.

Why not? It was because of the innocent blood being shed in the land. The people were sacrificing their children at Topheth in the valley of Ben Hinnom while worshiping God at the same time. The Bible tells us that this was something that never entered God's mind (**Jeremiah 7:31**). It never entered His mind that His people would do such a wicked thing! The land was full of blood, and this blood has a voice. It cries out to God day and night. It cries out for justice. Innocent blood must be avenged.

The people wanted God's mercy and blessing. They wanted Jeremiah to pray for that! God had something else in mind. He wanted the people to repent of child sacrifice. Justice for innocent babies had to be restored in the land before God's mercy would flow from heaven. *Where there is no justice, there will be no mercy!*

How could justice be restored? By the proclamation of God's Law. That is what Jeremiah was called to proclaim (**Jeremiah 1:17-19**). It is the Law of God that brings conviction to the heart, which leads to repentance. Yes, true repentance leads to justice, and justice leads to His amazing mercy and grace!

Justice must be established in the land before God's mercy will be dispensed. *Where there is no justice, there will be no mercy.* There was no justice in Jeremiah's time for innocent children therefore there would be no mercy!

God's mercy would not be offered until God's justice had been dispensed. The priests and the prophets were called to confront the people of the nation with the Law of God. Then the heinous sin of child sacrifice would be exposed so that the people might repent, justice be restored, and God's mercy again be poured out on all the land.

Called to confront, however, the priests and prophets of Jeremiah's time chose to cajole and comfort. They were called to unsheathe the sharp double edged Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and let it do its awful, yet magnificent work in bringing people to repentance. In a phrase, they were called to **"...plead the case of the fatherless to win it."** But they had no intention of using the Law of God to get there. What would it do to "church growth" if this were the message? So they busied themselves **"...dressing the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."** (**Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11**).

This message of "false peace" delivered by the prophets and priests was precisely why Jeremiah was told by God not to pray for this people. They were unwilling to handle the Word of God in truth (**Jeremiah 8:8**). The people were not being confronted with their sin. **"...they (the prophets and priests) strengthen the hands of evil doers, so that no one turns from his wickedness..."** (**Jeremiah 23:14**). No one was turning from sin. Repentance, in this "seeker friendly" environment, was rendered

an absolute impossibility. *No justice – no mercy!* The prophets and priests pleaded the case of the fatherless alright, but they were not pleading to win!

This sounds strangely reminiscent of the Church in America today. The prophets and priests of Jeremiah's time were preaching positive "seeker friendly" messages and the people loved it that way. But God didn't! God desires mercy, not sacrifice (**Hosea 6:6; Matthew 12:7**). That means there has to be justice! In order for mercy to be poured out from heaven, justice must have its way on this earth. *No justice – no mercy!* It's just that simple.

Jeremiah was called to confront God's people with the sin of sacrificing their children at Topheth. He was called to bring God's Word and God's Law face to face with God's people. They hated him for it. It exposed their sin. It hurt and was certainly not a popular message. But once the judgment had been delivered, if the people repented of their sin, mercy could be dispensed from heaven. God desires mercy, but to get there, there must be justice.

Mercy certainly triumphs over judgment (**James 2:12-13**), but it cannot be had apart from judgment. Mercy can only be dispensed after the judgment is made. In order for God to have mercy on the people of Judah, they had to repent of child sacrifice. But the prophets and priests had no intention of confronting the people with this sin (**Jeremiah 23:14-22**). It just wasn't "seeker friendly." Exposing sin was simply no way to grow a thriving church.

The people in Jeremiah's time wanted God's mercy while continuing in their sin. **Romans 6:1** anyone? We do the same thing in America today by asking God to bless us while sacrificing His children, calling what is evil

good, and tolerating all religions except Christianity. So God made it very clear that He would bring an end to His people. No amount of prayer, evangelism, singing, proclamation, or sacrifice would change His mind.

Why? Why was God being so hard on His people? The Bible tells us that it was because of what Mannaseh, son of Hezekiah, did in Jerusalem (**Jeremiah 15:4**). Mannaseh had “...filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord was not willing to forgive.” He had even sacrificed his own son in the fire (**2 Kings 21:6**). Yet, God patiently waited (five different kings) for the people of Judah to repent of this heinous sin. By Jeremiah’s time, God’s patience was at an end. Is God’s patience with child sacrifice in America coming to an end?

We should be aware that God’s patience with us over this sin must never be mistaken as His approval of it. His kindness, tolerance, and patience is meant to lead us to repentance. That is precisely what God’s Word tells us in **Romans 2:4**. We are not getting away with the murder of over 45 million children. Just look around!

We have been lulled into thinking that, “If God hasn’t judged us by now, He must not really be that upset with us.” What a tragic mistake! Listen to **Psalm 50:21**: “**These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face.**” Or how about **Isaiah 57:11**, “...Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me? I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you.” We aren’t getting away with anything. Future generations, our own sons and daughters, will suffer for our unrepentant sins. This is exactly what happened in Jeremiah’s time.

Today in America, we Christians are worshiping God while children are being sacrificed at abortion mills. We ask for God’s mercy, but have no concern for His justice. Remember, *no justice – no mercy!* Oh, we plead the case of the fatherless, but not to win it. We trust the Republican Party to do that. It pleads the case of the fatherless only to keep its conservative voter base strong. It has no intention of **pleading the case of the fatherless to win it.**

Yes, we have become pleaders – not winners. This was the sin of Jeremiah’s time. Our newly elected President says that the culture is not ready for the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. He is not pleading to win. He is just pleading.

The culture may not be ready to end abortion, Mr. President, but God is! He is looking for a man to unsheathe the Sword of the Spirit and restore justice to the land. Surely we Christians can do more than vote Republican, support a local crisis pregnancy center, and hold a Life Chain.

Therefore, the prophet Jeremiah was told by God Himself not to pray for the well-being of his people. Should you and I be praying for the well-being of America, or should we be doing something else?

Surely we have sacrificed more children than King Mannaseh. The young, the weak, and the aged in America have become a prey. Justice has stumbled in the streets, and because it has, God will not dispense His mercy. Only His judgment and wrath remain. Remember, *no justice – no mercy!*

Ours is to **plead the case of the fatherless to win it!** We cannot wait for the President, the Congress, or the Supreme Court to do what only we can do. We cannot wait on the

Republican Party, nor can we wait on conservative radio and TV talk-show hosts. They will plead the case of the fatherless, but they won’t plead it to win it. It’s up to you and me, and all who claim Christ as Savior to bring justice back into the streets.

The prophet Amos said it well: “**But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!**” **Amos 5:24**. Why was it so important to have justice in the land based on the Law of God? Because it convicts the heart of sin and brings God’s people to repentance, that God might pour out His mercy and grace.

We are the forgetful recipients of the mercy and blessings Almighty God has bestowed upon this nation. Isaiah, when describing the nation of Israel, said, “**See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was a nation full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her – but now murderers!**” **Isaiah 1:21**. Is this America today?

We have become a nation of murderers and, even though we elected a Republican President who confesses to be a “born-again” Christian, we are still not really ready to “**plead the case of the fatherless to win it,**” for we are still not ready to bring justice into the streets for pre-born children.

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*Pleading the Case of
the Fatherless to Win It*