

FIND ME A MAN

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." Jeremiah 5:1.

Jeremiah lived in a wicked age. The chosen race was rapidly degenerating; the enemies of Judah were strong; the end was not far off. The manhood of the nation was impoverished, gaps were down, and the call of matchless causes fell on deaf ears. The country was bankrupt for the lack of men. Injustice, impurity, impiety, and oppression were widespread. The impending judgments of God were evident. Was there any chance of rescue or hope of deliverance? Yes, if a man could be found. However, he must be a man who would do right and seek the truth.

Can a righteous man be found in Jerusalem? There were thousands who had the outward semblance of men, but the question was whether any of them had the manly character. Surely there must have been some who were striving to live rightly. But conditions were so deplorable that it seemed to Jeremiah that he was absolutely alone in his desire to maintain God's honor.

In this chapter, Jeremiah is striving to bring home to his people the fact that things are not as they should be. He thought, perhaps, that if he could find even one strong and faithful servant of the Lord, that God might pardon Jerusalem as He had once pardoned Sodom. But he could not find such a man. He found profession but not sincerity; chastisement but not amendment; remorse but not repentance. The days were evil alike among high and low. Carelessness, unbelief, self-seeking, and insincerity were widespread. Men were completely at ease and were confident that no evil could befall them. Jeremiah knew differently. He knew that greed, falsehood, unreality, and corruption could not last.

In the history of ancient Greece, about three hundred years after Jeremiah's day, we come upon a similar incident. Diogenes, the cynic philosopher, searched the sunlit streets of Athens with a lantern at noonday. Upon being asked what he was looking for, he replied, with a grim smile, "I am seeking a man." That was a rather severe and caustic way of trying to awaken his fellow citizens to the surrounding degradation. At any rate, the widespread extinction of true manliness had aroused the honest indignation of this old Greek philosopher.

In many ways the age in which Jeremiah lived reminds us of our own age. Each is an age of crisis, of decaying faith, and of change—both actual and impending. Even today there are so many whose desires outrun their realizations, whose spiritual ambitions prove to be stronger than their actual achievements. We need prophets to bring home to us the sense of our unreality, of our selfishness, and of our false security on the very edge of peril. Our great need is for real men of God who will be loyal and faithful to Him regardless of the cost.

God's men can't be measured with tapeline, political gauge, intellectual measures, or dollar marks. These are the world's standards of success. God wants men of righteous convictions, godly purposes, faultless integrity, unquestioned righteousness, unswerving perseverance, and unfaltering fidelity.

God is looking for men of heroism. Distinguished courage and moral fiber are needed. Heroism and bravery to the degree that we will be willing not only to stand alone, but also to endure ridicule, be maligned and persecuted for the right, are needed. Cowards do not stand up and speak out for God and the right. The bravest of the brave have been found in the ranks of God. John Huss went to the stake in the fourteenth century rather than recant his teachings or falter in his fidelities. His ashes were thrown upon the Rhine, but instead of their being washed away, they have enriched every shore, lighted gospel lamps on benighted continents and become the seed corn of rich harvests of golden grain. Luther bravely stood in the

breach when reeking corruption flowed in all channels. The death council of the Diet of Worms could not daunt him in his purpose nor cause him to recant. When the Roman General, Pompey, was warned against the danger of his returning from Egypt to Italy to meet a trouble in his own land, his brave answer was: "It is a small matter that I should move forward and die. It is too great a matter that I should take one step backward and live."

Another quality that men need is vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Multitudes of men who have vision in other fields are woefully nearsighted in matters of kingdom interests. One man of vision, Columbus, emancipated Spain, a land of hoary traditions and stupid complacency, into alertness which caused her to change her motto, chiseled on the pillars of Hercules: "Ne plus ultra"--"No more beyond," to "Plus ultra"--"More beyond." The people of our Colonial days had the vision of an empire in their souls. Their vision caused them to face hardships and conquer difficulties which the world thought unconquerable as they struggled for mere existence. That vision gave to us and to the world the United States. With heads erect, and purposes undaunted; with their eyes on God, and with their faith unclouded, the early settlers converted a howling wilderness into harvest fields; shadows into sunshine; poverty into plenty; stones into silver; sand into gold; despair into triumph. We need men who can grasp their spirit, feel the needs of this hour, and telescope new visions for our day.

In the silken threads of the Christian flag are woven the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Within its sacred folds is wrapped a message of salvation, emancipation, liberation, consolation, and glorification for the peoples of a world which staggers like a drunk man and gasps like death. Its symbolism is that of hope for the hopeless, cheer for the cheerless, comfort for the brokenhearted, light for the benighted, salvation for the lost, and pardon for the guilty. It calls for greater sacrifice, for greater fidelity and for broader vision.

God is calling for men of integrity. In spite of all the odious iniquity, revolting lewdness, lamentable crookedness, dastardly dishonesty, unbridled greed, unbelievable humbuggery, and scandalous wickedness, integrity and honesty are the biggest words in the business world today. They shine like diamonds in the mud and slime of a boggy world. When Marshall Field was burned out in the great Chicago fire and his possessions lay in ashes, Eastern financiers wired him to draw on them to the limit of his needs. The devastating fires which destroyed Chicago could not burn up Marshall Field's fireproof integrity character, and sterling worth. When Robert E. Lee was offered \$50,000 to head a questionable business concern, and was told that they needed his name, he said: "My name is the heritage of my parents. It is all I have, and it is not for sale."

Men of unfaltering fidelity are needed today. God seeks for men who can be trusted. To be faithful followers of Christ is the greatest privilege and should be the chief aim of life. You can let God's walls fall down, His causes suffer, and His banner drag in the dust because of infidelity to your trust. You can refuse to link yourself with earth's most challenging cause. You can refuse to place yourself in a position to render the largest service.

This age is putting a premium on manpower. During the war the government called the flower of the manhood of the nation. Our choice young men were called from their homes, comforts, families, salaries, offices, shops, fields, and places of responsibility. Those with strong bodies, clear minds, courageous spirits, and skilled hands were wanted most of all. Industry is calling for manpower. The call is for capable, industrious, and efficient men. All professions are calling for men. Practically all fields where men can render valuable services are wide open.

Our churches are calling for men of conviction and the courage to match their convictions. They must have men whose hearts hunger for the things that Christ offers. God is seeking men to defend the safety, solidity, and sanctity of the home. God calls men to stand in

the breach of institutions and make up the walls. The Southern Baptist Seminary was first located in Greenville, South Carolina. The struggle was too hard and the load was too heavy for mere men. The day was dark. Four men, two of whom were Doctors Boyce and Broadus, were together. One said, "We will have to let it die." Another arose and said, "I will agree on one condition, namely, that we die first." There the call of the Lord stood.

Our great need is for men to fill places of burning need in the churches. For this cause God is seeking men today. It is so often true that men who do not hesitate when other organizations call will falter, dally, and fail when their church calls them. Strong men fail to be brave, responsive, valiant and faithful when the church calls them. We fail to get in, stand up, and speak out in helping to win souls and grow better men and women.

Nowhere else will one's life count for so much as in the work of the church. The church's message inspires and prepares one for the best and the most. It was the church's message that inspired Florence Nightingale in her remarkable work; Clara Barton to found the Red Cross; George Williams to start the Y. M. C. A. work; Joan of Arc to place herself at the head of a beaten army, free her countrymen, and die a martyr's death; Luther to defy wickedness in his day; Bunyan to write Pilgrim's Progress, and Carey to die for Christ in India. The church gives to men the greatest channel for spiritual expression. Through the church and its program dormant spiritual powers are fanned into flames of activity, influence, service, and limitless power. The mission of the church warms our hearts and challenges our best. We must give our best to Christ through the church.

The mission of the church has every element to challenge the highest, the deepest, the broadest, the noblest that man possesses. The Grecian philosophy was, "Know thyself." The Roman philosophy was, "Control thyself." The Christian philosophy is, "Deny thyself." There is that something in the vastness, the ponderousness, the imperativeness of the church's militant, imperative, imperial mission that calls men to their knees and sends them forth as armies of marching crusaders for Christ. They do not halt at the Atlantic or at the Pacific.

"If we would build again,
And build to stay,
We must find God
And go His way."

The bravest, finest, ablest, most faithful, influential, useful men of the ages have placed themselves in the service of the church and carried on its work. I appeal to you to give yourself to Christ, be loyal to Him, and loyal to the church.