

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 60

Jeremiah 13:1-11 - A Clean Girdle

INTRODUCTION: Here is an amazing story of something that God did to the people through Jeremiah. The people were living in sin, and God was displeased with them. Jeremiah was His prophet, but the people would not listen to Jeremiah. Consequently, God did something to get their attention and to draw them to listen to His prophet. He told Jeremiah to get a girdle, a linen girdle, and to wear it when he preached. In fact, he was to wear it regularly. Bear in mind, the girdle in this day was not an inner garment but an outer garment. It was the kind of thing that was worn on the outside to tighten the clothing for battle or work. It was, however, an unusual thing for Jeremiah to wear the girdle while preaching.

Then the Lord told Jeremiah something else. He said, “Jeremiah, I want you not to wash the girdle.” Now that was an interesting and strange thing for God to ask Jeremiah to do. Hence, Jeremiah came before the people and preached. Every time he preached, his girdle was dirtier than before. Imagine how the people must have snickered and wondered first as to why Jeremiah wore a girdle while he preached, and secondly, why he didn’t wash his girdle before preaching! This drew the attention of the people, and they began talking all over the country about this prophet who was wearing a girdle while he preached, and yet the girdle was not washed and was getting dirtier and dirtier.

The Lord then did something even more unusual. He told Jeremiah to take the girdle, go to the Euphrates River and bury it. The Euphrates River was at least 250 miles from where Jeremiah was preaching. Can you imagine how God must have startled Jeremiah by asking him to do such an unorthodox thing? He was to walk 250 miles, bury a girdle and walk back! Can you imagine how the people must have felt when their pastor told them that he was leaving for a few weeks to go bury a girdle at the Euphrates River? God was simply getting the attention of the people. What a wonderful thing God does when He seeks our attention and uses such methods so as to make us listen to Him! Oftentimes people criticize some church or preacher because of unorthodox methods used in the drawing of a crowd. Yet the Lord did so to Jeremiah and the people. It worked. They came to hear him. He was the talk of all the country.

Jeremiah returned and stayed a while; in fact, he stayed for two or three months. The Lord came again to Jeremiah and said, “I want you to go back to the Euphrates River and dig up the girdle.” Once again Jeremiah got a startling request, but he obeyed. He went there, got the girdle and dug it up only to find it was rotten and was good for nothing.

The Lord has three lessons He wants to teach us in this story.

- I. HE WANTS US TO BE CLOSE TO HIM. The girdle wrapped close to the body is a beautiful picture of God wanting us to be close to Himself. We were made for fellowship with God. God made us because He loves us, and He wants us to be close to Him. Think of all the Scriptures in the Bible that teach us that God wants us to be close to Himself. (Teacher, you might get some kind of a garment, wrap it close around your body to illustrate.) God did not choose the hat to represent His people. He did not choose the shoes to represent His people; He chose the girdle which covers the most sacred parts of the body. It covers the heart, the loins, etc. God wants us close to His heart, and as it were, close to His body.
- II. GOD IS TEACHING US THAT WE MUST BE CLEAN IF WE ARE TO BE CLOSE TO HIM. No dirty girdle was to be worn by the prophet. In fact, he was to take the girdle 250 miles away. God is showing us here that we cannot be close to Him unless we are clean. God did not want the girdle just taken away, put in the closet, put up somewhere or laid in another room or even in another part of the house or even in the house next door. God told Jeremiah to take it 250 miles away. God was saying, “I will not have any dirty girdle close to Me.” That girdle represents God’s people. If we are close to Him, we must of necessity be clean.

(Teacher, take some time here to teach the pupils the importance of cleanliness, the importance of principles, the importance of doing right. Alert them to the evils of drinking, smoking, petting and other things that make us too dirty to have fellowship with God. Emphasize the importance of reading the right

things. Emphasize the importance of right magazines and right newspapers. Emphasize the importance of proper dress. There are a multitude of things that should be emphasized here.)

- III. GOD IS TEACHING US THAT WE LOSE OUR USEFULNESS WHEN WE ARE DIRTY AND WHEN WE ARE NOT CLOSE TO HIM. After the girdle had been dug out from where it was buried, it was rotten and good for nothing. (Teacher, take some old, worn-out garment and show the pupils that such a garment is useless. Take an old shoe without a sole, a shirt without sleeves or some garment that is rotten, and show how it is still a garment, but it is not useful.) We cannot be useful to God, and He will not use us in His service, unless we stay clean and unless we stay close to Him.