

CHURCH SCHEDULE

Sunday School & Bible Study:
9:45 a.m.

Sunday Service: 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study:
7:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

November 3: Ivan Niemela,
Holy Communion

November 10: Mark
Sunnarborg

November 17: Ivan Niemela

November 24: Ivan Niemela

*There will be NO Potluck meal
following the service*

CONTACT

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The Enemy Within

“Then spake the priests and the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears”-
Jeremiah 26:11

Nearly three hundred years of godless living had run its course before God finally delivered an ultimatum to Judah through Jeremiah: repent or face judgment at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. All-out war looked more appealing to the Judaeans than did repentance, as evidenced by their defiant declarations: *“I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim”* (Jer 2:23) and *“We are lords; we will come no more unto thee”* (Jer 2:31). In other words, they believed they worshipped God and were secure in their faith, rejecting Jeremiah’s warnings. By ignoring God’s call to repent of their sins, they remained bound to them and forfeited His help in turning Babylon away. Jeremiah made another plea; surrender to avert war and save lives. Captivity meant they would serve the Babylonians and their gods for seventy years; however, they could return to Judah in freedom afterward. Enraged by these suggestions, both priests and prophets called for Jeremiah’s life.

This indictment stemmed from his willingness to preach these truths in the Lord’s house. His message was not just about world events as they affected the church, but also about the necessity of voluntary confession of sin to a priest at the door of the Tabernacle. Disputes arose when other prophets who also preached in the Lord’s house disagreed saying that sins could be privately confessed elsewhere. While both sides agreed that confession was necessary, just where and to whom became the issue. Moses had addressed this issue centuries earlier, stating that if a penitent soul offered a sacrifice *“and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle... that man shall be cut off from among his people”* (Lev 17:9). Jeremiah constantly echoed these words in his sermons, but the people would not heed these words of old, so strife ensued.

They had come to believe that they had discovered a new truth, different from that of their forefathers. Unambiguously, Jeremiah spoke plainly to the temple priests and to the congregation saying, your prophets lie; they *“speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord”* (Jer 23:16). Although these prophets used scripture to support their teachings, God said, *“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied”* (Jer 23:21). The temple prophets convincingly spoke of confession such that the listener did not *“ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein”* (Jer 6:16). Nonetheless, Jeremiah diligently proclaimed the same message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins as Moses had done. Sadly, the people refused to prayerfully consult God for the truth (1 John 4:1) but clung instead to the comforting words of the false prophets. They had no need to hear of the prophets of old, being content with their modern understandings.

Realizing that the people would not listen, Jeremiah stated, *“I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves”* (Jer 26:14-15). He was neither giving up nor compromising his faith. Instead, he chose not to engage in endless debate with the temple prophets. He preferred to

preach the Word and let God give the increase. This significant discord within the temple drew the attention of civil authorities. Upon hearing that the priests and prophets wanted to kill Jeremiah for preaching contrary to their beliefs, they ruled that there was no cause for death. God truly was in control, just as He is today amid the turmoil in the world and within the church itself.

The challenge that Jeremiah faced in dealing with unbelief among his people mirrors the situation we see today, where God continues to deliver the same message: repent before it is too late. King Solomon summed it up: *“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun”* (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Thus, history is repeating itself by silencing those who do not conform to popular opinion, and this is occurring at all levels of society, including within the church. Like Jeremiah and many others throughout time, we must faithfully preach the word despite the costs— not just from the pulpit but in our daily lives as well. Because all believers are sinners saved by the grace of God, it is vital to point others to the mercy seat, just as the Apostle Peter did. He counseled those convicted of sin to confess their faults and be baptized with the fire of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

While we face external turmoil from the enemy that roams like a roaring lion, as described in the Bible, we must also confront the enemy within our hearts—sin. As the Apostle Peter said, we are free to *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed”* (James 5:16), regardless of what others may say.

God's Peace,
Charles Korhonen