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“Wisdom for the Crossroads”

Jeremiah 6:16

Pastor Gary Hamrick

We all face times in life when critical decisions must be made. There are times when different roads intersect, and we need to figure out which way to go and what we need to do. Making right decisions can lead to the kind of *“rest for your [soul]”* mentioned in [Jeremiah 6:16](#), but making wrong decisions can lead to short-term or long-term regret, depending on the seriousness of the situation. In this message, Pastor Gary helps us understand biblical wisdom and counsel for times when we come to a crossroads in life.

Historical Background

1. The people of Judah were at a crossroads in that they needed to make a decision to turn away from idols and false gods and turn to the Lord.
 - a. [Jeremiah 6:16](#) - *“This is what the LORD says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”*”
2. They responded to the counsel and wisdom of God: *“We will not walk in it”* and *“We will not listen.”*
 - a. [Jeremiah 6:17](#) - *“I appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’”*
3. Judgment was their punishment for open and willful rebellion against the Lord.
 - a. [Jeremiah 6:18-19](#) - *“Therefore hear, O nations; observe, O witnesses, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law.”*

What Do You Do When You Come To A Crossroads In Life?

4. Pastor Gary said: “All of us will, from time to time, be [in a place of decision]. Just standing at a crossroads in life, having to make some critical decision that can impact life in big and small ways. [Sometimes] the choice will be clear and obvious, and other times it will not be as clear and obvious, and [it’s also true that] trying to make the decision and trying to discern the will of God will sometimes be painful, and even paralyzing. [I] believe contained here is some practical wisdom from God to help us make right decisions... so that we can find rest for our souls.”
5. Making unwise decisions that are outside of the will and ways of God, will always create a sense of unrest, etc.

When You Come To A Crossroads - Stand

6. **Jeremiah 6:16** - “*This is what the LORD says: ‘**Stand** at the crossroads...*” (Emphasis added)
 - a. The Hebrew word for stand is *amad*, which means to abide, endure, or to remain.
7. Pastor Gary said: “Please note, standing is not running, [walking or sitting]. Standing is being still and it’s holding your position, right where you are. ... [This word] has the connotation of a certain steadfastness, [and] immovability. It has the idea of being unhurried. ... I believe that this word... is a warning to us about not rushing into something. Just stand there. Just stand still. When you don’t know what to do, stay right where you are. [There isn’t one time in the Bible that we read that] Jesus was in a hurry or in a rush – ever! He [was] measured, he [was] disciplined, and he [was] deliberate. ... We need to learn to be still, [and] we need to slow it way down and not make any rash decisions. There are a few examples in the Bible of people who were so slow that they actually missed something that God was doing, but that’s rare. Most often in the Bible you see [examples] of people who ran ahead of God. [These people] got way out in front of [God] and took matters into their own hands, [and] made hasty decisions, [hoping] that God would bless [their decisions] after the fact.”
 - a. Examples of people who rushed ahead of God include:
 - i. Abraham and Sarah seemed to think that God was moving too slowly regarding the promise of a child, so they brought Hagar into their scheme!
 - ii. Forty years after Moses took action at the wrong time, God had matured him, prepared him, and it was then that God was ready to use him.
 - iii. After Judas committed suicide, the disciples moved ahead of God’s

timing by selecting Matthias as Judas' replacement, when they should have just followed the instructions they received to pray and wait!

- iv. The Thessalonians didn't wait for God's timing, they determined that the Second Coming of Christ was about to take place, so they stopped working, etc.
- b. Pastor Gary said: "Many of us tend to rush ahead of God and think that we are doing God a favor, when in reality, God just wants us to stand still. ... Don't run. Don't walk. Just stand! ... Standing still is not inaction. ... Standing still is a plan of action because you are waiting on the Lord for the next step. Don't be afraid just to stand still and wait. ... [Oftentimes] God will speak to us if we stand still long enough for us to hear him."
- c. **Psalm 37:7** - *"Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him..."*
- d. **Psalm 46:10** - *"Be still, and know that I am God..."*
- e. **Isaiah 64:4** - *"Since ancient times, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him."*

When You Come To A Crossroads - Look

- 8. **Jeremiah 6:16** - *"This is what the LORD says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look..."*
(Emphasis added)
 - a. The Hebrew word nabat means, consider.
- 9. Pastor Gary said: "Sometimes we're so eager to see what God will do, that we don't stop to consider what is doing, and [so] we miss God's direction for today. [Take a look at your life and notice what God is doing in the present]. Don't always be thinking forward, because God speaks in the now in everyday simple ways. ... Don't discount the many ways that God works through the natural."
 - a. The apostle Paul was stopped "in the natural" from going to the province of Asia to preach the gospel, thinking that Galatia was just a stopover on the way to better things in Asia Minor.
 - b. Pastor Gary said: "Galatia was not a pitstop [to] God, and what God determined was that in order to sideline Paul to redirect his steps... God actually used an illness in Paul's life to sideline him in Galatia, so that the people of Galatia could hear the gospel. God uses very practical, everyday things to direct our steps."
 - i. **Acts 16:6** - *"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia."*
 - ii. **Galatians 4:13** - *"As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you."*

When You Come To A Crossroads - Ask

10. **Jeremiah 6:16** - *"... ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it..."* (Emphasis added)
 - a. The *"ancient paths"* and *"the good way"* are references to the Law of God.
11. Pastor Gary said: "God [was] saying, 'You need to seek me and inquire of me through my Word. The reliable, timeless truth of Scripture is always a dependable source of guidance, wisdom, and inspiration. We must be people who are reading our Bible and are searching the Scriptures to find everyday practical wisdom and advice from above. ... When you're at a crossroads, do not rely on your feelings, do not trust your emotions, and never ever make a decision when you're down or angry. ... Turn to the Bible instead, as the reliable, never-failing source of truth and guidance. ... Ask for the reliable truth that has been tested by time and survived the scrutiny of the skeptics over the generations. God's Word is true, and God's Word will speak to [us] in either direct ways or indirect ways.'
 - a. **Matthew 7:7-8** - *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

When You Come To A Crossroads - Walk

12. **Jeremiah 6:16** - *"... walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."*
13. Pastor Gary said: "It's not enough to simply ask God for wisdom, we have to walk in it. We have to do what it says in order to benefit from it. This is about obedience. This is hearing what God says and doing what God says.
 - a. **James 1:22** - *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*
 - b. **Proverbs 28:26** - *"He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe."*

When You Come To A Crossroads - Find Rest For Your Soul

14. **Matthew 11:28-30** - *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*
15. Pastor Gary said: "[When we] harness ourselves to Jesus, like oxen are yoked together... life [will] be a whole lot easier walking with Jesus than walking alone. It's not burdensome with Jesus; it's not wearisome with Jesus. It's quite the opposite.

When we walk with Jesus, obey Jesus, [and] follow Jesus, [we will] have rest for our souls. And when I come to a crossroads, I wouldn't want it any other way."

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Jeremiah 6:16-19, 22](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they couldn't wait for God's timing.
3. How did the Lord minister to you when you realized his timing was different from yours?
4. How patient are you when it comes to waiting for God's timing?
5. Read and discuss [Psalm 37:7, 46:10](#), and [Isaiah 64:4](#), and Pastor Gary's remarks about standing at the crossroads. (See #7 above)
6. Read and discuss [Acts 16:6](#) and [Galatians 4:13](#), and Pastor Gary's comments about looking when you come to a crossroads. (See #9 above)
7. What is God doing in the "everydayness" of your life that you're aware of and what is he doing that you should be aware of?
8. Read and discuss [James 1:22](#) and [Proverbs 28:26](#), and Pastor Gary's remarks concerning walking in God's will and ways. (See #13 above)
9. Read and discuss [Matthew 11:28-30](#), and Pastor Gary's comments about finding rest. (See #14 and #15 above)
10. Close your time by having someone read [Matthew 7:7-8](#) and pray as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).