



Sunday, November 1, 2020

Message in Word “When the Desire to Quit Hits”

Rev. Jeffrey W. Campbell, Youth Minister

Scripture: Jeremiah 20:9, Psalm 39:1-3, Acts 18:5 (King James Version)

Good morning. I'll ask the same question every time I'm behind this pulpit: Did you come to church today expecting something from the Lord? What do we do “When the Desire to Quit Hits”? How do we act; what are our options? It's been easy to become “comfortable” during these recent times and with how worship has changed. My heart retreats to the Book of Jeremiah; it's one of my favorite Old Testament books. I think we're getting back to the days Jeremiah was living in. He was a man who preached for forty years and never had one person follow. How discouraging that could be! No one wanted to hear the message of God. The world today is retreating to those same standards—people don't want to hear anything about Jesus, sin, the cross, or especially the blood of Jesus. We need to be careful. From reading Jeremiah, I've grown to understand his frustration of leading, no one listening, and everyone complaining and being frustrated. Have you ever been frustrated with God? I think we could all shake our heads yes to that.

Today I'll give you three options or examples of what to do “When the Desire to Quit Hits.” (Point #1) Do we quit preaching? Jeremiah 20:9 “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name...” This portion is Jeremiah talking about the name of God that he's not going to mention or speak it again. I'll give you some background that leads to Jeremiah's frustration. Pashur was a priest of the day and chief of the temple police. He did not like the doom and gloom message of Jeremiah and what he brought. Jeremiah's message was of destruction—that if people didn't turn to God they would be destroyed (read first part of Chapter 20 to learn more). Pashur takes Jeremiah, beats him, puts him in stocks, and puts him in jail for one day—this got Jeremiah's attention in a bad way. He becomes frustrated with God; he's done everything God told him to do and this punishment happens. He calls the man who locked him up a terror to the people; he tells him he'll die by the sword. Jeremiah's not making any friends. The Word of God is not meant to make friends—it's to speak truth. This is what Jeremiah is doing in a harsh way; he's speaking the truth. As he does, he's thrown in jail. He's trying to follow God, pursue Him, and do the right thing. He feels people are mocking and scorning him and turning to violence against him. How quickly he's forgotten God's call on his life which is found in Chapter 1:18-19. ¹⁸For behold I have made thee this day a defenced city and an iron pillar and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. ¹⁹And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” God made Jeremiah a promise that He'd be with him and that nothing would harm him—he would stand as an iron pillar and wouldn't be alone. Jeremiah was waiting for the help to show up but he had to rest and depend on God. His frustration builds and he basically says “I quit.” This is when we get in trouble—when frustration takes over our actions. Have you been frustrated the last two weeks, months, or how about the year? Absolutely we have! From this side of the pulpit it's frustrating—seeing a church that was once filled now sparsely filled. People scared to come; I don't blame them. But do we quit?! No, we don't! Yes, we're frustrated but we're here to depend on God and seek His leading in these days. What about frustration in other areas of your life? Maybe you're frustrated with the way church is being run, a deacon, a Sunday School teacher. So the easiest thing is just to quit—just walk out those doors and never come back. I warn you—as frustrated as Jeremiah was, he was about to step outside the will of God. This is a dangerous place to be! If you walk out of the front doors and quit Clifford Baptist Church, you better make sure you're in the will of God! What about your job—any stress, your boss—being asked to do things not in your job description. I'll quit. What about your marriage? Your children? I've seen people walk out on them. Some people have just walked out on life altogether and chosen the easy out and ending it all. I've been at funerals on this side

of frustration, and it's hard to see that happen. When frustration goes from your thoughts to actions, there's no telling the road Satan will lead you on to get you away from the will of God—whether it's leaving your church, family, or life altogether. Satan seeks to destroy you, and the easiest thing to say is “I quit!” Then you think you're doing the right thing—go back to Jeremiah. He says I'm quitting the ridicule, the frustration, the beatings—all of it! But when he quit, he stepped out of the will of God which could and would mean his life. Jeremiah 20:9 continues: “...But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” How many of us will let the fire of Christ burn and live and flow through us to the world? Jeremiah said I want to quit but the fire will not let me; it would cause me more hurt and sorrow if I kept the good word of God inside me than to stand here and preach and take the beatings and ridicule. I would die if I kept it to myself. As we think of Jeremiah—have you ever been frustrated enough to say I'm quitting it all? We need to remember the promises of God—1 John 4: “...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” We have forgotten that. As you walk in the world, you're going to be ridiculed and made a laughing stock. Teenagers, if you stand for Christ you are not going to be popular. Will you let the fire burn? Point #1 “When the Desire to Quit Hits”—do we quit preaching? The answer is absolutely not!

(Point #2) Now we go to David in the Book of Psalms. He's found himself in a place in life where there's no hope, but he does have hope because there is the Lord. Psalm 39:1-3: “¹I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. ²I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. ³My heart was hot within me, while I was musing (meditating) the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.” Point #2—Do we quit speaking? Do we quit telling the wonderful stories of Jesus? Do we quit praying? Anyone who knows me knows that when I get frustrated or mad I shut down. I don't want to be around you or talk to you—just leave me alone. I have my own little pity party with myself! David has grown quiet; he's in a dark place. Quiet for some people is a dark place. All the sin and everything around him has brought him to this point where he says I'm just going to keep my mouth quiet. Have you ever felt like you can't talk to someone about their sin because of your sin? So you keep your mouth shut. Have you thought your words could be twisted and turned so it's best not to say anything? Maybe you're scared you'll say the wrong thing and offend someone with the name of Christ; I'll just stay quiet. Or maybe I don't know what to say so I'll keep silent. In our own wisdom we think the best answer is no answer; silence could be the best response. As David thought and prayed about it, he said “my heart was hot within me and while meditating, the fire burned.” It's amazing what God can do if we go to Him; he will stoke the embers of that fire. That's what He did with David. As the fire was stoked, he spoke with his tongue. Proverbs 3:5 says “...lean not on thine own understanding.” When we do this, we think we have it right but we're totally wrong. As you think about the wisdom we have, it's not always right. When working on this message, I recalled the times when I should have said something but I didn't. For whatever reason, I kept silent because I thought that was the right answer but it was completely wrong. At thirty-eight years old, I wish I could have those chances back but praise God, the fire still burns. I've reached the age where my “filter” is going! My filter to God is going also—to the extent that I rather be rejected for Christ than responsible for not speaking. This carries a lot of weight. In this same Psalm, verse 7, David says “And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.” Christ was the source of all protection and hope He would offer everybody He came in contact with. I believe David was fearful for his life so he kept quiet. In doing so, he didn't speak for the Lord when he needed to. “When the Desire to Quit Hits”—do you think silence is the answer? I would say absolutely not!

Point #3 takes us to Acts 18:5-6 with this thought: “When the Desire to Quit Hits” do we trust God will work? Paul says: ⁵“And when Silas and Timotheus (Timothy) were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. ⁶And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.” As Paul reaches Corinth, God surrounds him with some very good and godly people. Aquila and Priscilla are two of them,

along with Silas and Timothy. Paul carried out a very godly action being “pressed in the spirit”—his chief ministry was to the Jewish people of the day. He wanted them to accept Jesus as their Messiah but they weren’t having any part of that. The same exists today—the Jewish people will not accept Him. The harder Paul preached and the more he pursued them, they put up a defense—a battle wall. In verse 6 “when they opposed themselves” that’s a term for a battle plan for a fortified wall against Him. They were pushing back, but they played dirty—they blasphemed the name of God and Paul. You can talk about me all you want—my bald head, my singing—but don’t talk about my God. That’s where Paul was; he was offended but he knew the name of Jesus was under attack. Paul “shook his raiment”—he dusted off his coat. Jesus did this but with His shoes. When people didn’t receive His message, He dusted the dust off His shoes and moved on. Paul does the same with his coat; he said OK, Jewish people I’m moving on. He said his hands were clean and “...I will go unto the Gentiles.” It’s funny how God works! Read verse 7 “And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.” So he moves even closer to the Jewish people. Verse 8 introduces us to “Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue...” He’s the leader of the Jewish people. He “believed on the Lord with all his house...” When the Jewish people listened, God moved him a little bit closer and allowed the leader of the Jews to hear the gospel message. It changed his life and changed the house’s life “...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.” Paul could have walked away when no one listened, but he was compelled by the spirit of God. “When the Desire to Quit Hits” will you trust God to move and to work? As I see the way God changed the lives of those around Paul, I pray He’ll change people’s lives around me. The promise is in verses 9-10: “⁹Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.** ¹⁰**For I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**”

We see three heroes of the faith—three men of God brought to the point of frustration in ministry ready to quit, throw in the towel, and be done. That’s the cheap and easy way out. I don’t know how this message speaks to you today but maybe in the last few days, months, or year you’ve thought about quitting something—whether it be church, your marriage, job, or life altogether. Know this: God knows exactly where you are. If you quit, make sure God is moving you and you’re not moving yourself. Make sure you stay in His will; stepping outside could endanger you. Consider this: Does the desire outweigh the fire? Does the desire to walk away from God outweigh the fire that burns inside? I pray if you’re a Christian, no matter your age, that fire still burns. Maybe today you need to rekindle it in a special way. I’m going to open the altar today as one of your pastors. You might say I’m not quitting—God, rekindle and stoke the fire within me. If I quit every time I got frustrated, I’d be long gone from Clifford, Virginia! I’d be in the woods somewhere by myself and you couldn’t find me! Church has made me think about it before. It made Jeremiah think about, David think about it, and Paul think about it. Who are we going to trust—Satan and his deceitful lies or the fire of the Lord that burns within? Today, do you need your fire rekindled? If you come and kneel before the Lord and ask Him to do it, I believe He will. You may say, Jeffrey, my fire’s just fine. Well, I’m glad for you—2020 has two months left! You don’t know what can rain down on your fire. Pray to God that you’ll continue to pursue Him and others because of Him. Maybe you haven’t quit because you’ve never started. Maybe you don’t know what that relationship with Christ looks or feels like. Get your heart right today! Jeremiah said the word of the Lord was in my heart. That’s where it needs to be for you; when you put it there, He will stoke and kindle the fire of service. What is the need of your heart? Quitting is not an option. Though we’re ministering different now and church looks different which frustrates us, the fire will burn. Join us today as we open this altar; if God is speaking, simply move. Don’t let the frustration go from thought to action that pulls you from the will of God. Be careful. Today, praise God for the fire that burns!

Let Us Pray: Father God, I pray You would move in this moment of invitation. I see good Christian people and know there’s someone who may be frustrated with the church or feel You’re not moving. Have mercy on that one who’s frustrated with life; show them a better way. We open this altar to frustrated people but who want the fire to burn. If someone needs You as Savior, we pray for them to come and take away their sin and give them a purpose in life. In the powerful name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.