

Jeremiah 20:7-9

You Can't Quit

By Rev. Jeremiah Parks

Intro: There is a story told about a champion greyhound racing dog that ran across the tracks of Europe at break neck speed. This champion developed a following because it had never lost a race. In and around the tracks of Europe and ultimately in the United States , one particular fan ran to the paper regularly to see the speed that this greyhound racing dog would run. This fan finally saw in the paper that the Dog's owner was bringing this dog from Europe to the U.S. to race.

The race was 4 states over therefore this fan saved his money, packed up his car and decided to drive 4 states over to witness in person this champion greyhound racing dog. He got to the track that day, walked up to the betting booth put his money on the counter and told the betting booth operator "I will like to place my bet on that European racing dog that is coming to race today. That operator looked at him

and said I am sorry sir, but the dog isn't racing. Quite upset, the man told the operator sir you don't understand. I been following this dog's career for quite some time, I looked at this dogs career in the newspaper, I know that he is racing today in fact I saved my money, packed up my car and have driven 4 states over.

The operator said forgive me sir but the dog isn't racing today. The fan said at least tell me why the dog won't race. The operator said sir I don't know but the dog's owner is standing right over there, feel free to ask him. The fan went over to the owner and said excuse me, I have been watching your dog's career for quite some time, I packed up my car and have driven 4 states over , you need to explain to me and tell me why the dog isn't going to race?

The owner shrugged his shoulders and said sir I am sorry but I don't know, You're going to have to ask my dog. That man stooped down, put his hand in the dog's face and said dog I have been following your career for quite some time, I packed up my car and driven 4 states

over and I know you were supposed to race today, tell me why you are not racing today.

The dog slowly lifted his face and said these words sir all these years I have been chasing that rabbit and I just found out that the rabbit isn't real.

And for all of those that have been called by God in the ministry of prophetic pronouncement, those of us who have been called to be the Lord's proclaimers, and his witnesses in the Lord's church we have all felt the frustration of being faithful without seemingly bring fruitful.

It feels sometimes as if we are chasing phony rabbits

When we serve to the best of our ability and we do the best we can and instead of seeing converts we rather see conflict. Seems as if we are chasing unreal rabbits.

When we try to do the best we can in God's service but evil is around on every hand it feels sometimes as if we are chasing un real rabbits.

My Question, to you is have you ever been there. I admit serving the Lord is a glorious but nobody tells or teaches you the occupational hazards one must face in serving God. You have to love people who have yet to learn to love themselves. You are challenged to forgive people even when they don't deserve it. You try to offer a word of hope even when your life is hopeless and it seems to be falling apart, Have you ever been at a place where doing ministry is what motivated you to keep showing up to youth meeting, but now you feel like what you're doing is a waste of time. It feels sometimes like we are chasing un real rabbits

Chasing unreal rabbits seems to be where Jeremiah is at the time of our text. Here in the passage Jeremiah is called to be a prophet during King Josiah reign over Judah. By now Jeremiah has been conveying God's message for some twenty two years. He has been preaching and challenging Judah to turn back from their wicked ways or

destruction will be their fate. Judah at the time of our text isn't listening to him.

This very sermon gets Jeremiah thrown in prison. And while Jeremiah is in prison he teaches us

Thesis: Be encouraged realizing our motivation for God's work is not always based upon what we can see with our natural eyes, but we are motivated by what God does on the inside.

Jeremiah frustration shows us what happens when you feel like quitting.

You feel like quitting

First: When the one for you seems to be against you. Verse 7

Here in this text we see Jeremiah has carried the message of God but yet he has his own set of misery. Jeremiah has been speaking God's word that he has given him according to Jeremiah 19: 15 but the

nation of Judah isn't listening. Notice Pashur has put Jeremiah in stocks and chains.

Look at him if you don't mind, Jeremiah is in stocks, chains and bent over. His skin has been broken from being in chains and Jeremiah calls out to God and says HEYYYYYYYY You tricked me, God you done me wrong!! And every now and then all of us have felt like Jeremiah where it seems like God has been against you. And You are ready to quit.

Forget getting out of the youth ministry, staff position, you have felt like calling ministry, felt like quitting School all a quits. perhaps You are a full time parent, husband, wife and now but there is a traffic jam on the blouvard of your thought where you want to say I QUIT!!

Jeremiah says God, you have deceived me and I was deceived. Jeremiah paints the idea where he brings God up on kidnapping charges. He says I feel like a woman who has been taken advantage of. You told me to tell the nation of Judah to turn away from their wicked

ways. You said a disastrous future awaited them but right now nothing is going on. Jeremiah says I am running out of options

Jeremiah says God you are making me look like a complete fool, I am running out of options, you told me to do something, Jeremiah says, I've done my part but God you have dropped your end of the deal.

Jeremiah says my back is up against the wall. I am out of options

You know on Thursday's nights there was a show that came on called Scandal. If you don't mind allow me to take you back to the first season.

Scandal is starred by Kerry Washington, playing the role of Olivia Pope.

A woman. Scandal is based on the life of the fixer Judy Smith. On

October 3 Olivia is playing the role of fixer. But at this particular time

Olivia, the fixer needs fixing herself. Olivia is in a jacked up situation and

her father says Olivia your situation looks bleak, Olivia you have ran out

of options. Olivia shoots right back at her daddy and says I am never

out of options.

And I admit you are bad, when you never out of options but if some of you be real with me we can't afford Olivia Pope and we don't know Judy Smith and every now and then we all have ran out of options.

Have you ran out options before because your money was funny and your change was strange

I tell you if you can't get to Olivia, I know somebody who sits high and looks low. And God says I am never out of options

If you are at the Red Sea, I will make a way out of no way

If you get thrown in the fire furnace, I will jump in the fire with you

If you are locked in the lions dens , I will lock the lions Jaw because I am never out of options

And so sometimes You and I want to quit because every now and then God will seem to be at the root of the problem. But if God being the root of the problem doesn't cause you to quit then

Secondly: When what you take serious others take lightly: vs 8

Here Jeremiah now begins to describe how unpopular his job is. He says this message I preach is not a message of blessing but of punishment and destruction. When you think about it Sermons on destruction doesn't get YouTube hits, sermons on destruction doesn't go viral on periscope, sermons on destruction doesn't even get a 30 clip on snap chat . And jeremiah says God you got me looking like a fool.

jeremiah says, Now God, because this so called destruction that you said is coming but hasn't come, It's causing me now to be laughed at. I am chasing un real rabbits

Anytime they see me coming they now have made me a new nickname. "here comes old violence and destruction, here comes old terror on every side. God they are laughing at me. I am serious about the work, but the people I am preaching to are not.

And you know that's really frustrating when you're trying your best to make a difference in the kingdom of God but other's are not as serious as you.

It's enough to make you want to quit!

It's enough to make you want to quit when you're trying to get young boys and girls to understand Jesus and his work and his work in the world but the people you work with are constantly not giving their best.

It's enough to make you want to quit.

It's enough to make you want to quit when the good you do just never seems to be good enough. It's enough to make you want to quit

It's enough to make you want to quit when we see an egotistical president whose plight is to build a wall rather than building a bridge of reconciliation, it's enough to make you want to quit

When you are a man and you are nice to a woman, people accuse you of being a play boy, if you have a regular conversation with a man and

You are a boy they accuse you of being funny it's enough to make u
want to quit

Its enough to make you want to quit when those who are not as
credentialed as you but they are the ones that seem to receive all the
spot light. ITS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WAN'T TO QUIT

It's enough to make you want to quit when your job say we have a
promotion for you, all you have to do is go back to school and get this
degree, you get the degree and they over look you by giving the
promotion to someone else, it's enough to make you want to quit

That's where Jeremiah is, he has been taken as a joke. The people of
Judah are being sarcastic towards him. Jeremiah is a complete laughing
stock of the very thing he was called to do.

I believe what God is trying to teach us and that is the Gospel can
weigh on you.

Jeremiah says I didn't sign up for this. He says don't you remember in Jeremiah 1. He said I am just a youth. I didn't sign up for this but God's desire over powered my own personal desire.

Yes God had promise that Jeremiah would prevail yet that day of promise seems so far away. And when you look at your situation it is enough to make you want to quit. When the power below seems to be louder and greater than the power above is enough to make you want to quit, when what you take serious others take lightly is enough to make you want to quit.

Finally I discover It is the remembrance of our pain that can help us arrive at our purpose. Verse 9

Jeremiah is feeling less then. He is feeling seduced. Notice Jeremiah is so upset with God he won't even mention him by his name. Jeremiah says I won't make mention of him or speak any more in his name. Jeremiah has been in a manner forced and driven into this

intolerable position by the coercive power of God which left him no choice.

Jeremiah treachery of betrayal, laughed at, set up to fall suggest that he would give up in being God's spokesperson;

Look at him if you will. He is at his office, tears down his license to preach, tears his ordination paper off the wall, walking out the office for the final time, but as he 2 inches from the door but an inward flame burnt so fiercely that he couldn't find no relief for his anguish. Jeremiah says it was like a fire shut up in my bones. Jeremiah says its an uncontrollable fire. It's a fire that's like in a building that consumes everything in its path. But the only way for me to get it out, I can't run it out, I can't read it out, I can't fuss it out. Jeremiah has come to the conclusion that as much as I want to quit, I can't quit because God's word has to come out of my mouth.

And let me tell you that's when you are really committed to Christ, when you want to quit but you can't quit.

someone is depending on you to do your part.

You are the missing piece to someone else's puzzle.

You are the missing element to someone else equation

You are the missing character in someone else story. YOU CAN'T QUIT

I believe Edgar Albert Guest said it best when he said

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,

when the road you're trudging seems all uphill,

when the funds are low and the debts are high,

and you want to smile but you have to sigh,

when care is pressing you down a bit rest if you must, but don't

you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns.

As everyone of us sometimes learns.

And many a fellow turns about when he might have won had he
stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow - you may succeed
with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than it seems to a faint and faltering man;

Often the struggler has given up when he might have captured
the victor's cup;

and he learned too late when the night came down,
how close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out - the silver tint of the clouds of
doubt,

and when you never can tell how close you are,

it may be near when it seems afar;

so stick to the fight when you're hardest hit - it's when things
seem worst, you must not quit.

There is a story told of an Egyptian painting called checkmate. It was a painting that showed what checkmate looked like. People from all across the country came to admire this picture in this beautiful picture gallery. One day while thousands of people were walking past the picture a man in the back of the gallery shouted it's a lie, it's a lie.

Everyone gasp for air as they were appalled one spectator said what do you mean by it's a lie. The man responded, the picture clearly says checkmate, but he said if you look in the corner of the picture, the King still has another move

You remember Moses don't you, he was leading the people across the Red Sea while pharaoh army was behind him, it looked like all was over, the lord told Moses raise your rod, and god did a carate chop on the waters and parted the waters on both sides and the people of Israel crossed on dry land, because the king still has another move

You remember Paul and Silas, Paul In Silas we're in a Phillipian jail with shackles on them and shackles on their feet, they were doomed and they were struggling, and at midnight paul and Sails had a prayer meeting. Paul did the praying, Silas did the singing and at midnight they were singing and praying and God caused an earthquake and God said go down and release my children, and they walked out because the king still has one more move

Come here Jesus, they put Jesus on the cross, they nailed his hands and nailed his feet, they put a spear in his side and a crown of thorns on his head and it looked like the game was over, it looked like checkmate, they took him down and put him in Joseph's new tomb, and it looked like death had won . he stayed there all day Friday and all day Saturday but early Sunday morning he got up with all power in his hand

Don't throw in the towel God still has another move

And when you give the best of your service telling the world that the savior has come, be not dismayed when men don't believe you, he will understand and say well done. Oh when I come to the end of my journey weary of life and the battle is won carrying the staff and the cross of redemption he will understand. I said he will understand

When you preach and they don't want to hear you, he will understand

When you laughed at, he will understand

When the good you do does not seem good enough he will understand

When you do a great job and no one seems to appreciate you, he will understand

When no one seems to care how you are doing in school he will understand.

Hallelujah he will understand, hallelujah he will understand and say well done

I know you have had some long nights but don't quit

I know you have had to drink tears for water but don't quit

I know it seems like your potential has maxed out at the place of where
you serve bu don't quit

I know it's a race epidemic but don't quit

Weep in May endure for a night but joy comes in the morning