**Text: Jeremiah 8:14-22; Acts 2:32-33, 39**

**Subject: Enough is Enough! Now What?**

 While it is not completely clear who first said, “Enough is Enough,” it is clear that this phrase has been used as a rally cry amongst the ranks of oppressed people who are sick and tired of being sick and tired of the oppression that they have endured.

 This phrase indicates that people have been brought to a boiling point whereby they are ready, willing and able to do whatever is necessary in order to be heard-- especially when it seems like no one else is listening.

However, today, my concern is that once we have declared that “enough is enough,” and after actions, through riots and protests have been taken, then the question becomes “Now What?”

 So far, historically, the aftermath of unrest seems to end the same way.

Perhaps, some concessions are made by government officials in order to increase the peace, or, perhaps some legislation gets promulgated in order to appease those whose voices have been heard but not really adhered to.

However, some time after the smoke has cleared, and after the windows panes have been replaced, and after the legislation of pacification has been passed, things seem to go right back to where they began before the uprisings began.

I believe this is the case because what we are dealing with is not necessarily a social problem. Instead, what we are dealing with is a spiritual problem.

Now, stick with me because this is where some who are sick and tired of being sick and tired check out. This is especially the case when the case can be made by some who may say: we’ve tried that before, but it didn’t work.

However, before we check out, let me remind you of the Apostle Paul who said in Ephesians 6:11-12 that we ought to put on the whole armor of God, that [we] may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

In other words, the battles we fight against oppression cannot be won unless an Spiritual axe is laid to the root to the aggressive and destructive weeds of systemic racism that continues to spring up like poison ivy that grows from the hardened and darkened hearts of those who could care less about the plight of a hurting and oppressed people.

That means that in order to truly win, we have to fight with the right weapons, or else, we may find ourselves worse than at first.

Now, I realize that this is not a popular view right now because tensions are high, and morale is low especially after so many black and brown lives have been lost at the hands of dark-hearted aggressors.

To add insult to injury, I am also aware that we are in the middle of a perfect storm of injustice especially when we consider that over 100,000 lives, most of which have been black and brown people, recently have been lost to COVID-19.

So, yes, I understand the human need to want to do something especially when doing nothing can no longer be an option because “enough is enough.” However, what I don’t fully understand are some of the courses of action that have been taken without having an end game in sight.

First, let me say, I fully understand the frustrations because I have lived long enough to have firsthand knowledge of what racism looks like and feels like.

At the same time, I don’t fully understand why we tend to destroy our own communities when we have had enough.

Now, to provide us with some insight, I have looked to researchers in the field of psychology who have studied what causes the human brain to reach a point where people decide to go and riot in the streets.

From a psychological perspective, it is said that after a person has been oppressed for a protracted period of time, and when there is a heightened sense of helplessness and hopelessness, the human brain reaches a point of acute hyper-arousal, and when it reaches that point --personal and social unrest is often the end result.

Specifically, what happens is, adrenaline and stress hormones kick into an acute stress response which then manifests itself into a fight or flight response.

In other words, when our brains reach the point where we can’t take it anymore, we have a tendency to “kirk out” which means people will either fight or run but may not always be fully aware of what they are doing or why they are doing it.

In a sense, researchers state that we go into a kind of survival mode especially when danger is perceived to be continuous and imminent.

Certainly, that definition frames the situation, and certainly it helps to explain human responses, however, what it doesn’t do is provide us with any solutions.

As a result, at best, we are left with more questions than we have answers especially to the issues of racism and brutality that black and brown people are still facing is still prevalent in America today.

Therefore, this explanation is not enough and as a result, perhaps we should consult with the great thinkers and leaders who have paid the ultimate price in the struggle for justice and equality for guidance.

First, in 1965, Malcolm X said, “I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation.”

Then, in 1967, in a speech at Stanford University, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr said:

“Certain conditions continue to exist in our society, which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met.

And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality and humanity.

And so in a real sense our nation’s summers of riots are caused by our nation’s winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.”

Also in 1967, at the American Psychology Association, Dr. King said:

Urban riots must now be recognized as durable social phenomena. This may be deplored but they are there and they should be understood….the looters are not seeking to seize territory or attain control of institutions. They are mainly intended to shock the white community. They are a distorted form of social protest…

But, most of all, alienated from society and knowing that this society cherishes property above people, he is shocking it by abusing property rights. There are thus elements of emotional catharsis in the violent act.

In that same speech, Dr. King went on to say, a profound judgement of today’s riots was expressed by Victor Hugo a century ago. He said, “if a soul is left in the darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness.”

And while these are still true, the ultimate truth is that even though legislation was passed and blood has been shed, systemically, nothing has really changed because the solutions are not enough. They are not enough to brighten a darkened heart; and they are not powerful enough enlighten a reprobate mind.

In other words, those deeply profound and powerful words, and the meaningful movements that these two great men started, are just not enough to eradicate the hatred that is so deeply embedded in the psyche of too many.

In essence, riots, protests, and powerful quotes, and great platitudes like: I’m sick and tired of being sick and tired; no justice—no peace; fight the power; power to the people; and even enough is enough, are still not enough because they are social, emotional, and even physical tactics that are not equipped to win a Spiritual war.

However, I do understand that we have a dilemma. This is so because on one hand, I’m sure we would all agree that doing nothing is no longer an option. Yet, if continue to do what we have always done through riots and protests, in order to be heard, we run the risk of getting the same results that we have always gotten which virtually amounts to nothing.

Or, we can attempt to devise a more effective strategy—a Spiritual strategy which is designed and equipped to win against the one who is responsible for darkening the souls and corrupting the minds of those who wrongly believe that they are superior.

Therefore, with this dilemma, we are still left more questions than we have answers—and the biggest, most pressing question is: Now What?

So it was with the discourse in our text. In Jeremiah 8:14-22, we find the Israelites also in a dilemma. On the one hand, they too were under siege and as a result, had to do something. But, on the other hand, what they purporting to do was not enough.

Specifically, this generation of Israelites had enjoyed the good life in the land flowing with milk and honey but had not adhered to the prophecies that had been spoken concerning the will of God.

As a result, they were under siege by the Babylonian Army whereby they were going to be taken out of Jerusalem and into exile in Babylon. Therefore, even though their problems manifested as a societal issue, really what they were in the middle of was a spiritual war.

As a result, ultimately, the only way they could win against sin, was to fight with the right Spiritual weapons which in this was the Word of God.

Nevertheless, in verse 14, we find one faction of the people who believed that their only salvation was to stand and fight the power. They said, why do we sit still? Gather together; let us go into the fortified cities, and perish there.

In other words, that particular group felt like they couldn’t just stand there and be consumed by an enemy that had a mandate to capture and oppress them by extracting them out of the Promised and taking them into exile in Babylon.

Thus, they felt like doing nothing was no longer an option even if what they wanted to do might end in death. I presume they were thinking something like: give me liberty or give me death.

However, those feelings, were not enough and deep down inside they knew it was not enough because they said: “we looked for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but behold terror.”

As a result, they were still facing a dilemma because they knew they needed to do something-- but they did not know what to do. And, unfortunately, this uncertainty turned into doubt that God would be willing or able to help them to get through what they were going through.

We know this because in verse 19 of our text, Jeremiah said to God, behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land; “is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?

Then, in verse 20, he said, the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Then, in verse 22, he asked: Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

Well, let’s pause here for a minute because there are a couple things we need to peel back. First, Jeremiah was well within his rights to grieve for the condition of his people because he just could not stand to see what was happening to them.

At the same time, it was even ok for Jeremiah to question why God had not yet moved. However, it was not ok for him to question whether God was able to move, or whether God was Lord and King in Zion.

So it is with us today. There are many in our community across the nation who have grown weary in their faith because they believe that God has not moved quick enough to change our condition which has been wretched since 1492.

And as a result, people believe that matters have to be taken in their own hands, and at the same time, they do not believe that God is Lord and King over the earth.

And because of that, many hearts of the oppressed have grown almost as dark as the oppressor because they have forgotten or perhaps they never knew that God is who He says He is.

Now, in the case of the Israelites in our text, God reminds Jeremiah of who He is in Jeremiah 9:22 when He said, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.

In other words, God was telling the Israelites that no matter what it looked like, God was, and still is able to bring justice and righteousness through His steadfast love, even if it took a while to manifest and even it didn’t look the way they wanted it to look.

Therefore, God was saying, of course, there is a balm in Gilead; and of course He is able to heal the land; and of course, He is still King and Lord over all the earth knowing that the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world, and they who dwell therein.

However, for some, that is not enough because we want what we want and we want it now. And as a result, we do not want to hear all that God talk because some say we’ve been hearing it for too long without any results.

And to that, I say, I understand. But, that is not enough—because once we have made that declaration, then we are still left with the question, Now What?

We have tried peaceful demonstrations; and we have tried unpeaceful demonstrations. They have passed legislation; and they have reneged on the enforcement of their promulgations. But, that is still not enough.

Therefore, without faith in God, we have come to the end of our options and we will find ourselves hopeless and powerless, even though there are some who have begun to believe that’s where we are right now.

However, today, I stopped by here to let you know that we are not a powerless and hopeless people. Instead, on this Day of Pentecost, by faith, we are a people who have the precious promise that we are endued with power.

Therefore, when Enough is Enough, we will be able to answer the question, Now What? By saying: We’ve Got The Power!

First, we know we’ve got the power because Acts 1:8 says, we shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost has come upon us….

Now, some who don’t fully believe might say, So What?

And if that’s what you are saying then what you don’t realize is that this kind of power is more than enough.

Let me remind that so far, we’ve tried everything else, but nothing else has been enough.

But God has shown us, time and time and time again, that His power is more than enough to overcome the oppression of the oppressor. And, the most important example of that was exemplified through was the life, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

In other words, when the Lord Jesus came to the earth, the people of that time were also sick and tired of being sick and tired, and they too felt like enough was enough.

At the same time, everything they tried was not enough.

So, they too were asking themselves, Now What?

However, right when they felt like they couldn’t go any further and when they felt hopeless and powerless, God sent forth His only begotten Son whom He had anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit because He knew His power would be more than enough.

We know this is so because in Acts 10:38, Luke citing Peter said, God anointed Jesus of Nazereth with the Holy Spirit and with power. [and] He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

In other words, what God gave to the Lord Jesus Christ was His power-- that was more than enough to overcome the power of the oppressor who had oppressed the people with the yoke of chains and bondage.

Then, in Acts 2:25, he said, God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Then, in Acts 2:32-35, 39, we find these words. (READ)

Here, we see that oppressor’s oppression was not enough to hold the Lord Jesus down, but God’s power was more than enough to lift Him up.

Not only that, but God made a promise that He would give us that self-same resurrection, Pentecostal power that Jesus had.

He said He has poured this out that we ourselves would be seeing and hearing.

Then, He said, for the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.

So then, Yes, I realize that we have all had enough—that Enough is Enough!

And, I also realize that what we have tried has not been enough!

Thus, today, we have to try what we know will work; what we know is powerful, and with such, we will be able to answer the question: Now What?

In other words, if we would just let go and let God fulfill His promise that He already fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost—that we would be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit—we will find that we have more than enough to help us to overcome the oppression of the oppressor who seeks keep a knee on our necks.

With this power, when asked Now What? We will be able to say:

We’ve got the power! That’s What!

That we’ve got the power over oppression!

That we’ve got the power over racism!

That we’ve got the power over fascism!

That we’ve got the power over classism!

That’s we’ve got the power over sin!

That there is a balm in Gilead!

That there is King in Zion!

Therefore, Enough is Enough!

But with the Power of the Holy Ghost, we’ve got more than enough!

Now What? That’s What!

Amen!