



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Micah 6:1-5

"Jehovah's Case Against Israel"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning tonight to Micah chapter 6, verse 1 through verse 5. Our subject for tonight is "Jehovah's Case Against Israel." Micah chapter 6 and verse 1 through verse 5. One of the recurring problems of recalcitrant saints is tiring of the Lord God. To be tired of God is something that afflicts the whole body, the church of Jesus Christ. It affects local churches like Believers Chapel that are evangelical in their doctrine, but nevertheless in their individual lives and then as a church body, they become tired of the Lord God. And especially it afflicts all of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Probably there is not a single person in this auditorium, even the youngest of the Christians who would not testify to the fact that already in their Christian life there has been a time in which is probably fair to say that they have grown tired of the word of God and of the experience of the life with God.

You can see this in the Bible itself in the experiences of the saints. For example, take a great saint like Uzziah who was king of Judah. He was a magnificent king of Judah. He was one of the greatest of the kings. He ruled in Jerusalem for fifty and two years. In 2 Chronicles chapter 26 many things are attributed to Uzziah as improvements in strengthening of the nation. God helped him against the Philistines. For example, he

built towers in Jerusalem at the corner of the gate and the valley gate. He built towers in the desert. He had a host of fighting men that went to war by bands according to the number of their account.

And as a result of the work of this great king, Israel reached one of the high points in its history. It was strong. It was a nation that did not have in any to apologize for its power or its existence. But then we read in verse 15 and verse 16 of 2 Chronicles chapter 26, these words concerning him. "And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong." That's a magnificent statement with reference to him, the divine power and providence working in his behalf. "He was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense."

So Uzziah: a great ministry, a great rule, a great reign, but at the end disobedient to the word of God, the result was he became a leper and died a leper. He was the king of whom Isaiah writes when he says that "He went into the temple of the Lord in the day that Uzziah died and he saw the real king." Take Gideon, Gideon is one we know as one who accomplished a tremendous miraculous victory for the nation Israel through the Lord over the Mideonites. But as you read the story of Gideon, chapter 6, chapter 7, and then in chapter 8 of the Book of Judges you learn that in the last days of Gideon as a result of something he did, he became a snare to the children of Israel.

One can also see this illustrated in the lives of us who are Christians. Who does not as a Christian know of other Christians who for some period of time gave every evidence of being genuine believers, were genuine believers, so far as I know may still be genuine believers, but at a certain point in their life their interest in spiritual things began to wane. Their interest in the word of God began to wane. They began to take the

things of the Lord as if they were just ordinary things. And the result is that many of them have become totally indifferent, it would seem, and lethargic so far as spiritual things are concerned. I've often said this, of course, and it is something that arises out of the fact that I've preached in Dallas for over thirty years now. But I can look back over the city and think of individuals who were responsive to the word of God at one particular time over the years in some of the churches in which I preached, but who today do not have any outward interest in spiritual things. Some have a little bit. Some seem to have settled into a kind of life on a certain plane in which they seem to be saying, "I'm satisfied with that which I have attained. I don't think there is anything else for me in spiritual things."

I think of the men who graduated from the theological seminary or who were former students. Occasionally in Dallas people will come up to me and say, "Did you know so and so?" And I'd go back in my mind and say, "Well, yes I think I did know someone by that name." "He said that he attended Dallas Seminary and that you were one of his teachers." I remember one particularly but a number have been like this. I'll say, "Yes I do remember him. He went for one year. He was from Bob Jones University, one particular person I was thinking about." And this individual will say, "Well I saw him the other day, and I began to talk to him about spiritual things and he has no interest whatsoever in the Bible." Well, it's one of the sad things that one sees in spiritual things, but it's one of the true things. Sometimes men obtain real skills in the interpretation of the word of God. For example, the person who has interpreted the Gospel of Mark in the New International Commentary Series is a well known individual who attained to considerable skills, unusual skills for a young man. But because of spiritual decline, is not in effective service at all at the present time.

Well, one might ask, what is the remedy? I think you would get some help from what the Lord Jesus wrote to the church at Ephesus. Remember the church at Ephesus had had a remarkable kind of ministry. It was one of the churches that the Apostle Paul knew extremely well. They had Bible classes. They had prayer meetings. They had

ladies auxiliary. They had men's fellowships in the days that the Lord Jesus wrote to them, because he says, "Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write, these things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, I know thy works and thy labor and thy patients, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne and hast patience and for my name's sake has labored and hast not fainted." So here is a church that has works, labor, patience. It's not the work of faith. It's not the labor of love. It's not the patience of hope, but nevertheless they have works. They have labor. They have patience.

What would the Lord Jesus say about them? He said, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee for thou hast left thy first love." Is it possible that a person who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ can grieve Immanuel? Is it possible that you would wound the one who has loved you and gave himself for you? Is it possible that you can grieve him whose heart was pierced for your redemption? Well, all of the Bible tells us that that is a possibility. And not only is it a possibility, but many saints down through the years have fallen into the indifference and lethargy that characterizes just such people. You know, this is sad, I think, in the light of the Epistle to the Ephesians, too, because when Apostle Paul finished his letter to the Ephesians, in chapter 6, verse 24 of his letter he says something to them like this, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility." What a sad thing that a church, to whom the Apostle Paul had written, and which had been encouraged by the Apostle Paul to go on loving the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility, and less than forty years later the Lord Jesus writes to that same group and says, "You have left your first love."

Now, the ministry that Micah had to the children of Israel in his day was a ministry to a nation that had had a great experience of the Lord God, but now they were indifferent, lethargic, and what's more, they apparently had abandoned the teaching of the word of God in such a way that it was necessary for God to say through the prophet, "I

have a controversy with you." May I ask you a personal question? If God were to speak to you, and you were to hear his voice, could it be that he would say to you, "I have a controversy with you." Is it possible? Is it possible that our Christian experience is paralleled, a paralleled experience with Israel. Let's listen to what he says to Judah and Israel. Now, I'm going to read verse 1 and verse 2 first, where the prophet speaks of the covenant lawsuit summons.

"Hear ye now what the LORD saith; (By the way, that hear ye, notice the plural, this is a general address.) Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou (Notice the singular, this is not a reference to the general audience, but this is a reference to the nation Israel.) Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel."

Now you can tell from just reading these verses that this particular paragraph in the Prophecy of Micah has language and style that is drawn from the legal practices in the nation Israel. So what we have here is a kind of summons to a lawsuit, and God is the one who is issuing the summons through the prophet. Incidentally, this not only introduces the five verses that we will look at tonight, but chapters 6 and 7. I want you to notice the address to the general audience first, "Hear ye now what the Lord says." In other words, the Lord is speaking. Yahweh is talking. Now when Yahweh speaks, everybody ought to keep quiet. That's what Habakkuk means when he says, "The Lord is in his holy temple let everybody keep silent before him."

Now, the second part of this address, or this covenant lawsuit summons is addressed to Israel in the latter part of verse 1, as I said when we read these two verses. "Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice." So Israel is ordered by the Lord to do what you might do in a law court, stand up and defend your

positions. So Israel is told to "Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice." Now notice that the spectators are not human spectators. But the spectators in this courtroom, by the prophet, are the mountains and the hills that are about. Those majestic mountains, those majestic hills, they are the legal assembly that is to hear the case. One might wonder, why is the case to be heard before them? Until you reflect upon the fact that those mountains and those hills have been there ever since God made his covenant with Israel. And so in symbolic fashion, they heard the initial making of the covenant, and they have observed the life of the nation down through the centuries. It is they who have seen how Israel has responded. They have seen the things that God did for Israel, through Israel. And they also are the ones who have seen Israel's misdeeds, and so they are called as witnesses in this law court.

Now, you can tell that this is a serious matter so far as God as concerned, because he does call the mountains and the hills to witness to this controversy. So he addresses the mountains directly in verse 2. "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people." In other words, nature itself is called to hear the covenant litigation. Now, notice that little phrase, "his people." Now, that indicates that this is a covenantal kind of lawsuit. In other words, God has entered into a relationship with Israel such that they are his people, but yet at the same time they have not been faithful to that covenant. The people's existence and their history is really the work of the Lord. There would not be any Israel had it not been for the Lord laying his hand upon Abraham, revealing himself to Abraham, calling out Abraham from the midst of the Gentiles, giving him great covenantal promises in the Abrahamic covenant, confirming that covenant to Isaac and confirming it to Jacob. And then ultimately, as they were led down into Egypt, bringing them out of Egypt in great magnificent acts of divine power and grace. So they are his people. They belong to the covenant. They are a covenantal people, but now they are brought before God in this law case.

And we read in the last clause of verse 2, "And he will plead with Israel." By the way, that word "plead" is the same word that is used in Isaiah chapter 1, in verse 18 where the prophet says, "Come now let us reason together." It is true it's in a different stem in the Hebrew text, but it is the same verb. This plea that the Lord speaks about here, "He will plead with Israel," is a plea that is not based upon his power and his authority alone, but it is based upon truth, and it is based upon reason, too, reason under truth.

Now then, the complaint is given in verse 3, "O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me." Notice the expression, "O my people." And then again, verse 5, "O my people." Pusey, in his commentary on Micah in his commentary on the Minor Prophets, says, "This one tender word contains a whole volume of reproof." "O my people," this is an expression that can be used of the church. It can be used of a church like Believers Chapel, "O my people." After all what have we in Believers Chapel? We have a group of individuals who claim to have entered into relationship with the Lord who make profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have acknowledged that their hope and trust rests upon him alone. You speak about him as your Savior. You speak about him as your Lord. This is a gathering of believers who form a local church, a manifestation of the divine presence. In that sense, we could be called people of God. "O my people," he said with reference to Israel. We, too, have entered into covenant relationship with him, not the Abrahamic covenant, or yet is it not the Abrahamic covenant? For after all, the Abrahamic covenant is the one comprehensive covenant, and then out of that flow the Davidic and the New covenant, which Jesus consummated in the shedding of his blood on Calvary's cross. We belong to the same company of the people of God. "O my people." But how is the zeal, the love, the obedience of Believers Chapel? What would the Lord say about us if he wrote a letter to us? Would he say, "You've left your first love?"

And of course, all of these things that we apply to a church apply to us personally. Would he say that to me? Would he say that to you? Do you remember a day when your love was fresher than it is today? After all the test is obedience, isn't it? Those that love him keep his commandments. Do we keep his commandments? Is that the bent of our lives? That is a pathetic, poignant kind of expression, isn't it? "O my people," from the Lord of the universe.

"What have I done unto thee?" Two questions, you'll notice the first one is rather defensive. He protests his innocence, really. "What have I done to thee?" The second gives the position that Israel apparently is taking. The text doesn't really tell us here, so we learn it from the question that he asks. He says, "What have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee?" So evidently Israel was saying, "You've wearied us. The Lord wearied us. We're tired. We don't find life with Yahweh to be interesting and exciting. We find it to be tiring." "Wherein have a wearied thee?" In other words, they hold him responsible for the circumstances that have exhausted their patience. He's the one who's really responsible. God doesn't detail their sins. He doesn't say, "Now, I want to tell you three things that you've done wrong, number one, number two, and number three." I'm sure that if he had started out like that, we would have Micah as one of the largest books in the Bible. But he didn't do that. He asks about his own faults. He said, "Have I made harsh demands on you? Have I given you rash promises, which I have been unable to keep? Have I abandoned you in the experiences of life? When you came into difficulty, did I leave you? Have I wearied you? What have I done?" Startling thing isn't it, the way the Lord speaks.

I remember a text in one of the prophets who wrote at the same time as Micah, Isaiah, and in the 5th chapter of his great book he has one of those little sections in which he gives a parable of a vineyard. He likes Israel to a vineyard. He says, "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard." And remember, in the New Testament the Lord Jesus uses this and constructs a parable of a vineyard. He says,

"My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof." It's a pictorial picture of what God did for the nation. "I planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it," and so on. And he goes on to speak and finally in verse 4 the Lord says, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" In other words, I have made every provision that could be made for my people.

Now, we turn to verse 4 and verse 5 after his complaint. Here is his countering reply to the complaint that Israel had against him that he's wearied them. They're tired of him. Now, what would you expect the Lord to do? Well, I think he does exactly what we would expect him to do. If we've read the prophets much, we know what he would want to do. He will want to go back and talk to them about the beginning. He will go back and recount their covenantal history. So he recites here the covenantal history. That's the normative story of the grace of God, the way in which he brought the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt into the wilderness and then ultimately into the land and established them in the land that he had promised them. Why is he doing this? Why, he's trying to bring the law court, the mountains and the hills, they already know the truth, but he's trying to bring Israel to the conviction that the case that he has against them is the right case. They are guilty. And so he just goes back and tells them what he has done. Listen, I'm going to read verses 4 and 5.

"For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD."

The evidence is all in support of the case of Yahweh against Israel. What has he done? Why he's taken them out of Egypt, first of all. They were there in bondage. By the way, there is a marvelous play on words, which is characteristic of Micah. In verse 3

when we read, "Wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me." The word "wearied" is very close to the word in verse 4 "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." One of these may be pronounced helithika and then the other heelithika. So it's almost as if he were saying, "I've not let you down, I've brought you up." "Wherein have I wearied thee?" And a pun on that sound, he makes his point by the use of the sound, it's just the opposite. I didn't let you down; I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee from the house of bondage. You have feelings that you are wearied with me. I ask you to look at the facts. I have redeemed you. You are part of the great salvation history which was constructed as I brought you out of Egypt in redemption into the land. I've not overburdened you. I have actually rescued you from your burdens. A magnificent statement isn't it? And when we think of the cross of Jesus Christ, that's exactly the way he would construct a case against us. When we think that the Christian life is difficult and hard, I'm not speaking about the kinds of afflictions into which we might fall, or which we may experience. But I mean those times when we think that the burdens of the teaching of the word of God are such that we become wearied with divine things. It might help you to take a look back at what has been done for you, too.

So he's saying, "I brought thee out of the land of Egypt and I redeemed thee from the house of bondage." He just goes over those beneficial acts. Now, those were acts that ratified the Abrahamic covenant, because he had said that Abraham and his seed would be blessed by the Lord God. And when Israel was in the land of Egypt, one might have wondered, what about the promises of God? But God raised up Moses and Aaron, and he led the children of Israel out of the land of bondage on into the Promised Land in the ratification of those Abrahamic promises that had been given to Abraham so many hundreds of years before, redemption by power and by blood.

That's what we learn when we read the Book of Exodus. We know about the conflict that Moses had with Pharaoh and the Egyptians and finally how as a result of the shedding of the blood of the lamb placed upon the door posts, all of that was designed

simply to foreshadow the ministry of the Messiah who would accomplish the spiritual redemption in the future. But by the blood that was placed on the door posts, they were delivered from the judgment of the death of the firstborn. And then by the mighty power of God, which is the issue of the blood that was shed, the blood being the ground of the redemption. The power of God in the deliverance being the issue of it, Israel went out to the Red Sea. God parted the waters. He brought them through the waters on out of the clutches of Pharaoh and his man, and actually when the waters came back Pharaoh and his men were destroyed. All of that was a typical picture, of course, of what has transpired in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it was a tremendous thing for Israel to have had that experience by the power of God and by the blood of the lamb.

Now, in verse 4 I want you to notice the word "redeemed." He says, "I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and I redeemed you out of the house of bondage." That is the Hebrew word *padah*. Now, *padah* is a word that means to deliver someone, or to free someone who is bound by legal obligation, by the payment of a price. Let me say that again. *Padah*, this particular word, this word which means "to ransom" is a word which means to free someone from a legal obligation by the payment of a price. That's its normal meaning.

Now, when you look at the context of the Book of Exodus, for example, when we think of *padah*, to ransom, by the way, I like the word ransom. B.B. Warfield used to say that he liked the word ransomed better than the word redeemed, because the word ransom still contained in it the idea of the payment of a price. Today in modern times we've had ransom come back on the front pages of our papers. Wealthy business men, important business men, wealthy political figures taken by terrorist groups, and in general they ask for ransom, that is a payment of a particular price. It may be to release some of the terrorists who are in jail, or it may be to pay some fantastic amount of money. Redemption, however, has come to be used of a lot of things of which there is no payment of a price set out. In other words, redemption has been so watered down that it

is now become a very weak illustration of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And most preachers have to explain the details, but ransom, that word is still useful. And if I had to choose between the two I, with Warfield, would prefer ransom, because it does connote the idea of the payment of a price. And of course, the blood of Jesus Christ is the ultimate price that was paid, a price paid not to some foreign figure like Satan, or in this case Pharaoh, but simply a price that is paid to the justice and holiness of God, a satisfaction of that justice in order that men may go free.

So when we read here that they were redeemed, well we can say "ransomed out of the house of servants." It was the freedom from a legal obligation by the payment of a price. Peter speaks about this in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 18 and 19, when he says words like this, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

John Newton is a man whom we know because of the marvelous hymns that Newton, together with William Cowper wrote. They published the Olney Hymns because Newton came to know Cowper later on. And we know John Newton by some of the hymns that he wrote. Newton had a most interesting kind of existence. He was the son of a merchant sea captain. He had an unsettled childhood and a turbulent youth. He was forced to join the royal navy. He was arrested in West Africa. He eventually became virtually the slave of a white slave trader's black wife. She humiliated him. He lived in hunger and was destitute for a couple of years, and he was also involved in the slave trade. In 1747 he boarded a ship for England, but a violent storm in the north Atlantic almost caused the ship to go down. It was so fearful for him that at that point he turned to the Lord. His conversion was not so striking that he did not go back to the slave trade for a while, for he did. He traded further in the slaves, but eventually he gave it up, became a Church of England preacher, came in touch with William Cowper, was known

for his evangelicalism. They produced the Olney Hymns and among those hymns that were produced by them were "Amazing Grace," "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken." And Newton had for many years in Britain a very influential ministry. He became associated with William Wilberforce, and out of the association and his support of Wilberforce's politics, slave trading became outlawed.

Do you know what his favorite text was? Deuteronomy chapter 15, verse 15. This is what he put above his desk. "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day." "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee." Against the figure of Israel ransomed from Egypt he saw his own life. And really that's a way in which we can see our lives, too. That figure, but especially the reality. We were in bondage to sin, and the Lord our God has redeemed us through the Lord Jesus Christ, on the way to perishing, on the way to eternal hell fire, and we were snatched as a brand from the burning. You see what the Lord is doing? He's saying, "Take a look at the past. Wearied you? Have I given you rash promises? Have I left you to yourself? Is there something that I should have done that I have not done? What have I done that has brought about this condition that you are disobedient to me?"

Well, he not only speaks of what he did for them in bringing them out of Egypt, he goes on to say, "I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." In other words, the ministry of Moses was a ministry that came from me. You think of Moses as great. I gave Moses to you. I sent Moses. I sent Aaron and Miriam before you. That's part of my providential dealings. And then he speaks of the wilderness, well that's the wilderness guidance. And then he speaks of the entrance into the land. He says in the 5th verse, "O my people, remember now what Balak, King of Moab, consulted and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD." Remember that after God had brought them out of Egypt, and they had

been led through the wilderness by Moses, they came to Shittim, a little place on the east of the Jordan. That was the last stopping place before they went into the land. The first stopping place after they got into the land was Gilgal, and in between was the miraculous passage of the Jordan River in which they went over dry-shod. So this is his statement concerning entrance into the land. "I brought you out of Egypt, I redeemed you. I led you for the forty years through the wilderness. I brought you into the land."

Now, when they got to Shittim, remember, there was one last difficulty, Balak did not like the idea of the children of Israel coming through his territory, because he recognized that as a threat. So he didn't do what others did. By that time Israel had evidently become so powerful that he didn't feel he could do that, attack them physically. So he thought he would do it another way. He thought the best way to do it would be to get a prophet of God and have him prophesy against them. And you remember he paid Balaam. Balaam's the typical hireling prophet. We've got a lot of them in the Christian church today. They stand behind the pulpit, because they are hired to stand behind the pulpit. In fact they teach men in theological seminary -- tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon, lest the uncircumcised Philistines of the liberals hear -- but they teach evangelicals that you ought not to take a church unless the church commits itself to you in a certain way. I'd love to the apostles here to listen in on some of the conversations that evangelicals have with their students and among themselves today, so contrary to the word of God.

But anyway, Balaam was hired, and he was hired to prophesy against Israel. And you know what happened, every time he got up to prophesy, his tongue got tangled up in his mouth, and out came, instead of a curse, a blessing. Go back and read Numbers 22, 23, 24, four great Messianic promises. God says he turned his cursing into blessing. That fellow got up fully intending to curse Israel and couldn't do it. Remember later on he did persuade the children of Israel to have relationship with the women. Having tried prophesy, that didn't work; he tried fleshly entanglements and that worked in a certain

way until finally a man of God named Phinehas stood up for the Lord. And the disobedient were gotten rid of, and God brought Israel into the land. He's talking about that. This is his work. "I have brought you out of Egypt. I led you through the wilderness. I brought you through the difficulties with Balaam and Balak, and I brought you into the land that you may know the righteousneses," incidentally, that's plural in the Hebrew text, "the righteousneses of the Lord." What are the righteousneses? Well, those are his saving acts, just what he's been talking about. I think it's very interesting that the cross of Jesus Christ is called a righteous act in Romans 5:18.

Well, you can see who is going to win this law case. Jehovah is vindicated. Israel is convicted of gross neglect, convicted of gross ingratitude just like the church at Ephesus; the church at Ephesus, a group that had the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Not only the ministry of the Apostle Paul, incidentally, he commends them in his letter to them for their faith, and for their love toward all the saints. They had a good beginning, and then later on, remember, the apostle met with the Ephesian elders on the way back to Jerusalem and he said, "Take heed to the church of God, to yourselves, and to the church of God, among which the Holy Spirit has put you as overseers to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. So take heed." And the Lord Jesus speaks, "You've left your first love."

And today, when you go to Ephesus, what do you see? Magnificent ruins. There is no church at Ephesus, just ruins, magnificent ruins. Archeologists are interested in Ephesus. Biblical students of archeology are interested in Ephesus. Extensive ruins, that's all. When you leave your first love, and when you abandon him, that's what happens. There are lots of spiritual ruins that are walking around as professors of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, too.

What is Israel to do? Well, reconcile, they are to respond in faith instead of murmuring, instead of saying, "We are wearied with the Lord God." And that's to be expressed in loving obedience as they reflect upon what they really would be apart from

the Lord God. There is a story that I like about a missionary who was preaching out west. There was an Indian chief in his meetings. He was ministering among the Indians. As he was speaking about Jesus Christ, the chief stood up, walked forward, laid his tomahawk down at the missionary's feet, and said, "Indian chief give his tomahawk to Jesus Christ." He sat down and the missionary continued telling more of the love of God in Jesus Christ, and later rising a second time he walked forward, took his blanket off his shoulder and put it down and said, "Indian chief give his blanket to Jesus Christ." He had his pony over by the side of the meeting, and in a few moments he got up, went over and took the bridle on his pony and brought it over and said, "Indian give his pony to Jesus Christ." And the preacher, by that time, had reached the story of the cross. And as he was telling the story of the cross, so it is said, some big tears began to flow down the bronzed face of the Indian chief, and finally he walked forward to the preacher and knelt down before him and said, "Indian chief give himself to Jesus Christ." Well, that's really what our Lord wants. He doesn't want our things. He wants us.

If you have any question about how much you owe, do like Thomas Goodwin, the Puritan. He used to say, "When I felt cold, and I was not filled with amazement at the grace of God, I used to take a turn up and down among the sins of my past life, and I always came down with a broken and contrite heart, ready to preach that wonderful grace." Take a look back. Take a look back at what you were. Take a look back at what God has done for you in wonderful covenant grace. And if you think he wearies you. If you think he has not done for you what he has said that would do, if he has not done for you everything that ought to be done, get down upon your knees and ask God to move in your cold and indifferent and lethargic heart, and warm it with the sense of the grace of God manifested to you. Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the way in which Yahweh dealt with Israel for we know that's how he would deal with us. Lord, that's how Thou wouldst

through Jesus Christ speak to us. So often we feel ourselves paralleling the sins of the nation Israel. Oh God, deliver us from feeling that you have wearied us when you have released us from all of our burdens, have done everything that could be done for us. Oh God...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]