

**Life's Ultimate Questions:
What Is Really Important?
Jeremiah 9:23-24**

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Text Introduction: We are in a series of messages that we are calling "Life's Ultimate Questions." Questions like: "What is the purpose of my life?" and "Is God watching over me?" Last time, we asked the question, "What about my heart?" Today, we raise this question: "What is really important?" Our text for this series is the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet in the last days of Old Testament history before the exile.

Text: This is what the LORD says:

The wise man must not boast in his wisdom;
the mighty man must not boast in his might;
the rich man must not boast in his riches.

²⁴ But the one who boasts should boast in this,
that he understands and knows Me—
that I am Lord, showing faithful love,
justice, and righteousness on the earth,
for I delight in these things.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Introduction: I think it is fair to say that our culture struggles with what is really important in life. Our struggle, though, is not in knowing what is important. If you ask most people what should be number one in life, most will say "God." To continue that thought out, then they will say, "And second must be my family." Again, our struggle is not in knowing what is important. Our struggle is in living our lives as though that which we say is most important is purposefully lived out as important. In other words, it is not a question of the belief; it is a question of the will.

We are in a section of Jeremiah that seems to be a compilation of the sermons of Jeremiah. After the Temple Sermon of the beginning of chapter 7, which we looked at last week, we get a glimpse of the preaching of Jeremiah. You might imagine it as little brief clips of the sermons of Jeremiah. Something like "The Best of" is what I think we are seeing here. I really like the word we get here in Jeremiah 9:23-24, because indeed it gets to the heart of one of those important, ultimate questions of life. What is really important?

Discovering What is Important:

The important things in life are not what the world considers important,

- Wisdom
- Strength

- Wealth

Now, you already knew that, didn't you? You knew that life is not found in wisdom (education), strength (power), or wealth (money, possessions). Here is the irony. We believe that Jeremiah lived and therefore preached approximately 600 years before Christ. Nothing has changed!

We know that, but we don't live like we know that! It takes the catastrophic to cause us to realize this. This photograph (show slide of picture) was taken this spring after the devastating tornadoes in Moore, OK. Look at it. The little sign in the midst of all of this rubble says, "The most important things in life aren't things."

So, where do we really find life? Not in these things,

but rather in Knowing Him.

This was the testimony of the Apostle Paul. Hear his words as recorded in Philippians 3:4-10. He begins with a reflection of his past in verses 4-6.

⁴ although I once also had confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

He then shifts to his present pursuit in verses 7-10.

⁷ But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ My goal is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Dedicating a Life to Knowing Him!

This will be a life dedicated to . . .

1. Perspective and priorities fixed on eternity.

Perspective is what I think about; priorities are how that perspective is worked out in my life. The first of this triad is not important and worth boasting about because these things do not last.

Best way to know your priorities is to consider your calendar and your check book—where you spend your money and where you spend your time will tell you about your priorities.

2. Practices founded on the things of God.

He delights in these things. We should delight in these things.

3. Praise focused toward God.

The Hebrew word that Jeremiah employed here is the Hebrew word *halel*. What do you hear in the word? *Hallelujah*, right? You are not going to find your hallelujah in the world; you are going to find it in Him. You are not going to find what is really important in the world; you are going to find it in Him.

Concluding Thought:

There are two things I think we ought to consider in closing. First, this is a battle. You will battle with this for the rest of your life. Second, there is a difference in knowing Him and knowing about Him.