

JEREMIAH: From Weakness Made Strong to Stand Alone For God

THE MAN - Born into a priestly family, but called by God to be a prophet (Jeremiah 1: 4-10). Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet (Jeremiah 9: 1; 14: 17). He did not merely speak for God, he felt God's broken heart over the spiritual adultery of His people; he did not merely speak to God's people, he felt the consequences of their sin & suffered with them (Jeremiah 13: 15-17). Jeremiah is an object lesson for all time of God's persevering love in the presence of man's rebellion & sin.

HIS MESSAGE - Jeremiah called on the nation of Judah to repent of their sin or suffer destruction & captivity at the hands of the Babylonians. The heart of Jeremiah's message is captured in two recurring phrases, "I will punish" and "I will restore." Though God would severely wound His people for their sin, the last word would not be the demise of God's people, but the healing of God's people through His love (Jeremiah 30: 11-18).

HIS MINISTRY - Jeremiah was born during the reign of Manasseh, the most wicked of Judah's kings. His ministry began in the thirteenth year of King Josiah and spanned five decades, covering Judah's last five kings. He was the last prophet to a decaying nation, calling them to repent and return to God, but never saw any success in ministry as God's people plunged into God's judgment. He witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and died during the early years of the seventy year Babylonian Captivity. Historical background is found in Jeremiah 1: 1-3, 2 Kings 21-25, & 2 Chronicles 33-36. A summary of the times in which Jeremiah ministered is found in 2 Chronicles 36: 11-21.

HIS MISERY - No servant of God ever suffered more physical, mental, emotional, & spiritual anguish over such a long period of time as did Jeremiah. He was branded a false prophet and a traitor to his nation, suffered constant ridicule, total isolation, and severe persecution that often led to beatings and imprisonment. Throughout his five decades of ministry, discouragement & depression dogged his steps. Despite all of this he remained faithful to God to the very end. In the eyes of the public he never flinched once, he never faltered, he was like a rock, a tower of strength; but when alone with God it was a different story. You see him weak, frightened, throwing pity parties and often ready to quit (Jeremiah 15: 15-21 & 20: 7-18). It was alone with God that Jeremiah found the resolve to stand alone for God.

Lessons Learned From Jeremiah

1. _____. Darkness, depression, despair, & disappointment are legitimate spiritual experiences. Just as there will be mountain top experiences, there will be seasons in the valley of disappointment; this is inescapable!

- 2 Corinthians 4: 1-12
- 1 Peter 1: 6-9

2. _____. It is okay to express my raw emotions to God. God will never gasp in surprise and say, “I would never have believed that of you!” The suffering can only be endured when the pain is articulated, which is the first step to healing.

Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord.

Lamentations 2: 19b

3. _____. In difficult times there is no one to turn to but God, but remember, when we are perplexed, God does not explain Himself, He gives _____.

But the righteous will live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2: 4

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2: 14

But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.

Habakkuk 2: 20

I heard and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the people to arise who will invade us. Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places.

Habakkuk 3: 16-19

