

Jeremiah 38

Read Jeremiah 38:1-13: We have talked about the book Pilgrim's Progress. It's theme is about a man who is fleeing the City of Destruction. Jeremiah is telling the people that whoever does not leave Jerusalem will either be killed with the sword or starve, or die of disease. Their only chance was to go with the Chaldeans. The people were invested in their own survival ideas. That is why we are so hard to help. We would rather stick to our doomed plan, than to trust God with control over our lives. It seemed to them like God was their enemy. They alienated themselves from God to enjoy their sin. When we only occupy ourselves with the daily pattern of this world, without God we are ultimately taking on a losing proposition. Living agnostically seems harmless on the surface, but it is not. God confronts us all. We have to sidestep Jesus. He is right in the middle of the road that seems to lead to pleasure.

And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."
(Matthew 21:44)

How does a man find himself actually opposing God? Psalms 1 breaks it down pretty well. It is a natural progression. It begins by listening to worldly advice and godless chatter. It begins with a live and let live mantra. That is a false narrative. A lot of talk radio and media and idle conversations are void of godly counsel. That freedom of speech is a phony. is only to gain a foothold. Those same free spirits use their influence to silence anything from God. God's wisdom is only found in the Bible. The eventual result is a scornful man whose life is playing out like a country song. Men become bitter and disillusioned. The guy who leaves his wife for another finds out that things are more similar than he thought. The guy who self-medicates begins to see that the masking is wearing off, leaving him in an even lower place. The guy who wants no responsibility begins to see that he has become a burden to others.

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 2:1-2)

To an unbeliever, Jeremiah is just a depressing broken record. It is like seeing John the Baptist wearing a sandwich board telling people to repent. The people are already depressed by the looming Babylonian activity. Now Jeremiah is making them feel like they don't stand a chance at fighting back. Jeremiah was lowered into a muddy pit-like dungeon. What a hellish place to die!

The local authorities decided to kill Jeremiah, because he was shaking the confidence of the people. When you think about it; that is why we are promised tribulations in this life. Zedekiah let the princes take Jeremiah and throw him onto a muddy dungeon. Jeremiah sank down. Ebed Melech an Ethiopian eunuch saw what they did to Jeremiah and told the King.



An Ethiopian Eunuch told the King that Jeremiah was going to die a terrible death if someone did not save him. The King gave him authority to grab 30 men and pull him out with ropes and old rags for padding.



We rebel when we are told to do something other than what we planned on. The leaders of the city just wanted to silence the word of God. It is an illusion that God will ever be silenced. True depression comes when we know that we are on the wrong track. The message to get out of Jerusalem now and surrender was easier to understand, now that the food was gone.

This is not the only time that God told his people to leave a city or die. God told Lot to run for his life and leave Sodom.

Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” (Genesis 19:12-13)

God also told his people to get out of Babylon.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Revelation 18:1-4)

Read Jeremiah 38:14-28: These secret conversations between Zedekiah and Jeremiah remind me of how Herod greatly respected John the Baptist, and he still left him in jail. His popularity was very important to him. Zedekiah knew Jeremiah was legitimate, but he could not have anyone broadcasting that the King was on his way out. That would make him look weak. This was similar to Pilate feeling forced to hold on to and crucify Jesus. In a sense, these kings were slaves to their own creations.

Jeremiah was told to speak freely in private to the King. The King was told that he could still live a good life, if he surrendered to the Babylonians. The city would not be burned down, and also there was no need to experience these horrible consequences.

Zedekiah was also fearful for the Jews loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. He feared that they would assassinate him. Zedekiah was hand-picked by Nebuchadnezzar as his puppet king. Zedekiah failed to act like a puppet, and he tried to break away. Then the King was reminded of how it was not just him he should be worrying about. It was his family and the city, and its inhabitants.

Ironically, Jeremiah remained in prison until the invasion and the sacking of Jerusalem. Being imprisoned certainly made Jeremiah not look like a threat to the new regime. He had been advocating cooperation with him. He was the most protected man in town.

We need to see whatever things seem to be holding us up as hidden blessings.