

Jeremiah 12

Read Jeremiah 12:1-2: Jeremiah wants to discuss God's word with him. He has questions based on his experiences; which seem to contradict God's laws. It is not a lack of faith that produces these questions. There is a difference between Jeremiah questioning God and a mocking unbeliever is significant. Jeremiah opens with the statement "Righteous are you, o LORD". The unbeliever opens with a refusal to acknowledge or submit to God. In the end, this chapter is not really about God's righteousness. It is a view into the soul of a believer in conflict. We all have faith-crisis moments. Even the apostles were purposefully put into a situation where they were confused and conflicted. Our faith has to hold while we sort out the facts. Sometimes we do not get our questions answered; but need to trust that God is righteous and consistent.

This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. -I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. -The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? -Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. -Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. -For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. -He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. -As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. -This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live for ever. -These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. -Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? -When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? -What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? -It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life. -But

there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. -And he said, Therefore said I to you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. -From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. -Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? -Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:50-68)

Confidence in God must outweigh our logic. God provides the logic to support his actions after the test. This should comfort us when it seems that God is not living up to his promises. God is always true. We just need to recognize our limited understanding and attempt to add to our perspective. That is why knowing God's ways are at least as important to knowing his word. In other words: I can't recall what scripture says about an issue; but I know that God is all about giving abundant life to mankind. Jeremiah can't reconcile God's written truths; to what he has personally seen to also be true. For example: Why do the wicked prosper? Why are the sinners happy? God's law says that those who do not follow God will find themselves in a desolate and desperate place.

Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. -But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had nearly slipped. -For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. -For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. -They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. -Therefore pride encompasses around them as a chain; violence covers them as a garment. -Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. -They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. -They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. -Therefore his people return here: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. -And they say, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? -Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. -Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in

innocence. -For all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. -If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. -When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; -Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. -Surely thou did set them in slippery places: thou cast them down into destruction. -How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. -As a dream when one awakes; so, O Lord, when you awake, you shall despise their image. (Psalm 73:1-20)

Read Jeremiah 12:3-4: Jeremiah longs for the restoration of the land; which cannot happen in a fallen world. The landscape and the nations do not function well when man is following his imagination and lusts. Jeremiah wants restoration and is asking God to do some housecleaning. God's timing is not in sync with ours. In reality, our quality of life is not based on how evil the unbelievers have become. It is about how healthy the church is.

-If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

We clearly see how our government fails us. We make a mistake by thinking that the solution is political. The leaders we receive are commensurate with our behavior; that we might repent. You can't fix a broken president; but you can fix your heart towards God and your fellow man.

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Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (Romans 13:1)

Read Jeremiah 12:5: Here is the focus of the chapter. Jeremiah is being told that he is stressing out over the seemingly out-of-control conditions. God is telling Jeremiah that his anxiety level over the surrounding sinners is crippling him. How much chattering and

complaining do we do? Isn't that complaining against what God has allowed for our benefit?

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, -Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? (Job 38:1-2)

Shall he that contends with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproves God, let him answer it. (Job 40:2)

He is still ill-equipped to be used on larger issues. How do we handle our own affairs when circumstances are going the opposite direction? I know that God has been teaching me to stop worrying about being stuck with others' who are my overseers. I feel stranded by their indecision; while I have to submit to them. I find myself circumventing protocol and getting chastised when I try to 'save the day'. God is fine tuning Jeremiah for bigger assignments in the same way he tunes us all up. The issue is never that the world is falling apart. The real issue is how I am I handling it? What am I worrying about? Do I think that evil will prevail; or that I will be perceived as a failure?

My little children, these things write I to you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: -And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. -And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. -He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. -But whosoever keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (1 John 2:1-5)

I cannot perform my function in the body of Christ if I am not directed by Christ. I might follow a holy lifestyle if nothing goes wrong. What acts of desperation do I resort to when something is on the line? Maybe that is why I keep finding myself in those critical and urgent situations. Maybe I am not letting the Holy Spirit work it out in his timing.

Read Jeremiah 12:6-16: God is instructing Jeremiah that he has been betrayed by his confidants, family and co-laborers. That hurts more than they opposition of the enemy. Satan uses friendly fire and personalities effectively to split churches. We should not believe flattering words. Jesus is helping Jeremiah to identify with himself. Jesus was betrayed by his own countrymen.

-Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. -But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, -And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. (John 2:23-25)+