

RUNNING WITH HORSES

Saturday, October 14

Reading: Jeremiah 11-12

Jeremiah 12:1 *You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before You. Yet I would speak with You about Your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease? 2 You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit. You are always on their lips but far from their hearts.*

The people and priests of Judah had forgotten what God's covenant with them was all about! They were mindlessly going through the Temple rituals described in the Law of Moses but they were ignoring its' heart. Jesus would confront the people of His generation with this same issue. They had neglected "the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy, and faithfulness" (Matt. 23:23).

The situation had gotten so bad that God told Jeremiah not even to pray for Judah because He would no longer listen to their cries. They did not want to repent! They only wanted God to deliver them so they could continue in their sinful ways.

In the midst of this, God reveals a murderous plot against Jeremiah. His family and the people of his hometown were planning to kill him. They were going to pretend to "speak well" of him to lure him into a trap, like a lamb led to slaughter (11:18-19; 12:6). This causes Jeremiah to cry out for God's protection and vengeance on his enemies which God promises to do (11:20-22).

However, Jeremiah has a bigger question: How can God allow the wicked to prosper while His faithful prophet is persecuted? God's answer is very interesting. Instead of answering the question about his enemies, God tells Jeremiah to get prepared because it will only get harder!

Jeremiah 12:5 "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"

What Jeremiah had experienced so far was light (foot race; safe country) compared to what was coming (running with horses; thickets of the Jordan)! So Jeremiah would need a strong faith and remember God's promise: "They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you" (1:17-19).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Do you ever feel like Jeremiah? The wicked are flourishing and you are struggling! Look at how Jeremiah responded:
 - [1] He took his problem to God instead of relying on his own ideas and wisdom (12:1).
 - [2] He trusted in God's judgments because He is always righteous and just (12:1, 3).
 - [3] He continued to deliver God's message (12:14).Are you ready to "run with horses"? Will you have faith in the tough times? "When the going gets tough, the tough trust God!" (see Hebrews 12:1-3)
2. "You are always on their lips but far from their hearts" (12:2). Do you know anyone like that? They talk about being a Christian but their life does not show it! How can we keep God close to our hearts? How can we show this is true?