

The Weekly Word

July 1-7, 2019

We have made it through the first half of 2019. This week we will also reach the halfway point of Jeremiah. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, July 1: Jeremiah 23 – Jesus our righteous savior...

In a chapter where God speaks directly to the false prophets who were leading Jerusalem deeper into sin, there are some words of hope for the people. Verse 5-6:

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior.

I will not abandon and punish you forever. I will send a faithful king who will save Israel and will reign wisely.

These words must have brought rays of hope for a people poised for destruction. Destruction and judgment are NOT God’s last words. God will send a righteous king, *The LORD Our Righteous Savior*.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Word of the Lord. Jesus is *The LORD Our Righteous Savior*... Jesus is *The LORD MY Righteous Savior*.

I pray that everyone who reads these words also knows Jesus as their Righteous Savior. What a wonder and blessing it is to live under the grace and love of God known through Jesus the Lord.

Jesus, my Savior, I bless and thank You for saving me, for dying for me, for forgiving and redeeming me. Thank You and bless You. You are the hope of Israel and the hope of the world. Praise be to You, Lord. Amen and amen.

Tuesday, July 2: Jeremiah 24 - awe, reverence, surrender and adoration ...

This chapter displays the sovereign will of God. The Lord God chooses those whom He will watch over with care and those upon whom He will send a sword or famine.

God decides.

God determines...

God lifts up and God tears down.

I sit today marveling at the Lord. He alone is Sovereign. God makes the rules. God is Supreme.

There are many things I do not understand. Still it remains clear to me that the Lord God Almighty alone is Sovereign.

The weight of this thought presses me to awe, reverence, surrender and adoration...

Almighty God, by whom all things have been created, I surrender to You.

Have mercy on me, for far too often I try to run my world and set my agenda. Forgive me for my arrogance at playing god over my own affairs. Allow right understanding to fill my mind and set me to obedience and praise of You. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Wednesday, July 3: Jeremiah 25 – When Faith is under Fire!...

As stark and strong as today's word from Jeremiah is, I couldn't get past verse 3. *For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.*

For Twenty-Three years Jeremiah had been prophesizing to the kings and people of Jerusalem and Judah. For 23 years, he had been scorned by the people to whom God sent him. For nearly a quarter of a century Jeremiah had labored faithfully despite no positive response from the Lord's people.

With a little research I discovered that Jeremiah's full ministry lasted at least 40 years long. His last 17 years of ministry fared no better.

Faith under fire comes to mind. I so much want my faith to be rewarded with goodness from God. Yet, as I consider Jeremiah, I am reminded God chooses our calling, God chooses our calling and our role is to be faithful no matter what 'fruit' ministry might bear.

This caused me to consider the extent of my faithfulness to God's calling...

Lord, am I being faithful to You in the execution of Your call in my life? Am I, Lord, saying, leading and doing the things You want me to be saying, leading and doing? Or am I saying, leading and doing things I believe that will reward me with earthly blessing?

Oh, God, I pray for faithfulness to You and You alone. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Thursday July 4: Jeremiah 26 – Treasure of the word...

Yesterday I noted that Jeremiah stood for the Lord for 23 difficult years. As I open today's chapter, Jeremiah's life takes a turn for the worse. Jeremiah's call from God is a difficult one.

How bad is it? Jeremiah is God's mouthpiece to call the people back to the ways of the Lord. And to put it bluntly, they are not interested... *The priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the LORD. But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, "You must die! (7-8).*

I notice that the people groups in both sentences are the same, everyone - *the priests, the prophets and all the people*. The scribe who records this book and this chapter makes it eminently clear everyone wants Jeremiah gone. Everyone wants Jeremiah to stop speaking these harsh words. Everyone has decided NOT to listen to him. This is not a case of bad leaders duping the people into wrong thinking. No, everyone who hears Jeremiah's words cries, "No, Jeremiah, must die!"

How far from God and His ways the people of the land have drifted. I wonder, if I were there would I have shouted for Jeremiah to die as well? Probably???

I looked back at the designation, *the priests, the prophets and all the people* and I put myself in the people's shoes. The average people likely didn't read. They were dependent upon the priest to be their intermediary with the Lord and the prophets to be the spokesperson for the Lord. Both of these groups, priests and prophets, had turned their backs to the Lord and were likely teaching the people ways that caused the people to do so as well. So, it is no surprise that the people joined with the priests and prophets crying for Jeremiah's death.

Where else could the people turn to learn the truth of the Lord? This thought caused me to be grateful for two things: the ability to read and the written word of God in my language. I don't

need someone to tell me what God's Word says, I can read it for myself. What a gift and treasure God has given us.

Thank You, Lord God, for having Your Word recorded and passed down through the ages to us today. Thank You for men and women who study it and teach on it. Thank You that I can pick it up anytime and read it for myself.

Please, Lord, open my heart to Your Word. Allow Your truth to seep down in the depths and marrow of my life that I might live faithfully and be able to draw upon Your Word in every moment of need. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, July 5: Jeremiah 27 – Lessons of obedience...

I was fascinated that God sent Jeremiah out with a word for the neighboring countries about Nebuchadnezzar's advance. As I read the chapter it is essentially the same word God sent to Judah.

Early in the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: This is what the LORD said to me: "Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck. Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Tell this to your masters: With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. Now I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him (1-7).

On the one hand, think about the audacity of the Lord... here He is taking the liberty to speak to people who do not worship Him and tell them what to do as the enemy arrives on the horizon! He even goes so far as to tell these leaders not to listen to their prophets and mediums... *So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon (9).*

At times of His own choosing, Yahweh exerts His power and authority even upon those who are not His own! This is authority. This is power. This is the definition of sovereignty!

This is yet another example of the absolute rulership of the Lord our God!

Next, I mused on Jeremiah as God's prophet being called to stand before foreigners and announce God's Words. I wondered how Jeremiah felt about this given the fact that his words to his own people have been received with scorn and derision. My gut says that by this point Jeremiah has learned to simply obey and he has hardened himself to the onslaughts of his hearers. Even if that is the case, this is not an easy task.

I wonder if I have learned the lessons of obedience and hardening my life against the insults of people. Thinking about this I would say, obedience I have learned some, but I have a long way still to go. I don't think I am hardened to the onslaughts of people who don't want to hear what I believe God would have me say. And this naturally plays against my obedience...

Jeremiah's life continues to challenge me to trust and grow in my Lord...

Oh, Jesus, I surrender to You. Lord, Savior, Master, lead me in the paths of righteousness for Your name sake and so that I might fulfill all your instructions so that Your name will be glorified. I pray this in Your name, Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, July 6: Jeremiah 28 – Correcting a wrong...

What a prophet says must come true for the man or woman to be a prophet. Hananiah is spilling lies to Israel and Jeremiah calls him on it.

Two observations struck me about Jeremiah's responses. One, Jeremiah confronts Hananiah in public, so everyone can verify what is being said. There is no behind the scenes sabotage or gossip. Jeremiah speaks with Hananiah fact to face and in public.

The second comes at the end where Jeremiah 'prophesies that Hananiah will die within the year. And the text goes on to say, *In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died* (17). Thus Jeremiah's word from the Lord is confirmed by coming true.

I believe that God continues to speak through people in His church. But I grow a bit nervous when some people speak "thus sayith the Lord" statements that do not come true. It seems to me if it was truly from the Lord then it would come true.

Thinking about Jeremiah and Hananiah reminds me that when I feel I must entertain confrontation with someone who is misspeaking about the Lord, I need to do it face to face, and the correction should mirror the location where the error was spoken.

Truth is truth and we need to guard the truth of the Lord to the best of our ability...

Correcting wrong is never easy and it is not something I enjoy. But when God calls me to do so, I must do it with integrity.

Lord, in all my conversations, help me to speak truth in love... In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Sunday July 7, 2019, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the Living Hope website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@LivingHopeCT.org.

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.