

# **“We Will Listen to Our God!”**

**Jeremiah 42:1-17**

**Intro.** – It has been said that “Life will be different in the tomorrows, whether for the better or worse, because of the decisions made today.” All of us sense the crossroads we presently are. Because of this we ought to sense the need for wisdom that is higher than our own. We all must realize the need of guidance from Him Who views the end from the beginning, who knows all, sees all, and can do all things!

This now sets the stage for our text. Jerusalem had just been destroyed by Babylon. Most of Judah had been taken away into captivity, but a remnant remained behind under the governorship of Gedaliah. Upon his assassination, the remnant headed by Jehanan, feared retaliation by the Babylonians; thus, they definitely were at a crossroad. In desperate need of guidance, the remnant turns to the prophet of God, Jeremiah and says, “*Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will listen to the voice of the Lord our God...*”

*Purpose: to see what we must do at all crossroads (decision making points) in our life*

Decisions will and must be made throughout our lives. This text gives each of us practical instructions as to how we ought to go about making these decisions: “*Listen to God!*” If *we will listen to our God* we must do the following three things as revealed through our text:

## **I WILLINGLY SEEK GOD (vv 1-6)**

- Illus. – Bible gives numerous examples of those who sought the Lord’s guidance: Moses at the Red Sea; Joshua at the crossing of the Jordan into the promised land; Ruth in the village of Bethlehem; Nehemiah in the court of the King; Peter on the housetop; and Paul on a storm-tossed ship.

### **A. He Must Be Sought in All *Honesty***

1. The Remnant was utterly discouraged:
  - a. few months time they witnessed Jerusalem reduced to shambles and now they were homeless!
  - b. they literally had their back against the wall
2. Such conditions brought them to the point where said:
  - a. “*May the Lord be a witness against us if we act not in accordance with the whole message.*”
  - b. “*Whether pleasant or unpleasant we will listen to our God... in order that it may go well with us.*”
3. O, that we would come with such “seeming” honesty!
4. Our short sightedness cannot determine what is for our good or for our detriment in the long run!
5. We need willingly to see God’s council, His guidance in all honesty!

### **B. He Must Be Sought in All *Faith***

1. The Remnant came in faith, although we’ll learn later their willingness to seek God’s guidance honestly and faithfully was hypocritical at best!
2. Jeremiah made clear he would relate to the people “*the whole message which the Lord will answer.*”
  - this implies the need of full confidence and trust...
3. This is certainly implied elsewhere in Scripture:
  - a. James 1:5-6 “*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*”
  - b. Matthew 21:22 “*And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.*”
4. Thus, let us willingly seek God’s guidance in all faith:
  - a. committing ourselves to the study of His Word...
  - b. asking for wisdom after we study... making the application...
  - c. yielding to His guidance and growing in His assurance... let us come to God knowing HE KNOWS BEST!

Yes, if we are going to listen to our God we must willingly seek His guidance in all honesty and faith!

## II WILLINGLY WAIT FOR GOD (vv 7-12)

- in this “instant answer, instant everything world...” there’s the strong tendency NOT to wait on Lord!
- Illus. – “Men would pluck their mercies green when the Lord would have them ripe!”
- if we’re going to listen to our God, we must willingly wait for His instructions. This, according to our text involves the following:

### A. God’s Guidance is Never *Hurried*

1. Note: God’s answer to remnant didn’t come immediately – there was a 10 day waiting period!
2. Why? – handle in a moment, but at the base of this is fact God’s purposes never hurried us...
3. Throughout history, man has always sought to rush God’s time table:
  - Illus. – life of Christ perfect example – a. came “in the fullness of time”; b. sought to kill Him before His time; c. sought to make Him earthly king before His time...
4. We too are guilty – need to learn God’s purposes are never hurried by man!

### B. God’s Guidance Often Develops *Slowly*

1. The reason for 10 day delay answer from God may stem from following:
  - a. punishment for their hypocrisy
  - b. or to show Jeremiah didn’t speak on his own...
2. Whatever the reason, imagine the remnant in this 10 day period! Looked like Philips Brooks:
  - Illus. famous New England preacher who was noted for his poise and quiet manner, one day was caught by a friend. Brooks was feverishly pacing the floor like a lion. “What’ the trouble, Mr. Brooks?” He asked. “The trouble is that I’m in a hurry, but God isn’t!”
3. Haven’t we felt, acted, and sounded the same way?
4. How we need to realize God’s purposes often develop slowly:
  - Illus. – again the life of Christ is a perfect example – 30 yrs prep for a 3 yr ministry; yet, in that 3 yr ministry more accomplished than all men put together combined!
    - a. Isaiah 30:18 “*Blessed are those who wait on the Lord.*”
    - b. Isaiah 49:23 “*...Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.*”
5. “Patience is a virtue that often carries a lot of *wait.*” God’s guidance often develops *slowly*.

### C. God’s Guidance is *Sure*

1. How clearly illustrated this is through Jeremiah – if only the people had waited for X’s guidance!
2. There will come occasions (crossroads) where it will seem essential to make an immediate decision... Heed this advice: What ever you do, do NOT run ahead of God!
3. God will never arrive too late, nor will He ever lack for any of our needs!

Thus, if we’re going to listen to our God, we must willingly *wait* for His directions!

## III WILLINGLY OBEY GOD (vv 13-17)

- the word given to the remnant was clear (v 10)...
- this was exactly the message they did NOT want to hear – they desired to flee to Egypt where they would see “*neither pestilence nor warfare.*”; yet, they wanted God’s approval to their preferences.
- from this we learn the necessity of obeying God’s guidance:

### A. Not to Insist on Our *Preferences*

1. To do so is to learn with sorrow and regret all your days...!
2. Illus. – remnant who directly went against the Lord’s directions... v 16 reveals God’s promise if they disobeyed Him...!

### B. Must *Endure* the Lord’s Chastening

1. Babylonian captivity (remaining in Palestine under their rule) = God’s disciplining of Judah – only through this would the remnant learn true restoration! (v 12)

2. Same holds true for us – there is no substitute for wholehearted obedience to God’s revealed will!
3. Thus, the question is clear: Are we really willing to obey the will of the Lord whether it is pleasant or unpleasant?
4. Isaiah 1:19 makes it clear *“If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.”*

**Conclusion:** A professor who had taught for many years was counseling a younger teacher. “You will discover,” he said, “that in nearly every class, there will be a student eager to argue. Your first impulse will be to silence them, but I advise you to think carefully before doing so. They probably are the only one listening.”

Is that not the truth?! Listening is a lost art that needs to be re-embraced; especially when it comes to listening to our God.

With thoughtless and impatient hands,  
We tangle up the plans the Lord hath wrought.  
And when we cry in pain, He says:  
“Be quiet dear one, while I untie the knot.”

Each of us assembled here this morning are at crossroads. How are we going to decide which way to turn? Unlike the remnant of Judah, let us willingly SEEK, WAIT, and OBEY the guidance of the Lord. Let us listen to our God!