

RUIN, REBELLION, and RESTORATION
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH
Jeremiah 19:14-20:18

“THE SEDUCTION OF MINISTRY AND FIGHTING THROUGH DEPRESSION”

INTRODUCTION: There are many factors that might cause someone to experience a season of depression. Our concern today is not the depression that might be alleviated with chemicals, but the kind that is clearly caused by spiritual reasons. Spiritual depression is often caused when someone feels **God has “let them down,” “not kept a promise,”** or **“allowed them to suffer pain that could have been avoided.”** Many pastors are functionally depressed and go through the motions of ministry. There is a way to come out of spiritual depression, yet the process often takes time. Have you ever disappointed the LORD?

BACKGROUND: Jeremiah had faithfully proclaimed God’s Word to a generation that was determined to ignore him and continued to leave God out of their lives. Jeremiah’s prayers for the people were not being answered, and after learning spiritual lessons at the potters’ house, Jeremiah was beginning to experience verbal persecution. It was about to get worse, and he needed some answers from the Lord.

I. RELIGIOUS SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST ONES TO REACT VIOLENTLY WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE TRUTH. (Jeremiah 19:14-20:6)

- A. In Romans 1-3, Scripture classifies sinners into three categories; Rebellious, Rational, and Religious. Jesus faced his most violent opposition from religious sinners. (John 8:37-41) Jeremiah was fighting with people who had their own convictions about God and His ways and were not open to hearing the truth. (Jeremiah 19:14-15)
- B. Jeremiah boldly preached about the coming judgment upon God’s people, and Passhur, the person in charge of temple security, had Jeremiah arrested, severely beaten, and placed in stocks to reinforce his pain and to humiliate him. Intimidation works against most people, but it did not work against Jeremiah. Is it working against us? (Jeremiah 20:1-2)
- C. Rather than be silenced by his punishment, Jeremiah let Passhur know that the LORD would “terrorize” him for his rebellion and mistreatment of God’s man and God’s word. (*Passhur means “tranquility” while “Magomassibib” means terror on every side*) This false prophet would live to see his city destroyed, loved ones killed or taken captive to Babylon, and he would die there for his cruelty to God’s prophet. Our Lord will take vengeance against those who harm His children! (Jeremiah 20:3-6)

II. THE POSSIBILITIES OF GREAT MINISTRY SUCCESS CAN BE SEDUCTIVE. WHILE THE REALITY OF DIFFICULT MINISTRY CAN LEAD TO DEPRESSION. (Jeremiah 20:7-13)

- A. Many are called, but few are chosen (choice) servants of God. Sometimes, even those servants may feel as though they were seduced by the call when things do not turn out as they anticipated. (Jeremiah 20:7) (Acts 9:15-16) Everyone wants to hear “feel good” sermons, but God’s servants *must* preach the whole counsel of God. Prepare to experience rejection during your ministry.
- B. Jeremiah had been mocked and laughed at for two decades! Ministry will bring times of nearly unbearable pain (John 12:27) (Matthew 27:46), and other times may bring unspeakable joy. (John 15:11) (3 John 4) How do you balance between such extremes? The only reason Jeremiah could not quit was because the power and fire of the word of God had found a home in his heart. If the Holy Spirit of God is actually living inside of you, how can you keep that a secret? (Jeremiah 20:8-12)

C. THE BEST MEDICINE FOR SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION IS PRAISE. HOWEVER, THE MOMENT YOU STOP PRAISING AND THINK ABOUT AND FOCUS ON YOUR CURRENT CONDITIONS, YOU MAY BECOME DEPRESSED AGAIN! (Jeremiah 20:14-18)

A. In the midst of his depression, Jeremiah began to sing praises to the Lord for rescuing him from those who had injured him. Praise has a way of shifting our focus from ourselves to the One who is worthy of all praise! (Jeremiah 20:13)

B. Praising God does not mean we pretend like we were not hurting deeply. Jeremiah was so discouraged that he stopped praising and began to curse the day he was born! He would not curse his parents and invite the judgment of God upon himself (Exodus 20), but he spoke against everything and everyone else associated with that day. Imagine hurting so badly that you wished your mother's womb had actually been your tomb! (Jeremiah 20:14-18)

ELIJAH'S DEPRESSION LANDED HIM IN A CAVE WITH THOUGHTS OF WANTING HIS LIFE TO END. (1st Kings 19) GOD MINISTERED TO HIM. THE PSALMIST HAD TO REMIND HIMSELF TO REFOCUS ON THE LORD. (Psalm 42) THE CURE FOR SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION IS INCREASING YOUR TRUST IN AND STRENGTHENING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD. HE CAN TURN YOUR MOURNING INTO DANCING!

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