



I. Standing Up For God In A Falling Down World

A. We Are Moving Toward A Defining Moment

“These are the times that try men’s souls.”

American Patriot Thomas Paine

1. This has been a most uncomfortable year!
2. A few days ago, I came to a place in prayer where I found myself like some of the Psalmists, complaining to the Lord...which is OK!
 - a. The heading of Psalm 102 says:

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord.

- b. When David was hiding in a cave from Saul:

Ps 142:2-3

I cry out to the Lord; I pour out my complaints before Him; for you alone know the way I should turn.

3. When I got through pouring out my own complaints, thinking about the seriousness of the moment we live in, the Lord directed me to something in the 12th Chapter of Jeremiah.

B. The Life And Times Of Jeremiah

1. Jeremiah ministered under the last 5 kings of Judah, all evil, before God sent Israel into Babylonian captivity...

“...at a time when all things in Judah were rushing down to judgement; when political excitement was at its height; when the worst passions swayed the various parties; and the most fatal counsels prevailed.”

J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore The Book

2. The nation was in a political mess:

“Judah's politicians were busy explaining that the kingdom's troubles were due to a geographical dilemma...but Jeremiah's message was that the nation's calamities were because the nation had slidden away from God.”

“History repeats itself. Our politicians are still floundering about among second causes. **The fundamental cause of all our troubles is that God is forgotten. We discuss policy instead of putting away sin. It is the same today as it was in Jeremiah's time.** When will nations learn that national decay and ruin are, at root, due to failure towards God? Jeremiah's message may well be heeded by our leaders today.”

J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore The Book

3. America goes to the polls in 9 days to elect the next President; and many of us are wondering why we don't have better choices. So it was in Israel...

"We read the list of Israel's bad kings and wonder at how these people failed to produce statesmen who were able to cope with the political situation!"

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan

4. We can begin to wonder if we're weird because our souls are grieved at all this political corruption; but no! This should be normal for true believers.

“When the faithful see the ungodly proceeding in all wickedness and evil deeds (and getting away with it), claiming the world for themselves, while God seems to go along with them, their minds cannot but be grievously distressed.”

John Calvin

5. This was the prophet's state of mind in his prayer in chapter 12...

C. The Prayer Of Jeremiah

1. God's ears are open to complaints that come from an honest heart.

Lord, you always give me justice when I bring a case before you. So let me bring you this complaint: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy?

Jeremiah 12:1 NLT

a. The Message Bible says it this way:

Why do bad people have it so good? Why do con artists make it big? You planted them and they put down roots. They flourished and produced fruit. They talk as if they're old friends with you, but they couldn't care less about you.

b. It's nothing new to wonder why the wicked prosper...

Meanwhile, you know me inside and out. You don't let me get by with a thing!

Jeremiah 12:1-2 The Message Bible

c. I confess to being grieved as more revelations about the corruption in our government and how far it has gone come to the surface; it seems like certain powerful people get away with everything! Meanwhile, I can't throw a gum wrapper on the ground without hearing the Lord make me pick it up; I can't change my mind about an item in my grocery cart and leave it in the store in the wrong place!

2. God understands our complaints; He's heard them from His people before!

a. He even understands when we pray He remove them!

Drag them off like sheep for the slaughter and set them apart for a day of carnage!

Jeremiah 12:3

3. How many intercessors for America are praying like Jeremiah in verse 4?

How long is the land to mourn...(because of) the wickedness of those who dwell in it...who say 'God will not see...'

Jeremiah 12:4

a. Notice: Wicked people keep doing wicked things because they think that because they're getting away with it, God doesn't see...or doesn't care.

4. So now we come to the point of the message: What is God's response to His prophet?

a. Will God rebuke him? Will He tell him everything will be just fine? Will he agree to turn the nation around? No. None of these. *He asks him a question:*

“If you're struggling now, what will you do if things get worse?”

"If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, How will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?"

Jeremiah 12:5

“If you can't keep standing up for God before judgement falls, what will you do if judgement does fall?”

5. This was the question the Lord asked me...

a. What if this election doesn't go the way you want?

b. What if Americans vote to continue the policies that have brought you to the brink of judgment?

c. Notice that He was not saying, “It will get worse”.

He was asking me, “What will you do if it does get worse? What will you do if “worst comes to worst”?”

II. Application To Our Day

A. History Of Jeremiah

1. We don't know what's going to happen to our country after this election. But we do know how it turned out for Israel. They had backslidden so far from God that judgment couldn't be avoided. The nation would fall into captivity to Babylon.

2. Beloved, this is a critical election. It really *does* matter who gets elected, who runs the Congress and who sits on the Supreme Court. We must stay in faith that God clean up the corruption in our government.

But it doesn't mean we do not have faith if we ask, “What if He doesn't?”

3. This was what the Lord was saying: If I let my faith fail me when things are going badly, what will happen to my faith *IF* things start getting worse?

4. For some Americans, “worse” means Donald Trump getting elected; for some of us “worse” means Hillary Clinton gets elected...

But the message for ALL of us is, no matter WHO gets elected, the kind of Christianity that would fail us now will certainly fail us if things get worse.

5. So the Lord is calling us to a kind of....

B. Spiritual Gut Check (3 Questions)

#1. How am I doing spiritually, right now?

"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses?"

- a. 1500 pastors a month are leaving the ministry
- b. The church dropout rate is at an all-time high
- c. Statistics say 75% of professing Christians won't even bother to

vote

d. If these are the numbers while we're only “running with the footmen” what will happen in the “swelling of the Jordan”?

IT IS TIME TO GIRN UP OUR LOINS AND STAND UP FOR GOD IN A FALLING DOWN WORLD.

#2. Where is my trust?

- a. Re-read Jeremiah 12:5...

And if in the land of peace, *in which you trusted*, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the flooding of the Jordan?

b. Jeremiah's message was very unpopular; he was warning Israel they were going too far; but Israel had confidence in Israel; they could never believe that God would allow His chosen people to go into captivity. In the same way, some people don't think God would judge America. But what if He does?

c. I've been in foreign countries where Christians are persecuted; where they can go to jail for sharing the Gospel; where there is no tax credit for paying their tithes and giving offerings; but the churches are stronger there than

they are here where we don't have those challenges. If American Christians won't share the Gospel, commit to a local church or pay tithes now, what will happen if the Government makes it harder to do these things?

d. Let this be our posture: pray, be informed, vote; but let our faith be in God, NOT in the land; not in America; not in the politicians.

#3. What if God is calling us to a deeper walk with Him?

a. Every cloud has a silver lining; God may judge nations; but He will never leave or forsake those who love Him with all of their hearts.

“The great lessons of this Book of Jeremiah speak to all peoples in all ages. Where sin has destroyed the vision of God, men think that the calamities which are permitted to come upon them are indications that God has abandoned interest in them; **but where the vision of God is clear, as it was with Jeremiah, the things which are permitted to happen are seen in, their true significance; the calamities are evidences that God has not abandoned His throne!**

b. Even though God judged Israel, His mercy set a limit on His judgment...

For thus says the Lord , 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord , ' plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 'And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 'And I will be found by you,' declares the Lord ...'

and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the Lord , ' and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'

Jeremiah 29:10-14

c. God will always, always cause us to triumph in Christ!

III. Conclusion: A Word To The Discouraged

A. Jeremiah Knew Discouragement

“All disappointed, dis-appreciated, disregarded, misunderstood, misrepresented, and persecuted Christian workers today, sticking on at their work, but with a leaden weight at the heart and a choke of grief in the throat, should turn aside again and again to commune with the heroic great-heart of these pages.”

1. Jeremiah was sold out to God, but he had few followers.
 - a. The priests of Anathoth had betrayed him
 - b. His follow prophets made fun of him
 - c. The king locked him up
2. By most measures he was not a “success”.
 - a. He aggravated them so much they put him in a pit!

“There is another lesson in this book, too, which stands out prominently, and which should be very comforting to all sincere Christian workers today. *God does not reckon the worth of service for Himself merely in terms of success.* Nor must we, on our part, judge the blessing of God upon us merely by the degree of success that comes to us. Judged by that standard, where is Jeremiah? *We must learn to be faithful even where we do not appear to be successful* - as Jeremiah was, so conspicuously.”

Explore The Book

3. Personal words (not included in these notes) to our church family...

“The purpose of life is the building of character through truth, and you don't build character by being a spectator. You have to run with endurance the race God sets before you and do it on God's terms.”

Phillips Brooks

C. Communion And Prayer

1. I still believe the Lord may have a good “November Surprise” in store for us in the election; ***but even if He doesn't, we can commit to stand up for God in a falling down world.***