

Lessons from Jeremiah

The Power of the Call - Jeremiah 1:5, 12, 17-19

In the first chapter of Jeremiah, we find some details about the call on the prophet's life. God knows us. He knows every detail about every moment of our lives. We also learn that God protects his word. He ensures that it has power to change lives and circumstances.

He gives his servants assurance that while they are obedient to the word and commission they have been given that they are 'indestructible!'

The Weakness of Ritual - Jeremiah 7:8–10

There is nothing inherently wrong with ritual and tradition. However, when it is performed by a disobedient people, it loses all meaning and effectiveness. We must ensure that we are living as God has called us to live. Then our worship will mean something.

The Folly of Self-Reliance - Jeremiah 9:23–24

Wisdom, power and wealth are no match for knowing and understanding God. In all our efforts to improve ourselves, we can lose sight of who God is and who we are in relation to him. We think very highly of ourselves and begin to embrace the idea that we can determine our own destiny, define our own self-worth and make every decision perfect. What God wants, and what we need, is to walk in his way and adopt his values.

Thriving in Adversity - Jeremiah 29:10–11

Perhaps the most misunderstood and frequently quoted scripture is one from a letter Jeremiah wrote to the exiles. They were forcibly taken from their home, their land and their people and forced to settle in another country with different language and customs. More than anything they longed to go home. If there was one thing that they wanted, it was to return to Israel. However, they were told that they would not go home, that they should seek to thrive where they were and stop longing to return home. That is hard news. But with this hard news, God gave great assurance.

How to Pray - Jeremiah 29:12–13

We often take a shallow approach to prayer. Our prayers sometimes resemble a wish list of what we want from God. While it is certainly appropriate to ask God to help us and provide for us, it is far less important than seeking him. When we seek him and not just what he can do for us, we find that he does everything we need him to do. Seeking God means we have a deep desire to experience the fullness of who he is.

A Great Promise Given and Now Fulfilled - Jeremiah 31:33

Throughout the Old Testament, promises are given regarding a change in covenant or a new covenant that changes how God's people relate to him. The new covenant would mean that the law wasn't an external set of regulations but truth engraved on the heart of the people. It would be internalized. That reality, we now know, is possible through the indwelling Spirit of God.

Obedience Under Pressure

What do you do when God doesn't give you the answer you want? In Jeremiah 41-43, the people faced this dilemma. After the land had been conquered and the Babylonian governor assassinated, the people feared reprisals. They summoned Jeremiah to have him intercede for God's guidance and they promised him that no matter what God said, they would do. However, when the answer came and it didn't agree with their opinion of what should be done, they rebelled. They accused Jeremiah of duplicity and did what they wanted anyway.

Sometimes, God keeps us in a place that feels dangerous or leads us into a situation that feels dangerous. God's view of our lives and circumstances is different than ours. He sees things perfectly. And he is not as concerned with our comfort as our character.

We must learn to be obedient no matter what the circumstances. This level of obedience requires a profound faith in God and his word. This is a lesson we must learn and it often takes repeated tests for us to finally get it!