

P545

Grace Notes Program

THEME: What do we HOPE in? – Part 4

SONGS: HE KNOWS MY NAME

THE ONE THING

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. Have you ever wondered if you're on the right track in your work for the Lord? You've been faithful in what you've been called to do, but there doesn't seem to be any fruit for your labor. Should you continue to hold fast to the hope you had in the beginning or just give up?

We can learn a great deal about tenacity from the prophet Jeremiah. He was Divinely called to confront the Israelites about their sin during one of the darkest times in their history. Because they would not forsake their ways, God sent them, along with Jeremiah, into captivity. During the forty plus years of his ministry among them, he more often than not felt his efforts were in vain, yet he continued to hope in God's Divine plan and in His ever-faithful promises to him.

In our lesson today, Barbara Sandbek will show how the prophet Jeremiah dealt with a situation that looked bleak. This message may be just what you need to hear today for your current situation or the one you're about to face.

God called Jeremiah as a young man to deliver a message of impending destruction to the nation of Israel. In His providence, God knew they would not repent of their moral corruptness and would, therefore, have to suffer the consequences. This is what God told Jeremiah as recorded in his book in chapter 1 verses 16 & 17...

I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made. "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. "

A prophet was usually greatly respected, but this wasn't the case for Jeremiah. Instead of thanking him for the warning, the people slandered and misrepresented him.

They accused him of being a traitor and made an attack on his life. But through all the adversity, God promised He would deliver him. In Jeremiah 1: 18-19 God said...

Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," ...

I dare say that nothing God calls us to do would seem so difficult and unfulfilling, so if Jeremiah could be comforted and encouraged to hope in all this, we can, too.

Jeremiah held fast to the promise and so should we. When we feel like we're fighting a losing battle, we need to remember God's words written to us in Hebrews 13:5b, 'I will NEVER leave you nor forsake you'.

It always amazes me that God's promises are specific to us as individuals. We can even take the words He spoke to the Israelites to meet our current needs. Like what He said to them in Isaiah 43:1 after they had strayed and suffered the consequences...

"I am the Lord that created you..and He that formed you. Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine.

The Matthew Henry commentary states... God's favor and good-will to His people speak abundant comfort to all believers... All who are redeemed with the blood of His Son, He has set apart for Himself. Those that have God for them need not fear who or what can be against them. True Believers are precious in God's sight, His delight is in them, above all people.

The Geneva study Bible says...

God promises deliverance to his Church because he has regenerated them, adopted them and called them. When you see dangers and conspiracies on all sides, remember this benefit and the love of your God, and it will encourage you.

I can't help but recall how this song encouraged me and brought tears to my eyes every time we played it when we were in Belize, Central America. We had met with great success in building and operating the radio station there, yet we were miles and miles away from home and faced adversity often. At times we just needed to be reminded that God did know our name and did understand how we missed our family and the familiar things.

Maybe you're in a similar situation. Remember, if you are a child of the KING, He knows all about you. You're not a social security number to Him. He listens for your call, and as David so beautifully put it in Psalm 56:8 - He stores your tears in a bottle.

***** HE KNOWS MY NAME *****

No man or woman is an island. Unfortunately, when someone we love sins, we often suffer with them. God executed judgment on the nation of Israel and Jeremiah was right in the middle of it to see the devastation. Here's what he wrote in Lamentations chapter 1...

How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.

5 Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease...

Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe.

8 Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean.

9 Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future.

Her fall was astounding; there was none to comfort her.

Instead of blaming Babylon for the overthrow, though, Jeremiah mistakenly blamed the Lord and took it personally. Speaking of Israel as himself he said in vs. 12-22...

The Lord inflicted suffering on me in the day of His fierce anger.

He sent fire – down into my bones.

He spread a net for my feet and turned me back.

He made me desolate, faint all the day long.

The Lord has zapped my strength.

He has handed me over to those I cannot withstand.

"People have heard my groaning, but there is no one to comfort me.

All my enemies have heard of my distress; they rejoice at what you have done.

It's easy to criticize Jeremiah, but don't do we do the same thing when we get angry at God for what sin has caused. Jeremiah did understand the greatness of Israel's sin, but he also loved God's people and felt their pain, as God does. That's why he was known as the weeping prophet. Seeing Jeremiah's heart, we can appreciate how much inflicting judgment saddens God. I suppose we never really look at it this way, especially when we're in the middle of it.

God again gave Jeremiah a promise as written in Jeremiah 31:16... He said,

"Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded...they will return from the land of the enemy."

Perhaps you have a child, spouse or friend who has fallen into sin and nothing you say or do seems to matter. Well, hold fast – continue to pray and ask God for faith to believe they will come around like Israel did, and remember this one thing in the middle of it all –

Jesus is on your side and He really loves you.

18-5 4:00

***** THE ONE THING *****

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Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!