



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 32, Day 1 --- Zephaniah 1-3

Week 32, Day 2 --- Jeremiah 1-3

Week 32, Day 3 --- Jeremiah 4-6

Week 32, Day 4 --- Jeremiah 7-9

Week 32, Day 5 --- Jeremiah 10-13

Week 32, Day 6 --- Jeremiah 14-17

Week 32, Day 7 --- Jeremiah 18-22

Week 32, Day 1 --- Zephaniah 1-3

God chose prophets from all walks of life. Zephaniah is a part of the royal family. He is the great, great, grandson of King Hezekiah. His royal blood does not change his message. He prophesies during King Josiah's reign, so a good king is leading the country. Zephaniah writes to warn the people that God is going to destroy not only their oppressors, but the evil people within Judah itself. The book does end on a high note. God will preserve and restore those who are faithful to Him. I love the following verse:

The LORD your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing."
Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

I think it really captures who God is, both His might and His love. In spite of all we've done, when we turn toward Him He delights in us.

Week 32, Day 2 --- Jeremiah 1-3

Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. As you will see as he tells his story his life is filled with great and continual sadness. It appears that from a very young age God chose Jeremiah to be a prophet. His life is spent speaking and writing a message that it seems no one wants to hear. God is trying to win His people back. The word picture that God often uses compares God's relationship with Israel with the relationship between a man and his wife. God is the husband and Israel is the wife. When God says that Israel prostituted herself under every tree He doesn't necessarily mean that Israel sold herself sexually for money. Sex outside of marriage certainly occurred during idol worship, but God's bigger issue was the worship of idols themselves. Israel wanted benefits they thought God wouldn't provide, so they "sold" themselves to the idols that they thought would provide what they wanted. In this way they were unfaithful, just as a wife would be if she sold herself to a man who was not her husband. In spite of Israel's unfaithfulness I hope you can hear God's passionate love for His people coming through in chapter 3.

Week 32, Day 3 --- Jeremiah 4-6

It is hard to imagine the depth and breadth of the evil in Jerusalem. God challenges Jeremiah to find a single person who is faithful to God and knows that this person can't be found. I love to preach, but I have always preached to friendly and willing audiences. Jeremiah was called to preach and God told him that his preaching would be like fire. Jeremiah was to preach all the time to an audience that did not want to hear what he had to say. The only relationship that Jeremiah had to hang onto at this point was his relationship with God.

Week 32, Day 4 --- Jeremiah 7-9

But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. Jeremiah 7:24 (NIV)

This is the verse that caught my attention. God wants the people of Israel to understand that their direction matters. He wants us to understand that direction matters. God had rescued Israel from Egypt and they had moved toward God until they conquered the land. From that time on they occasionally turn toward God and move toward Him, but mostly they turn back toward Egypt and move in that direction. The worship of idols moves them away from God. As the people become less like God they care less and less about the things that God cares about. The widows and the poor suffer as a result. God's actions may seem harsh. Let me see if I can paint a picture with words that will help. There is a road that goes through a desert. In one direction there is an image of an oasis. It isn't real, but the image is strong. However, before the oasis is a deep canyon and the cliff appears without warning. In the other direction the road goes on for what appears to be forever. It goes over hills and valleys, but there is no way to see the ultimate destination. God knows that the ultimate destination is a real oasis, life forever with Him. God doesn't want to see anyone fall over the cliff to destruction in the deep canyon. Since everyone seems determined to go that way He must find some way to turn people around. I think that the destruction is God's effort to turn some of the children of Israel around before it is too late, so that there will still be a people who are moving toward Him.

What happened in your life to turn you around? Where were you headed before that happened?

Week 32, Day 5 --- Jeremiah 10-13

I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own;
it is not for man to direct his steps.

Correct me, LORD, but only with justice—
not in your anger,
lest you reduce me to nothing. Jeremiah 10:23,24 (NIV)

This is a hard part of the Bible to read. It is kind of like a long dark tunnel. There is a great light, Jesus, at the end of the tunnel, but sometimes it is very hard to see. Jeremiah had a very healthy fear of God. I think that is the only reason he could keep proclaiming the message that God gave him. Today's chapters make clear that there were men who were try to kill Jeremiah to shut him up, but God protected him. Many are tempted today to worship many gods hoping that one of them will be real and give them what they want. God finds this very offensive. The Jews were continuing to make their daily sacrifices in the temple, but would immediately go out and offer up sacrifices to their idols. The whole purpose behind their eventual destruction and captivity was to rid them of these idols.

Week 32, Day 6 --- Jeremiah 14-17

Jeremiah has a very special relationship with God. He is a prophet, but he is also a priest. He has the task of delivering a very unpleasant message of judgment to the people. At the same time that he is preaching destruction he is praying for mercy. You will see later that Jeremiah suffers a great deal for the message he is delivering. He cannot be ignored because his love for God and his love for the people are obvious. As you are reading Jeremiah look for little nuggets of truth and blessing like the one below.

⁷ "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him.

⁸ He will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7,8 (NIV)

Just like the weather life changes. One year there is an abundance of rain, maybe even floods. The next year there is too little rain and we ration water. One year our life is full of blessings and everything seems to be going well. The next year it seems that everything is a struggle and our lives are filled with pain and sadness. We cannot depend on circumstances. The only one we can depend on is God. He never fails and He will keep us standing regardless of the circumstances that life brings our way.

Week 32, Day 7 --- Jeremiah 18-22

Jeremiah makes a big switch in today's reading. Up to this point he has often pleaded for the people of Israel at the same time that he was prophesying their doom. When it becomes very clear that they will not listen and desire to kill him Jeremiah switches his prayer to God. He begins to pray that God's wrath will come on the people. The second big thing I noticed in this reading was the offer of mercy to the people. Siege was a terrible thing. A city was cutoff from all sources of food and water and slowly consumed all its supplies until it actually began to consume itself. Cannibalism is a fact of life during the last days of a siege. The only hope of rescue is from an outside force and the people were consistently being told that God would not rescue them this time. God says, "Trust me and put yourselves into the hands of the Babylonians and you will live." God has a good plan, but it requires that the people surrender. God has a plan for us and it also requires that we stop fighting for our independence and surrender to Him.