



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 33, Day 1 --- Jeremiah 23-25

Week 33, Day 2 --- Jeremiah 26-29

Week 33, Day 3 --- Jeremiah 30-31

Week 33, Day 4 --- Jeremiah 32-34

Week 33, Day 5 --- Jeremiah 35-37

Week 33, Day 6 --- Jeremiah 38-40 - Psalm 74 - Psalm 79

Week 33, Day 7 --- 2 Kings 24-25 - 2 Chronicles 36

Week 33, Day 1 --- Jeremiah 23-25

The Bible often uses the term shepherd to describe a spiritual leader of people. Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd. Many desire to be leaders, but often don't think about the consequences. God holds leaders accountable for how they lead and where they lead. The shepherds of Israel were leading the people astray and needed to be destroyed.

God tells Jeremiah that the period of captivity will be 70 years long. I'm not sure why God chose 70 years. This long a time probably meant that it was the grandchildren of those who went into captivity who would return to Jerusalem. It would be people who had never seen Jerusalem who would build the new Israel. Once again the people were placed in slavery, so that they would value freedom when it was given to them.

Week 33, Day 2 --- Jeremiah 26-29

What were the people worshipping? Were idols of wood and gold their only sin? I think Jeremiah 26 points out something that may not have been obvious in the rest of the prophets we have read through. The people did continue to perform the rituals and sacrifices that were called out in the Law of Moses. However, instead of worshipping God they had begun to worship the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. They knew it, but didn't want anyone to tell them that. Even worse, they didn't want Jeremiah telling them that God was going to destroy what they worshipped.

Jeremiah 29 reveals God's purpose for the time of captivity. His plan was to rebuild what had been destroyed. He instructs the captives to work for the good of their captors. I will live and act differently if I know I'm going to be in a place for a very long time. I make it my home. This is very hard for a captive to do. A captive longs for the home he was taken away from. God tells the captives to recognize that their old home is gone. They must settle in and be at home in order to rebuild and be prepared to return to build a new home in their old land. All of those who hear this message will be dead by the time this comes true. The book of Isaiah offers hope for long in the future with the coming of Jesus. Jeremiah provides practical instruction on how to deal with the reality of today.

Week 33, Day 3 --- Jeremiah 30-31

Jeremiah prophesies that a new covenant is coming. The New Testament describes that new covenant that we live under. In the Old Testament God made a covenant with a group of people, the descendants of Jacob. We know them as the children of Israel or Jews. In the New Testament God makes a covenant

with individuals. People who have entered into this covenant, or agreement, with God we know as Christians. The family or group of all those who have entered into this new covenant is known as the church. It is important to see that God's new covenant is not with the church, but is instead with individuals. I do not want to diminish the importance of the church, but it is most important to see that God's new covenant is between God and an individual person. This is a really good thing because it means that I have direct access to God. His law is written directly on my heart.

Week 33, Day 4 --- Jeremiah 32-34

Many of the books of prophecy look far into the future. Prophecy is always delivering God's message and sometimes that message is for the immediate situation. That is the case with today's reading. Zedekiah has placed Jeremiah in prison to limit the number of people he can talk to. The result is a series of very personal messages for the king about what is going to happen very soon. Zedekiah is very fortunate that he will live. However, many will die because of their refusal to surrender to the Babylonians. The more serious issue is their unwillingness to surrender to God. This is shown by the disobedience to the law. It was not against the law to have an Israelite for you slave. I was against the law to keep them in slavery for all their life and that is what was happening.

Week 33, Day 5 --- Jeremiah 35-37

Jeremiah gives us a running account of the final destruction of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. He begins with a very important story of a faithful family. It is easy to forget that there were people who remained faithful to God alone in Israel. There is so much focus on the rulers and those who are unfaithful that we forget that God has preserved a remnant who love Him. It is always easier to hear and pay attention to the loud and rebellious. Just as it is always easier to hear Satan than it is to hear God. Satan shouts and God whispers. I can't imagine the amount of work that the king burned up when he burned the scroll. Think how long it has taken us to read this far in Jeremiah. Imagine writing that all out twice!

Week 33, Day 6 --- Jeremiah 38-40 - Psalm 74 - Psalm 79

This section begins with Jeremiah being thrown into a cistern. A cistern is a big hole that has been dug in the ground where water is stored. Cisterns are still used in many parts of the world. In our country we don't dig holes in the ground. Instead we have very large tanks to store water. Water is collected during the rainy season for use when it is dry. The cistern Jeremiah was thrown into didn't contain any water, but was still muddy at the bottom. If he had been left there he would have died in a few days. Fortunately, he was rescued. The hero of this story is Gedaliah. He trusts in God and takes a stand against everyone to rescue Jeremiah. He is rewarded when Jerusalem falls.

Zedekiah the king is not a hero. He is the great example of a coward. He fears men and not God. The result is a long time of suffering for the city of Jerusalem and the death of all his family. Why do you think Zedekiah asked for Jeremiah's advice and then didn't follow it? What is God calling you to do that would require that you trust Him more than you fear men?

Week 33, Day 7 --- 2 Kings 24-25 - 2 Chronicles 36

The key to the reason for the captivity and the length of the captivity is found in the following verse:

The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah. 2 Chronicles 36:21 (NIV)

The law that God gave the people through Moses said that the people were to farm the land, but that they were to let the land rest every seventh year. God promised them an abundant harvest in the sixth year that would provide for them through the seventh and eighth years. This was to be a reminder that it was God who provided for them and God who owned the land. As far as we know from the stories in the Bible the people never practiced this Sabbath rest for the land. They didn't keep the weekly Sabbath and they didn't allow the land to rest. So, the punishment of the Israelites included a time of recovery for the land.