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Persevere In Serving The Lord Jeremiah 37-39

- Chapter 37 is the beginning of the end for Jerusalem as recorded by Jeremiah. The Babylonian army had besieged the city but not penetrated the city walls. During this time King Zedekiah sent his officials to Jeremiah saying pray to the Lord for us.
- Consider the facts here. Zedekiah wants the prophet to pray for God's help, now that they are in trouble. In verse 3 he says pray to the Lord **our** God. He is recognizing and claiming the Lord as Judah's God but has refused to obey God's command for years now.
- They want God to save them from the onslaught of the Babylonian army. Like many people throughout time and many today they seek God's help in times of trouble, but when the crisis passes so does their commitment and obedience to the Lord. The people of Judah are under judgment because of their disobedience.
- God has provided salvation for them. They want God to save them but they are not listening. Jeremiah has continued to tell them that the way of death is Jerusalem. If you try and stay here you will die by the sword or famine or pestilence. Submit to the Babylonians, go to Babylon and live in peace there and all will be well with you.
- I believe this to be a problem for the large majority of us. We petition God in prayer for the resolution to a problem or some issue in our lives, but then we tell God how to fix it or how we want it resolved. We just want deliverance or we want the problem to go away. What does God want? He wants us to trust Him. He wants us to trust Him to take us by the hand and lead us through the storm. This is how we grow and mature in our faith. Charles Stanley calls it advancing through adversity.
- The people of Judah and the king did not trust God. That was evident in their disobedience and refusal to submit to the Lord's will. At this time the Pharaoh of Egypt sent his army to help Jerusalem. When the Babylonians learned of this, they temporarily lifted the siege and went to deal with this, but they would be back.
- Read 37:11-17. During this lull, Jeremiah tried to leave Jerusalem to claim some property but was arrested by a guard named Irijah. He was the grandson of the false prophet Hananiah who had made the claim that Jerusalem would be delivered and the King brought back within 2 years, back in chapter 28.
- Irijah accused Jeremiah of consorting with the enemy. Jeremiah refuted that claim, but the guard arrested Jeremiah and brought him to Zedekiah's officials. Remember the officials of Jehoiakim protected Jeremiah and tried to get the king to do what was right. Here, Zedekiah's officials beat him and put him in prison.
- Zedekiah then sent for Jeremiah and met with him privately. He asks

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Jeremiah, have you heard anything from the Lord? Jeremiah said the message remains the same; you will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Zedekiah may have had a false sense of security because Babylon's attention was turned away to deal with Egypt. However God's message did not change, an alliance with Egypt would not save Jerusalem.

- Jeremiah also asks the king, where are your prophets who told you the king of Babylon would not come against you? Where are these so called prophets who said all would be well in 2 years? Jeremiah pleads with Zedekiah to open his eyes and see that God has been faithful to what He said He would do. Judah and Jerusalem would be judged for their disobedience. And in turn God would be faithful and restore the nation as promised.
- So these officials of the king ask Zedekiah to execute Jeremiah because his message weakens the morale of the fighting men and the people of the city. They believed Jeremiah was weakening their resolve to hold out against Babylon. They saw their problem as political, opposition from Babylon. Jeremiah said their problem was spiritual, opposition from God. The official's answer was to silence Jeremiah. They then took him and put him in a cistern. There was no water, only mud. During all this Jeremiah never wavered in his commitment to the Lord. He never compromised the truth.
- Can you imagine being put into a hole, can you imagine the despair Jeremiah may have felt. As you see only darkness and sink into the mud, facing certain death. Maybe hearing the laughter of those who believe themselves to be triumphant.
- Many people walking around us each day feel this despair. The world has closed in on them and has cast them into an inescapable pit. There is no hope. But the world cannot destroy God. Our hope in Him cannot be taken from us unless we allow it. Our hope in Him is not in vain. The people of God always have hope, because we serve an awesome God, He is all-powerful, He all knowing, and He loves us and will not forsake us. Turn over to Romans 8:31-39.
- Absolutely nothing can separate believers from God's love. It is very difficult to find the words to describe the absolute certainty of God's love for us, and you can see Paul struggles in Romans 8 but does a pretty good job. Not life or death, angels or principalities, things we see now or things to come, no created thing can separate us from the love of God.
- So if God, the Uncreated One is for us, then none of these things, no created things can separate us from His love, then we know our security in Him is ABSOLUTE!
- If the citizens of Judah could have been able to get hold of this truth, if this understanding of God's love had been taught from the temple, then they may not have been facing this certain judgment. If believers today could really understand this truth think how our world could change.

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- But Zedekiah was a compromiser, like so many today. He knew what was right and may have even had some desire to do it, but he caved in to opposition, he caved in to his subordinates. He took the path of least resistance even though it led to destruction.
- Many today serve the Lord as long as it is easy. When it becomes difficult, they turn away from God. What can we learn from Jeremiah? Perseverance. So much of what we busy ourselves doing or worrying about weighs absolutely nothing on the scale of eternity. The way we respond to each other does, the way we respond to God does.
- The Lord has saved us, we stand redeemed! When troubles come or we are persecuted because we love Him, then rejoice! “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”(Matt 5:11-12).
- Beloved, understand that when suffering or troubles come, it is not necessarily due to sin in your life. God allows some things to come into our lives to grow our faith and trust in Him. Some things are to test us to know our hearts. Some are to bring glory to Him, and some suffering is due to sin in the world around us. And yes some is for rebuke and correction.
- God is a loving and patient Father. Just as He pleaded with His people through Jeremiah to repent and come back to Him, He calls His people now to put away those silly little sins we drag along with us. Don't compromise like Zedekiah, stand firm in perseverance.
- You are Redeemed!