

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What servant of the prophet Elisha ran to meet the woman of Shunem?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Elijah - 1 Kings 18:46

Published by the church of Christ which meets at 755 Pinole Valley Road, Pinole, CA 94564, Phone (510) 724-1994, (Mailing address: church of Christ, P.O. Box 453, Pinole, CA 94564)

Pinole Tidings

www.pinolechurchofchrist.com

Vol. 15, No. 09 - December 15, 2013

Jeremiah: "Utter Faithfulness"

Harold Hancock

J. Sidlow Baxter in his, *Explore The Book*, p. 260, described the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, as "utter faithfulness." Why? Why not just call Jeremiah, faithful? Perhaps for emphasis—to say Jeremiah was not just faithful, but faithful under, what seems to us to be extremely difficult circumstances. Get to know the message and you will get to know the man; and the man's position, his burden for the Word of God, his character, and his obedience exemplify utter faithfulness.

Jeremiah was born to be a prophet. God said He knew, sanctified, and ordained Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations even before Jeremiah was born (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah began prophesying in the thirteenth year of Josiah, King of Judah, and continued to prophesy for fifty or sixty years. He saw the nation of Judah pass from prosperous conditions during the time of Josiah to a state of iniquity under the last four kings—Jehoahaz, Jehoikim, Jehoikin, and Zedekiah. Jeremiah heralded the collapse of Judah; many inhabitants would be carried to Babylon, and others would suffer sword, pestilence, and famine; the land would be left desolate, the city of Jerusalem would lie in heaps, and the

temple of God would be destroyed. The harsh judgments predicted by Jeremiah caused him to be subjected to a barrage of slander and persecution by the priests, kings, and people of Judah. These judgments also tore at the heart of Jeremiah. Every prediction of the coming destruction was soaked with tears. Every plea to Judah was punctuated with sobs. Because his judgments proclaimed so much devastation, Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the “prophet of doom.” Because of his anguish over the disobedience and apostasy of Judah, he is sometimes called “the weeping prophet.” Jeremiah, however, was not all gloom and doom. He offered Judah hope when he prophesied that after seventy years Babylon would fall and Israel and Judah would be gathered from among the nations and would return again to their homeland; and an even greater hope was offered through the promises of the Messiah.

The mere fact that Jeremiah was a prophet speaks of his faith. True prophets were holy men of God speaking as the Holy Spirit moved them (2 Peter 1:21); holiness is rooted in faith! Look also at the passion with which Jeremiah spoke his message. It cost him to be a prophet of ill; he had to contend with false prophets, he was threatened with death, and he was imprisoned. Not an easy life! Truthfully, there were times when Jeremiah entertained the thought of not mentioning God or speaking in God’s name anymore, but because God’s word was as a burning fire shut up in his bones, and he was weary with forbearing, he could not keep from prophesying (Jeremiah 20:9). It is conviction that compels one to speak, especially in adverse times. Paul said, “I believed, therefore, I spoke!” (2 Corinthians 4:13); Jeremiah believed, therefore, he spoke!

It is the consensus of many that none of the so-called writing prophets reveal more of themselves in their works than does Jeremiah. Jeremiah reveals his personal feelings and the

“inmost recesses of his mind” (Bible Study Textbook, Jeremiah and Lamentations, Smith, College Press, p. 52), providing us insight into his character. Limited in understanding and sensitive to the suffering of the people, Jeremiah sometimes brooded before God, but he was never disobedient to the Lord, and he discharged his duties before the people without murmuring. For this reason, he is often described as gentle, courageous, and uncompromising. Others have taken note of Jeremiah’s guileless motive, his humility, and his willingness for self-sacrifice. Truly, Jeremiah was a man with strong character, but strong character starts with faith. Peter said, add to your faith: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:5–7). Jeremiah had to have faith to have character.

All obedience shows faith, but one act of obedience by Jeremiah especially demonstrated his faith in God. When Jerusalem was besieged and all looked hopeless, God told Jeremiah to buy a field in Anathot from his cousin Hanameel (Jeremiah 32:6, 7). God had said, “Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land” (Jeremiah 32:15). By unhesitatingly purchasing the field, Jeremiah showed that he not only spoke the word of God, but that he believed the word of the Lord.

Witnessing Jeremiah’s struggle with his burden of prophecy and its harsh judgments, unrepentant people, and persecutions endears him to us—he seems real! Seeing Jeremiah’s determination to do what was right and seeing him triumph morally and spiritually makes him utterly faithful! He encourages us; we know that we can triumph, too!

Christianity Magazine
September–October 1998
Volume 15 Number 9/10