

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 5
WEEK OF JULY 12



Growth Group Summer 2020

Frustrated

Week 5 – July 12, 2020 - Jeremiah 15:15-21 (The Message)

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

Jeremiah had been trying really hard to remain faithful to the calling God had placed on his life. However, he has come to a point where he feels alone and it appears as though God doesn’t care. Jeremiah wonders why God is not paying attention. He cries out and asks God to remember. For a Jewish believer, “remembering” was not mere recollection. It was a recapturing of the past, in a way that led to action in the present. Jeremiah was asking God to remember what God knew of Jeremiah and to do something active on Jeremiah’s behalf.

Jeremiah goes on to “remind” God about how much he had loved the calling that God had placed on his life, how much he loved reading/devouring God’s word, which in this case is probably the book of Deuteronomy. Ezekiel had a similar reaction to God’s word as well. In doing this Jeremiah is also probably trying to encourage himself. He also needed to remember how great it had been to read and study God’s word.

Yet, Jeremiah feels as though God has abandoned him, or worse yet, tricked him. Is God only a mirage? Is faith just an empty riverbed? Is there no living water? Jeremiah laments that there is no healing in the land. God seems like a deceitful brook, a stream that goes dry in the summer and cannot be depended upon for water.

God then responds to Jeremiah’s complaints. Jeremiah had been the one calling the people of Judah to repent, and now God calls Jeremiah to repent. God is calling Jeremiah to turn back to God and to renew his trust in God. God tells Jeremiah to make sure that he is proclaiming words that are pleasing to God, and not to the people around him. Jeremiah is to model a life of integrity.

God tells Jeremiah to quit whining and to start trusting. God does not deny that Jeremiah is going to be attacked and persecuted. Yet, God reminds Jeremiah that he will be protected. God is not going to abandon him. God will deliver him.

Jeremiah’s prayer began with his frustration with God, and it ends with God’s words of encouragement for Jeremiah. This passage teaches an important lesson about prayer – that it is both speaking to God, as well as being intentional about making time to listen for God’s response.



Exploring the Text

Read Jeremiah 15:15-21 (The Message)

15-18 You know where I am, God! Remember what I'm doing here! Take my side against my detractors. Don't stand back while they ruin me. Just look at the abuse I'm taking! When your words showed up, I ate them—swallowed them whole. What a feast! What delight I took in being yours, O God, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! I never joined the party crowd in their laughter and their fun. Led by you, I went off by myself. You'd filled me with indignation. Their sin had me seething. But why, why this chronic pain, this ever worsening wound and no healing in sight? You're nothing, God, but a mirage, a lovely oasis in the distance—and then nothing!

19-21 This is how God answered me: "Take back those words, and I'll take you back. Then you'll stand tall before me. Use words truly and well. Don't stoop to cheap whining. Then, but only then, you'll speak for me. Let your words change them. Don't change your words to suit them. I'll turn you into a steel wall, a thick steel wall, impregnable. They'll attack you but won't put a dent in you because I'm at your side, defending and delivering." God's Decree. "I'll deliver you from the grip of the wicked. I'll get you out of the clutch of the ruthless."

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Do you have a favorite place where you like to pray?
- 2) Jeremiah says God knows where he is. This implies that God is omniscient and sovereign. Do you believe that God always knows where we are and what we are doing?
- 3) Can you think of a time when God has been slow to answer one of your prayers? What did you learn from that?
- 4) Jeremiah talks about devouring God's word. He speaks about how satisfying God's word was. Have you ever felt that God's word was not satisfying or fulfilling?
- 5) Jeremiah is honest before God about his emotions and feelings. Do you feel like you can approach God in that way, when you pray?
- 6) What do you think about God telling Jeremiah to stop whining? What is the difference between complaining/whining and lament?
- 7) How do we make sure we are speaking God's words, and not words that people around us want to hear?
- 8) God had some thoughts/words for Jeremiah. Can you think of a time when you felt like God had a specific word or thought for you? What was the situation? What did God "share" with you?