

"OH, THAT I MIGHT LEAVE..."

Text: Jeremiah 9:2

INTRO: Each of us can identify with the feelings of the prophet in this passage. Let's look at his situation in more detail & see what we might learn from this faithful servant of God.

I. WHY DID JEREMIAH WANT TO GET AWAY?

- A. His was an extremely important task--one for which he felt himself poorly equipped & one which he accepted only reluctantly. READ 1:4-7.
- B. His message, for the most part, was one that was not pleasant to deliver. READ 1:9-10.
- C. His audience was not at all inclined to properly value the prophet's negative preaching & dismal predictions. READ 1:8, 17-19.
- D. His unpopular preaching brought him almost constant persecution READ 18:18; 20:2, 7; 26:8; 37:13-16; 38:6

Finally Jeremiah was taken forcibly to Egypt where he died. Jewish tradition says he was stoned to death by his own people.

- E. Perhaps no man ever preached longer & more devotedly than Jeremiah with as little positive results. This must have at least sometimes made him look at his work as a failure, & perhaps saddest of all, in spite of knowing what the problem was & what the solution was, he had to helplessly watch his nation go to its ruin.

II. WHY, THEN, DID JEREMIAH NOT RUN AWAY?

- A. He was man enough to accept responsibility. He had a duty to stay & do what he could.
- B. Tho he knew that the multitudes would reject his message, he also knew that in his message was their only hope for his own generation & for generations yet unborn.

C. He also knew that God always had a righteous remnant, & they would hear his message & benefit from it. READ 44:28.

D. He loved his people too much to ignore their needs.

E. His only personal hope was in a right relationship with God. To turn his back on the unpleasant task God had given him would have been to turn his back upon God, the only hope for himself or his nation.

III. WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF JEREMIAH'S FAITHFULNESS?

A. In his own lifetime, very little. I wish I could report that he saved his nation & became a national hero--but such is not the case. He died in Egypt where he had been taken against his will. He saw his beloved nation go into Babylonian exile, its temple destroyed, its cities looted & pillaged & burned.

B. Yet, he could face death knowing he had done his best. And knowing that a small righteous remnant had found strength & encouragement thru his ministry. His prediction of a restoration to the land of Canaan after 70 years in exile became the one bright spot in the life of the next generation of Jews.

C. To later generations, of course, Jeremiah was a hero, and folklore even caused many to believe that he would be resurrected in a later age to take part in a rebuilding of the temple in some future golden age. See MT 16:16ff.

D. But most importantly, Jeremiah, by his faithfulness, secured for himself a place in the eternal heavens. Luke 13:28.

CONCLUSION: By being faithful in our duty to our Lord, we too can sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jeremiah & the other faithful prophets of Old & New Testament times, in the kingdom of God.

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