

Responding to Difficulties

Jeremiah 29:4-14

4/06/03

Intro

- Pray for our men who are risking their lives
- Keep praying for our President

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At this point in history, Nebuchadnezzar has already taken captives back to Babylon. They had lost everything but their lives and for many the situation looked hopeless.

The problem was that the false prophets continued to give false hope to the people. There was even one by the name of Hananiah that said that the Lord would break Babylon in two years.

This is a letter that Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylon to give them instruction as to what to do in their tragedy. He knew they would have difficulty understanding what was happening and how they should respond.

It's often difficult for us to interpret situation that happen to us. Sometimes things happen in a wonderful series of events. **Illus – when the plane came back in for me.** Sometimes it seems like nothing goes right at all.

These verses give us insight into what we should do in times of difficulty.

I. Accept it as from the hand of the Lord

A. Don't kick against the goads

- Bitterness only gets in the way of faith
- You're only making the situation worse

Job 1:21, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away."

Job 2:10, "Shall we accept good from the LORD and not accept adversity?"

- We don't always know **why** things happen
 - Bad does not always mean God is punishing you (look at Job).
 - Good does not always mean God is blessing you.
- If it's discipline, call will have given you a clear warning and the consequence is connected to the decision.

B. Be fruitful

- Do the best with what you have

Illus – this is some wisdom from my mother

Illus – If your husband, boss, or anyone you're under authority does something you don't agree with, what should you do? Be fruitful!!

C. Seek the welfare of the city

- Its welfare will be your welfare
- Pray for your enemies

Matthew 5:43-48; I Timothy 2:1-3

II. Have faith in God's plan for you

- A. Situations may not reveal God's heart
 - Things are not always as they appear

- Difficult things may bring us blessing, those things which appear to be blessing, may bring us great grief.

Illus – My friend’s godson who passed on big opportunity would have missed a better one.

Illus – Dr. or pastor? God knew how to make the best out of my weakness.

- Don’t judge God by the situation

Illus- Jon Courson when he lost his wife and daughter

B. Rather believe God’s Word

- God’s wants to give us a future and a hope

Romans 8: 31, “What can we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

- Even if the situation isn’t obvious.

Habakkuk 3:16-19

III. Seek the Lord in all circumstances

VS 12-14

A. The Lord uses difficult times to draw us toward the Lord.

- To confess sin
- The purify our lives

Illus – The nation of Israel never again went back to idolatry

B. He wants us to seek Him with all our hearts

- In good, give Him glory for all He’s done.
- In bad, seek what he is doing.
- But restore your relationship to the Lord and return to your first love!!

Conclusion

To know in all faith that God has the best in mind for us, is the key to overcoming the greatest tragedies and trials.