

The Emptying Principle

Jeremiah 48: 11-18

5/18/03

Intro

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In these last chapters Jeremiah is reciting the prophecies against the various nations around Israel. In chapter 48, The Lord is speaking of Moab, a nation which is across the Dead Sea from Israel.

Moab is Israel's cousin. They are descendants from Lot through one of Lot's daughters. They did not allow Israel to pass through their land as they were under Moses and heading for the Promised Land.

They are the ones who hired Balaam to curse Israel, though he ended up speaking blessings.

Moab's biggest problem was complacency. They were out of the way of the great tidal shifts in power and had come to be at ease since their youth. They have become arrogant and proud against the Lord.

But in these verses we have insight the process the Lord uses to cause us to grow into maturity; through the challenges and difficulties of our lives.

He uses as a teaching tool the process of making what Isaiah calls, "fine, aged wine."

This verse was found stamped onto a wine container in the 2nd century AD

These verses give us insight into the process of godly change.

I. God filters our lives

A. God is the wine-maker

Vs 11

- God uses wine in many places of scripture as a teaching tool
- Here the process of making wine is used to see that God expects us to change, to become mature and quality in the process of aging

B. Wine must be filtered

- Grape juice is cloudy and filled with impurities
- It is placed into dregs, or barrels and let to settle for several weeks
- But it cannot stay in that place or it will not improve – **It will stagnate!!**

Zephaniah 1:12, "And it will come about at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will find the men who are stagnant in spirit, who say in their hearts that God will not do good or evil."

Illus – lukewarm food is sure to spoil (cold preserves food, heat prepares food, room temp spoils it)

Revelation 3: 14-22 Church in Laodicea

C. Wine must be disturbed

- Moab had been at ease since his youth
- If our lives are always at ease, then the impurities of our lives are never removed

Illus – "resting on the lees"

II. It's a process of being poured out

- A. Poured from vessel to vessel
- May our faith increase to see that God uses difficult times for our maturing
 - The key is our heart in faith that believes that God is doing a good thing through bad times

Illus – “poor me,” or “pour me”

- B. So the flavor changes
- God is looking for something to change in us
 - He is looking for us to become more like Him
- C. The aroma should also change
- We are the aroma of Christ

II Corinthians 2:15, “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”

III. The tilters will come

Vs 12

- A. Better to be poured than broken
- The maturing process is from vessel to vessel
 - Some people must be tilted and then broken
 - When we think life was better back there

B. Better to not be ashamed

- They will be ashamed of Chemosh
- As Israel was ashamed at Bethel

Romans 6: 21, “What benefit did you gain from the things you are now ashamed of? For the outcome of those things is death.”

C. Come down from our own glory

Vs 18

- They trusted in their own achievements and treasures (vs 7)
- They thought they were mighty and courageous

Illus – But the opposite of courage is not fear, but conformity

Conclusion

Is the flavor of our lives changing? There is a process that God is doing in all of us of pouring from vessel to vessel. May we say, “Yes, Lord, purify my life..”