



I FEEL YOUR PAIN

Studies in Jeremiah & Lamentations

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Growing in Spirit & Truth

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A Study in Contrasts

Introduction to Jeremiah 34-40

Whether it's in art or literature studying contrasts always reveals a deeper level of truth. In this week's study in Jeremiah there are many such contrasts that reveal the truth. The first of these contrasts is between the mercy, faithfulness and concern of the Lord and those who serve Him and of those who don't. King Zedekiah, who had been unfaithful to the Lord, was nevertheless shown faithfulness and mercy by God. Even though he would be captured by the Babylonians, God promised him that he would die in peace with an honorable burial. In contrast Zedekiah showed unfaithfulness by first releasing Hebrew slaves, then rescinding his order and enslaving them once again. This violated Mosaic law, and the contrast between God's mercy and faithfulness and Zedekiah's

unfaithfulness revealed the truth of each one's character. Another example of this contrast was the obedience of the Rechabites, a priestly family who had vowed to taste no alcoholic beverage, and had upheld that vow. Judah, on the other hand, had not been true to their vows to God, revealing their disloyalty. Another contrast in this section was God's demonstration of mercy by sending Jeremiah (via Baruch) to King Jehoiakim with His words on a scroll to provoke them to repentance. However, instead of repenting the king cut up and burned the scroll, an incredibly arrogant contrast to God's mercy. In the next section the respect that God's people showed is contrasted with the disrespect of the ungodly. Jeremiah was imprisoned, released, then thrown into a cistern by the



Our hearts should break with God's over our sin.

Jewish officials, but a lowly servant, Ebed-melech, showed great respect and kindness to Jeremiah by getting him released, and extracting him from the cistern. Finally, the rewards for those who serve God, like Jeremiah and Ebed-melech, is set in contrast to the consequences of sinfulness and rebellion which Judah and its king, Zedekiah received. Not only was Jerusalem captured, but the king saw his sons murdered before his eyes were blinded. The truth of God's ways and unbelievers' is always a study in contrasts.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Daily Study Questions for Jeremiah 34-40

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com, small groups, abf)

1. Look at Jer 34:1-7. What was happening (v1, 6-7), and what did God tell Zedekiah about this (v2-3)? How did He show him grace (v4-5)?	
2. In 34:8-22 what had Zedekiah done that was good (v8-10, 12-14), and then bad (v11, 15-16)? How did God respond (v17-22)? What does this teach?	
3. From 35:1-19 why were the actions of the Rechabites (v1-11) so much better than Judah's (v12-17). How did God deal with each of them (v17, 18-19)?	

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Jeremiah 34-40 Daily Study Questions (cont)

4. Using Jer 36:1-10 what did God command Jeremiah and why (v1-3)? How did he respond (v4-7) and what can we learn from this?

5. Based on 36:11-32 how did Micaiah respond to God's words (v11-13), the other officials (v14-19) and the king (v20-26)? How did God deal with this (v27-32)? Apply.

6. According to 37:1-10 what did Zedekiah ask of Jeremiah (v3-5) and why was this ironic (v2)? What was God's answer (v6-10)?

7. What happened to Jeremiah in 37:11-21 (11-16)? How did Zedekiah react (v17) and what was Jeremiah's response (v17-21)? What can we learn from his example?

8. In 38:1-13 what happened to Jeremiah next (v4-6) and why (v1-3)? Who stood up for him (v7-9) and what was the result (v10-13)?

8. From 38:14-28 what was Zedekiah's next move (v14, 16) and Jeremiah's response (v15)? What was God's word for Zedekiah (v17-23) and his response (v19, 24-26)?

9. Looking at 39:1-18 what happened to Jerusalem (v1-3), Zedekiah (v4-7), and the rest (v8-10)? How were Jeremiah (v11-14) and Ebed-melech (v15-18) treated? Why (v18)?

10. Using 40:1-6 what was Jeremiah offered (v1-4) and how did he respond (v5-6)? Why do you think he did this?

11. In 40:7-16 who was appointed over Judah then (v7-8) and what did he advise (v9-12)? What danger did he face (v13-15) and how did he deal with it (v16)?

Scripture to Remember

"Because you trusted Me, I will preserve your life and keep you safe. I, the LORD, have spoken."

Jeremiah 39:18 (NLT)

Celebration Fellowship

Help—Hope—Healing

We're on the web

www.thehospitalchurch.com

Life Group Questions—It's All About Jesus, Christ In You (Col 2:1-5)

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Think about the best friendship you've ever had. Share with the group what made that so special. It is possible to experience that in the church—why or why not?
2. Read Col 2:1-3. What does the word "encouragement" mean to you? When do you need it, and what are some ways that you get it?
3. When you think about hearts being "knit together" what comes to mind? Have you ever experienced that? How does true love provide the environment for that?
4. What do each of the ways to love—what we say, what we do, where we stand—mean and how does each help us be knit together in love? Which do you need to work on?
5. Why is it important to increase in our understanding of God and each other to be able to experience genuine Christian community?
6. How can each of you grow in encouragement, love and understanding this week?
7. Bring up anything else important to you from Sunday's message if there is time.