

## Is There Any Word From the Lord?

I told you last Sunday that this phrase had been running through my head. I shared the verse in the first service but we didn't get too far with it. I thought we would move on to a new subject but I just couldn't get away from this phrase, this question. This is the only thing the Lord would allow me to write about for this morning. Turn with me to Jeremiah 37. As you are turning there, let me quickly and briefly set the stage for you.

The northern kingdom of Israel has been destroyed by the Assyrians about 100 years before Jeremiah and now God is bringing judgment against the southern kingdom of Judah as well. They have forsaken the Lord and worshiped idols. They have sinned against God and refused to obey his word or listen to his prophet. The Babylonians had conquered the Assyrians and now Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were coming to lay siege to Jerusalem and capture Judah. Just to give you a modern point of reference, ancient Babylon made its capital in a city about 50 miles south of the present city of Baghdad.

God called Jeremiah to prophecy and to warn the people and the king that judgement was coming upon Judah. He told them the only way to escape death was to surrender to the Babylonians. Some of the Jews branded Jeremiah a traitor for speaking about surrendering to Babylon. When Pharaoh from Egypt came marching toward Jerusalem as part of a pact they had signed years before, the Babylonians withdrew their siege. The people of Jerusalem rejoiced thinking they had escaped the coming destruction that Jeremiah had spoken of, but read what the Lord told Jeremiah to say to the king. (Jeremiah 37:5-10).

After the Babylonian army withdrew (briefly) Jeremiah started to leave the city to go check on his home in the territory of Benjamin but the captain of the guard stopped him and accused him of deserting to the Babylonians and arrested him, had him beaten and thrown into a cell in a dungeon. The king was young and had only been the king for a short time and was afraid to stand against his advisors and councilors. He went along with them, but then privately he sent for Jeremiah and brought him out in order to ask him this one question. **“Is there any word from the Lord?” Jeremiah 37:17.**

It is a strange question to ask the prophet, in light of what the bible says

concerning the king in 37:2. The bible said of the king, **“Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.” Jeremiah 37:2.** They ignored the word of the Lord, and yet in the very next verse the bible says the king sent word to Jeremiah through a couple of emissaries asking him to “Pray to the Lord our God for us.” Interesting isn’t it? They didn’t want to accept his words. They refused to pay attention to the prophecies of this weird prophet, but they wanted to cover all their basis. “Hey, we don’t really believe you or believe God is going to destroy us. We are too sophisticated for that, but just in case we might be wrong somehow, would you pray to the Lord for us and see if he has any words of help and advice for us? I mean, it couldn’t hurt.”

**Inquiring of the Lord is always the right thing, but what do you plan to do when he answers?** It is right to ask him for his direction, his guidance, his wisdom, his help, but you have to be willing to accept the guidance and wisdom and help he offers. If you ask him for direction, you had better be prepared to follow his direction. That was the problem with the king. He didn’t want to follow God’s direction and his failure to do so cost him dearly.

“Is there any word from the Lord, Jeremiah?” That wasn’t really the question he was asking after pulling Jeremiah from prison by cover of darkness. What he was really asking was, “Have you changed your mind about what you’ve been telling me is going to happen to me and to Judah? Has sitting in a cell changed your mind about what you want to say?” Remember, the king is asking Jeremiah if there is any word from the Lord, but verse 2 has already informed us that the king didn’t pay any attention to the words the Lord spoke through the prophet.

**You can’t afford to make God’s word say what you want it to say.** We haven’t been called to rewrite the Scripture and turn it into God’s magic book of prose and promise. Remember those promise cards that grandma used to have on her kitchen table? You pulled out a promise for each day? Pull out one that didn’t work for you and you just put it back and tried another one until you got one you liked. That’s how some folks want to do with direction from the Lord. Keep searching the bible, talking to counselors until you hear what you want to hear. Keep searching until you find

a theology that fits your sin or a promise that excuses or justifies and stick with it. The king was trying to find the right promise for peace and prosperity but that wasn't what God was saying or doing. There was a word for the king and he needed to hear it and heed it.

There is a word from the Lord for you today and you need to hear it and heed it as well. It's not enough to ask if there is a word from the Lord, you have to be prepared to hear it and receive it and live it. God told the king to surrender and he would live, but if he didn't, he would be captured and he didn't want that to happen. The king refused to obey Jeremiah and ended up being captured. He was forced to watch as his family was killed before his eyes and then his eyes were plucked out and he spent the rest of his life in Babylonian imprisonment, blind and alone, regretting the fact he didn't listen to the prophet and obey God.

**If you want to hear from God, be prepared to obey the word he speaks to you.** We can't pick and choose what we want to hear or what we are willing to obey. The bible tells us we are to be more than hearers of the word, we are to be doers as well. Is there a word from the Lord for us? Yes if you are willing to hear it and obey. If you want God's will and his favor, obey his word.

The king asks Jeremiah to pray for him. Seek God for me. Find answers for me, but make sure they are the answers I want. It doesn't work that way. Is there a word from the Lord? Yes there is, but it may not be the word you expected or the word you wanted right now. Are you willing to accept it and obey God's word, regardless? Are you willing to accept his timing? .

**Keep in mind that God's word is a redemptive word.** The judgement that was coming upon Judah and King Zedekiah was not God acting in anger towards his people. He was not being vengeful. Even though the people were suffering the consequences of their choices and sins, there was still a redemptive work at hand. You see, God had already promised redemption and restoration. He was judging sin so ultimately he could save the nation and save humanity.

You may be going through a difficult season right now. Perhaps you are going through a time of trial or testing and you wonder what's going to be the outcome of it all. Keep in mind that God is always acting in redemptive ways. It's true for you and your

situation. Look at Jeremiah 33. God speaks of the punishment and judgement that was coming because of their terrible sin against God, but then he says, **“Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.”** Jeremiah 33:6-9

If you are going through trials and difficulty, keep obeying the Lord, stay surrendered to him and realize that he is always working in redemptive ways in our lives and circumstances. If you are living in the trials of Jeremiah 37-39, don't forget the redemptive promises of Jeremiah 33. He will heal and restore. He will lead you into his blessing and peace.

Is there a word from the Lord? Yes. It may not be a word people want to hear. According to the bible things will get darker and more threatening and men's hearts will fail them for fear and we will wonder if Jesus can even find faith on the earth when he returns. The bible says in the world we will have tribulation, so prepare for it. But remember God's promise to his people: through Christ and by his power, we have overcome the world. Regardless of how dark and evil the world grows, God is still working in a redemptive fashion in the lives of his children.

Is there a word from the Lord for us today? Yes. Maybe life seems to be out of control for you. It feels like the devil is having a hayday in your life or your family and you've been asking, like the king asked Jeremiah, "Is there any word from the Lord?" Does God have a word for me? Is he still at work in my life? Is he still in control cause it seems like the devil is just running all over me."

Listen to what I've come to tell you this morning. The devil may be causing havoc in your life today, trying everything he can to destroy you and your faith, but listen to me, if you will hold fast to the Lord and obey his word, the outcome will be different than you think. The devil isn't in control in the life of a believer. The bible says in Mark 16:17 that those who believe in Christ will cast out devils. That sounds like God has

given authority to his children and we are in control and not the devil. The bible tells us that we belong to God, we are his children and we have overcome the forces of the enemy in this world because “greater is the one who is in you (i.e. the Spirit of God) than the one who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4.

There is a word from the Lord for you today. You don't have to be worried about all that is going on in the world today. Be concerned, yes. Be involved and take an active part to see that righteousness prevails, absolutely, but understand that God is still in control. Don't be dismayed. Don't let your heart be frightened and troubled. Even though Jesus called the devil the “prince of this world” or “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31) and it sure does look like the devil is running things unchecked and out of control in the world today, but the reality is that ultimately God alone rules and reigns in this world. The politicians and the dictators and the decision makers working behind the scenes and the devil himself may think they are exercising ultimate power and control over this nation and over the world, but the bible says, “**...the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.**” **Daniel 4:17.** The devil may think he is running things, and God has given him certain latitude to work his sin and misery for a season, but don't you forget, God holds the ultimate power over all. He is at work in this world to accomplish his will and his purposes.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? God is in control of this universe and of your life and your circumstances. He is Sovereign and he is Lord over all. The Psalmist declared, “**The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.**” **Psalm 33:10-11.** Are you ready and willing to trust the sovereign purposes of an all powerful, all knowing God? He has plans for you and if you will obey, he will work those plans for your good and his glory. His plans for you stand firm and solid forever.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. It maybe a word that calls you to repent. To trust. To confess and believe. To have faith. To surrender. To look to him, submit to him and his will and his way. Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes. Come to him. Move towards him. He won't cast you out. He waits to

forgive you. He longs to accept you and cleanse you from sin.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. He wants you to know he is the same yesterday, today and forever. You have no reason to fear. He will not leave you. He will not forsake you. He is still a healer, a provider, a comfort in times of trouble. He is still at work in your life. He is still causing all things to work together for your good because you are called according to his purpose. He will see to it that his good purposes will be fulfilled in and through your life.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. He is still speaking to people. He is still liberating and setting people free. He is still the Lord, the God of all flesh and nothing is too difficult for him. He is still setting his purposes in the hearts of his people and calling us by faith to launch out and fulfill that purpose. He is still calling us to live out the dream he has planted in our hearts, to dare to believe that what he has said about us and to us and for us will come to pass.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. He wants you to know that even though you will walk through evil days and shadow lands, his light will still shine from within you. His word will still illuminate your path. His breath will still be within you to strengthen and sustain you. His presence will be your sustaining comfort along the journey and he will cause the darkness to turn to light.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. Don't be weary in well doing for in due season you will reap if you faint not. Don't give up because a crown of life and victory has been promised to everyone who overcomes. That means there will be obstacles to climb over and giants to contend with, but don't lose sight of the call, don't lose sight of the goal, the promise, that to which we have been called.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. You may be suffering right now, going through some stuff you never thought you would go through. The bible says in 1 Peter 5:8 that the devil is going around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Verse 9 says, **“Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”** Suffering may be a part of the journey, the attacks of the enemy will be there, things will get more difficult and trying for the believers the closer we get to the end of the age, but there is a word from the Lord for you today. The word of God

**declares, “And the God of grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.” 1**

**Peter 5:10-11**

Remember God’s word from Jeremiah to Judah in Jeremiah 33. “You’ll go through this, but I will restore you and bring health and healing and prosperity and peace to you.” That’s what God did for Judah and for Israel and that’s what he will do for you. God’s grace is present and real and will restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. His power is at work today in our behalf.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. Psalm 68 prays for the day - the day that God assures us will come – when God will arise and his enemies will be scattered. Every foe will flee before him and the wicked will perish, but the righteous - there is a word from the Lord for the righteous – that’s us – the righteous will rejoice in the presence of God and be exceedingly glad.

There is a word from the lord for us today. Keep looking to him, our source and our Savior. Keep looking to him and trusting him. Weeping only endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. We have every reason to rejoice and be glad because our hope is in the Lord. In the world we will have tribulation, but in Christ we can be exceedingly glad.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes there is. Stop. Listen. Is he reminding you of a promise – a vow you made – and now he is calling you to make good on your promise, to honor your vow?

Perhaps the word from the Lord for you is a call to begin a new endeavor in your life. You heard the testimony this morning. Maybe he is calling you to get involved in the missions and ministries of this church. Or maybe he is even speaking to you about helping in one of the other churches we mentioned this morning. It’s not about Carbondale, it’s about the kingdom of God. Listen for that word from the Lord today.

Is there a word from the Lord for you today? Yes. He is still what you need. All you need. Who you need. If you need his help – if you need him – if you need his healing – if you need a word from the Lord – come meet me here at the front. I believe there is a word from the Lord for you.