

Renew Our Days

Lamentations 5: 19-22

“You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.”

LAM 5:19 - 22

Chapter 5 of Lamentations, is called by some ***“The Prayer of Jeremiah.”*** Why? Jeremiah believed the relationship between God and Judah still existed no matter how much it had been strained by the people's sin. If there were no true possibility of reconciliation, there would be no point in praying. Yet, many of the people who have been in captivity, were tired of living there. They found themselves crying out to God searching for answers to their situation. Regardless of what caused this situation, most of them were feeling the distress of captivity, thus, wanting and seeking sanctuary. What they sought was God's sanctuary and rest. A Holy place where they could discover His peace. This had become more important than any of their own desires or wants.

In my mind I pictured people laying on the ground, crying and pleading with God for His mercy and love. Recognizing that sin cannot be a part of their lifestyle. Crying out to God for His loving kindness, mercy and Grace. Spoiler alert- God grants them help because God is gracious. The fifth chapter starts with these words, ***“Remember O Lord, what has come upon us.”*** As if God had forgotten what had taken place in their rebellion against Him. God's memory was intact, and He knew well what they had done and were doing. Just as He knows what each of us are doing right now. The question is, are they sincere, or, are we simply playing games with Him. Seeking relief with sincerity or just to relieve the discomfort? Later we discover that life was not at all joyful and triumphant for them. Joy was all but gone, ***they were simply enduring life.*** Have we ever felt that life was more about endurance than anything else? We were created for more than to simply endure.

Look around you, what do you see? ***Is the joy of living as real to people as it should be? Is joy real for us?*** Are we rejoicing in the Lord, or, is there more complaining, grumbling and pessimism than anything else? How is our walk with the Lord? Is it as vibrant and strong as it should be?

Have you ever heard someone say ***“they want revival, right now.”*** A revival in where God is moving about this world changing the hearts of individuals, families, communities, and nations. Many of us within the church, want revival, but the truth is, revival will not come unless we break Satan's hold within our lives. Revival will not come, unless we sow the seeds of good news in Jesus Christ, deep within us, and cultivate it daily.

I posed a question last week about what others around us see taking place within our lives. I asked, ***“How many people have come to discover Christ because of our lives?”*** ***“When was the last time you shared your faith or talked with someone about Christ?”***

People watch those who claim Jesus as Lord to see how they are living life, what they say and do. Right and or wrong, they are watching us. If we truly want revival, then our lives should reflect it.

Here is a reality in life, when we live in obedience, God's joy is seen in our lives. When we choose disobedience, God will allow us to experience spiritual dryness. ***In those moments, we lose sight of the joy of the Lord.*** As the early followers of God found, disobedience comes in many forms.

If we are not actively sharing our faith in Christ, it's only a matter of time until spiritual dryness comes upon us, and joy will be absent. What I have realized is that we need to share our faith for our own sake.

Just like a body of water, such as a lake, is healthier when the streams not only flow in to it, but, when they flow out of it, providing living water to others. If God's living water is not flowing into us and out to others, we will become dry, crying out to the Lord, ***"Renew our Days."*** The Prayer of Jeremiah, could be a prayer God gave for us!

Let's look at a few comments found in Lamentations 5: 19-22.

First - A deep concern for God's house.

In verse 19 - 22 the people had a great and deep concern for the Temple of God, which had been destroyed. In verses 17-18 we find that the people who were crying out were so loaded down by the need to renew the temple of God, they were ***"sinking under the load of their own heaviness."*** It reads this way in the New Living Translation: ***"Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears. ¹⁸ For Jerusalem is empty and desolate, a place haunted by jackals."*** NLT

Have you ever felt the weight of something so much, that you couldn't sleep, eat or even sit still for long? A burden, so heavy, so devastating, that all you could think about was that person, circumstance or issue?

There have been times, as we as a church body have been praying for our missionaries, Israel and others we love and care about, that my thoughts began thinking about children growing up without a mother, father, or other family, and my heart became extremely heavy. Why, I think of my own kids and grandkids. I have often wonder, ***"Why, Lord?" "Why such a heavy burden for these people?"***

Then I realized that it's during moments like these, the Lord gives His children assurance concerning issues in life. These assurances come when we allow ourselves to be drawn into a close relationship with God. It is then, that as we see the real needs of others. Imagine, ***"What if that were me, my family or us?"*** Lord, help us open the door to our hearts. Help us place our TRUST in the Lord!

The words of Jesus' came to me, found in Rev.,

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." REV 3:20

How many times have we heard Him knocking, and kept the door shut? Only to find out later, that our hearts are in the midst of a spiritual desert and we begin to wonder why? Lord, help us to open the door when You knock.

There is a promise found in Rev. 3:20 listen: (*my paraphrase*)

"I am standing here, waiting for you to open the door. When you do, I will come in, and I will eat with you, and you will eat with me." I will draw close to you and be with you whatever you are facing. What a promise! What a hope! He is waiting for us. Renewal will come as we open the door. It has to be something we want, and then, seek after. ***How close we are to Him.***

Illustration:

As I have stated several times, I like old westerns. I pictured an old western taking place in the desert. The horse and man are riding along, then in the next scene, the horse is walking and the man is leading it, followed by the man and horse collapsing on the sand.

What words might we hear? ***"Water, water, my kingdom for a cup of cold water!"***

Perhaps that why some of us are so ***Spiritually*** dry, we have not come to the place of ***craving Living Water.*** ***"Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears. ¹⁸ For Jerusalem is empty and desolate, a place haunted by jackals."*** NLT

Maybe we need to draw close to Him now! Do we want it?

Second - Belief in Him for an eternity

When all of our creature comforts are gone, when our hearts seem to fail us, when life is all but fallen completely apart, then we encourage ourselves to believe. ***Why do we wait until everything is so bad?*** All, while He tells us, ***"Your throne endures from generation to generation."*** In the King James version it says, ***"Thou remainest forever!"***

Whatever seems to shake our world the most, often destroys it. However, it has little or no affect upon God or His kingdom. He is steadfast, strong, able to overcome whatever takes place. No matter what war(s), struggle(s) and horrible events take place, there is no change in the Eternal Mind of God.

Our problem is, we don't conceive of this. We can't picture it because of the influence of this world upon our minds and hearts, thus, we don't believe. ***We don't conceive – we can't believe!*** The result, we are swallowed up by worry, doubt, trials, turmoil, and strife, followed by the world consuming us, and our feelings. That is Satan's way of destroying us.

The Hebrew writer reminds us of something so simple, yet often forgotten, ***"Keep our lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*** Many things can replace money.

The writer of Hebrews says, ***"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*** HEB 13:5 – 8 Does Jesus ever change? He is as steady as a rock!

In a few words, ***“If you walk after Christ, as many of the men and women of faith did in the past, we will find confidence, power and strength in our time of need.”*** Why? Our Savior has not changed. Nor will He ever! Trust in Him, believe in Him, place your life in His hands.

Illustration:

Do we believe that the chair you’re sitting in exists? Do we believe that that these chairs will support us while we sit in them? We can believe that a chair exists, and we can believe that the chair is capable of supporting our weight, but until we actually sit down in the chair, we have not actually put our faith in the chair.

Putting our faith in Jesus Christ is like sitting down in a chair. We demonstrate that we believe that the chair can hold us when we sit in it. We show that we have faith in Jesus Christ, when we trust Him to save us from your sins. As we walk with Him daily, trusting that He will guide, protect and provide what we need, when we need it. That is how faith works and grows. Belief in Him! It requires action!

Third - Returned and Renewed

A common feeling among many followers then, and now, was that God had turned His back to them. I have heard that statement many times in the past many years. Truth was and is, He has never turned His back on His children, as some have thought, or felt. Though many have turned their backs on Him.

There last plea to Him was this, ***“Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old, unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.”***

If you will allow me, I want to paraphrase this verse...

“Lord, draw me close to your side. I want to, no lord, I need to, be as close to you as I can right now. I want to be where I once was, your son, (or daughter) heir to your Kingdom. I know things can never be as they once were, yet, allow me Father, to be at your side.

Walking with you, as I hold your hand. Talking with you, as I seek your advice. Listening to you, as you give my life meaning, purpose and direction. Lord, my Lord, if you have not already abandoned me, then hear my prayer, for I love You Father. I need you in my life, right now. I pray that Your anger is not too strong that You do not hear me as I pray. Thank you, Father, for your loving kindness and your mercy!”

I believe that there is one thing God looks for in every person who sincerely wishes to return to Him and be renewed, it is, ***“a broken and contrite heart.”***

His word says, ***“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*** PSA 51:16

We need to let go, and Let God have control over our heart, mind and souls. Broken, but destroyed. Contrite, ***a heart which demonstrates remorse for what we have done, or how we have been living.*** A person who truly seeks for His Grace and love and then, walks earnestly after it.

God wants a people who are seeking to be changed by His love, rather than be changed by this world. Are we that person? If we are, He is here waiting for us right now.

Renew Our Days, O Lord.

- A Deep concern for God's house
- A Belief in who He is for an eternity
- A desire to return and be renewed!