

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND HOPE

Jeremiah 32: 1- 15; 42- 44

April 18, 2021

I. Optimism Is Not the Same as Hope.

- A. There are many common and humorous expressions of optimism
 1. Seeing a silver lining in every cloud.
 2. Finding joy in the moment, no matter what is about to happen
 3. Knowing there just has to be a happy ending
- B. At first glance, Jeremiah seems to be an optimist
 1. Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, was hopelessly surrounded by Nebuchadnezzar's army.
 2. Jeremiah himself was imprisoned at the palace of King Zedekiah, who hated him.
 3. And yet he decided to buy some property.
- C. But Jeremiah's no optimist
 1. The king and many of his advisors, as well as many of the other prophets in the city, were all counting on help from the Egyptian army, which they believed would soon be there, and they were trying hard to sell that message to the people.
 2. Jeremiah, however, was imprisoned because he prophesied that because of the king's and the people's sins the city would be destroyed and the king would be captured.
 3. Even many of the other priests and prophets resisted his pessimistic message and tried to punish him for proclaiming it.
- D. Sadly, optimism is not based on truth.
 1. It's often based on ignoring truth or even on lies.
 2. Jeremiah's prophecy came true.
 3. The optimists' predictions didn't.
 4. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians.

Jeremiah 20:1-2 (NIV) When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the chief officer in the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple

4. Some of the people in his hometown even tried to kill him for what he said.

5. The king and his officials, the other prophets, and many of the people were the optimists, not Jeremiah

Questions:

- 1) Would I say that is encouraging to me to be around optimistic people, and that pessimists often depress me? Why or why not? Would I also say that when I'm going through real difficulty, optimistic people can be difficult to be around? Why or why not?
- 2) Have I ever said what I thought was a true message rather than an optimistic one? How did others react?
- 3) What is the real danger of optimism?
- 4) Some Christians now believe that all people will be saved in Christ? Is this a true message? Why or why not? Is it a popular message? Why might it be a dangerous message? Why might it be dangerous to tell people that their immoral lifestyle is okay and that God accepts them as they are?
- 5) Why is the real alternative to optimism not pessimism, but honesty and hope?

II. True Hope Is Based on Trusting God and His Promises.

A. Jeremiah bought land because he trusted the Lord who commanded him to do it and he trusted his promise.

Jeremiah 32:42 (NIV) "This is what the LORD says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them.

1. God's promise came true.
2. After 70 years the people were allowed to return home from captivity in Babylon.
3. And land was again bought and sold in Judah.

B. Yet, in order of trust the promises of God, we must believe that he doesn't always bring us blessing.

1. Notice what he says first, "As I have brought calamity."
 - a. God also brings us calamity.
 - b. Some people want to believe that God brings us only good things and that he is incapable of preventing some bad things from happening.
 - c. But the Bible teaches that God controls all things.

Jeremiah 32:17 (NIV) "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

2. We trust God's promises 100% because nothing is too hard for him.
 - a. You and I might be honest dependable people, but we don't control everything.
 - b. Not so with God.

C. But that's exactly why some people don't trust God's promises.

1. For them this means that God causes and allows things we don't understand.
2. This means that the same God who gives blessing also gives punishment and correction.

3. **And this also means that we must trust a God who does or allows things that we think are cruel and unfair.**
 - a. **We must trust a God who allows hideous deformities, deadly diseases, and pernicious viruses like COVID to hurt innocent people, including our own kind and loving family members.**
 - b. **We must trust a God, who lets guilty people escape punishment and innocent people be punished instead.**
- D. **To trust a God we often don't understand we must also trust that he loves us.**
 1. **Jeremiah put his hope in God because he trusted his love.**

Jeremiah 31:3-4 (NIV), The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful.

2. **And he trusted God's love, because God had proven his love time and again.**

Jeremiah 32:20-22 (NIV) You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. You gave them this land you had sworn to give their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

3. **But we have an even better reason to trust God.**

- a. **We know his love in his one and only Son Jesus Christ, whom he sent to suffer and die that he might save us from our sin and rebellion.**
- b. **We can trust God's love in spite of our sins,**

Romans 8:1 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

- c. **And we can trust that God who sacrificed his own Son will never forsake us and will provide for all our needs.**

Romans 8:32 (NIV) He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

- d. **Therefore we know that nothing will separate us from his love.**

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- E. **True hope can only come from trusting in God no matter what.**

1. **Jeremiah died before his family ever reclaimed the property for which he trusted God.**
2. **True faith doesn't require sight.**
3. **That's what Hebrews 11:13 says about Abraham and other heroes of faith.**

Hebrews 11:13 (NIV) All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Questions:

- 1) **Why is trusting God absolutely essential to having true hope?**
- 2) **What promises has God fulfilled in my lifetime that have help me to trust him?**
- 3) **Why is it difficult for me to trust God and his promises? Do I truly believe that God controls all things and even the worst tragedies in our world have happened because he allowed them to happen or sometimes even caused them to happen? Do I believe in that although God hates injustice, he allows it to occur? How can I explain that?**
- 4) **How does the mere fact that I am human assure me of God's love and favor?**
- 5) **How has God shown me his love in Christ?**

III. Hope Results in Loving Obedience.

- A. **True obedience comes from a heart of love for God and others.**

- B. **Jeremiah obeyed because he loved God and he loved the person from whom he purchased the property.**

4. **Hanamel, the man from whom he bought the land had undoubtedly gotten into debt, which made it necessary for him to sell the property he had inherited.**
5. **But to do so he would give up the land that God had promised to his family.**
6. **In the Law of Moses, the Lord provided a way for the land to remain in his extended family until he could buy it back.**

Leviticus 25:25 (NIV) "If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold.

7. **In obedience to God, Jeremiah performed this act of love for his relative Hanamel.**
8. **In doing so, he showed his faith in God's promise and realized the hope that it brought.**

- C. **The one who truly inspires faith, hope, and love in us is Jesus Christ himself.**

1. **We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19 NIV)**
2. **And it is by trusting his love that we can have the hope to lovingly do all he commands us to do**

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV) Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Questions:

- 1) **Why does hope lead to loving obedience?(also see 1 Corinthians 15: 55- 58)**
- 2) **Jeremiah showed his love by obeying the Law of Moses. How have I shown love to others by simply obeying what God commanded in his law? How is it possible to obey God's law without having love in my heart for him, for other people, and for creation? Why are such attempts to obey God not the true obedience God seeks of us?**
- 3) **What examples can I site of people who lovingly and sacrificially obeyed God, because they in faith put their hope in him?**
- 4) **As one who hopes in the Lord, why is it important for me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus?**