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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 2 (God's Certain Judgment)

TITLE: Program 28 – Do Not Be Afraid Of...Whom You Are Now Fearing!

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Do you have trouble standing up for the Lord? Do you have trouble when people are saying things that are not biblical? Stepping in and saying, "But do you know what God's Word says?" "But do you understand who God is?" "But do you realize that God is sovereign?" Do you have trouble saying things like that? I wonder why. Could it possibly be that you fear the face of man? That you want the praise of man over the praise of God?

PART ONE

"[It's] the fear of man that brings a snare...." (Proverbs 29:25) And when you are trying to be a people pleaser, when you want to blend into the crowd, when you are hesitant to speak up about God, you can know this: you fear man more than you fear God. And, Precious Ones, listen to me, that's a very dangerous, unsettling place to be, because it will lead you down a path that only leads to destruction. Jesus said it: ["You cannot serve two masters.

You can't serve money and God.]" (PARAPHRASE, Luke 16:13) Galatians chapter 1: [You can't be a bondservant of Jesus Christ and be a bondservant of man]. (PARAPHRASE, Galatians 1:10) You have to make a choice. And that is what this week is all about. This week as we look at the saddest chapters in Jeremiah, you are going to see a people that do not learn their lesson because they are fearing man. And listen, in the days in which we're living you have to decide whom you're going to fear. Are you going to fear man or are you going to fear God? There are consequences for fearing man above fearing God. And there are rewards and blessings, not exemption from suffering, but rewards and blessings that will come if you will fear God. We're going to look at it. So open you Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 41. And we left there, remember Ishmael has taken out Gedaliah who was to rule over the children of Israel. And Ishmael has all those people— those men, those women, those daughters of the king etc.—on there way to Ammon. And what happens? Verse 11: **"But Johanan...and all the commanders of the forces that were with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael...had done. So they took...the men and [they] went [out] to fight with Ishmael...and they found him by the great pool that is in Gibeon."** (Jeremiah 41:11-12) Now if you have a map, and you get a map with us when you download our study guide on preceptsforlife.com; preceptsforlife.com. We want you studying with us. We want you to know how to discover truth for yourself so that you will truly fear God and not fear man. But you can't fear God, respect Him and trust Him, if you don't know who He is. So that's what this is all about. All right, so they found him by the pool. Verse 13: **"Now as soon as all the people [that] were with Ishmael saw Johanan...and the commanders of the forces that were with him, they were glad."** (Jeremiah 41:13) They didn't want to cross that Jordan River. They didn't want to go over to Ammon and so they're very, very glad. Just think about these people: they are led this way, they are lead that way. Gedaliah tells them "Stay in the land, the king of Babylon will

bless you,” and now Ishmael has come along and he’s killed Gedaliah and he is taking them to Ammon. Now Johanan is pursuing Ishmael. So it says in verse 14, **“So all the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to Johanan...but Ishmael...escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the sons of Ammon.” (Jeremiah 41:14-15)** So “X out” Gedaliah, he’s off the scene. Now “X out” Ishmael, he’s not dead, but he is gone. Guess who is in charge? Johanan. Now watch what it says, **“Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him took from Mizpah all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael...after he struck down Gedaliah...that is, the men...,”** now catch this, this scenario, **“...[the men] who were soldiers, the women, the children...the eunuchs, whom he had brought back from Gibeon. And they went and stayed [at] Geruth Chimham....”** You say where on earth is that? Well, he tells us. **“...Which is beside Bethlehem....” (Jeremiah 41:16-17)** Now catch this, and you want to double underline it ’cause we double underline all “geographical references.” There’s a lot to underline here: “Mizpah,” and “Ramah,” and all these different places. But double underline it. Why does he take them near Bethlehem? He takes them that way because that’s the way to Egypt. So what is his intention? His intention is to go to Egypt. Now God has said a long time before this: **“Woe [be unto] those who go down to Egypt...”** In the time of trouble, or to **“...Go down to Egypt for help....” (Isaiah 31:1)** It’s like going to the world for help when you belong to God. So it says in verse 18, and I want you to get this verse. **“Because of the Chaldeans....” (Jeremiah 41:18)** They were going to go down to Egypt because of the Chaldeans. Now Gedaliah said “Stay here and they’ll take care of you.” But now remember Ishmael has killed the one that the king of Babylon appointed. So now there’s a fear here. because of the Chaldeans. **“[Because of the Chaldeans] for they were afraid of them, since Ishmael...had struck down**

Gedaliah...whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.”

(Jeremiah 41:18) So now they are fearing the face of man. Now watch what happens. This is so key. This is the chapter, this is the chapter that literally, literally breaks my heart! I mean, it breaks my heart. Watch what happens:

“Then all the commander of the forces, Johanan...[and] Jezaniah...and all the people both small and great...said to Jeremiah the prophet....”

(Jeremiah 42:1-2) Now remember Jeremiah could have gone to Babylon, but he chose to stay in the land. He stayed with Gedaliah. Gedaliah is out.

Now Johanan is there, they're on their way to Egypt, but listen to what happens. Listen to what happens. **“And [he] said to Jeremiah the prophet, ‘Please let our petition come before you, and pray for us to the LORD your God....’” (Jeremiah 42:2)** Now what I do is I mark every reference to “prayer.” I use fine micron fine-points, pens, and colored pens. And so I underline “prayer” and then at the end of each of that underlining on the side I put like a diagram of hands in supplication. I do that in purple, and then I color it pink. So if any mention of “prayer,” or “supplication” is in the Book I can see it. So he says, **“...Pray for us to the LORD your God, *that is for all this remnant...*”** and remember we are marking “remnant.”

“...Because we are left *but a few out of many, as your eyes now see us, that the LORD [our] God....*” Now I highlight this in yellow. You don't want to miss this. **“[That the LORD your God] may tell us the way in which we should walk and the thing[s] that we should do.” (Jeremiah 42:2-3)** “Will you go to God and ask God where we should go? Ask Him what we should do.” **“[And] then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, ‘[I’ve] heard you. Behold, I am going to pray to the LORD your God in accordance....’”** “I am going to pray to the Lord your God” underline it. **“...[In accordance] with [these] words....” (Jeremiah 42:4)** “I’ve heard you. You want to know what God has to say, where you’re to go, what you’re to do.” **“...And I will tell you the whole message which the Lord will answer you. I will not keep back a word from you.” (Jeremiah 42:4)**

“I’m gonna go to God, I’m gonna to seek God, I’m gonna listen to God, and whatever God says, I’m gonna to tell it all to you.” **“Then they said to Jeremiah...,”** now this is key, **“...‘May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with the whole message with which the LORD your God will send you to us.’” (Jeremiah 42:5)** “If we don’t obey,” he says, “then we’re calling God as a witness against us.” He says, **“Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant....”** “Whether we like what God says or we don’t like what God says, whether it’s pleasant or unpleasant, we will do—.” **“...We will listen to the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you....” (Jeremiah 42:6)** Now what are they saying? Look, “Jeremiah, we’re asking you to go to the Lord and ask the Lord, ‘What is the way we are to go? What are we to do?’ And we are calling Him as a witness that whether we like what you come back with or not, we will do it. So please, please tell us what He says.” And so then he says, **“...That it may go well with us when we listen to the voice of the Lord our God.” (Jeremiah 42:6)** Now what I do is over every use of “listen” or “hear” I take my green fine point micro-pen and I draw a green ear. If it’s a positive they are going to listen, I just leave it like that. If it is we will “not listen” or “we did not listen” then I put a line through it indicating that it is a “No.” It is a “Stop.” It is a “Don’t do.” Do you get the picture? They want to know what God says. Let me ask you a question? Do you want God’s direction for your life? Do you really, really want it? Whether it’s what you want or what you anticipate or what you desire, or whether you don’t desire it? Do you so fear God? Do you so respect God? To fear God means to respect Him for who He is, to respect the fact that He is God, that, that He is sovereign, that He rules over all, that He is worthy of our obedience. To fear God is to respect Him. It is also to trust Him. To say, “Okay, you’re God and I’m going to trust you.” Do you really fear Him? Or do you fear man more? We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Do you take time to listen to God? Do you take time to commit your way unto the Lord so that you can trust in Him and be convinced that this is what God has said for you to do? You know, our lives are so busy. We are going chip, chip, chip, chip, chap. We're just so fast. We're so speedy. We're always listening, always talking, always texting, always hearing. It's noise, noise, noise, noise, and we don't take time to listen to God. And you know what? When you don't take time to listen to God then you don't walk really in the fear of the Lord, in the trust of God, in the respect of God. You just do it on your own because you've got to make a decision. Well, remember they're under Johanan, and it's the children of Israel, the small remnant left in the land. They're camped on the way to Egypt, but they want to know what God says. They've said, "Will you tell us? And God is our witness that we will, **'...whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will listen....'** and we will do what He says." (**Jeremiah 42:6**) Ten days they wait. Ten days they wait, and God comes back with the answer. Look at it, Jeremiah chapter 42, verse 7: **"Now at the end of ten days...."** And you would put a green circle and underline **"at the end of ten days"** because it is a time phrase. It says, **"...The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah."** (**Jeremiah 42:7**) I mark every reference to the **"Word of the Lord,"** or **"God saying,"** usually with a picture of a like an open Bible. I do it in purple because it's God's Word, and I color it green. And so it says, **"[They] called...Johanan...and all the commanders of the forces that were with him...for all the people [and for all the people] both small and great, and said to them...."** verse 9, **"...Thus says the LORD...God of Israel...."** (**Jeremiah 42:8-9**) Can you imagine? They've asked, "What is He going to tell us?" "What is He going to tell us?" "We've waited ten days. What is He going to tell us?" **"...To whom you sent me...."** Jeremiah speaking, **"...to present your petition before Him...."** And this is the answer, **"...If you will indeed stay in [the] land then I will build you up and not tear you down...."**

(Jeremiah 42:9-10) This is God. He's saying, "Don't go to Egypt! Stay in the land. I will build you up. I will not tear you down." **"...I will plant you and not uproot you; for I will relent...."** (Jeremiah 42:10) And I draw a purple line under it 'cause it's God and then go around the corner and put an arrow going in the other way. **"...I will relent concerning the calamity I have inflicted on you."** (Jeremiah 42:10) What an awesome, awesome, promise! "You can stay in the land. And you know what? I am going to build you up. I am not going to tear you down. I am going to plant you; you're gonna be solid. And, you know? I had calamity planned for you, and I've been telling you that." And you go through and you mark every use of "calamity." I put a black circle around it and then color it red. **"...I will relent [of] the calamity that I have inflicted on you."** (Jeremiah 42:10) "I'm going to bless you instead." Then He says this, and this is very important: **"Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you are *now* fearing...."** (Jeremiah 42:11) "I know you are fearing him, stop it! Stop it!" **"The fear of man brings a snare...."** (Proverbs 29:25) Stop it! **"Do not [fear] the king of Babylon, whom you are *now* fearing; do not be afraid of him...."** (Jeremiah 42:11) Now that's exactly what Gedaliah said to them, so they should get it. (See Jeremiah 40:9) "Hey! This is God's message. Gedaliah said, 'Don't be afraid, stay in the land, I will intercede for you with the king of Babylon.'" But because Ishmael came along and killed Gedaliah, now they're afraid of the king of Babylon and they're shaking in their boots. And God says, "Stop it. Stop it." **"Do not be afraid of the king...whom you are...fearing; do not be afraid of [them], declares the LORD, 'for....'"** Now why are you not to be afraid of him? **"...[For] I am with you...."** "I am God. I am with you." He says, **"...To save you and deliver you from his hand."** (Jeremiah 42:11) Now we have a hard time grasping this, Beloved. But God is sovereign. He rules over the nations. Sometime, study Psalm 2 and you will see it. (See Psalms 2:1-12) We fear man and you know what? We fear the nations and we fear the people, so

therefore we go against God. We want to be popular, so therefore as a president, or as a politician we court anybody that's going to give us our vote and we make promises to them that are compromises against God. We fear man above fearing God. And who is man? He's another man. You say, "But he has more power." I know he has more power, but, duh, doesn't God have more power than man? I mean, didn't God create them? Doesn't God give man breath? Can He take it away? You say, "Well, he sure should have taken the breath away of Hitler a lot sooner, and Mussolini lot sooner, etc. etc. etc." He didn't because He had a purpose. And many times He leaves them as a test for you and for me. And this is what he says, **"I will...show you compassion, so that he [the king of Babylon] will have compassion on you and restore you to your...soil."** (Jeremiah 42:12) There it is! They have the answer. They've waited ten days and now they've got the answer. The answer is "Stay." The answer is: "Don't be afraid." The answer is: "I've got it under control and I will make the king of Babylon have compassion on you." "But" and this is very important. I colored this brown. **"But if you are going to say, 'We will not stay in this land,' so as to not listen to the voice of...God."** (Jeremiah 42:13) And what God is saying, because He knows their hearts, He's giving them the choice. He's setting before them, in a sense, like He does in Deuteronomy: "Life and death; blessing and cursing. (See Deuteronomy 30:19) You choose." And so, He's laying out the consequences. And he says, **"But if you are going to say, 'We [are] not [staying] in this land,' so as to not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, saying, 'No...we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the sound of a trumpet [indicating war] or hunger for bread, and we will stay there.'"** (Jeremiah 42:13-14) Well, for heaven's sakes. We've read that they have all the land before them. We've read that they have oil, we've read that they have summer fruits, we've read that they even have wine, it's there for them. (See Jeremiah 40:10) He says, **"Then in that case...."** "If this is what you are saying, if this is your attitude," he says,

“...Listen to the word of the LORD....” Put a green ear over “listen” and then mark “the word of the Lord” **“...O remnant of Judah....”** Mark “remnant” too. You say, “But that’s a lot of marking.” That’s right and it takes time. You know what? But I can look down and tell you in my Bible, I can spot it like that, every place that “remnant” is used. I can place every place that the “Word of the Lord” is used. If I want to know about “remnant” I can look at every place it’s used and I list everything I learn about “remnant.” You say, “That takes time.” That’s right. But you know what? It puts that word in your heart and it seals it there. And so he goes on to say, “No,” if you’re saying, “No we will go to the land of Egypt.” Then in that case **“...Listen to the word of the LORD, O remnant....Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘If you really set your mind to enter Egypt and go [there] to reside...then the sword, which you are afraid of, will overtake you...in the land of Egypt....’”** (Jeremiah 42:15-16) “If you fear man instead of fearing Me then you’re gonna hurt and you’re gonna hurt bad.