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

**TITLE: Program 24 – Living Godly And Bravely Suffering Persecution**

**THURSDAY**

**OPEN**

Beware, my friend, of the fear of man, the fear of man that keeps you from the fear of God. Because, you know what it will do to you? It will cause you to self-destruct. If you're constantly looking at others, and wanting to please them, and curry their favor, and thinking "I can only attain what I want if I curry their favor," you are wrong; because there is a God in heaven.

**PART ONE**

Today as we look at Jeremiah chapter 38, Beloved, you're going to learn that **"The fear of man [does bring] a snare...."** (Proverbs 29:25) You're going to see the importance of godly leadership, or leaders that really and truly fear God; fear God more than the face of men, fear God so much that they're not going to manipulate man to get their way; rather they are going to become putty in the hands of God. I know that when we go to the polls, we listen to the people that give us the promises, but sometimes we don't look at their

track record. Sometimes, we don't look at their lack of experience. Sometimes, we don't look at their voting record, or we find out that they never voted because they wanted to stay neutral. Well, God has lessons for us in this segment of Jeremiah from 35 to 39 that we've been studying all this week. And the lesson that He has for us is that many people want the help of God without the interference of God in their lives. They want God at their beck and call. They want to be able to pray, and ask for prayer, and get the help of God, but not do the will of God. The third thing that we have been looking at besides leadership and the importance of it, and praying, and asking God for help, but not listening to His Word, the third thing is this: that God is calling you and me to be like Jeremiah in our day; a man, a woman, that is going to stand for truth, a man, a woman, that is going to hold to the Word of God and to proclaim that word **"...in season and out of season...."** (2 Timothy 4:2) Now we left Jeremiah in the court of the guardhouse. He was in prison. He was in a vaulted cell. Zedekiah has taken him out of that vaulted cell. (See Jeremiah 37:16-17) Remember, he ended up there because when the siege of the king of Babylon was lifted from the city, because Pharaoh was coming up, they thought they were going to be fine. Jeremiah left the city. He went out of the city because he had some business to take care of. And he was arrested and accused of defecting to the Babylons. (See Jeremiah 37:14) But actually what he had been telling them over and over again was go out to the Babylonians and you will live. Go out to the Chaldeans—the Babylonians and the Chaldeans are synonymous—well, now we come to chapter 38 verse 1. And once again to words and names I cannot pronounce. "[But when] **Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchijah** heard the words that Jeremiah was speaking to all the people, saying," (Jeremiah 38:1) Now this is what Jeremiah was saying, "...**'Thus says the LORD, "He who stays in this city...,'"**" if you stay in this city, **"...will die by the sword and...famine**

**and...pestilence....””” (Jeremiah 38: 2)** Now this is a phrase that we have asked you to mark, or we have suggested that you mark throughout your study of Jeremiah. When you mark a key phrase then you see how often it is used. These are God’s three plagues of judgment: “sword, famine and pestilence.” Pestilence is like a plague. Pestilence would be like a disease that passes around. And so, he has used this phrase before. You say, “I’m new to the program. I don’t know exactly what you’re talking about.” Well, we want you to become part of the program. And so, you just go to [preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com) and you’ll see how you can download a study guide that goes with this ministry. Our goal for you is to help you discover truth for yourself so that you know God, so that you can **“...be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...,”** and, **“...knowing that your [steadfastness, your work for the Lord] is not in vain [but God is going to reward it].” (1 Corinthians 15:58)** So this was what he was saying and they didn’t like it. It says, **“Thus says the LORD, “This city...,””** and he’s talking about Jerusalem, **““...will...be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and he will capture it.””” (Jeremiah 38:3)** Now watch, why is the king of Babylon able to take this city of Jerusalem? Why is he able to come in and to capture this city? It’s because this city here will be given into his hand because God is sovereign. God rules over all. And so what he is letting them know is that it is God who has determined that this is going to happen. So now watch what it says, **“Then the officials said to the king, ‘Now let this man be put to death....’” (Jeremiah 38:4)** So many times, we think that we can get rid of truth if we will get rid of a person. But God will always raise up another to take their place. **“...‘[Get rid of this man] let [him] be put to death...as he is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city and all the people, by speaking [these] words to them....’”(Jeremiah 38:4)** You and I have to know, hey, people do not want to hear about the judgment of God. And preachers who will not preach on it and who will not preach against sin,

and preachers that come along and say “God loves us all,” “We are wonderful in His eyes,” and you know, “It’s all going to be good,” and “You’re so special,” and they say it so nicely—people want to hear that! They don’t want to hear bad news. But if bad news is going to happen, if a city is going to be taken, and you can save yourself by going outside the city, wouldn’t you want to know? Or do you want to sit there in your stupidity and experience the sword and famine. The famine gets so bad that they eat their children? Do you want to experience that? Do you want to experience the pestilence, the plague that comes on these weakened bodies, and because of the animals, and all of the things that happen because of a siege of a city, or do you want truth? See, one of the things that people encourage me in, and by the way, I read your e-mails and I read the comments that come in on our website. And they are such an encouragement to me and I thank you so much. But they say to me, thank you for your boldness, thank you for your courage, thank you for being willing to stand up. Well, listen, any man of God, or any woman of God, that knows this Book would have to do the same. It’s the call on all of our lives and I’m so thankful that you want to hear it. But it says, **“...He is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city...all the people, by speaking [these] words to them; for this man is not seeking the well-being of [the] people but rather their harm.”** (Jeremiah 38:4) Now that’s a direct lie. He is so seeking their well being that he is willing to be put into prison. **“So King Zedekiah said, ‘Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can do nothing against you.’ Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchijah the king’s son, [who] was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud. But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, while he was in the king’s palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Now the king was sitting [at] the Gate of Benjamin; and Ebed-melech went out [to] the king’s palace and spoke to the king,**

saying, ‘My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom [they’ve] cast into the cistern....’” (Jeremiah 38:5-9) Now you want to mark that “cast into the cistern.” “‘...And he will die....’” And I mark every reference to “death.” I draw a black tombstone. “‘...Right where he is because of the famine, [and] there is no more bread in the city.’ Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian...‘Take thirty men from here under your authority and bring...Jeremiah the prophet from the cistern before he dies.’” (Jeremiah 38:9-10) Now he’s in the cistern. Now he’s sunk deep into this mud. But listen, listen: God promised Jeremiah that when they came against him they would not prevail. (See Jeremiah 1:8, 19) So he raises up Ebed-melech an Ethiopian who comes to the king and pleads on his behalf. Then he says, “**So Ebed-melech took the men under his authority and went into the king’s palace to a place beneath the storeroom and took from there worn-out clothes and...rags and let them down [like] ropes into the cistern to Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 38:11) And “...then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, ‘Now put out these [worn] clothes and rags [put ’em on] under your armpits....’” (Jeremiah 38:12)** So that he could lift him out of the cistern. And watch what it says. “**...And Jeremiah did so. So they pulled Jeremiah up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern, and Jeremiah stayed in the court of the guardhouse.**” (Jeremiah 38:12-13) You can know this: If you will fear God and you will not fear man, and you will do what God says, you may suffer. In fact, “**...all [who] live godly in Christ Jesus [are going to] suffer persecution.**” (2 Timothy 3:12, KJV) But there is, “**No temptation [trial or testing, taken] you but such...is common to man; and God is faithful, [He] will not [permit] you to be [tested or tried or] tempted [above] what you are able [to bear. He] will [make a] way of escape....**” (1 Corinthians 10:13) And Ebed-melech was Jeremiah’s way of escape out of that cistern,

out of the mud. God has a way for you to escape too. We'll talk about it in just a minute.

## **PART TWO**

No matter how our nation goes, no matter what others do, no matter what you and I may suffer, Beloved, we have to learn; we have to learn that we have to stand for what is right. Jeremiah, as we saw, has just been lifted up out of the pit. God sent an Ethiopian to rescue that man. (See Jeremiah 38:12) I know a woman, Marta Gabre-Tsadick And Marta, was the first woman senator under Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. He used to call her his daughter. And I remember when Marta would tell how she would be in meetings and sometimes men would indicate that they wanted to get rid of Haile Selassie. And she warned him. She said, "Father...", she said, "they want to get rid of you. This is what I'm seeing." And he said, "Oh no, no, no Marta they're my children. They would never do that to me." But you see we get it in our head that we can rebel, that we can follow ungodly men and have our way and we can't. And we always need godly people to stand up. Marta and her husband fled. They hid in the woods, as they tried to kill them. And God spared them. Do you know what Marta does now? This tall, beautiful, Ethiopian woman; she now brings relief to Ethiopia. She's doing what's right, and that country is suffering because they did not listen. Listen to what happens in verse 14. It says: **"Then King Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance that is...the house of the LORD; and the king said to Jeremiah, 'I am going to ask you something; [don't] hide anything from me.' Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, 'If I tell you, will you not certainly put me to death...?'"** (Jeremiah 38:14-15) You want to hear something from me, but you want to hear what you want to hear. And if I tell you the truth, will you not put me to death? And then he says, **"...Besides, if I give you advice, you [won't] listen to me."** (Jeremiah 38:15) You'll turn your back. You'll walk away.

I've spoken to you time and time and time again. You have not listened. If I tell you the truth you are not gonna listen. And this is what he said, **"But King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah..."** and here again is that word **"in secret,"** **"...saying, 'As the LORD lives, who made this life for us...'"** as the LORD lives who made this life for us, who gave us this life, **"...surely I will not put you to death nor will I give you over to the hand of these men who are seeking your life." (Jeremiah 38:16)** I promise to protect you. But I'm telling you this in secret. Now watch what it says, **"Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, 'Thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, 'If you will indeed go out to the...king of Babylon....'"** If you will leave the city, if you will go out here, and you will go to the king of Babylon, he says, **"...Then you will live, this city will not be burned with fire, and you and your household will survive." (Jeremiah 38:17)** Listen to me King. Listen to what I'm telling you. I'm telling you that if you will leave this city and you will go out to the king of Babylon, not only will you spare your own life, you will spare the city. You can save this city. You, the leader, can save the city by obeying God. Do you realize how many leaders there are that could have brought life and blessing and prosperity to their people if they had only listened to God? Do you realize how many leaders there are, Beloved, that have harmed a whole nation; Hitler was one of them, because they did not listen to God? Listen to what he says. **"But if you will not go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given over to the hand of the Chaldeans...they will burn it with fire, and you yourself will not escape from their hand." (Jeremiah 38:18)** Now listen, the Babylonians are around the city. The Babylonians have the city under siege. And God is saying, if you will only listen to Me, I am giving you this opportunity. It is the last hour. It is the last minute and I am telling you, I am God! I am able to take away this trial. I am able to take away this siege. If you will listen to me, you can spare the city. You can spare the people's houses. You can spare the temple. It will not be burned

with fire, if you will listen. Do you realize how many people there are that are on drugs and alcohol, they are sexually immoral, that are lying, that are stealing, that are gossips and maligners? And they have heard that God says that this is a sin and it brings judgment and they will not listen. (See Romans 1:28-32) And they continue, listen, to destroy and to self-destruct. And that's what happened to him. **"Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, [ah] 'I dread the Jews who have gone over to the Chaldeans, for they [will] give me into their hand and they will abuse me.'" (Jeremiah 38:19)** "Listen, if I go out to the Chaldeans they're gonna take me to Babylon. The Jews that are there are going to abuse me." Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Now listen, he has a choice to listen to this man of God, this man of God that has been proven right so far. **"... 'They will not give you over. Please obey the LORD....'" (Jeremiah 38:20)** Put a big, blue O over "obey the Lord." **"...In what I am saying to you, that it may go well with you and you may live." (Jeremiah 38:20)** This is God's word to you today: obey the Lord. And what He's saying to us: and it will go well with you and you will live. He says, **"But if you keep refusing to go out, this is the word which the LORD has shown me: 'Then behold, all...the women who have been left in the palace of the king of Judah are going to be brought out to the officers of the king of Babylon; and...[they] will say....'" (Jeremiah 38:20-22)** They'll turn around and say to Zedekiah, **"... 'Your close friends have misled and overpowered you; while your feet were sunk in the mire, they turned back.' They will also bring out...your wives....,"** Jeremiah is saying, **"...and your sons to the Chaldeans, and you yourself will not escape from... the king of Babylon...this city will be burned with fire."** Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, **'Let no man know about these words and you will not die.'** (Jeremiah 38:22-24) He's had truth. He doesn't want others to know what he has heard. **"But if the officials hear that [I've] talked with you and come to you and say to you, 'Tell us now what you said to the king and what the king said to you; do**



**not hide it from us and we will not put you to death,” then you are to say to them, “I was presenting my petition before the king, not to make me return to the house of Jonathan to die there.” Then all the officials...,” did exactly what the king thought, “...[they] came to Jeremiah and [they] questioned him. So he reported to them in accordance with all these words which the king had commanded; and they ceased speaking with him, since the conversation had not been overheard. So Jeremiah stayed in the court of the guardhouse until the day that Jerusalem was captured.” (Jeremiah 38:25-28) What he said came to pass, but what about Zedekiah? Did what God say about Zedekiah come to pass? You’ll have to tune in tomorrow. Just know this: God said to Jeremiah, “...I [watch] over my word to [fulfill] it.” (Jeremiah 1:12)**