

# Words of Encouragement & Hope from the “Weeping” Prophet

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### Introduction

Last week we focused on Jesus’ admonition against looking back once we answered His call to follow and “plow” with Him. The past is past and **nothing** we do will change that. I closed last week with this verse from the Apostle Paul:

*“Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who are mature, let us have this attitude... (Philippians 3: 13-15a )*

This week we look forward to what lies ahead.

### Prologue: The Lamentation

*“my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD.” Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.” Lamentations 3: 17-20*

This entire chapter has been one long lament from Jeremiah. He described all that had happened to disobedient Israel, despite his warnings and prophetic words. No one was listening and those words describe how he felt at this point. *No peace. Forgot what happiness was, no strength, no hope.* The last phrase is key: *His soul was bowed down.* That meant he was

utterly humbled before the LORD. Now we come to today's passage:

*"But this I call to mind, and therefore **I have hope**: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him." The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.*  
Lamentations 3: 21-25

### **Great Words of Encouragement for this new year (and always)**

- God's love is steadfast and unceasing. What does *steadfast* mean? Some translations use *It is kind love* that is part of the nature of God. We love our children with kindness and love (with conditions), so does God. He never stops loving us no matter what we do or where we find ourselves in life.
- He is merciful (compassionate) and those are unending as well. They are new every morning. This verse is said to refer to the fact that God did not destroy all of Israel for their unending disobedience and idolatry. He spared a remnant. That was merciful. For us, every time we awaken to a new day, God has demonstrated mercy in doing so. For the lost and unrepentant, it is amazing grace and mercy extended so that in that day they would confess their sins and repent, receiving Christ as Savior.
- Great is Your faithfulness. Some great theologians of old render this in a manner that many today do not consider. We think immediately of ourselves—God being faithful to us. That can be part of our problem. God is first and best faithful to Himself. He is faithful to His Word and promises. He cannot lie and has nothing from which He would ever repent. We are blessed in that because what God has promised (with the conditions I

will soon discuss) He will bring to pass. All of them!

- The LORD is our portion. What does *portion* mean? The word carries several meanings and connotations. *Reward* and *inheritance* stand out among them. He fills me with all I need to live according to His commands.
- Because of the above, Jeremiah drew hope. Not just a general hope in or from the world, his hope was in God and God alone. We also place our hope in the LORD.

## The Conditions

- **Those who wait on Him.** What does that mean? Two faces of the waiting coin. On one side, we wait on God to show us, tell us, or lead us in His ways according to His plans. Flip the coin over and we find that waiting is for our eternal hope to become reality when Jesus returns for His people and calls us Home, whichever comes first.
- **Those who seek Him.** In the Bible book that bears his name, Jeremiah wrote one of the best known and most-quoted verses in the Old Testament, Jeremiah 29:11. However I never teach that without including the verses that follow for context.

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* Jeremiah 29: 11-13

All our hearts. This means, laying aside our agendas, we want nothing but God. We know from the New Covenant; we can only reach Him thru Christ. The same intentional teaching is found in the “faith” chapter in the book of Hebrews.

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a*

*rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."* Hebrews 11: 6

## **Closing**

David wrote these beautiful words hundreds of years before Jeremiah. Note the consistency of the meaning and application breathed into these men by the Holy Spirit.

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from Him.* Psalm 62:5-6

The only people who must not wait on the LORD in the context above are those who are lost and without hope, though many disavow the warnings as nonsense. My plea is that you recognize that sin and rebellion from God have allowed you to put yourself in your place, whether you consider it great or pitiful. I may be the last evangelist or missionary God sends to you to offer salvation and hope eternal which may be found in Christ alone. I beg you one more time, perhaps the last time, to humble yourself, confess your sins, repent, and receive Jesus as your Savior. He is the One waiting on you. Wait no more,

For Christ's sake,

*Walter*