

Jeremiah 32

By Bob Young

I am a preacher—I am always grateful for the opportunity to share a message from the Bible. I have been a preacher since 1967 when I began preaching every Sunday in a small church near Wichita, Kansas. I was a university student studying mathematics and chemistry. Those early beginnings encouraged me to preach. That was almost 50 years ago.

I completed my university studies at Oklahoma Christian, with a major in Bible and a minor in Biblical languages. After I had preached in local ministry settings for 20 years, I returned to the university and earned my master's degree in ministry, completed the coursework for a master's degree in church history and theology, and then earned my doctorate in ministry focused in church growth and preaching.

Afterward I went to the university as a professor, director of Bible studies (both undergraduate and graduate), and executive vice-president.

All of that to say—I am first a preacher.

This is a study of Jeremiah 32. We do not have time to read the entire chapter, but we can summarize it.

- The people of Judah are about to fall to the Chaldeans, that is the Babylonians. Jeremiah has been put in prison by the king for prophesying, v 1-5. Jeremiah had been critical of the government, and had continued to speak an unpopular message from the Lord. He was in prison, persecuted, rejected.
- In the midst of troubles, he received instructions from the Lord to go buy the field he had the right to redeem, v 6-15. He bought the field as a prophecy, exemplifying the promise of the Lord that the people would return after their captivity.
- Then he prayed, confidently affirming that God could do anything he desired, v 16-25.
- The Lord replied with the same affirmation, and added another, v 26-44.

There are at least two principal concepts in this chapter.

- Nothing is too hard for the Lord, v 18, 26
- The Lord will do a new thing where there seems to be no hope.
- These two principles are set forth in the context of several other factors, reflected in God's response: that they fear me, a new covenant, and doing what is the good.

The ministry and mission works I am involved in have as one of their purposes to develop leaders for Latin American churches. The goal is to support and encourage and help the churches, to benefit the churches. Some of those leaders will be preachers, some will be missionaries, and some will be ministers. Others will become elders and deacons, others will become bankers, and teachers, and engineers. Some will become translators or computer experts. I can already see that many of the spiritual leaders of the churches will not serve as full-time ministers. The way in which our world is changing suggests the need for new, more effective ways of spreading the gospel. The goal is always the same—to follow and imitate Christ, to accomplish his purpose, with eyes fixed on the lost and the needs of the world.

There is a Jesus crisis in our world. The crisis is one of morality, and ethics. The crisis is a social and economic crisis. But the cause is the lack of Jesus. Because the cause is the lack of Jesus, the solution is not more teaching, education, money, benevolent work, orphanages, schools, medical care. Do not misunderstand me. These are all good. But they are not the solution to the world's problems. The solution to the world's problems is Jesus, v. 37-41.

Jeremiah 32 presents to us two very important questions.

First, do we genuinely believe that God has the power to accomplish his will and purpose through his faithful servants? The crisis in the church is a lack of faith in God's power to act. What does it mean for us to reverence/fear God? Are we committed to doing what is good?

Second, what new thing does God want to do through us? He works in and through us.

What new thing in this world is God doing in your life?

What new thing is God doing in the life of another person through you?

I am working with God to change the life of _____? Who is that person?

With whom are we sharing Jesus?

I like giving out certificates and diplomas, but the work of the kingdom is not about producing titles and awards, but about developing workers for the kingdom, capable teachers, elders, deacons, and yes, ministers and missionaries full-time.

Let me share my goal. This has always been my goal. I got it from Paul. 1 Cor. 9:12-16.

I want to share the gospel. I remember another good statement of our goal. Phil. 3:7-11.

God is working a new work, doing a new thing, desiring a new result, seeking a new kind of person who will participate in his kingdom activities. God is looking for those who will participate with him in helping solve the Jesus crisis in our world.

God is not looking for people who want an easy life, who desire comfort, who want money, who want prominence. God is looking for people like Jeremiah—people willing to suffer, to be in prison, to announce the word of the Lord in the midst of challenging times, to confront the governments, to confront the lost, to share the good news.

God is able to make his will come to pass. God does new things through such people. God does new things through those who are fully committed to him.