



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Jeremiah; Lamentations Sermon Series

Supports Session 11: Trustworthy

Sermon Title: "One Step Away"

Passage: Jeremiah 42:1-44:18

Connection to Session 11

We face consequences when we trust our own understanding more than the Lord's commands.

Opening/Introduction

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem, exiled Judah's residents to Babylon (Jer. 39), and set Gedaliah as governor (Jer. 40). After Ishmael assassinated him (Jer. 41), a frightened remnant came to Jeremiah and asked him what they should do under the circumstances (Jer. 42:3). Jeremiah inquired of the Lord, and the Lord commanded them to stay in Judah and prohibited them from going to Egypt. He warned of judgment if they refused (Jer. 42:7-22; 43:8-13). The remnant rejected this council. They accused Jeremiah and Baruch of trying to ruin them. Then they packed their belongings, kidnapped Jeremiah, and went to Egypt anyway (Jer. 43:1-7). While in Egypt, they suffered the ruin they tried to avoid when they left Judah.

The remnant trusted their own understanding more than the Lord's commands. The text reveals traits we may display when we trust our ways over the Lord's commands.

Outline:

1. Mere Appearances (Jer. 42:1-3,9-17).

- a. The remnant exhibited traits of spirituality. They knew where to find Jeremiah. They requested prayer for guidance. They voiced a desire to know the Lord's will. They wanted the Lord to witness against them if they did not act according to the Lord's directions. They vowed to obey the Lord's directions whether it was pleasant or unpleasant. Nevertheless, when the Lord's directives differed from their predetermined plan, they disobeyed Him and continued with their predetermined plan.
- b. We are one step away from insincerity when our spirituality is merely an appearance.

2. Malicious Accusations (Jer. 43:1-3).

- a. Jeremiah returned with the Lord's direction and reported that "all the other arrogant men responded, 'You are speaking a lie'" (v. 2). They did not like Jeremiah's message, so they trashed Jeremiah's reputation. They accused him of having the secret agenda of ruining their lives. They had a hidden agenda. On the surface their agenda was the Lord's will, but

their real agenda, hidden behind fake piety, was to do their own will. The remnant was guilty of its own accusation.

b. We are just one step away from hypocrisy when we start accusing people.

3. Misguided Assurance (Jer. 44:15-18).

a. When it comes to trust, there are plenty of alternatives in our world, and they each appear more reasonable to human wisdom than trusting in the Lord.

b. The remnant's real trust surfaced in their argument with Jeremiah. They claimed they had abundance when they were idolaters. They trusted idols with their needs more than the Lord.

c. Frankly, it is none of our business how God meets our needs. That is God's business. Our business is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. His business is to add all necessary things to us (Matt. 6:33).

d. We are one step from idolatry when we have more faith in human means than God's faithfulness to meet our needs.

Conclusion

When we resort to our own understanding to avoid trouble, we may meet the trouble we try to avoid. Only God's way, will, and wisdom can keep us from stupidity. The better option is "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6). Trust only in Him. Deliberately crucify your own understanding. Give Him His rightful place as Lord and He will direct your steps.

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