

FOLLOWING GOD HOME

Text: Jeremiah 12:1-5 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? 2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins. 3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter. 4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end. 5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

Introduction: Jeremiah, the prophet, was confronting God with an “AGE-OLD” question - a question that has been debated and ridiculed by many as a sign of “lack of faith”; but it is a question almost all Christians have asked God somewhere in their past. The question is both simple and complex at the same time. The question is “**WHY**”. OUR TEXT: *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.*

I. There is nothing wrong with asking God “WHY” if we ask the question in the right way:

Three examples from scripture:

Judges 6:13 (Gideon) *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

Psalms 42:9 (King David) ... Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Psalms 22:1-2 (Jesus) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

II. What is the proper way of asking God, “WHY”-

(1). **with fear and reverence: Psalms 22:3-4 (Jesus)** *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

(2). **with remembrances of God’s Goodness and past Faithfulness: Psalms 42:5-6, 8 (King David)** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan...*

(3). **with the right attitude:**

- not in a murmuring or complaining way,
- not with doubts about his love for us,
- not with doubts about his leadership ability,
- not with doubts about his wisdom!

III. God is Leading His People Home: He is in charge of our CARE! He is our Good Shepherd!

John 10:2-5 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

The Song “*In Shady Green Pastures*” by George Young (1855-1935)

It Tells of the good Journey Home and God’s Care for his People all along the way!

*1. In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet,
God leads His dear children along;
Where the water’s cool flow bathes the weary one’s feet,
God leads His dear children along.*

Refrain:

*Some through the waters, some through the flood,
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,
In the night season and all the day long.*

*2. Sometimes on the mount where the sun shines so bright,
God leads His dear children along;
Sometimes in the valley, in darkest of night,
God leads His dear children along.*

*3. Though sorrows befall us and evils oppose,
God leads His dear children along;
Through grace we can conquer, defeat all our foes,
God leads His dear children along.*

*4. Away from the mire, and away from the clay,
God leads His dear children along;
Away up in glory, eternity’s day,
God leads His dear children along.*

IV. BUT, the question is, ARE WE GOOD FOLLOWERS?

Israel’s Fourteen Complaints against Moses & God in their Journey to the Promised Land:

1) *Because of Moses, Pharaoh made it harder on them...* **Exodus 5:20-21** And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

2) *At the Red Sea...* **Exodus 14:11-12** And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

3) *At the bitter waters of Marah...* **Exodus 15:23-24** And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

4) *Lack of food...* **Exodus 16:2-3** And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

5) No water to drink... **Exodus 17:3** And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

6) Moses took too long on the mountain meeting with God... **Exodus 32:11** And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

7) Tired of manna and wanted meat... **Numbers 11:4-6** And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

8) Aaron and Miriam complain... **Numbers 12:1-2** And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

9) Giants in the land... **Numbers 14:2-3** And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

10) Complains about Moses' leadership... **Numbers 14:4** And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

11) Korah, Dathan, and Abiram lead a rebellion against Moses... **Numbers 16:2-3** And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

12) Children of Israel accused Moses of killing God's people... **Numbers 16:41** But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

13) Complained about water... **Numbers 20:2-5** And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chided with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

14) Complained because the way was too difficult... **Numbers 21:4-5** And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

V. Lessons Learned from these fourteen examples:

I Corinthians 10:6 -13 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

VI. Making Mountains out of Mole Hills: Be careful! Keep the right attitude about the Things we face!

- 1) *The devil is an expert at sowing “doubt and fear” in our mind in every problem, both large and small!*
- 2) *Our flesh is weak – we need to pray harder when we go through problems and not allow everyday problems to become larger than they really are!*
- 3) *The problems we face today are common problems! I Corinthians 10:13* There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able
- 4) *God’s record of faithful toward his children is unblemished and without a single error! He never Fails!*
- 5) *WE NEED GOD because the “Swelling of Jordan” and the “Contending with Horses” may lay in our near future! Five examples of the Swelling of Jordan and Contending with Horses:*
 - *The Fall of an Entire Country – a conquering Babylonian War and Occupancy was coming!*
 - *A life altering event in life – death – a major health change – a financial disaster – etc.*
 - *The future Return of Christ, at any moment!*
 - *The Great Tribulation and coming seals of Doom from Revelation!*
 - *Staying prepared for Death and our appointed time of judgment by the Creator!*

These are more than routine and common, everyday problems: most other problems pale in comparison!

Jeremiah 12:5 *If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?*

VII. Closing - God is God - he may tell us **“why”** NOW, or at a LATER DATE, or HE MAY NOT TELL US UNTIL WE GET IN HEAVEN!

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...

His answer to Jeremiah – 12:12-13 *...the sword of the LORD shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace. They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.* **God’s Answer to Jeremiah:**

- God sees the wicked - rest assured He sees all and knows about their sinful ways
- the wicked shall not prosper much longer – (... they have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns)
- they will soon meet with His Judgment - in due time – (... the sword of the Lord shall devour)

God’s answer to us for ANY AND ALL UNEXPLAINED QUESTIONS: ASK ME - BUT TRUST ME!

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*