

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtmnc.org Today's Date: September 4, 2016

Delighting In What God Delights In

by Dan Trygg

“Who is the wise one who may understand this? And who is the one to whom the mouth of Yahweh has spoken, that he or she may declare it? Why is the land ruined, laid waste like a desert, so that no one passes through? ¹³ And Yahweh said, ‘Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it, ¹⁴ but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart...’”
Jeremiah 9:12-14

“Let not a wise person boast of his wisdom, and let not the powerful one boast of his power, let not a rich person boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let the one who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am Yahweh who exercises loyal-love, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares Yahweh.”
Jeremiah 9:23-24

Jeremiah 9 is a very moving, emotional chapter. The prophet begins describing his sorrow by exclaiming, “Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” What a powerful word picture! He goes on to say, “If only I had a traveler's lodging place in the wilderness, I would abandon my people and depart from them, for they are all adulterers, a solemn assembly of treacherous people.” If Jeremiah had his choice, he would just as soon *escape* from all these evil people! God, however, had called him to prophesy to this rebellious nation! In the following verses, the prophet lists out how they were deceitful, and went on from evil to evil. Yahweh says, “Through deceit, they *refuse* to know Me” (vs. 6). God had tried to refine them and test them, but *they refused to respond*, so they incurred judgment upon themselves and the land. The mountains and the pasturelands were made desolate. Even the birds and animals of the wilderness had fled the countryside. God warns that the cities will be next. Even Jerusalem will be left in ruins.

This is the backdrop for the first passage listed above. Who *understands* this turn of events, the disaster that has come upon the land? Who is *wise enough* to perceive what is the real cause of all this? Most people are oblivious to the true reason for all the disasters on every side. They look only to secondary causes, or think of it as “bad fortune”. No. The events and circumstances they were experiencing had been *predicted in detail hundreds of years before*. God had spoken of these very scenarios through Moses, before the Israelites had even crossed the Jordan to take possession of the land. In Deuteronomy 28 and 29, God clearly presented the results that would follow faithful obedience to God and His ways, as well as the repercussions that will come to those who depart from God and rebel against His ways. A wise person would be able to put the pieces together and realize what was going on. Furthermore, God *had spoken to some* (like Jeremiah), and *even appointed them to proclaim publicly what He had revealed*. Here, we have both *the Mosaic law* and *the prophets* in agreement: “Why is the land ruined, scorched like a desert, so that no one travels through? *Yahweh says, ‘Because they have abandoned My law which I set before them, and did not obey My voice...’*” Instead, they have walked after the stubbornness of their own hearts.

Therefore disaster had come, and would *continue* to come, until they were annihilated or driven from the land. God would feed them bitterness and poison. He would scatter them among the nations, and even then the sword will pursue them. God tells them to call the professional mourning women to come, and begin their wailing. God tells the women to teach their daughters wailing songs and dirges, because Death was going to come and take away their children and young men. The men of the land would be cut down in the open field, and their corpses left like sheaves of grain in the field, but no one will gather them in or bury them.

These words seem *harsh*. They grate against our ears and our sensibilities, but God had tried to warn the people of Israel for literally *hundreds of years*! Moses had written these warnings down over 800 years before, but the Israelite people had toyed with rebellion and its consequences repeatedly throughout the history of their nation. Like a butterfly drawn to a flame, the people seemed to be drawn to pursue sensuality and to follow other gods. In spite of the incredible history of all that God done to care for them, and protect them, ...generation after generation would *forget God*, and choose to follow other distractions.

Most of the competing religious systems were varieties of fertility schemes and rituals. The end attraction was the same goal so many are pursuing in our own country today: We want *more*, ...we want *better*, ...we want it to come *easier*, ...we want to prosper with *doing only a minimum of work*. We want to live *in luxury*, ...we want to be *entertained*, ...we want to *have pleasure*, ...we want to be *served*. We want to *find love*, ...we want *sex without responsibility or consequence*, ...we want to *party and carouse*, ...we want to *alter our mood with alcohol and other chemicals*. We want to be *in charge*, ...we want to be *in control of our own lives*, ...we don't want anyone to tell us, “No.” We want *what we want when we want it*. The ancient Israelites were looking for *fulfillment* apart from God,

just like so many in our country today are looking to fill their inner emptiness through experiences, relationships, sensual pleasures, accomplishments, prestige.

The problem with such self-centered, self-absorbed living is that it ignores THE CENTRAL REALITY OF EXISTENCE – GOD. *God created us. We didn't create ourselves, ...nor did we create Him.* God is the proverbial “800 pound gorilla in the room”. We can try to ignore Him. Good luck with *that*! If you aren't familiar with that word picture, it comes from an old joke, “Where does an 800 pound gorilla sit? – Anywhere it wants to!” **God is going to do what He wants to, whether we like it or not. He is in charge, ...not us, after all.** The people of Jeremiah's day were coming to the end of His patience, and were about to find out. We will find out, too.

God tells us NOT to glory in what the world delights in. He tells the wise person NOT to glory in his wisdom. Isaiah prophesied, “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight” (5:21). Solomon wrote, “...do not lean on your own understanding, ...do not be wise in your own eyes...” (Prov. 3:5,7). Instead, we are to “reverence God and turn away from evil.” Again, “**Do you see a person wise in his own eyes, there is more hope for a fool than for him**” (Prov. 26:5,12). Those who *claimed* to be wise in Jeremiah's day were arrogant, and rejected the Word of Yahweh (8:8,9). What wisdom did they really have? They were put to shame. In Romans 1, those who professed to be wise became fools (1:22). **God has purposely chosen to humble those who think themselves to be wise. It is not through worldly wisdom that we are saved,** but through what appears to be foolish. The message of the cross of Christ seems to be foolishness, but it is the wisdom and plan of God to save people. **Only those who will humble themselves to accept God's way will be able to experience life** (I Cor. 1:18-31). Boasting is for ‘wise’ fools.

God tells the mighty, or powerful, person to NOT glory in his power. The strength or power does not lie in themselves. It comes from God as a stewardship. All might, power, dominion or greatness comes from God (II Chron. 29:10-12). He reigns as King over all the earth, determining the times and boundaries of influence of the nations (Act 17:26; Job 12:23). **It is easy for those with power to abuse their strength or influence.** To rule with force and severity, to extort or oppress, to dominate and abuse others is not consistent with God's heart. The mighty will have to answer to God for how they utilized their strength and influence. **God purposely chooses to utilize the weak and powerless to do great things. He uses the weak and powerless to shame the wise.** His strength is made visible in people who are *not* the mighty, the powerful, the credentialed. He loves to bypass the world's value system to reveal His grace. **The powerful will not be saved by their own strength. God used weakness to disarm and defeat the devil.**

He tells the rich person NOT to glory in his riches. This is not the only place God says this. **While in the rich man's mind, his wealth may seem like a fortress (Prov. 10:15), or a strong city (Prov. 18:11), the Lord counsels him not to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in Him,** who freely gives us blessings to enjoy (I Tim. 6:17; Psa. 49:16-20). If he has come by his wealth honestly, through hard work (Prov. 10:4), God is *still* the One who enabled him to receive these blessings (Prov. 10:22; I Chron. 29:12; Deut. 8), and he will have to give account of what he *does* with what he *has* been entrusted with (Lk. 12:16-2; Jas. 5:1-6). **He should humbly thank God, and use his resources to honor Him and benefit others** (I Tim. 6:18,19; Jas. 1:10; Lk. 16:9-13; Acts 2:44,45; 4:33-35). Unfortunately, the love of money can be a snare (I Tim. 6:9,10). The rich can become wise in his own eyes (Prov. 28:11), and dishonor and oppress others (Jas. 2:5-7; 5:6; Prov. 18:23; 22:16). He often will gain power over the poor by lending money (Prov. 22:7). Those who make money for themselves from interest and usury will experience calamity and judgment from God (Prov. 28:8; Hab. 2:6,7). Those who are rich, but do not plead the cause of the poor will be punished (Jer. 5:27-29). The seductive pride and arrogance that can accompany wealth can cause people to disregard both God and humanity. **It is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven, because of pride and self-sufficiency, and an unwillingness to part with their wealth** (Matt. 19:23-26; Lk. 14:27-33).

What are we to glory or boast in? We are to glory and delight in the fact that we understand and know God! There is no illusion of self-glory here. It is all about glorifying and magnifying God. In the natural, wise people, powerful people, and rich people often glory or delight in the area of their strength. They look to *that* for their identity, security, and stability. It is what *defines them*, at least in their minds. Here, **it is knowing God that defines us, ...that is our identity, security and stability.** Notice how God describes Himself: *He* is the One who exercises loyal-love, justice and righteousness on the earth. **God is a faithful Lover, One who is committed to us and our good, One who will correct and overturn evil, and establish goodness, equity and fairness in every area of life.** God says, “**I delight in these things.**” As a God-follower, as one who glories and delights in Him, I can't help but ponder what He delights in. We saw the arrogance of the wise, the oppression of the mighty, and the self-centeredness of the rich, ...and here we see that the Kingdom of God is just the opposite! **Those who follow Jesus are humble, meek and lowly of heart; their strength is applied in protecting, empowering and serving others; and they give of their resources to meet the needs of others. This is loyal-love, overcoming evil, and establishing fairness. This is the Kingdom of God, ...and... Kingdom people delight in what God delights in.**