

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

When the Worst Is Happening
Jeremiah 32:1-15

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

If you desire to have a person read Scripture, give the references out ahead of time.

Bible Study Leader:

Make sure you have studied the material ahead of time.

Important: Request enough copies of the "Youth: Take Ten" application for each youth to have one. (See page 16)

Worship Time Leader:

Have the songs picked out and hymnals or song sheets ready.

Music Sources:

Great is Thy Faithfulness, *The Worship Hymnal* #96; CCLI #18723

Shine on Us, *The Worship Hymnal* #89; CCLI #1754646

My Life Is in You, Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #518; CCLI #17315

In Christ Alone (My Hope is Found), *The Worship Hymnal* #506; CCLI #3350395

Be Strong in the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI #52105

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***When the Worst Is Happening*****Focal Text**

Jeremiah 32:1-15

Background

Jeremiah 32

Main Idea

Even in the darkest time, God still offers hope.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have in the worst circumstances of life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of God's help in the difficult circumstances of their lives.

Gathering together:

As the group arrives ask them to pair off into twos and pray for today's lesson and for the needs the two might have.

Sing one or both:

Great is Thy Faithfulness, *The Worship Hymnal* #96; CCLI #18723

Shine on Us, *The Worship Hymnal* #89; CCLI #1754646

First thoughts:**Can It Get Any Worse?**

There are instances when each of us must be with individuals and families during times of crisis. It is during crisis times that one's faith is needed most. When all seems lost and life seems at a crossroad one needs a firm faith in God and His Word.

Everyone has gone through tough times. If you know someone who says he/she has not then they need only to wait a while. Troubling times will come.

Jeremiah spent forty years giving the Word of God to Judah's kings and people. As time passed the situation with Babylon got worse and the attitude of the people toward Jeremiah got worse. His prophecy seemed all gloom and doom. But he was preaching hope if only the people would listen and accept it.

The same message is preached throughout the Scriptures. One can take the view of the world and perish or take God's view and live. It can get much worse for the unbeliever.

Read the following passage carefully. Don't stop at the first verse. You need to hear it all.

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

God sent Jeremiah to Judah that they would not perish at the hands of the Babylonians. The purchase of land at Anathoth was an illustration of that truth. God sent Jesus to let us know that we should not perish. In both cases the proper response is to believe His Word.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Pray that each might hear and obey the Word of God. Do not be blinded by what the physical senses can perceive. Trust God.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

When the Worst Is Happening

Focal Text

Jeremiah 32:1-15

Background

Jeremiah 32

Main Idea

Even in the darkest time, God still offers hope.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have in the worst circumstances of life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of God's help in the difficult circumstances of their lives.

Introduction to your personal study:

What would you do if all around you people were perishing and you had help that would save them?

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #15) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Have you ever been so discouraged you thought about quitting? Your situation seems so hopeless that you just want to walk away? Then this lesson might just be what you need to hear. Ultimately it is a lesson about hope.

Although the passage under consideration is part of a section of Jeremiah called "The Book of Consolation" (chapters 30-33). Jeremiah never gave up. The commitment to his call and the Presence of God in his life gave him strength to endure.

The story centers around Jeremiah's purchase of land at Anathoth and cast light on Jeremiah's belief that Judah would be restored in the future. The land purchase was a symbol of Yahweh's promise.

1. No Hope (vv. 1-5)

Conditions for Jeremiah included the following:

- (1) The best of the population had been taken away as prisoners of war some seven years earlier.
- (2) Jerusalem had been under siege for months (2 Kings 25:1).
- (3) The nation's leaders had rejected Jeremiah's counsel; indeed, they considered him a traitor (v. 3).
- (4) Jeremiah was confined to prison.
- (5) There is no hope of victory or of escape (end of v. 5).

Even the most faithful servant of God can face times that look hopeless. In fact, it was Jeremiah's obedience that made his circumstances worse.

There was some good news. Even though Jeremiah was confined to a courtyard cell he was allowed visitors. This corresponds well to the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul. God's messenger can be imprisoned, but His Word cannot.

1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah.

The siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. The capitulation of the city would take place during the fourth month of his eleventh year. During this time Jeremiah was arrested and placed in courtyard under guard. He was kept there because his calls for surrender were demoralizing the people and eroding their will to resist.

3 Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, “Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. 4 Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape the Babylonians but will certainly be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. 5 He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him, declares the Lord. If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed.”

Zedekiah just did not get it. Over and over the question arises **“why do you prophesy as you do?”** The answer is always the same. **“This is what the Lord says”**. Isn't this the proper response for all Christians today. Why do Christians keep repeating the Gospel and be adamant that the only way to God is through Jesus. Are they not His words for you and me. If a person refuses to hear and heed then he/she will be in the clutches of Satan.

In most wars a country fights to win. In this war God wants Judah to surrender so they will not be carried off and/or destroyed. Verse five contains an important principle. If Judah fights against Babylon she fights alone and she will not succeed. For the Christian today fighting against Satan without the power of God will bring defeat.

There is an example from the New Testament that speaks to the same principle. Acts 4:19-20 (King James Version) ***But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.***

Peter and John were following in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets and proclaiming what they were told by Jesus to say.

2. No Sense (vv. 6-8)

There is something worse than hopeless circumstances -- those times when in addition to bleak circumstances the counsel from the Lord does not make sense. It doesn't make sense when God is silent in spite of our cries. It doesn't make sense when God's answer seems illogical or impractical.

If we were to read this today it perhaps would not make sense to buy land when the nation was about to be deported. Jeremiah would never get to use the land. He would have greater need for the money in the days of siege and the years of exile.

6 Jeremiah said, “The word of the Lord came to me: 7 Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.’

Hanamel's coming to Jeremiah was not unexpected. God had revealed it to Jeremiah before he came. The purchase was a symbolic act to show the people that there would be a time when Judah would return.

This physical act will address their spiritual needs. For Jeremiah to purchase land would be ludicrous if there were no hope of his return. Earlier God had proclaimed that the exile would last no longer than 70 years. This was the number of Sabbath rest years Israel had not observed. Now the land would rest.

8 "Then, just as the Lord had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.

How much is land worth in a country besieged by an enemy with victory for them imminent? Anathoth was already in Babylonian hands. The land would be worthless if the Babylonians continued to occupy it, yet God told Jeremiah to buy or redeem this family land. He was obedient. This object lesson revealed Jeremiah's belief in a return and demonstrated it to the people of Judah.

The right of redemption is described in Leviticus 25:25-31 and illustrated in the book of Ruth, especially 4:1-12.

When what the Lord seems to be saying to us does not make sense, we should wait and watch to make sure it is the Lord who has spoken. Jeremiah did so. Note his words when Hanamel offered to sell him the land just as the Lord had said: **"Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord"** (v. 9). The Bible consistently says that truth is established by two or three witnesses. Jeremiah had an internal witness (the word from the Lord that his mind had perceived) and an external witness (the events or circumstances occurring to him). Only with confirmation could he be sure it was the Lord's word.

3. No Hesitation (vv. 9-15)

"I knew that this was the word of the Lord; 9 so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. 10 I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. 11 I took the deed of purchase---the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy--- 12 and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard."

Verse 9 begins with the simple statement, "So I bought the field." The act of buying the field was a statement of faith. Jeremiah was "putting his money where his mouth was." He was making a symbolic statement of belief in the future completion of God's promise to bring the people back to the land. Actions speak louder than words. If we really

believe something, our actions will show it. Faith is more than a state of mind; it is an internal conviction that moves us to action. What we do reveals what we believe. True belief always affects behavior.

Why was the silver weighed? Because there were no coins. Seventeen shekels equals about seven modern ounces.¹

13 “in their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: 14 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last for a long time.’ 15 For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.’”

Clay jars were a common storage place for documents. They have withstood hundreds of years as is demonstrated by the clay jars of the Qumran community.

The bottom line is that Jeremiah’s purchase of the land was symbolic. It was to show Judah that they could hope for a return.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Keep in mind the darkness of the time, but also keep in mind God’s promises. Do not allow the lesson to end on a negative note. God did what He did to Judah because He wanted to draw them back to Himself. The judgment that came to them was the result of their lack of obedience and His keeping His Word.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

¹ Some of the material was taken from study notes written by Dr. Randel Trull.

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

When the Worst Is Happening

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Jeremiah 32:1-15

Background

Jeremiah 32

Main Idea

Even in the darkest time, God still offers hope.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have in the worst circumstances of life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to testify of God's help in the difficult circumstances of their lives.

Connect with Life:

Share these thoughts: This will be a study in hope. The object lesson for study is the purchase by Jeremiah of a field in Anathoth. This occurs as citizens of Jerusalem are about to be taken into Babylonian captivity. If you walk in their shoes you will see it is one thing to hear preaching about hope but another thing to live through adversity until it is fulfilled.

Although the passage under consideration is part of a section of Jeremiah called "The Book of Consolation" (chapters 30-33), the situation for the prophet was anything but encouraging until God told him to purchase the land in Anathoth. The people would one day return.

Guide the Study:

There will be three sections for you and the group to study and discuss. They are entitled: No Hope (vv. 1-5), No Sense (vv. 6-8), and No Hesitation (vv.9-15).

I. NO HOPE (vs. 1-5)

Tell the group: conditions for Jeremiah and Judah included the following:

- (1) The best of the population had been taken away as prisoners of war some seven years earlier.
- (2) Jerusalem had been under siege for months (2 Kings 25:1).
- (3) The nation's leaders had rejected Jeremiah's counsel; indeed, they considered him a traitor (v. 3).
- (4) Jeremiah was confined to prison.
- (5) There is no hope of victory or of escape (end of v. 5).

Ask: Have you ever done the right thing for the right reasons and made your circumstances worse?

Make sure the class understands: Jeremiah's obedience to God is what got him put in prison.

Have a volunteer read Jeremiah 32:1-5

Emphasize to the group: Jeremiah was not always free to move about.

Remind the group: He was kept there because his calls for surrender were demoralizing the people and eroding their will to resist.

Say: Is there anyone in the group who has been where it seemed there was no hope? What did you do?

II. No Sense (vs. 6-8).

Have someone read vs. 6-8.

Ask: What is the importance of the phrase "The word of the Lord came to me?"

Let someone explain this: Why did Jeremiah purchase the land in Anatoth?

Remind them: Anatoth was already in the hands of the Babylonians.

Ask: Would any of you purchase land that could not be used or occupied by you?

Remind them that to the onlooker this transaction would have made no sense.

Question for the group: What were the reasons given for Jeremiah buying the land? (God told him to buy it. It was an object lesson teaching the truth that God would bring the people back one day – these remaining people were referred to as the “remnant”)

Then ask: Which one of you would be able to trust God and buy land for use 70 years from now?

Remind them: Jeremiah would not live long enough to see the lesson come to pass.

Seek an answer: What word comes to your mind when you think about this part of the lesson? (Faith)

III. No Hesitation (vs. 9-15).

Have someone read aloud vs. 9-15.

Ask: What transpired in this transaction? Is it similar to today's land purchases? (Paid the purchase price; signed and witnessed the deed; placed the deed in a secure place).

Remind the group: Actions speak louder than words.

Let someone explain the importance of this transaction. (It was a symbolic act of belief in a future completion of God's promise.)

Ask: Why did they use clay jars? What would be used today?

Express to the group: Nowhere in this passage does the writer indicate there was hesitation on the part of Jeremiah.

An important question for each: How quickly do you respond to the calling of God upon your life?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: When there seems to be no hope, and nothing makes sense, just might be the time God is speaking to you to respond without hesitation. Step up with faith.

Continue: By what actions do we express our faith in God's goodness and grace?

Finally: How can we turn the signs of the times into signs of the Kingdom?

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

(See following page)

Have a copy of this sheet for each of you to read. (Get them from the Bible Study Leader)

When the Worst Is Happening **Romans 8:28**

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

One of you read Romans 8:28. This verse is not an easy verse to understand and believe.

“We know” means that Paul is speaking from experience.

Question: Are you more willing to believe a person who speaks with experience?

Ask each other: When the worst is happening how is God working? (God is working for the good).

Also discuss: Is everything that happens good?

Everything that happens may not be good but God is working for the good of those who love him.

The question then is this: Do you love Him?

If you love God then you have a part to play in His purpose.

Answer this: What method did Jeremiah use to help them? (He prophesied in the name of God).

Ask your own self: What has been the worst thing to happen to you?

Then ask: Did you know that God was helping you during that time? Would you tell how He helped you?

Bow your heads and thank God for helping us when we experience trials.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***When the Worst Is Happening***
Jeremiah 32:1-15**Beginning the Service:**

Sing **My Life Is in You, Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #518; CCLI #17315
In Christ Alone (My Hope is Found), *The Worship Hymnal* #506; CCLI #3350395

Offering:

The group should be informed of the purpose for the offering. Let them know where it will be used. Always pray God will multiply it.

Praying for the World:

The 2014 Winter Olympics were held in Sochi, Russia. Homechurchonline.com materials are available in Russian. Pray that they may be discovered by those who would use them to start and continue home churches in Russian-speaking countries.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Faith**Introduction**

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him
 (Hebrews 11:6, King James Version)

In the study of Jeremiah the citizens and leaders of Judah failed to seek God in faith. They looked around and saw the Babylonian army encamped around them and concluded that the only way to survive was to fight. God wanted them to believe in Him

The writer of Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives a definition of faith.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1, King James Version).

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1).

Notice two words in the two translations. One is “substance”, and the other is “confidence”. Because we cannot see the future we have evidence of it in faith. It is the “evidence” and “assurance” of things to come. The writer wants us to that see by faith today ultimately what we will see by sight in the future.

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. (Hebrews 12:1-4, King James Version)

Carefully note that there three important points in this passage.

- (1) **Lay aside every weight and sin.** Do not let anything distract you.
- (2) **Run the race of life.** Keep on keeping on.
- (3) **Keep your eyes on Jesus.** Keep your focus on the finish line.

Paul liked to use athletes as examples. Those witnesses in chapter 11 were those who have excelled in their day. They were more than spectators. They were witnesses to the reality of spiritual and eternal things.

Now it is our turn to become a part of the crowd of witness for those who will come after us.

I. UNHINDERED FAITH. LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT AND SIN.

Runners train to get off undue weight. That is what the word weight means, undue flesh. It can also be used for pride, whether good or bad. When you enter the race for

eternal life you need to cast all your weight and care upon Jesus. Remember when you were saved you thought a great weight had been lifted off your life?

Sin has the connotation of missing the mark, not hitting the target, not getting where you should be. Sin has always been the worst hindrance to running the spiritual race. A runner would not want to run the race and be disqualified because of something. Steroids have been the big thing in athletics today. Some runners in the Olympics were disqualified because they took steroids. They paid a big price for the wrong that they did. Sin is wrong.

II. UN-CEASING FAITH. RUN THE RACE OF LIFE.

Once you begin stay the course. Keep on keeping on. This is a basic theme of Hebrews.

There once was a young junior high school boy who ran a race. He was far behind the rest of the runners when they crossed the finish line. He was still on the far side of the track. But, not once did he slow down. His pace was not near what the other boys had but he never gave up. Long after the others had crossed the finish line he came across. The crowd stood and cheered his effort. Fans for both teams saw the unceasing effort.

He typified what I believe all who chose Christ must have. They must be patient and have endurance. Christians must stay the race. The start is important but to finish is why we start.

This is Paul's testimony to Timothy. It ought to be the testimony of every Christian. ***I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*** (2 Timothy 4:7, King James Version)

III. UNMIXED FAITH. KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED ON JESUS.

Jesus is the supreme example for our faith. He is also the one who gives us our faith. He is the one who begins the work in you and He is the One who will bring that work to completion. Therefore, keep your focus upon Him. Do not mix the world in with your spiritual life. Keep your Christian life pure.

There is so much today that pulls at us for our attention and focus. Our lives are so full of activity that we hardly have time to stop and think. Activity can replace devotion. Ministry can replace meditation. This is a call to pause and refocus. Get your eyes back upon the Lord.

In his book And the Angels Were Silent, Max Lucado tells a story about learning to snow ski. He was taking his first lessons and was not doing very well. He kept falling down. The instructor told him to quit looking at his skis. Look up at the mountains and keep his eyes upon them. When he did and thought about going down them it took his mind off falling and he was able to stay up.

A pastor told the story of his high school days running track. When he would come around the last turn and start for the finish line he would always see his dad standing at the fence beyond the finish with his arms waving for him to come on. The pastor said that he would run the last part of the race with his eyes upon his father who was encouraging him.

What pictures. The writer of Hebrews is telling us the same thing. The race is not over. Keep on keeping on with faith that is focused upon the Lord Jesus.

Conclusion

You have not gone as far as Jesus did. Too many get what is called loser's limp. Many times those who are behind pull up pretending being lame. There is nothing wrong. They just do not want to be known for losing. Do not get "loser's limp" before the end of the race. Do not let anything deter you from finishing the Christian life strong.

Your faith should be:

Unhindered.

Unencumbered

Unmixed.

The closer we get to God the better off we will be. Keep the faith strong and pure.

Call to Commitment:

For those who have never started the race with Jesus today is the day to begin. Take Jesus as your Lord and Savior and begin running.

For those who have gotten your eyes off Jesus today is the day to refocus and commit yourselves to a race that will have a glorious finish.

Concluding the Service:

Pray for one another that each will be strong. Ask God for strength to run the race. Thank God for Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.

Sing:

Be Strong in the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI #52105