

## THE WORD OF GOD – OUR BASELINE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

### Part 6: The word of God gives joy

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*"Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name O Lord God of hosts"*  
Jeremiah 15:16

The kings of Judah strayed away from God and led the nation to worship lifeless idols. Almost all the people fell for this new-found religion except Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah the priest, who was the prophet at the time. Jeremiah remained faithful to God against terrible opposition. I think it is because of this that he became the longest serving prophets in both Judah and Israel. The bible tells us that Jeremiah prophesied over Judah during the reigns of five kings; namely, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. In today's language we can say they changed terms of office over him.

Things have gone so bad during Jeremiah's time that it was not safe at all for one to speak against the mood of the time. The false prophet kept on saying it is well when indeed God did not sent them. Jeremiah was the only one who would prophesy contrary to what these false prophets were saying. This got him in trouble with the kings every time. A vivid example of this was King Jehoiakim who was openly hostile to him. He destroyed one scroll written by Jeremiah and threw it into the fire and had him arrested. He ordered that he be thrown into a dry pit which served as a prison.

This is the background from where Jeremiah wrote the book which came to bear his name. This is the backdrop upon which our text of the day was written. Jeremiah has no joy at all. You will remember that he did not even have a wife or children to comfort him. Because of the pending judgment that was looming over the nation, God restrained him from taking a wife and having children like other prophets.

Then Jeremiah opened his mouth and prayed to God. "*O Lord, You know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke.*" He goes on to cry; "*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*"

When the going got tough Jeremiah bowed his head between his knees and prayed. He cried to God about his condition and pleaded for vengeance. Some scholars call Jeremiah a weeping prophet. He said in his prayer; "O Lord, You know. Remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for your sake I suffered rebuke"

While he was praying; suddenly something dropped into his mind. He remembered what God said to him when He called him. His spirit went back in history many years when he first heard the voice of God. He heard these words whispered into his ears; "*before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.... Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you.*" Jeremiah 1:5,7

He kept on hearing this words; "*do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you.*" As he listened, the intensity of these words increased. I don't know about you but I think he stood up, throw both his hand up in the air and turned his face towards God and said; Lord; "*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name O Lord God of hosts*" When he said "I found your words," suddenly his prayer changed. He no longer moaned and complained. He no longer identified himself with the condition he was in; he saw himself as God saw him. Instead of saying "...*for your sake I suffered rebuke*" he said, "*I am called by Your name O Lord God of hosts*"

When political rulers took it personal and saw him as a traitor, when religious leaders saw him as fanatic, when civilians saw him as a sellout; I mean when all hope was gone; Jeremiah found the word and ate it. When the world was void of joy Jeremiah found peace and joy in what God said to him when He called him and he said; "*I am called by your name O Lord God of host*"

The world we live in may be different from that of Jeremiah but the spirits are still the same. The same spirits that influenced leaders against Jeremiah are influencing leaders in political, religious and business arenas against the faithful of the Lord today. Those who will triumph over this onslaught are those who will say like Jeremiah; "*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name O Lord God of hosts*"

"Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." True joy is found nowhere but in the word of God. This is the kind of joy that prevails against any condition. You can't buy it. It is not a commercial commodity or a battering

item. It is found only in the word of God. This is the joy that Nehemiah referred to when he said; “Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength”

THIS JOY THAT I HAVE, THE WORLD DIDN’T GIVE IT TO ME AND THE WORLD CAN’T TAKE IT AWAY.