

Faithfulness During Uncertainty Jeremiah 25 & 32

Introduction

- Money for College
 - 10th Birthday
 - Grandfather pulled me to the side and gave me an envelope
 - Inside the envelope were 10 \$100 bills.
 - You can imagine how excited a 10 year old boy would be!
 - You can buy a lot of video games with \$1000
 - New Basketball shoes
 - I'm rich!
 - Take this money and give it to your parents
 - This is for college
 - Don't waste it!
 - For college?
 - College is like 9 years from now
 - An eternity
 - Why wait to spend it, when I have plenty of things to spend on it now?!
 - Each birthday, my grandfather would pull me aside, give me an envelope, and have the same conversation with me.
 - Fast-forward to my senior year of high school
 - Deciding on career, and college
 - Assumed I would go to Marshall University
 - College day met a recruit for a private Christian college
 - Completely changed my perspective
 - Felt called to ministry
 - How can I best be equipped for this calling?
 - No way had I ever dreamed, nor my parents of a private college
 - Long story-short, I got accepted to a private Christian college in Kentucky
 - God convinced me, and my parents
 - I quickly began to appreciate those yearly birthday envelopes
 - While my grandfather was making early investments, God was preparing for something far more than any of us could imagine.
 - The opportunity was there, and so was the money. I never paid a debt, although I owe a lot to my grandfather who invested in me.
 - Perseverance in Times of Uncertainty
 - Prophet Jeremiah
 - Called to deliver a message, to a people who were never going to listen
 - Rebuked, beaten, and imprisoned
 - Committed to the Cause, but often questioned the purpose
 - I don't know what compelled my grandfather to set aside money for college

- He didn't attend college
- The world had changed drastically from the time he was 19 years of age
- I don't think he had any idea that I would go to a private college, or even be called to ministry for that matter.
- None of that really matters, what matters is that he invested faithfully, and persistently when the future was not entirely clear.
- Jeremiah 25 & 32
 - Two different passages
 - After 23 years, Jeremiah is still delivering God's message, and the people are still rejecting the message
 - 70 years of captivity is about to begin
 - Jeremiah is provided the opportunity to make an investment in what is presently being destroyed, but what God promises to restore.
 - Uncertain times; unwavering faith
 - Perseverance in times of uncertainty
 - Perseverance is a Necessity of faith
- When Jeremiah wasn't delivering God's message, he was seeking God's Word
 - Example of how we can make an investment
 - Persevering through uncertainty by investing in our relationship with God
 - God always honors our investment of faith

Invest in God, because God is investing in You!

- **Jeremiah 25:3-7**
 - Jeremiah is persistent
 - How many of us would get up and do the same thing for 23 years without ever seeing positive results?
 - Easy to conclude that Jeremiah was wasting time
 - **Jeremiah 20:14-18**
 - Would you not respond the way Jeremiah did after 23 years without ever seeing positive results?
 - How does Jeremiah persevere?
 - **Jeremiah 1:5**
 - Emphasis on the word *Before*
 - God was doing something in Jeremiah's life before he was ever conceived in the womb, and before he was ever born.
 - This is important when you consider Jeremiah's despair in chapter 20
 - Toil
 - Sorrow
 - Spend my days in shame
 - What had God consecrated Jeremiah for?
 - **Psalm 139**
 - O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

- Knit together in the mother's womb
- Fearfully and wonderfully made
- God can see every day of our life, before we have ever lived
- With this in mind, the Psalmist returns to God's transforming power
 - Search me and know my heart-Same as Jeremiah has said in previous prayers
 - Point out any error in my way
 - Lead me in the way everlasting
- Despite his despair, Jeremiah has remained committed to the cause
- We give up way to easily, in fact we give up sometimes before we even get started
 - Instant results
 - Instant gratification
 - When things aren't working out, we assume that we are just wasting our time
 - Jeremiah was making an investment in his relationship with God, despite not seeing the results
- Stock market approach
 - Stock market goes up as investors grow in confidence
 - Confidence is a fickle thing; its an emotion
 - It can all change based on one decision that has yet to even play out—it is a prediction!
- If Jeremiah would have exercised that kind of mentality to his situation, he never would have invested in God!
 - My fear is that this is the way we invest in our relationship with God
 - We invest in what we are comfortable with
 - I'll go to church
 - I'll sit through the service
 - I'll get involved if I don't have to sacrifice anything
 - I'll pray when I really need something
 - That's not an investment!
 - This is the kind investment that the Jews made in their relationship with God.
 - It was an investment in connivence, not an investment in faith
 - When times of uncertainty come you won't have anything in the bank.
- Not only is Jeremiah persistent; God is persistent
 - This is why we can invest in God
 - God is working persistently
 - Persistently sent ALL his servants and prophets

- Jeremiah 1:5 God was working *Before*
- **Jeremiah 25:11-12** 70 years of exile to restore the people
- God's persistence is one way that God shows love toward us
- **2 Peter 3:8-9 (ESV)**, "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."
- We need to invest in God, because God is investing in us!
 - God has been shaping us before we were born, and God continues to shape us through uncertainty
 - Don't invest in comfort, invest in faith
 - "That is the source of Jeremiah's living persistence, his creative constancy. He was up before the sun, listening to God's word. Rising early, he was quiet and attentive before his Lord. Long before the yelling started, the mocking, the complaining, there was this centering, discovering, exploring time with God."¹
 - What kind of investment are you making? Comfort or Faith

God Always Provides a Full Return On Our Investment

- **Jeremiah 32:6-8**
 - Anathoth was where Jeremiah was from
 - Anathoth was about to be destroyed by the Babylonians
 - By all account, this was a bad investment!
 - Right of Redemption
 - Similar to Boaz, the kinsman redeemer (Ruth 4:6)
 - Inheritance acquired through investment
 - Jeremiah was offered an investment that he could redeem when God delivered on his promise!
 - I want to make an investment in something that I can redeem when God fulfills his promise!
 - What kind of investment are you making? Comfort or Faith
 - When times of uncertainty come, I want to be sure that my investment is secure.
 - When I can't see the future, I want to be sure that my investment is secure.
 - God Always Provides a Full Return on our investment!
 - "Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord"
 - Search me and know me
 - Point out the errors
 - Lead me in the way everlasting

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses: The Quest For Life At Its Best*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009. Pg. 116.

- Jeremiah's INVESTMENT in relationship produced a full return on God's part
- **Jeremiah 32:14**
 - Jeremiah was making an investment in the future
 - It was going to take 70 years
 - It might be a long time, but God was shaping destruction to bring about renewal
 - We need to invest in God because God is investing in us!
- **Jeremiah 32:16-19**
 - Jeremiah prays
 - he invests in his relationship with God
 - He has just made a major decision of faith
 - He gives it to God, he commits his cause to the Lord
 - Nothing is too hard for you
 - Jeremiah acknowledges that God is doing something that Jeremiah can't quite see in the moment.
 - This was not an investment in comfort, but an investment in faith! Jeremiah was all in!
 - Gambling at the Super Bowl²
 - Not just bidding on who would win, but all sorts of smaller details
 - Vegas came to understand that they could make a lot more money on small details than just the winner of the game
 - Chicago Bears
 - 1986 Super Bowl
 - William Perry "The Fridge"
 - Lineman would score a running TD
 - Vegas set the odds low, but the bidders gambled high
 - Gamblers won and Vegas lost a lot of money
 - So now they have oddsmakers that set odds for all sorts of things
 - The uniform # that will score the first TD
 - # of yards a running back will have
 - Scrabble score of the last name of the player who scores the first TD
 - Pastor is talking about gambling in church
 - Gambling is putting our faith in something other than God
 - If gambling is something that we are suppose to refrain from, why do we invest in comfort rather than on faith?
 - We have more to lose if we invest in comfort than if we invest in faith
 - God always provides a full return on our investment of faith
- **Jeremiah 32:37-41**
 - God is going to cause disaster
 - It will result in uncertainty for Jeremiah

² "How Super Bowl Prop Bets Come to Light." David Kezirian. ESPN. January 30, 2019.

- But invest in your relationship with God
- God is recreating one heart, one way, and a glorious future!

Conclusion

- If you want to persevere through uncertainty, it will require an investment
 - It is more than an investment in comfort, but an investment in faith
 - We need to invest in God, because God is investing in us
 - God invested in us before we were born
 - God continues to invest in us through times of uncertainty
 - God always provides a full return on our investment
 - God is persistent
 - Nothing is impossible
 - Glorious future