

**Jeremiah 32: 1-44; “Is Anything Too Hard for Me?”, Sermon #36 in the series –
“Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God”,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on, November 18th, 2018,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

Read Verses 1-5 – “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.” “For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, ‘Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face, and see him eye to eye; then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him,’ says the LORD; ‘though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed?’”

The city of Jerusalem was under siege. It was the 10th year of Zedekiah's reign and the siege had begun in the 9th year, the 10th month. Jeremiah has been imprisoned by the king for preaching and prophesying that the Lord would give that city into the hands of the king of Babylon. He prophesied that king Zedekiah himself would be taken from Jerusalem and led away to Babylon where he would speak to Nebuchadnezzar face to face and eye to eye. Zedekiah did not like to think that he would not succeed in repelling the efforts of Nebuchadnezzar to breach the walls of Jerusalem. And so he had imprisoned Jeremiah in the court of the prison which was in the king's house because he didn't like Jeremiah's words. He thought to himself – Perhaps I will be safer if I hold Jeremiah a prisoner, close by me in the king's house. Perhaps he thought, I can keep Jeremiah from speaking to the people, if I keep him there. In chapter 21, Zedekiah had sent to him, to inquire of him as a prophet, since but he only spoke of evil coming to him, and not good, he would make him his prisoner.

Jeremiah had spent the past 40 years of his life, preaching repentance to the kings and to the people. Since they didn't heed the word of the Lord to them, life as they knew it, was going to become very difficult for them. And so, now Jeremiah found himself in this prison, and many things were becoming too difficult for him; too hard for him to face, and too hard for him to understand. And so, in verse 16, he prays and in verse 17, he confesses God's great wisdom and power, and he says – “You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power – nothing is too hard for You”. This leads me to ask this question – What do you do when you are in a situation where you cannot see how anything can be changed in your life, or in the life of other people around you? What do you do when you do not see how God's cause and kingdom can advance or perhaps even continue, in the place where you live? Here is the answer, and our lesson for this morning – We must turn to God in prayer, as Jeremiah did, and we must confess that it is not too hard for God to do the many things which may seem difficult, or even impossible for us to conceive, how they could be brought about. Let me open up 4 things from these verses which should convince us that nothing is too hard for God.

1st – It is not too hard for God to prevail over the stubborn resistance of men's wickedness, even when His servant is in prison. (verses 1-5)

I think that we need to understand that there is, in the unregenerate heart of all men, a stubborn resistance to the word of God. It is bound up their very nature. But when you add to this, that a man is an unbelieving king, or a person who thinks of himself as able to control his own destiny, he will do anything to avoid submitting to God, or listening to His word. Think of Herod killing all the children in the environs of Bethlehem when he could not find the little Lord Jesus, to kill him. Think of Pharaoh refusing to let God's people go; hardening his own heart, and destroying his own country, because he would not let the children of Israel go to worship the true and living God. People by nature do not like to be preached to. They do not like to be told that destruction is coming. They do not like to be told that God's judgments are coming; that sin brings a person into captivity, bondage,

misery, and death. People do not want to be told that they shall not ultimately succeed in ignoring or neglecting God's word; His commands, His promises, or His warnings.

So, Jeremiah was put into the king's prison by Judah's king Zedekiah because he did not like his preaching in this way. What a shame! How many Christian preachers and ministers over the course of the Church age have been put in prisons for speaking the truth about people's sins; I cannot not say. It must be a great number. But even in good times (not persecuting times) many people try to put the preachers of God's word and the gospel, into a special little place in their mind. They say to themselves something like this – I will let this man's words only go so far with me, and no further. I will only hear the good things, and the pleasant things, of the word of God. I will receive all of the precious promises and all of the words of comfort. But I utterly deny God's sovereignty over my life and my eternal destiny. I will not let the warnings of the word of God past the entrance gate of my mind. I will not let them into the house of my heart or into the inner rooms of my conscience. I will imprison his words in the outer court of my soul. And perhaps they may go on thinking this way, for many years.

Beloved, this may be the norm for unbelievers, but it was hardly acceptable for the professed people of God then, and it is not acceptable now. Let us see from these verses, that although Zedekiah thought that he had everything under his control, it was not too hard for God to prevail over his stubborn resistance to His word, or to bring him to a very difficult place where he would be forced to believe in God's sovereignty, when God desired to deal with him. For although Zedekiah thought that he had everything under his control, it was not too hard for God to deal with this man. And it will not be too difficult for God to deal with any of us, either, or with our sinful nation. I want you to see that God's word would come to pass, and Zedekiah would not be able to prevent it from happening. He would fight long and hard against the Chaldeans, but he would not succeed. And this will be the case with all people who think that they can fight against God. No matter how convinced they are, that they can stand it out against God, and against all His expectations of them, they will not succeed. Though they fight long and hard, no man shall be able to successfully resist God's sovereign rule over their lives. They shall not succeed in nullifying God's word or His counsel.

It is good for every Christian, and every person who does not believe in God's sovereignty over all men, to study history. Let me read to you about a man named Julian the Apostate; one of the sons of Julius Constantinus. He was a member of the Constantinian dynasty, and he was orphaned as a child. He was born in 331 A.D. With his brother Gallus, he was entrusted for his education to Eusebius of Nicomedia. Eusebius gave them Mardonius for their tutor, and so Julian was given an excellent education. They were brought up in the Christian religion and compelled to enter the order of priests, which appears to have disgusted Julian, who at the age of 24, went to Athens. While he was there, he became acquainted with Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great. In this same period he was also initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, in which he enjoyed the instruction of some renowned heathen philosophers, and he embraced their false religion. On his coming to the throne, he then sought to restore the Pagan worship in all its splendor. (Now, you might remember that Constantine the Great had made the Roman Empire officially Christian in 323 A.D, putting an end to the Emperor worship and the great persecutions of Christians which had lasted for several centuries.

But on assuming the throne in 361, Julian opposed the Christians, and he took from the churches their riches, which often were very great. And after failing in the attempt to induce Christians, by flattery, to renounce their faith, he did all in his power to make their situation disagreeable. He forbade them to plead before a court of justice, or to receive offices under the state. He did not even permit them to publicly profess their religion; and he attempted to falsify the prophecy of Christ with regard to the temple at Jerusalem. What he did, was that he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple about 250 years after its destruction. But in this attempt he was completely foiled, for historians tell us that flames of fire belching forth from subterraneous caverns at the building site slew many of the workmen, and caused the undertaking to be entirely abandoned. Julian eventually died from a wound that he received in a battle, in the 34th year of his age. When he was struck by an

arrow and was bleeding to death from it, he threw his own blood into the air, and his last words were—“O Galilean, Thou hast conquered.” He was referring to the fact that it was our Lord who had the last say concerning his life. What should we learn from this? – We should learn that if the Lord will not prevail over us with His word; if we lock it up and do not receive it, He will still prevail over us by His judgments against us, in both this life and the next. Nothing is too hard for Him in overcoming the stubborn resistance of sinful men.

2nd – It is not too hard for the Lord to secure all of our material and spiritual interests, even during times of calamity. (verses 6-15)

Verse 6 says – “And Jeremiah said, ‘The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, ‘Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.’” “Then Hanamel my uncle’s son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, ‘Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.’” “Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.” “So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money – seventeen shekels of silver.” “And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales.” “So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.” “Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days.’” For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.’”

Here we see in verses 6 and 7 the Lord putting Jeremiah into the land speculation business. Here he is, a prisoner in the king’s court and his cousin Hanamel comes to him in the court of the prison and he says – Please buy my field.” You will remember that Jeremiah was single man with no family; he must have saved back a little money in his duties as a priest. Hanamel had become poor during this time of the siege and had come to the place where he wanted to sell his land to someone so he could survive and then he remembered that Jeremiah did have the right of inheritance and redemption. He would go to Jeremiah in Jerusalem and say – “Buy my field”. This is what he did, and Jeremiah was told by the Lord that this was indeed what he should do. He said – “Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.”

Turn with me over to Leviticus 25 and we will read of the right of redemption. It is found in verses 23-28. “The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.” “And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.” “If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.” “Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession.” “But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall return to his possession.”

We have here the law of purchasing back land sold to another, by a redeemer relative. Jeremiah’s help to his cousin and to all his extended family in Anathoth, city of the priests, would allow him to keep this land and any houses on the property, in their family. And then it would permanently be a part of the lasting earthly inheritance given them by the Lord. Jeremiah was fearing the Lord in this matter, and he was showing a godly love for his cousin as well. He was looking out for him in this holy way. In the year of Jubilee, the 50th year, the land could freely be given back to his cousin, and thus he would have redeemed the inheritance; he would have helped his family; in this earthly saving way, in regard to retaining their property. So, too, Jesus Christ has become the kinsman-redeemer of His

people; securing our everlasting inheritance. We through our sin became poor and could not have any everlasting inheritance. Sin threatened our souls with infinite loss. But because Jesus Christ has “purchased the field” of our inheritance by shedding his precious blood at the cross. We who have believed in Him, now have an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and laid up in heaven for us. It will not fade away.

No, it is not too hard for the Lord to secure our earthly material interests, and it is not too hard for God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to purchase for all sinners who will apply to Him, an eternal inheritance. If you will come by faith to Him today, and ask Him, “Please buy this field”, of my heart and my life; He will do so. “Come ye sinners, poor and wretched, weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity joined with power.” “He is able, He is able, He is willing, doubt no more.” So Jeremiah took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; and he gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel, his uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.” This he did, before them all. Then he charged Baruch before them, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days.’” “For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.’”

Jeremiah was prophesying the eventual return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, to their own land after the 70 years were up. God was telling him that and he and others of the Jews would repossess their lands. Let us see that he did this as an act of faith; knowing the word of the Lord to him was true. And, you and I need to see from this that we too must trust that all of God’s promises are “Yes”, and they are “Amen” in Christ, to the glory of God, in terms of the future for us, as Christians. Since Christ has purchased a spiritual land for us, let us be believing that we shall inherit all the blessings which Christ has purchased for us, at the right time in our lives. The promises of God are meant to bring you great hope, dear Christian, of God’s very real work of grace and His faithfulness to you, in the times when all seems lost. He will apply His great work of redemption to you individually, as a believing person, and you will come to understand that His plans to always do you good, He always has you in His holy mind. And He will remember continually to do you good, all through your life.

And we can also say that He will be faithful in terms of his plans for the whole Church down through time, and into eternity. The Jubilee year of redemption, spiritually speaking, for all of His Church, has been purchased by Christ to free them from all their sin debts and to liberate them from all spiritual bondage, and to apply to them all of His rich blessings of grace in order to bring them to eternal glory. And these will be applied to all of God’s spiritual Israel, at the right time and in the right way, throughout all generations. The blessings of the triumph of Christ’s Church over all of her enemies will come for both Jews and Gentiles together in the Church of Jesus Christ, according to the Scripture prophecies. When I say at the right time, I mean that Christ’s redemption in this Church age was first applied first to the elect Jews and some Gentiles in the days of the apostles, and because Israel as a nation generally rejected Christ, the apostle Paul and others said they were going to preach to the Gentiles. And indeed, in terms of the conversion of individual elect sinners, all down through this Church age, this redemption has been effectually applied by God, since the ascension of our Lord to glory. The year of Jubilee is a lively type of the gospel.

Andrew Bonar in his commentary on Leviticus says – “Does the Jubilee represent the preaching of the gospel?” “Some argue that it does, because Isaiah 61: 1 and 2, as used by Jesus of Nazareth, seems to be clothed in the language of the Jubilee.” “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” He says, “The true answer to this is, that Jesus was the High Priest who blew the jubilee trumpet throughout all the land of Israel, when He proclaimed this.” “But then

Jesus seems to have intended to proclaim, at that time, only that the rights and privileges of the jubilee year should belong to all His true Israel.” “The true time of the actual jubilee was not yet come; for the Day of Atonement was not yet past, nor had the High Priest gone in within the veil with His sacrifice, far less come forth from within the veil.”

“It is clear, therefore, that our Lord’s ministry was not the fulfilment of this type, but only the prelude of it; as if the High Priest of Israel had, on the morning of the Day of Atonement, proclaimed to all the worshippers, that whoever was of the seed of Israel should at the close of the day, hear the glad sound of entire deliverance, and enter on a year of rest.” “Christ’s First Coming gives the earnest of those blessings which His Second Coming shall give in full.” “The proper fulfilment of the type is found in the events referred to in Isaiah 27: 13, “So it shall be in that day that the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” “The time of fulfilment is thus indicated to be the time of Israel’s final restoration, and the time of the Lord’s glorious appearing.” (end of quote) I could say more here, but let’s go on.

3rd – It is not too hard for God to show us that what seems stupid or ridiculous in men’s eyes may actually be perfect wisdom in His eyes. (verses 16-35 and 42-44)

“Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying: ‘Ah, Lord God!’ “Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm.” “There is nothing too hard for You.” “You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them – the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts.” “You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.” “You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day.” “You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them – “a land flowing with milk and honey.” “And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law.” “They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them.” “Look, the siege mounds!” “They have come to the city to take it, and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence.” “What You have spoken has happened; there You see it!” “And You have said to me, O Lord God, ‘Buy the field for money, and take witnesses!’ – yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.” “Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, ‘Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.’ “Is there anything too hard for Me?”

Now, the reason that God had Hanamel come to Jeremiah and ask him to buy his field was to picture what God’s purpose was to be towards the nation in the future. But we learn here, from Jeremiah’s reaction that often we cannot see God’s purpose in the things that He ordains for us in our lives. And so we find our present position to seem stupid or ridiculous. This was the case with Jeremiah. He knew that it was God’s will that he buy the land, but he also looked out and saw the siege mounds and that Babylonian barbarians were sweeping through the land destroying everything and taking captives away; far away from their homes. His countrymen were being delivered to the sword, to pestilence, and famine. It seemed utterly ridiculous and stupid to buy this field and take witnesses to sign and seal the deeds and put them in an earthen vessel for many days. What difference would it make anyway when they country was being destroyed?

But God answers Jeremiah with his own words of verse 17, in verse 27 – “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.” “Is there anything too difficult for Me?” Yes, it is true, Jeremiah, that I have delivered Jerusalem to the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. But it is also true that I have plans for this nation and the godly remnant, plans of welfare, not of calamity, to give them a future and a hope. Verse 42 says – “Just as I have brought all this calamity, so I will bring on them all the good that I

have promised them.” I do not know what calamity the Lord may have brought you into, whether it is long term health problems or being looked down upon because of your stand for truth. But if you are trusting in God, through Jesus Christ, then God would have you to know that He intends to bring to you all the good He has promised that He will bring.”

He does indeed cause all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. This may sound trite or ridiculous to some; that God would promise you good and seek to give you hope, in the midst of calamity. Some people think that we shouldn't give verses like Romans 8: 28 to people who are suffering or in calamity. But surely God would have you to receive His promises rather than that you would disdain them as stupid. Each of us needs to be very careful that we do not cut off our own comforts and encouragements by attempting to be wise according to our own understanding. Dear ones, the Lord will minister grace to you, and peace and blessing, if you will receive His Word. It is not too hard for the Lord to show you that what may seem ridiculous to you now, may be essential to your spiritual welfare later. Let us lay hold of His promise, that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

And 4th – It is not too hard for the Lord to change His mind toward you , and your heart toward Him.

Verses 36-40 say – “Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.’ “They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.” “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.” “Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.”

Now, I hope that you can see that the precious and magnificent promises that are given here relate not just to the return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity, but also, and just as significantly, to God's bringing them back to their own land, out of all the countries where God has driven them in His anger, in New Testament times. He has brought a great number of them back and made them a political nation once again. But He has not yet brought them to salvation, or caused them to dwell safely in the land. He has not yet given them one heart and one way, that they may fear Him forever, for the good of them and their children after them. But certainly He will someday when He makes an everlasting covenant with them, that He will not turn away from doing them good. He will put the fear of Himself in their hearts so that they will not depart from Him, and He will rejoice over them to do them good. And they shall be planted in their land with all of His heart and with all of His soul. Truly this is what we ought to pray for, for them, brethren.

But let us also see, that all people in all nations who will trust in Jesus, shall have this everlasting covenant made with them; that our God will not turn away from doing good to all of His spiritual Israel. It is the Lord who causes you to dwell in safety. It is the Lord who brings you back from your captivity in sin. It is the Lord who turns His anger away from you and who has poured it on upon His Son for your sake. He is the One who gives you a new heart to want to be with God's people, His church. He is the One who is continually rejoicing over you to do you good. Will you not thank Him and praise Him for such a great salvation, even now, and determine that you will by His grace, walk in His ways?