



Run with the Horses – The Pursuit for Manhood.

“So, Jeremiah, if you’re worn out in this footrace with men, what makes you think you can race against horses?”
– Jeremiah 12:5

We long to live life to the fullest. We desire to merge freedom and spontaneity with purpose and meaning. Why then do we, as men, often find our lives boring, adventure-less, and fighting addiction to medicate our pain? Or else so busy, so full of chaos, but still devoid of fulfillment? How do we learn to risk, to trust, to pursue wholeness and excellence—to run with the horses in the midst of life? More is known of the life of Jeremiah than any other prophet, and his life is far more significant than his teaching. This study will be a model of manhood as portrayed by the prophet Jeremiah.

THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP! - Psalm 119:32; Jeremiah 37:13-21; 38:7-13.

Highland Colony Men’s Roundtable
www.MensTable.com

A Man will not journey to the goal of manhood without true friends.

July 25, 2019

Bible Verses: Jeremiah 12:5; Psalm 119:32; Jeremiah 37:13-21; Jeremiah 38:7-13

Music: Baxter Black: Equine Ego

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyjGMCQyWOY>

Resources: *Run with the Horses – The Quest for Life at Its Best* by Eugene H. Peterson

Videos: Some of the funniest scenes in Andy Griffith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RFc4ieSe48>

Monty Python: Who made you king?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZP5Cie7K1g>

Shawshank Redemption - Red describing Andy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKinbA4F18>

Meet Jeremiah

1. _____ → The nation of Israel was split after the death of Solomon. His son Rehoboam was set to become the next king. One of Solomon’s servants, Jeroboam rebelled. The ten tribes of the north rejected Rehoboam and embraced the leadership of Jeroboam. The two tribes of the south—Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to King Rehoboam. The result of tribal discord and political unrest resulted in the split.
2. _____ → In chapters 37 & 38 of Jeremiah decisive historical events are taking place. The nation is being radically altered. Powerful theological realities are emerging. Jeremiah is in the middle of it all. But Jeremiah, while not oblivious to the big issues, is mostly dealing with persons, persons with names. Named persons formed the raw material for Jeremiah’s daily life of faith. Every life of faith, whether it is conspicuous or obscure, is worked out in the context of persons not unlike the persons with whom Jeremiah rubbed shoulders. Three men of Jeremiah’s agenda are representatively significant: Irijah the Guard, Zedekiah the King, and Ebed-melek the Ethiopian Official.

Jeremiah – Irijah the Guard

1. _____ → Jeremiah has given counsel to the leaders and had preached to the people that the Babylonian presence was God’s judgment: it should be accepted and submitted to. They had sinned and they were being judged. The people didn’t like it! They kept trying to find ways to avoid the reality of judgment, to think in other categories, like loyalty and disloyalty or patriotism, rather than those of right and wrong, sin and responsibility.
2. _____ → Irijah was a nuisance—obnoxious and annoying. He was a man who used his job to escape his responsibilities as a person. He was a bureaucrat in the worst sense of the work, a person who hides behind the rules and prerogatives of a job description to do work that destroys people. Without considering morality or righteousness, God or person, he did his job.
3. _____ → Jeremiah did not bluster and curse. He did not threaten and rail. Nor was he a lifeless doormat. He asserted his innocence and he endured; he accepted this stupidity with, it seems, composure, and persisted in his job.

Jeremiah – Zedekiah the King

1. _____ → Zedekiah was not properly the king but a puppet king appointed by the Babylonians. The actual king, Jehoiachin, had been taken into exile in 598 B.C. along with most of the ruling class of the city. His uncle, Zedekiah, was appointed to rule in his place.
2. _____ → Zedekiah must have been one of the most difficult persons in all of Jeremiah’s life. Josiah had been Jeremiah’s close friend and Jehoiakim had been his implacable enemy, but Zedekiah was spineless. He did whatever he was told by the Babylonians. He was easily swayed. He was a marshmallow. He received impressions from anyone who pushed hard enough. Zedekiah shows that good intentions are worthless if they are not coupled with character development. He was hardly a person at all.
3. _____ → Jeremiah was a contrast to Zedekiah. He was formed from within by obedience to God and faith in God.

Jeremiah – Ebed-melek the Official

1. _____ → Ebed-melek was a foreigner, a black man from Ethiopia and an official in the administrative government. When he learned that Jeremiah was in the cistern, he knew that he would die quickly if not rescued. He rescued Jeremiah. Ebed-melek, the Ethiopian eunuch, risked his life in rescuing Jeremiah. Being a foreigner he had not legal rights. He was going against popular opinion in a crisis that was hysterical with wartime emotion.
2. _____ → Jeremiah was never popular. He was never surrounded with applause. But he was not friendless. Jeremiah needed friends. No one who is whole is self-sufficient. The whole life, the complete life, cannot be lived with haughty independence. Our goal cannot be to NOT need anyone. One of the evidences of Jeremiah’s wholeness was his capacity to receive friendship, to let others help him, to be accessible to mercy. It is easier to extend friendship to others than to receive it ourselves.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. "Who am I?" Quote by Erik Erikson.

I must register a certain impatience with the faddish equation, never suggested by me, of the term identity with the question, "Who am I?" This question nobody would ask himself except in a more or less transient morbid state, in a creative self-confrontation, or in an adolescent state sometimes combining both; wherefore on occasion I find myself asking a student who claims that he is in an "identity crisis" whether he is complaining or boasting. The pertinent question, if it can be put into the first person at all, would be, "What do I want to make of myself, and what do I have to work with?" -- Erik H. Erikson

2. When has God used an obnoxious person to show you His plan?
3. When has God used an incompetent person to build your character?
4. Who can you count on as a true friend?

Bible Verses – The Message

Jeremiah 12:5 - 5 "So, Jeremiah, if you're worn out in this footrace with men, what makes you think you can race against horses? And if you can't keep your wits during times of calm, what's going to happen when troubles break loose like the Jordan in flood?"

Psalm 119:32 - 32 I'll run the course you lay out for me if you'll just show me how.

Jeremiah 37:13-21 - 13 When he got to the Benjamin Gate, the officer on guard there, Irijah son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, grabbed Jeremiah the prophet, accusing him, "You're deserting to the Chaldeans!" ¹⁴ "That's a lie," protested Jeremiah. "I wouldn't think of deserting to the Chaldeans." ¹⁵ The police were furious with Jeremiah. They beat him up and threw him into jail in the house of Jonathan the secretary of state. (They were using the house for a prison cell.) ¹⁶ So Jeremiah entered an underground cell in a cistern turned into a dungeon. He stayed there a long time. ¹⁷ Later King Zedekiah had Jeremiah brought to him. The king questioned him privately, "Is there a Message from God?" "There certainly is," said Jeremiah. "You're going to be turned over to the king of Babylon." ¹⁸ Jeremiah continued speaking to King Zedekiah: "Can you tell me why you threw me into prison? What crime did I commit against you or your officials or this people? ¹⁹ And tell me, whatever has become of your prophets who preached all those sermons saying that the king of Babylon would never

attack you or this land? ²⁰ Listen to me, please, my master - my king! Please don't send me back to that dungeon in the house of Jonathan the secretary. I'll die there!" ²¹ So King Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah be assigned to the courtyard of the palace guards. He was given a loaf of bread from Bakers' Alley every day until all the bread in the city was gone. And that's where Jeremiah remained - in the courtyard of the palace guards.

Jeremiah 38:7-13 - 7 Ebed-melek the Ethiopian, a court official assigned to the royal palace, heard that they had thrown Jeremiah into the cistern. While the king was holding court in the Benjamin Gate, ⁸ Ebed-melek went immediately from the palace to the king and said, ⁹ "My master, O king - these men are committing a great crime in what they're doing, throwing Jeremiah the prophet into the cistern and leaving him there to starve. He's as good as dead. There isn't a scrap of bread left in the city." ¹⁰ So the king ordered Ebed-melek the Ethiopian, "Get three men and pull Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies." ¹¹ Ebed-melek got three men and went to the palace wardrobe and got some scraps of old clothing, which they tied together and lowered down with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. ¹² Ebed-melek the Ethiopian called down to Jeremiah, "Put these scraps of old clothing under your armpits and around the ropes." Jeremiah did what he said. ¹³ And so they pulled Jeremiah up out of the cistern by the ropes. But he was still confined in the courtyard of the palace guard.

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RUN WITH HORSES



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– Jeremiah 12:5 (The Message)*

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Meet Jeremiah

1. **North & South Kingdoms** → The nation of Israel was split after the death of Solomon. His son Rehoboam was set to become the next king. One of Solomon's servants, Jeroboam rebelled. The ten tribes of the north rejected Rehoboam and embraced the leadership of Jeroboam. The two tribes of the south—Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to King Rehoboam. The result of tribal discord and political unrest resulted in the split.
2. **God Works His Plan Through People** → In chapters 37 & 38 of Jeremiah decisive historical events are taking place. The nation is being radically altered. Powerful theological realities are emerging. Jeremiah is in the middle of it all. But Jeremiah, while not oblivious to the big issues, is mostly dealing with persons, persons with names. Named persons formed the raw material for Jeremiah's daily life of faith. Every life of faith, whether it is conspicuous or obscure, is worked out in the context of persons not unlike the persons with whom Jeremiah rubbed shoulders. Three men of Jeremiah's agenda are representatively significant: Irijah the Guard, Zedekiah the King, and Ebed-melek the Ethiopian Official.

Jeremiah – Irijah the Guard

1. **God's Way of Restoring Wholeness** → Jeremiah has given counsel to the leaders and had preached to the people that the Babylonian presence was God's judgment: it should be accepted and submitted to. They had sinned and they were being judged. The people didn't like it! They kept trying to find ways to avoid the reality of judgment, to think in other categories, like loyalty and disloyalty or patriotism, rather than those of right and wrong, sin and responsibility.
2. **Bureaucratic Authority** → Irijah was a nuisance—obnoxious and annoying. He was a man who used his job to escape his responsibilities as a person. He was a bureaucrat in the worst sense of the work, a person who hides behind the rules and prerogatives of a job description to do work that destroys people. Without considering morality or righteousness, God or person, he did his job.
3. **Response of Endurance** → Jeremiah did not bluster and curse. He did not threaten and rail. Nor was he a lifeless doormat. He asserted his innocence and he endured; he accepted this stupidity with, it seems, composure, and persisted in his job.

Jeremiah – Zedekiah the King

1. **Appointed Leader** → Zedekiah was not properly the king but a puppet king appointed by the Babylonians. The actual king, Jehoiachin, had been taken into exile in 598 B.C. along with most of the ruling class of the city. His uncle, Zedekiah, was appointed to rule in his place.
2. **Weak** → Zedekiah must have been one of the most difficult persons in all of Jeremiah's life. Josiah had been Jeremiah's close friend and Jehoiakim had been his implacable enemy, but Zedekiah was spineless. He did whatever he was told by the Babylonians. He was easily swayed. He was a marshmallow. He received impressions from anyone who pushed hard enough. Zedekiah shows that good intentions are worthless if they are not coupled with character development. He was hardly a person at all.
3. **Faithful** → Jeremiah was a contrast to Zedekiah. He was formed from within by obedience to God and faith in God.

Jeremiah – Ebed-melek the Official

1. **A True Friend** → Ebed-melek was a foreigner, a black man from Ethiopia and an official in the administrative government. When he learned that Jeremiah was in the cistern, he knew that he would die quickly if not rescued. He rescued Jeremiah. Ebed-melek, the Ethiopian eunuch, risked his life in rescuing Jeremiah. Being a foreigner he had not legal rights. He was going against popular opinion in a crisis that was hysterical with wartime emotion.
2. **The Power of a Friend** → Jeremiah was never popular. He was never surrounded with applause. But he was not friendless. Jeremiah needed friends. No one who is whole is self-sufficient. The whole life, the complete life, cannot be lived with haughty independence. Our goal cannot be to NOT need anyone. One of the evidences of Jeremiah's wholeness was his capacity to receive friendship, to let others help him, to be accessible to mercy. It is easier to extend friendship to others than to receive it ourselves.

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