

9TH YAG RETREAT (30 APRIL- 2 MAY 2009)

Theme: I Have Hope

Texts: Jeremiah, Lamentations

Venue: Bethany

8.00pm

Thursday, 30 April 2009

Session #1

GOALS OF THE YAG RETREAT

1. Comprehension of the vital importance of possessing Hope
2. Comprehension of the deadly danger of not possessing Hope
3. Challenge to cultivate a strong sense of Biblical Hope
4. Concerted effort needed to practise Hope
5. Condensed knowledge of the doctrine of Hope
 - a) Vitally related words (Positive)
 - i) Knowledge of God's will
 - ii) Faith in the word of God
 - iii) Exercising of trust in God
 - b) Vitally related words (Negative)
 - i) Ignorance of God's will
 - ii) Unbelief
 - iii) No exercise of trust in God
6. Consideration of the life of Jeremiah
 - a) Book of Jeremiah
 - b) Lamentations
7. Challenge to practise seeking and cultivating Biblical Hope

INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF HOPE IN THE SCRIPTURES

TWO MAIN LINES OF DEVELOPMENT OBSERVED

1. Old Testament

a) The theme of Hope is more geared towards life on earth

b) This theme is developed

- i) Openly (Psalms 42, 43, 71)
- ii) Quietly (The Historical and Prophetic Books)
- iii) The story of redemption is a story of Hope

2. New Testament

a) The theme of Hope is more geared to our Eternal Hope in Christ

- i) Hope in life is not ignored though
- ii) Hope in life is anchored through the exercise of faith in the Lord
- iii) Believers are exhorted to hold fast to their Eternal Hope in Christ

b) This theme is developed

- i) Pauline Epistles
- ii) Petrine Epistles
- iii) The Apocalypse (Revelation)

OUR FOCUS AT THE YAG RETREAT

1. Choosing two texts to study in some depth

2. Lamentations and Jeremiah

3. Greater focus- Greater depth possible

4. Highly relevant

A. STRUGGLES IN LIFE

1. Setbacks

- a) Financial
- b) Familial
- c) Personal

2. Sickness

- a) Long-term
- b) Terminal

3. Solutions

a) Secular approach

- i) Worldly wisdom
- ii) Carnal

b) Spiritual

- i) Biblical
- ii) Principles
- iii) Practices

B. STARTING OUT IN STRENGTH

1. A significant start

- a) A call to the prophetic ministry Jeremiah 1:1-8
- b) A call to believe the promises of God Jeremiah 1:9-19
 - i) The Presence of God Jeremiah 1:8, 19
 - ii) The power of God Jeremiah 1:10

c) A call to prepare for the ministry Jeremiah 1:17-19

i) Courage Jeremiah 1:17

ii) Strength Jeremiah 1:18

2. A strong prophetic ministry Jeremiah 1-4

a) Preaching against sins Jeremiah 1-4

b) Pleading with people to return to God Jeremiah 3-4

c) Praying for the nation Jeremiah 3:22-25

C. STRUGGLING IN FAITH, LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Early signs of struggles

a) Doubts Jeremiah 4:10

i) About God

ii) About God's promises

iii) About God's plans

b) Discouragement Jeremiah 4:19-21

i) Pain in the heart Jeremiah 4:19

ii) Problem of the spectre of war Jeremiah 4:20

iii) Purpose of God feared (confirmation of war) Jeremiah 4:28-29

c) Denial Jeremiah 5:1-5

i) The search for righteous people (among the poor) Jeremiah 5:4

ii) The search for righteous people (among the great) Jeremiah 5:5

2. More signs of struggles

a) Grievous Sorrow Jeremiah 8:18

b) Great hurt Jeremiah 8:21

c) Copious tears Jeremiah 9:1

3. Shock Discovery

a) Deadly Schemes against Jeremiah discovered Jeremiah 11:18-19

b) Despair and anger Jeremiah 11:20

D. SINKING INTO DESPAIR

1. Dwelling on things in the past

From a Princess to a slave Lamentations 1:1

Remembering all her pleasant things Lamentations 1:7

2. Dwelling on thoughts of sorrowful discouragement

a) Bitter tears Lamentations 1:2a, 16

b) Loneliness Lamentations 1:2b, 4, 9

c) Treacherous friends Lamentations 1:2c

3. Dwelling on sins

a) Admission of grave sins Lamentations 1:8

b) Yoke of transgressions Lamentations 1:14

c) Rebellion confessed Lamentations 1:18, 20

4. Desolation felt

a) No comfort Lamentations 1:2, 4, 9, 16, 17

b) Distress of the soul expressed Lamentations 1:20

c) Sighs expressed Lamentations 1:21, 22

d) Heart faint Lamentations 1:22

E. SEEKING A WAY OUT

1. Candidness necessary
2. Confession a must
3. Confrontation of feelings of anguish enjoined
4. Confession that God is righteous- a necessity Lamentations 1:18

F. SIGNIFICANT LESSONS LEARNED

1. Before Hope can come there must be:
 - a) A confession of our weaknesses
 - b) A confession of our sins
2. Biblical Hope
 - a) This will come only after we have come to the Lord in full repentance
 - b) Genuine Hope cannot be built on a life that has not dealt with the problem of sin
3. Important text to bear in mind

*“Only acknowledge your iniquity,
That you have transgressed against the LORD your God...
And have not obeyed My voice, says the LORD.” Jeremiah 3:13*