

9TH YAG RETREAT
Theme: I Have Hope
Texts: Jeremiah, Lamentations

9.00am
Session #6

2 May 2009

A. MATURE REFLECTIONS

1. Devastation of the land noted Lamentations 4:1
 - a) Suffering of the children Lamentations 4:4
 - b) Suffering of the privileged class Lamentations 4:5
2. Degeneration of the sons of Zion
 - a) From gold to clay Lamentations 4:2
 - b) Cruelty Lamentations 4:3
3. Punishment from the Lord
 - a) Compared to Sodom and Gomorrah Lamentations 4:6
 - b) Nazarites go unrecognized in the streets Lamentations 4:7-8
 - c) Ravages of war Lamentations 4:9-10
 - i) Hunger Lamentations 4:9
 - ii) Cannibalism Lamentations 4:10
 - d) Acceptance of the consequences of sin
 - i) Sins of the prophets Lamentations 4:13a
 - ii) Sins of the priests Lamentations 4:13b
 - iii) Wandered blind Lamentations 4:14
 - iv) Rejection by people Lamentations 4:14-15
 - v) Failure of political allies Lamentations 4:17-21

B. REALISTIC HOPE

1. Punishment concluded

*“The punishment of your iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion”
Lamentations 4:22a*

- a) Punishment had to be meted out
- b) Punishment had to be accepted
- c) Punishment completed and ended

(Subject of Chastening: Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-11)

2. Captivity over

“He will no longer send you into captivity” Lamentations 4:22b

- a) Captivity was never meant to last forever
- b) Lessons during captivity to be learned well (Cf. Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel)
 - i) Faith
 - ii) Faithfulness
 - iii) Love for God’s word
 - iv) Prayer
 - v) A close relationship with God that is treasured
 - vi) Ministry for God

C. PLEADING WITH DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AND RENEWED HOPE

1. Pleading with God to “remember”

Lamentations 5:1

- a) Pleading for mercy
- b) Pleading as God’s restored people

2. Pleading “inheritance” Lamentations 5:2

- a) Land overrun by foreigners
- b) Pleading for the return of the land

3. Pleading the suffering of the people of God

a) Children Lamentations 5:3a

b) Mothers Lamentations 5:3b

c) Intense hardship Lamentations 5:4-14

i) Difficulty in making a living Lamentations 5:4-6, 9

ii) A burdened generation Lamentations 5:7

iii) Oppression Lamentations 5:8

iv) Famine Lamentations 5:10

v) Oppression of womenfolk Lamentations 5:11

vi) Princes and elders not respected Lamentations 5:12

vii) Boys and young men bullied Lamentations 5:13

viii) Normal decent life disrupted Lamentations 5:14

ix) Joy ceased; mourning prevails Lamentations 5:15

x) Consequences of sin accepted Lamentations 5:16

4. Pleading for Restoration Lamentations 5:19-22

a) Pleading before the throne of grace

“You, O LORD, remain forever; Your throne from generation to generation”
Lamentations 5:19 (Hebrews 4:16)

b) Pleading to be restored

“Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored” Lamentations 5:21

D. PROMISE OF FULL RESTORATION

Jeremiah 30-31

1. Captivity to end Jeremiah 30:3a

2. Return to Israel promised Jeremiah 30:3b

3. Fear to be banished Jeremiah 30:10

4. Promise of the Presence of God Jeremiah 30:11
5. Promise of Mercy Jeremiah 30:18
6. God's people will be established Jeremiah 30:20, 22
7. God's everlasting love will be outpoured Jeremiah 31:3
8. Redemption will be given Jeremiah 31:11
9. Joy will return Jeremiah 31:12-13
10. Abundance will be experienced again Jeremiah 31:14, 23
11. A New Covenant will be given Jeremiah 31:31-34

E. CULTIVATING HOPE

1. Establish starting point Jeremiah 1

- a) Calling
- b) Initial faith
- c) Continuing faith

2. Evaluate faith and strength Jeremiah 12

- a) Discernment and Understanding of life
- b) Depth of response to adverse circumstances
- c) Demanding challenges

- i) Footmen Jeremiah 12:5
- ii) Horses Jeremiah 12:5

3. Enduring Hope

- a) False understanding of Hope
 - i) Mere euphoric feelings
 - ii) Unrealistic optimism

- iii) Foolish wishing
- b) Long Term (Life-long) approach/outlook of life
 - i) Short-term mindset to be abandoned
 - ii) Long-haul approach to be adopted
 - iii) Concrete plans
 - iv) Strength of spirit
- c) Mindset
 - i) Of faith in the Lord
 - ii) Of trust in the Lord's will
 - iii) Of hope for the future
 - iv) Of personal commitment to do our part faithfully

4. Example of a Reasoned Hope with reference to life on earth (Pauline)

- a) Access to God by grace through Christ Romans 5:1-2
- b) Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God Romans 5:2b
- c) Glorifying in tribulation Romans 5:3a
- d) Believing that tribulation produces perseverance Romans 5:3b
- e) Believing that perseverance produces character Romans 5:4a
- f) Believing that character produces hope Romans 5:4b
- g) Believing that hope does not disappoint Romans 5:5a
- h) Believing in the love of God outpoured in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us
Romans 5:5b

**F. NEW TESTAMENT FOCUS OF HOPE-
(IN THE SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL DIMENSIONS)**

1. Subjected in hope Romans 8:20
2. Hope in the glory of God Romans 5:2
3. Hope in things unseen Romans 8:24
4. If there is only hope in life on earth 1 Corinthians 15:19
5. Hope laid up in heaven Colossians 1:5
6. Christ in us- the Hope of glory Colossians 1:27
7. Hope of eternal life Titus 1:2; 3:7
8. Hope as an anchor Hebrews 6:19
9. A living Hope 1 Peter 1:3
10. Ability to articulate our hope 1 Peter 3:15

ADDENDA

TEXTS THAT TOUCH ON PROBLEMS THAT THREATEN TO ROB HOPE

1. A significant number of such texts may be found (Psalms)

- a) Psalm 6
- b) Psalm 22
- c) Psalm 31
- d) Psalm 32
- e) Psalm 35
- f) Psalm 38
- g) Psalm 41
- h) Psalm 42
- i) Psalm 55
- j) Psalm 56

2. Importance of these texts:-

- a) They teach us much about the presence of evil in the world
- b) They teach us about problems:-
 - i) How they can affect us adversely
 - ii) How they will affect us deeply
- c) They teach us about the nature of sin
 - i) The perversity of sin
 - ii) The power of sin

c) They teach us about ourselves

- i) How weak we are
- ii) How prone we are to feeling despondent
- iii) How we can end up with feelings of hopelessness

d) They teach us about how we can bring God into our life

- i) Through knowledge of God's word
- ii) Through the exercise of faith/trust
- iii) Through prayer
- iv) Through meditation
- v) Through hope

TEXTS THAT TOUCH ON GOD'S STRONG DEALINGS WITH SINFUL MAN

1. Serious Charges of God against Israel/Judah

- a) Rebellion Isaiah 1:2d, 23
- b) Laden with iniquity Isaiah 1:4b
- c) Corrupt Isaiah 1:4d
- d) Forsaken the Lord Isaiah 1:4e, 28
- e) Arrogance Isaiah 2: 11-17; 3:16
- f) Provoking of God Isaiah 3:8
- g) Oppression Isaiah 5:7

2. Struggles in Comprehension and Acceptance of God's Punitive Will

- a) Desolation of the country Isaiah 1:7
- b) Rejection of religious worship Isaiah 1:10-15
- c) Destruction of transgressors/sinners Isaiah 1:28
- d) Removal of leaders Isaiah 3:1-3
- e) Entering into judgment with Israel Isaiah 3:13-15
- f) Anger

3. Solemn texts that describe the above struggles

- a) Isaiah
- b) Jeremiah
- c) Lamentations
- d) Habakkuk
- e) Hosea
- f) Malachi

4. Significant truths that should have made a difference!

a) God's Promises

- i) Many promises of blessings
- ii) All promises are contingent upon faithfulness to God

b) God's Presence

- i) Manifestation
- ii) Hidden

c) God's Provision

- i) Abundance
- ii) All aspects (Spiritual and Material)

d) God's Power

- i) Evidenced
- ii) Awesome

e) God's Punitive Judgments

- i) Corrective purposes
- ii) Condemnation only where there is no returning to the Lord

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS THAT WERE RAISED

1. Hope as a System of Thinking

Romans 5, 8

a) Salvation

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|------|-------|-------------------------------|
| i) | Grace | The Basis |
| ii) | Faith | The Means |
| iii) | Hope | The yet-to-be-realised Future |

b) Hope

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| i) | Tribulation |
| ii) | Perseverance |
| iii) | Character |
| iv) | Hope |

c) Two vital principles man is subjected to Romans 8:18-25

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| i) | Subjected to futility |
| ii) | Subjected to hope |

2. Hope as a Personal Mindset

a) Content- Hope Lamentations 3:21

b) Choice (The Lord) - Hope Lamentations 3:24

c) Serving the Lord- Waiting Hope Lamentations 3:26

d) Humility- Hope Lamentations 3:29