

The Lord and His Workman

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Jeremiah 11-15.

B. Jeremiah was called to minister during a difficult time.

II. God promised to punish the evil doers in response to Jeremiah's prayer, but He would do it in His timing. It is hard dealing with God because He does things on His time schedule.

III. Jeremiah declared to God that He was right but voiced some vexing concerns about what He was doing—why does God let evil happen?

A. God responds by asking what Jeremiah will do when things get worse.

B. God does not promise to work out Jeremiah's problems—instead He says that things will get much worse.

C. The judgment was inevitable for the nation—there was nothing that Jeremiah could do to stop it.

D. The final message of God is compassion and love, but in between God does things we cannot quite understand. Christians must stand in this mystery.

IV. Jeremiah's sign.

A. God tells him to buy a pair of linen shorts and not wash them.

B. God was teaching Jeremiah that God chose Israel for intimacy (a pair of shorts is an intimate garment to a man).

C. God told Jeremiah to go to the Euphrates River and hide it there only to return later. Jeremiah found it deteriorated.

D. The life begins to rot that turns away from God.

1. It cannot be sustained on its own strength.

2. Man cannot be man apart from God.

V. Jeremiah asks God to restore Israel for His namesake, but God does not move.

A. When God gets this unmovable it appears to be a great threat to faith.

B. God however is not done with Jeremiah.

VI. Jeremiah prays for himself while his faith is failing.

- A. He wonders if God Himself would prove to be a liar.
- B. God deals with Jeremiah tenderly though—He promises to restore Jeremiah if he returns, making him a fortified wall of bronze.
- C. God affirms that He is the only source of strength in the time of trouble.

Application questions:

1. How would you respond to someone who challenges God's existence because of the existence of evil?

2. Have you ever experienced a time when God said no? What did you learn from the experience?

3. What examples come to mind of the life rotting that has turned away from God in your own experience? Explain.
