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“A Life that Bears God’s Name”

Jeremiah 15

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The word “Christian” is more than just a title; it’s an identity for those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. When we carry the identity of “Christian” we bear the Lord’s name. It means that we reflect him wherever we go, whatever we do, and with whomever we interact. We need to answer several questions: What are people learning about Christ through us? What is the glimpse of Jesus that we are giving to people? What things should characterize those who bear the Lord’s name? In this message, Pastor Gary shares five things Scripture teaches us about how we should live as men and women who bear the Lord’s name.

Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said: “Jeremiah [was] one of the prophets who would suffer [more] physically and emotionally than any of the other prophets. [Some] of the other prophets [were] brutally killed at the end of their life, but in the duration of their ministry, most times they were tolerated; they weren’t always listened to, but they were always tolerated. Jeremiah, however, [had] his enemies. [People didn’t] like him. They [didn’t] like what he was saying. They [didn’t] like the word of the Lord coming through him. So, they wanted him dead! It’s not only the assassination plot, [but] later on [in his life he] was beaten up, [put in stocks, and people] publicly called for his death. ... This is the way they treated him. It was constant [and] relentless. ... [But each time the Lord rescued and saved Jeremiah].”
 - a. **Jeremiah 20:1-2** - *“When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the chief officer in the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD’s temple.”*
 - b. **Jeremiah 26:7-8** - *“The priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the LORD. But as soon as*

Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, "You must die!" "

- c. **Jeremiah 38:6** - *"So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud."*
- d. **Jeremiah 15:21** - *"I will save you from the hands of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the cruel."*

2. **Jeremiah 15:16** - *"... I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty."*

- a. Jeremiah personalized God's word concerning what God was doing in his heart.
- b. Jeremiah was concerned about God's opinion about his life and how his life measured up against God's standard.
- c. Jeremiah was aware of the responsibility he had to represent the Lord, not only as a prophet, but everywhere he went, as well as in everything he said or did.
- d. Jeremiah's name in Hebrew is Yirmiyahu, which means God exalts, and his name also includes the root word for Yah-weh.
 - i. Pastor Gary said: "I think Jeremiah [was] keenly aware that he [represented] God wherever he [went] with whomever he [spoke with and] whatever he [did]. He [was] constantly aware that he [was] putting God on display. ... He [wanted] to make sure that he [was] bearing God's name properly. He [wanted] to make sure that he [was] reflecting the Lord well in his life. ... In [this] sense this is very applicable to us, because if you identify yourself as a Christ-follower, [having] yielded your life to Christ, and Jesus is Lord and Savior of your life, then [you also] bear his name... [This] is not just a title; it's an identity. ... This is not a negotiable thing! ... We have to be constantly aware of this. As a Christian, [we need to think about what Christians are supposed to look like, how Christians are supposed to act and behave, and what Christians are supposed to talk like]? [Our hope should be that we always reflect Christ!]"

Someone Who Bears God's Name Feeds On The Word Of God

- 3. **Jeremiah 15:16** - *"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight..."*
- 4. Pastor Gary said: "[It's clear that Jeremiah received and spoke the words of the Lord to the people, but] I think that it's always a wonderful reminder to us of the

importance, in general, of us reading the Word of God and getting all of what God has [for us]. [God has] spoken forth... through human vessels [who penned] the heart and the intention of God, and therefore, we need to take [the] Bible seriously... [The Bible] is his revelation for this and every previous and following generation. ... We must have a healthy and a hungry appetite for the Word of God. ... In order to bear the Lord's name correctly, in a world that needs to know Christ, [we must] first understand the heart of our Father. [We] won't know the heart of God unless we read the Word of God, [get] it into our hearts and our lives, that it might mold us and shape us that we might become more conformed into the image of Christ our Savior..."

a. **Psalm 119:103** - *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

5. We must be fed by, guided by, and governed by the Word of God, as it corrects, nourishes, admonishes, challenges, and encourages us.

6. Pastor Gary said: "The one who expects to properly bear the Lord's name cannot practice selective obedience to God's Word. [We] don't get to decide what parts of the Bible are worth obeying and what parts aren't. [There might be some] parts of the Bible that are easier to obey than others. There might be some parts of the Bible that come more naturally to [us] than other parts, but we must never read God's Word and think that [it's] just a bunch of suggestions. They are not! We must not read God's Word and think that it's just a list of rules. It's not! It's more than that. The ordinances, commands, and statutes of God are the wise counsel of an all-knowing, ever-present, all-loving God, who [is worthy of our praise, honor, and obedience]. ... The sure way to dishonor God is disobedience. And the sure way to honor God is through obedience."

a. **John 14:23-24a** - *"Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. ... He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.'"*

7. Pastor Gary said: "We must know the Scriptures, grow in the Scriptures, and show the Scriptures, by the way that we live."

a. **2 Timothy 3:15** - *"... [know] the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ."*

b. **2 Peter 3:18a** - *"... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*

c. **Philippians 2:15-16** - *"... you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life [to a crooked and depraved generation]..."*

d. **1 John 5:3** - *"This is love for God; to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome..."*

Someone Who Bears God's Name Avoids Bad Company

8. **Jeremiah 15:17a** - *"I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them..."*
9. **Psalms 1:1-2** - *"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."*
10. Pastor Gary said: "[Jeremiah wasn't] saying that he distanced himself from people because he was too good for them. ... We should never, as the church, think to ourselves that we're just [a] club and we're exclusive, and it's hard to get in our club, and we don't associate with other people outside the walls of the church, and we just need to make sure that we are only each other's friends and nobody's else's. That's ridiculous! We have to be salt and light to the world. God has called us to be a part of integrating with the world, only in so far as we're influencing the world, not [that] the world's influence on us would cause us to compromise our lives. We have to be very careful about this, [because it's] a very fine line. The world needs what you and I possess in terms of the love of Christ and the message of the Gospel. If we think that we're just going to rub shoulders with the world and hang out and do everything that they do, we're compromising our witness and God's not glorified, and his name's not born well. ... [Jeremiah's mission] was always to influence the world, [and] never let the world influence [him]. ... [Jeremiah] interacted with his world, but he never acted like his world. ... How can we ever expect anyone to want what we have if our lives look no different from theirs?"
 - a. **Jeremiah 15:19b** - *"Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them."*
11. **1 Peter 3:15b** - *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."*

Someone Who Bears God's Name Is Willing To Walk Alone

12. **Jeremiah 15:17b** - *"... I sat alone because your hand was on me..."*
13. Pastor Gary said: "The reality is that sometimes the life of the Christian is a lonely life. If you're really living for the Lord there will be times when you will be ostracized by people, you will feel strangely uncomfortable, [you] will be treated like 'odd man out,' and you will sometimes find yourself alone. ... When your values are different from the [world's] and when your convictions are different from the [world's] and when your standards are different from the [world's], you won't be able to [always]

fit in... and when you don't feel like you fit in you [will] sometimes feel strangely out of place, [and thus, you will] sometimes feel lonely. ...

14. Jesus knew loneliness and what it feels like to be abandoned.
 - a. Jesus' disciples deserted him after he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - i. **Matthew 26:55-56** - *"At that time Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled."*
 - b. When Jesus bore the sins of the world on the cross, he experienced separation and isolation.
 - i. **Matthew 27:46** - *"About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' - which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' "*
 - ii. **Isaiah 53:3** - *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."*
15. Pastor Gary said: "[Friends], we need to recognize that sometimes there will be lonely seasons in [our lives, and as Christians], when [we] determine that [we're] going to live differently than the rest of the world, [it] will be in those times of loneliness that Jesus will show himself to be [our] best friend."

Someone Who Bears God's Name Shares God's Feeling Of Indignation About Sin

16. **Jeremiah 15:17c** - *"... your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation."*
 - a. The Hebrew word for indignation is zaam, which literally means to froth at the mouth.
17. Pastor Gary said: "Sin should make us angry, and sin should make us angry because we first look at it in our own hearts and lives. ... We should be angry about sin in our own lives before we are ever angry about sin in the world. ... The worst place to be is when we sin and sin and sin, and we just don't have any conviction about it anymore. That's what the Bible refers to as a seared conscience. We become so used to sin that we get a calloused heart about it. ... [Concerning not always experiencing victory of sin], [as] long as you feel the conviction about it and continue to confess it before the Lord and ask for his help, you're going to be fine. The worst thing is to get to the place where you have no more conviction about it. Don't despise conviction because that's the Holy Spirit challenging [you]."

- a. [Jeremiah 15:18](#) - *“Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable?”*
- b. [Psalm 97:10](#) - *“Let those who love the LORD hate evil...”*

Someone Who Bears God’s Name Repents From Sin And Is Restored To Serve

- 18. [Jeremiah 15:19a](#) - *“Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me...’”*
- 19. Pastor Gary said: “It’s not enough for you and me to be distressed about sin; we have to repent of it. Being distressed is only half of it. Repenting is the other [half]. [In the New Testament, the Greek word for repent is metanoó, which means to change your mind]. In other words, you have to have a whole different mindset about sin and how much it grieves God and how much it grieves self, such that you would turn... from what you’re doing and go [in] the opposite direction. ... Repentance is a word that is commonly used throughout the Bible. [If we repent, we will be restored]! ... The only unusable person is an unrepentant person. When we come to the place of humility before the God... [and ask him for help and forgiveness concerning sin, he will forgive and restore and use us for his glory].
 - a. [Matthew 3:1-2](#) - *“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ ”*
 - b. [Mark 1:15](#) - *“ ‘The time has come,’ [Jesus] said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’ ”*
 - c. [Acts 3:19](#) - *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...”*
 - d. [1 John 1:9](#) - *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
 - e. [1 Peter 4:16](#) - *“... if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Jeremiah 15:15-21](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments and Scriptures regarding the ill-treatment Jeremiah experienced. (See #1 above)
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they’ve been treated in like-manner.
4. Spend time talking about Jeremiah’s being aware that he had personal responsibility when it came to bearing the name of the Lord. (See #2 above)

5. Read and discuss the Scriptures and Pastor Gary's comments about being fed by, guided by, and governed by God's Word. (See #3 and #4 above)
6. What are some of the ways you are being fed by, guided by, and governed by the Word of God?
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments concerning obedience to the whole counsel of God's Word. (See #6 above)
8. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared regarding knowing the Scriptures, growing in the Scriptures, and showing the Scriptures by the way you live. (See #7 above)
9. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways they are living a life for the Lord in the world. (See #8 through #10 above)
10. What are some of the ways you are sharing the truth of God's Word with others? (See #11 above)
11. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments concerning seasons of loneliness that every Christian will experience in life. (See #12 through #15 above)
12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about indignation for sin. (See #16 and #17 above)
13. Spend time reading the Scriptures and talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning repentance and the Lord's forgiveness and restoration. (See #18 and #19 above)
14. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).