



March 3, 2019
"The Remnant"
Jeremiah 42
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Biblically speaking, a remnant is a small group of the Lord's faithful followers who represent him in a larger setting. The Church is the remnant in the world that represents God's righteousness. We have been given the mandate and privilege of being the Lord's ambassadors on earth. Looking at Jeremiah 42 and other biblical examples, Pastor Gary makes four observations about the role of the remnant in the world today, and how we can fulfil our God-given responsibility of representing his righteousness.

Historical Background

1. The Remnant
 - a. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon allowed a small group of Jews to remain in the land of Judah.
 - b. The word remnant is used 10 times in Jeremiah chapters 40-44.
 - i. **Jeremiah 42:2** - *"Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire **remnant**. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left."* (Emphasis added)
 - c. The people wanted Jeremiah to pray for them so they would know if God wanted them to remain in the land or relocate to Egypt.
 - i. **Jeremiah 42:3-4** - *"Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do." 'I have heard you, 'replied Jeremiah the prophet. 'I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you.' "*
 - d. The people told Jeremiah that they would do whatever the Lord wanted them to do.
 - i. **Jeremiah 42:5-6** - *"Then they said to Jeremiah, 'May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with*

everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us. Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God.’ ”

2. The answer to Jeremiah’s prayer came ten days later.
 - a. **Jeremiah 42:7** - *“Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.*
 - b. Pastor Gary said: “By the way, a little reminder, every time you pray you may not get the answer by the evening. ... Sometimes we want the answers quickly. Sometimes they don’t come quickly, but they are always according to God’s perfect timetable. Ten days isn’t that long, actually. Some people have been praying 10 years about something and God’s delay is always for his display. Sometimes [the answer] is slow according to our timetable, but it’s always on time with God.”

3. **Jeremiah 42:8–22** provides the details of the message the Lord gave Jeremiah for the people.
 - a. Pastor Gary said: “We get the idea from the last part of this chapter [that] what Jeremiah [said is] that God [had] revealed to Jeremiah the true intent of the heart of the remnant, and the true intent of the heart of the remnant was that all along they really wanted to go to Egypt. ... [Maybe as a formality they asked Jeremiah to pray for them so they would know God’s will concerning staying or going.] ... [Jeremiah rebuked them because he knew what they were going to do.]”
 - i. **Jeremiah 42:19–22** - *“ ‘O remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, “Do not go to Egypt.” ‘Be sure of this: I warn you today that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, “Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.” ‘I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you. So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go settle.’ ”*
 - ii. Pastor Gary said: “This is a good reminder [for] us. Don’t ask God to answer your prayer if you have no intention of doing what he says. And, furthermore, none of us should never ask to know the will of God about something if its predicated upon our will, and some of us are like that. ... Is it your will or God’s will? Are you really praying because you want to know what God wants you to do or are you praying because you want his stamp of approval on what you’ve already decided to do?”
 - b. In Jeremiah 43 we learn that the people accused Jeremiah of lying to them when he said that God’s will was for them to stay in the land of Judah.

- i. [Jeremiah 43:1-2](#) - *“When Jeremiah finished telling the people all the words of the LORD their God - everything the LORD had sent him to tell them - Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, ‘You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘You must not go to Egypt to settle there.’”*

4. Pastor Gary said: “[The focus of today’s study is on why God wanted the remnant to remain, and it’s also about why God always wants a remnant to remain in places that need his representation. This is not just an historical story. This has modern application as well, and future implications.”

The Remnant Is The Minority

5. The biblical definition of a remnant: a small group of the Lord’s faithful followers who represent him in a larger setting.

6. Pastor Gary said: “[Why would God want a remnant to remain?] ... Primarily because God wanted to make a statement, that Judah would rise from the ashes. [He] wanted the remnant to remain right where they were because it was a statement that God [had] not forsaken or forgotten the land or his people, and that once again, the land would be fruitful, and once again the people would return to this land. He wanted the remnant to remain as sort of a deposit guaranteeing what [was] to come. ... [God wanted a remnant to represent him and to remind people that God was faithful to his promises.]”

7. Pastor Gary said: “Let me tell you why understanding the role of the remnant is so important for us today. [It’s] because we are that remnant in the world today. ... We are to be a reminder of the faithfulness of God and the representation of the presence of God by reflecting his righteousness in the world. That’s the duty and calling and privilege and responsibility of God’s church.”

8. Pastor Gary illustrated the percentage of evangelical Christians in the world today be using estimated population totals. ¹

- a. Of the 7.7 billion people living in the world today, there are 2.2 billion people who profess to be Christians, and of those 2.2 billion people, there are approximately 550 million ² who are evangelical Christians, which would be approximately 7% of the world’s population.

- b. This means that approximately 93% of the world’s population doesn’t share our values or our biblical worldview.

¹ The Barna Research Group January 18, 2007 - “Survey Explores Who Qualifies As An Evangelical” - See “Research Details section at the end of the online article.

<https://www.barna.com/research/survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical/>

² Pastor Gary said he believed this number to be *very* generous.

9. God chooses to use the remnant to accomplish his purposes, so that people would know it was something only God could do.
 - a. One shepherd boy (David) slew Goliath, the champion of the Philistines.
 - b. Gideon's "army" of 300 overcame the armies of the enemies of God. ³
 - c. Twelve disciples changed the world.
 - d. One Savior, Jesus, brought salvation into the world!
 - e. [Psalm 20:7](#) - *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God."*

10. Pastor Gary said: "We are only outnumbered in terms of the population, not in terms of what God can do through a faithful few. We've got a massive world to reach for Jesus. Don't stop sharing about Christ just because some refuse to listen or believe. The work of the Holy Spirit is conversion. [Our] work is conversation. ... [Trust the Lord with the results.] ... [Don't] stop standing for what is right just because you are in the minority. Be the remnant that reflects Christ and his righteousness in the world.

God Is Always With The Remnant

11. [Jeremiah 42:11](#) - *"Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands."* (Emphasis added)

12. Pastor Gary said: "[Don't] be surprised that in the course of representing Christ in your world, that some people won't like you. [Some] people will oppose you, and some people will [become] downright hateful. ... In case you haven't noticed there is increasing hostility in our world toward Christians and Christianity and biblical values, and it will only get worse. ... For a long time, a Christian in America could blend into society without that much distinction. That was [a time when] societal values and laws and social norms were more parallel to Christian values. [But that's no longer the case.] The lines are not parallel; they have veered in opposite directions. I've never lived in such a time as the present, with such cultural and sexual and mental confusion. A time when people not only expect [us] to embrace, but to celebrate what is abnormal and unhealthy and in complete denial of reality. ... And when [we] don't embrace and celebrate those things they will hate [us]. The opposition will rise up. ... We have to always remember that God is with us.
 - a. [Matthew 10:22](#) - *"All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."*
 - b. [Matthew 5:11-12](#) - *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be*

³ [Judges 7:12](#) - *"The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore."*

glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

- c. **Romans 8:31b** – *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*
- d. **Psalms 28:7a** – *“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.”*

It’s Possible For the Remnant To Remain Righteous In This Generation

- 13. **Genesis 6:5, 9** – *“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”*
- 14. Pastor Gary said: “It is possible to live a righteous life in an unrighteous world. It is possible to live a blameless life in a blame-filled world. It is possible to walk with God when others may not. Noah did and so can we. Our day is not too far removed from the days of Noah.”
 - a. **Matthew 24:37–40** – *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*
- 15. **Genesis 9:15–17** – *“I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.’ So God said to Noah, ‘[The rainbow] is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on earth.’ ”*
 - a. Pastor Gary said: “The homosexual community may hijack the symbol of the rainbow for their cause, but the symbol of the rainbow [means that God will never again judge the world in a world-wide flood], but it doesn’t mean [that he won’t judge the world again]. Judgment is still coming, and we must be the faithful part of the remnant to make him known.
 - b. **Genesis 7:1** – *“The LORD then said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.”*

God Has Preserved A Righteous Remnant Around The World

- 16. Elijah was a prophet during the reign of King Ahab of Israel and his evil wife,

Jezebel. ⁴

- a. During Ahab's reign, the worship of idols was at an all-time high and the worship of God was almost non-existent.
- b. Elijah was in the remnant in his day and God sent him to deal with the false prophets of pagan gods.
- c. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, the Canaanite god, and Asherah, the female counterpart to Baal, on Mount Carmel. ⁵

17. Elijah literally came down off of the mountain, and on the heels of this time when God used him mightily, he became depressed.

- a. **1 Kings 19:10** - *"... I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

18. The Lord told Elijah that he wasn't the only godly person left in Israel.

- a. **1 Kings 19:18** - *"Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel - all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."*

19. Pastor Gary said: "I just want to make sure that in summarizing all of these things, that when we speak about the church being a remnant in the world, I want to make sure that everybody understands that I mean the Church at large. ... Don't for a minute think that we are the only church and we are the only ones who are exclusively living for the Lord as a remnant in this world today. ... God has preserved a righteous remnant around the world; we are only a small part of the larger Body of Christ to reflect his righteousness on the earth. God is doing some amazing things through his Church around the world, and I'm excited [about the fact] that we get to be a small part of it. I thank God for you, and I pray that we, together, will remain true to the Lord and to his Word. And, that we will share Jesus, reflect Jesus, and represent Jesus as part of the remnant of God's Church in the world today."

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Jeremiah 42:1-6** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of the historical background Pastor Gary shared concerning the biblical understanding of a remnant. (See #1 above)
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comment about the delayed answer to Jeremiah's prayer. (See #2 above)

⁴ Elijah's story is told in 1 Kings.

⁵ **1 Kings 18:16-40**

4. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when they had a similar experience of a delayed answer.
5. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 42:8-22](#). (See #3 above)
6. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks about the reason God wanted a remnant to remain in the land. (See #5 through #7 above)
7. Read and discuss the statistical evidence Pastor Gary shared concerning what it means for us to be in a world in which only about 7% of the world's population are evangelical Christians. (See #8 above)
8. Spend time talking about the biblical examples Pastor Gary shared concerning the spectacular ways God has used a remnant to accomplish his purposes. (See #9 and #10 above)
9. How has the Holy Spirit helped you stand firm for truth and the Word of God in the culture in which we live?
10. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 42:11](#), [Matthew 10:22](#), and [Matthew 5:11-12](#). (See #11 and #12 above)
11. Read and discuss [Genesis 6:5, 9](#) and [Genesis 9:15-17](#). (See #13 and #15 above)
12. How is the Holy Spirit helping you live a righteous life, a blameless life, and maintain a close walk with the Lord? (See #14 above)
13. Provide an overview of the account of Elijah and the 800 prophets of Baal and Asherah. (See #16 through #18 above)
14. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's concluding remarks about the Church being God's remnant in the world today. (See #19 above)
15. Close your time in prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

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