

Lesson 170: Walking with Jesus - Part 2b

Scripture: Jeremiah 28, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 33:4, John 14:6, Eph 4:14

Memory Verse: 3 John 1:4 "I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth."

Last week, we learned about telling lies. This week we're focusing on telling the truth. This week's story comes from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet, that means he spoke about the Lord and told God's people what God was going to do. The Bible warns about false prophets, which is someone who pretends or thinks they're telling God's truth but they are not. It also talks about true prophets. It says you can tell someone is a true prophet because the things they say NEVER contradict what we know about God and the things they talk about come true.

Jeremiah was a true prophet, he studied God and knew him. God even spoke with him.

This story happens when the Israelites were in exile. They did not listen to God over and over again and God allowed the nations around the Israelites to overtake them. You may have heard of Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar. When King Nebuchadnezzar took over Jerusalem, the Babylonians went into the temple of the Lord and they took special and holy items that were used in worshiping God. They also took people, especially people who were really good workers. Those items and those people were forced to live in Babylon far away from their family, friends and the temple of the Lord. It was a sad and scary time for the people of Israel. They prayed and hoped that God would fix the bad things that were happening to them and around them.

One day Jeremiah was in the temple of the Lord, in Jerusalem. He wore a wooden yoke around his neck that's normally used to make an ox do the work people want them to do. When Jeremiah wore one, he was showing the Israelites that they needed to accept that they were now prisoners.

As he was in the temple, another prophet began to speak, this prophet's name was Hananiah. Hananiah began to tell everyone there that God said that he was going to break the yoke that Babylon had on Israel, meaning that Israel was not going to be taken captive anymore. Hananiah said that in just two years, the people who were taken to Babylon would come home. The precious things from the temple would be returned and that the son of the King of Judah would become the ruler of Israel.

These were all things that sounded very good to the people. It was exactly what they hoped would happen. Jeremiah even said that he really hoped that's how things turned out. But Jeremiah also pointed out that God's prophets warned for MANY YEARS that war, disaster and disease were coming because the Israelites would not follow God's ways. He told everyone there that if Hananiah was a true prophet then the things he said would come true. (Remember, if someone says something untrue about God, they cannot be trusted.)

Then Hananiah walked over to Jeremiah and broke the wooden yoke he wore around his neck to symbolize that the bondage would be gone. Hananiah said again that in just two years God would restore Israel.

Jeremiah left the temple and soon after God gave him a message for Hananiah. God wanted Hananiah to know that he broke a wooden yoke, but that God had put an iron yoke on all the nations taken captive by

Babylon and even the wild animals were subject to King Nebuchadnezzar BECAUSE God put the iron yoke there to humble his people.

Jeremiah then told Hananiah that the Lord did not send him, that he had been telling lies to God's people and that he would die that same year. Hananiah died two months later, his prophecies did not come true in two years proving he was a false prophet. Even though Hananiah was saying things that sounded very good, they contradicted what God had been saying and doing.

Jeremiah was less susceptible to believing those lies, because he spent time getting to know God. In **2 Corinthians 3:18**, it says, "And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

When we are open and honest followers of Jesus we are changed by the Holy Spirit, we reflect God's glory in our life like a mirror reflects what someone looks like. We are ever changing by tiny bits to look more like him.

In **2 Timothy 3:16-17** it says "Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good." (CEB)

The Bible tells us how to live and when we read it, the Spirit convicts our hearts, showing us where we need to change.

And lastly, our memory verse, **3 John 1:4** says "I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth."

We must know the truth, that is God's word, in order to follow it and we will become more like Jesus as the Holy Spirit works in our hearts.