

Family Faith Discussion Questions For Sunday September 25, 2022

Whether you worship with us online or in-person, you may find these questions helpful in starting meaningful faith discussions at home.

Scripture: Psalm 91 and Jeremiah 32:1-15

Helpful Background:

Background on Our Psalm Passage for this week:

The Book of Psalms is a unique book of scripture. It contains 160 Psalms, which are basically songs where the music was lost centuries ago and only the lyrics remain. Many Psalms are attributed to David, but the historical authors are impossible to know. Psalms is filled with the emotions of followers of God. Anything we may feel towards or perceive from God --anger, love, gratitude, lament, pain, loss, loneliness, abandonment, joy, support, calling, encouragement, praise, majesty, awesomeness—it can be found in the Psalms.

We've been reading through Jeremiah for the last few weeks. Just as a reminder:

Jeremiah was active as a prophet from the thirteenth year of Josiah, king of Judah (*Southern Kingdom*) (626 BC) (*Remember, Israel and the people of God split into two separate kingdoms (Southern kingdom named Judea and Northern kingdom named Israel) in 930 BCE*), until after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 587 BC. This period spanned the reigns of five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

It might be helpful to refresh our memory on what a prophet actually did, and was called to do. We don't talk about having prophets today, so it is kind of a foreign concept for some of us. God used ordinary people throughout history to help God's people remain faithful and loyal to God. These people we call *prophets*, because they *prophesied* to God's people about what was wrong and how they could repair their broken relationship with God. This basically means that God told the prophets what to say to explain the situation as God saw it, and then tell the people what bad things might happen if they didn't change. Now, God wasn't saying that God would cause these bad things to happen as punishment, not exactly, more of a warning of what was to come.

This week, our passage begins by telling us exactly when Jeremiah spoke these words from God. So much time has passed, sometimes it is hard for us to understand the information Scripture gives us to place it in a historical timeline or context. In verse 1 this week, we are told that Jeremiah spoke these words from God in the 10th year of King Zedekiah and the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. Based on other sources of history, that means it was roughly 587 BCE. The Babylonians were attacking Jerusalem and won the battle, and were able to conquer Jerusalem that year, under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar. (His name is spelled differently in different sources Nebuchadrezzer/Nebuchadnezzar.)

Questions:

Psalm 91

- Psalm 91 is a psalm of Assurance of God's Protection. How does it feel to read this Psalm? Do you feel safe, comforted, nothing?
- Verse 2 is one that we repeat a lot at church: "the Lord as my refuge and my fortress" what does this mean to you? What do you think it might mean for others?
- What speaks to you the most in this Psalm?
- Are there any parts of this Psalm that trouble you or do not make sense to you?

Jeremiah 32: 1-15

- Verse 1 is being used to tell us the date of these words of God from Jeremiah. Does the date have any importance to you when you read it? *Having a Biblical Timeline in your head of Old Testament kings, prophets, and times God's people were conquered by different nations is INCREDIBLY challenging! Jerusalem is attacked and conquered several times throughout the Old Testament, but this is one of the earliest times. The Babylonians win against God's people and take most of them back to Babylonia in exile. Being separated from the land God gave to their ancestors was very troubling to the Jewish people.*
- Verses 2-5 describe Jeremiah prophesied that King Zedekiah will lose the battle with the Babylonians and the people will go into exile. What would it be like to receive this kind of information from the prophet, if it was about you or your people?
- Verses 6-15 then tell us about a land purchase that Jeremiah goes through. Why do you think Jeremiah shares this information, and why does he buy the land and then bury the deed? What do you think God is telling God's people in these words?