

6/26/11

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**      Jeremiah 28:5-9

*(Jeremiah talks about the difference between true prophecy and words people want to hear.)*

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. 6 He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon.

7 Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: **8 From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. 9 But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."**

**THE GOSPEL LESSON**      Matthew 10:34-42

*(Whoever does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.)*

**34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- 36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' 37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

**39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."**

INTRO - There is an old story about a poor Central American fisherman. He was paid to take a wealthy business man fishing, and it was a great trip. The fisherman knew a beautiful place where the fish were. He showed the businessman how to land the fish. And, they caught fish. It was a successful fishing trip, and a day of peace while enjoying the beauty of nature. At the end of the trip the businessman said, "If you worked another couple days a week you'd earn a little more, and could hire some help." "Why would I do that?" asked the fisherman. "Well," the businessman replied, "then you could buy another boat." "Why" continued the fisherman. "To earn more money and have more boats," the business man encouraged. "Why?" asked the fisherman again. Well then you could retire." The fisherman asked one more time, "Why retire?" "Well, then you could relax and go fishing," answered the businessman. "Like I am doing now?" asked the fisherman. The businessman missed two things. The businessman missed what was really of value. And, the businessman missed how a person receives what is valuable.

Jesus talks about people misunderstanding as well.

I. First, the businessman missed what is of real value. Somehow for the businessman the real value was money, rather than the peace he hoped to buy by using money to go fishing.

A. Jesus knew that people misunderstood him, in part because they missed what was really of value. In today's lesson Jesus talked about things people value and pursue.

But, in pursuing them they miss what is really important.

1. Jesus talks about peace, and says, **34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.**

2. Jesus talks about family and says, **37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

3. Jesus talks about life itself and says, **39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

B. It is not that peace, and family, and life itself are not of value. But, the real prize and treasure is Jesus.

1. Jesus is God himself, the creator of all the things of this world.

2. Jesus, gives himself for us, when He came to this world, when He died on the cross, when he offers us His love, and peace, and blessings as we turn to Him in faith that trusts Him above all.

3. Jesus is not like the things of this world, here today and gone tomorrow. No matter how valuable the peace of this world, the blessings of family in this world, the gift of life. These are all passing. Jesus is eternal, and the blessings he gives are eternal.

4. Jesus Himself is the real treasure, for this life and eternally.

C. People can read these words of Jesus and misunderstand.

1. We can think he is not for peace, or that he does not support families, or that He does not care about our life or love us.

2. Misunderstanding this verse forgets where Jesus offers peace, establishes and encourages families, gives love and life throughout Scripture.

3. It is just that these blessings come through Jesus, rather than being ultimate ends in themselves.

II. That gets to the next misunderstanding. Secondly, the businessman misunderstood how to get what was really valuable. He knew he had experienced something beautiful on the fishing trip. But he thought he had to earn and buy it. Actually, the beauty and the peace of the fishing trip was a gift from the creator, from God.

A. The blessings of God's love in Jesus, and the blessings of this life are a gift.

1. We cannot earn God's love, because we have sinned against Him. Still He gives His Son.

2. Jesus is given freely, even as God knows our sin, because He loves us.

3. Actually, we don't even choose God, He chooses us in love

4. When people read these words they forget the gift Jesus speaks, **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

- B. The gift is not free, there is a price, but God paid that price.
  - 1. The key is God's love for us in Jesus came through a cross in Jesus' life.
  - 2. Our peace and help and love come through a cross in Jesus' life.
- C. Often, because we follow Jesus, God's gifts are received through a cross in our lives.

III. I once talked to a man who wanted to talk to me because I was the Pastor. After talking he said, "When I get my life straight I'll turn to God." The man had a mistaken impression about God. We don't get our lives straight in order to turn to God. God, His Son Jesus, are the one thing we need. We get our lives in order by turning to God.

- A. When we understand what is really valuable, and how to get it, our goal in life should be first and foremost to seek to grow in the gift of God's love for us in Jesus,
- B. There are costs, but these costs don't earn anything, they are part of the cross of life.
- C. But, with Jesus comes life, and with Jesus comes real peace, and real help for families, and real and eternal life.

CONCLUSION - We can misunderstand the story of the fisherman too. The real gift was GOD, God who gave the beauty and the bounty and the day of peace. God gives us everything we ever need through His Son Jesus. We don't want to miss it.