

Thy Word To Me

Jeremiah 15:16

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FOCAL Read TOGETHER {Jeremiah 15:16} **Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.**

Trials and tribulations come to all people at some time in their lives. The richest man in the world is still subject to colds and influenza, is still in a position where those who befriended him may one day turn their backs on him. Regardless of position or power we all have mountaintop experiences followed by valleys.

Where we often look when trials come is at the trial itself, and not at Him Who is the God over all trials.
You never see the sun rise by looking westward.

The sun doesn't rise in the west, but in the east. In the same way you will never find relief from trials and tribulation by focusing on the trial or by turning to your own resources. Some people, on encountering the trials of life, often turn to friends for help. Don't you remember the lesson that God taught Job? The ancient Prophet Job lost everything in life – money, position, power, family (all except a shrewish wife) – and as he lay in sackcloth and ashes suffering *three friends* came and helped him to suffer. These friends – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar – all took turns taking shots at the suffering saint. Though Job had done nothing wrong they were determined to make Job's suffering *his fault*, a punishment for sin, and were bewildered when Job would not repent.

Suffering is not always the result of an unrepentant heart

or active sin in our lives. Though personal sin can surely bring suffering into your lives – remember always that **the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)** – there are times when God sends suffering our way to bring us to His loving arms. **All we like sheep go astray (Isaiah 53:6)**. We wander away from God as we worship other gods.

The grass always looks greener a little farther from the Great Shepherd, so He sends suffering like a sheepdog to chase us back into His loving shadow.

There are times when, like Jeremiah, we suffer because of other people's sins. God does not save a people then leave them wandering and purposeless in the wilderness of the world. If you have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ then you are to be *people of purpose*. What does the Scripture say? **God is calling out a people unto Himself, a people called according to His purpose.**

Romans 8:28-29 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. {29} For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

God called Israel, but Israel rebelled away from Him, so the Lord put the Prophet Jeremiah in their midst. Jeremiah suffered terribly for preaching the Word of God. In one place he said:

Jeremiah 9:1-2 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! {2} Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

Job suffered and Jeremiah suffered because the Bible tells us that **“the Potter (God) hath power over the clay (humanity)” (Romans 9:21)**. God loves that which He has created, and wants all to be saved. God wants those who are saved to **“grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)**. He wants us to turn – not to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar – but to Him and His Word. God wants a deep friendship with those whom He has saved, and wants to save **whosoever will**.

The Lord loved Jeremiah, but put Jeremiah in a difficult place because He loves others as well. The Lord uses saved man to reach lost man, and uses trials and tribulations to bring us all closer to Him.

Once we draw close to the Lord through study and application of His Holy Word then we will have the same attitude that the great preacher Matthew Henry had. Matthew Henry wrote in his diary:

“Today I was robbed, and I thank God. First I thank Him that the thief took my wallet and not my life. Second, I thank God that even though the thief took

all I had, I didn't have much to take. Thirdly, I thank God that I was the one robbed and not the one doing the robbing.”

John Deere® may be a good tractor, but no matter how hard you try you can never plow water. In the same way you can never find true happiness in this life – or in the next – apart from finding and consuming God's Word. Like Job you may find yourself in a position where you are without money, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Like Jeremiah you may find yourselves in chains and rejected for doing that which God has called you to do. Like Daniel you may find yourself in a pit surrounded by hungry lions. Like David you may find yourself betrayed by those you have tried to help. No matter what position you find yourself in, it is your position with God that will take you safely through the fiery trial.

Let's look at our text.

**1. God Provides The Solution To Our Problems
But You Must Willingly Receive What He Provides**

FOCAL {Jeremiah 15:16} **Thy WORDS were found ...**

Let's focus first of all on the phrase “**Thy words were found**”. Notice first of all that it was **God's WORDS** (plural) that brought rejoicing back to Jeremiah's suffering heart.

God speaks to the hearts of those who will be still and

listen to Him. He has a word for each one of us, a message for our hearts, a comfort for all no matter what we suffer. He has a word of hope for all who will listen – but we must listen.

In Genesis chapter one the Lord spoke less than three hundred words to create everything – Heaven, earth, and all the creatures on the earth. Less than three hundred! Yet the Lord goes on to write many other words to us in His Bible, thousands of words. These words were not just given to us to be placed on a shelf, but to be placed *in our hearts*. God gave more than one Word for He created us diverse. There is a word for every need in His Book. But look further:

FOCAL {Jeremiah 15:16} **Thy words WERE FOUND ...**

There is a big difference between *hearing* the Word of God and *finding* the Word of God. People can sit under the preaching of the Word of God for years and *never* benefit from it. Why? Because some hear the preaching and *find in the words application for somebody else*.

ILLUSTRATE I am often finding things on the Church grounds, things that were lost by others. I commonly find hair barrettes, sun glasses, various types of coats. I one time found a single shoe! Those things all belonged to someone else and, when I found them, I quickly dropped them in the “Lost and Found” box. I do not need a hair

ribbon, or a child's shoe – it has no value to me. But let me lose my car keys, and I will look high and low for those things until I find them. Why? They are MY KEYS. It was MY STUFF that was lost. It belonged to ME.

Dear friends, when Jeremiah said “**Thy words were found**” he was stating that he sought for these words from God because *they were God's Word to Him*. This Bible is not a common Book, nor was it written by common Man. These are God's Words – and when we claim them by faith we find eternal life. When **Philip found the Ethiopian Eunuch** reading the Word of God that dear Deacon asked him “**Do you understand what you are reading?**” The Eunuch said “**How can I, unless you guide me?**” (Acts 8:30-35). Philip began to explain to that dear Eunuch how the Word of God was teaching that Jesus Christ came to *die for his sins* – and that wonderful Word led the Eunuch to be saved. Dear friend, you *must* believe that the words of God is for you, and not for your neighbor. You must believe that it is God speaking to YOU when He says:

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

W.A. Criswell told about his visit to the Auca Indian Missions in the Amazon Jungle of South America. Criswell said:

“For generations these Stone Age Indians bathed their hands in human blood. They had murdered even the five white missionaries who had landed in a

little airplane to bring them God's message. ... Two dedicated missionary women gambled their lives to enter the boundaries of the jungles over which roam these savage Aucas. Within a matter of months they had won them to Christ, and the savage cruelty of these naked, Stone Age Indians had been changed into humble, loving discipleship of Christ.¹”

So many people die in their sins believing in their heart of hearts that the Word preached applies *to their neighbor and not to themselves*.

The **Pharisees** were not saved because, though they heard Jesus Christ preach the Word unto them (Mark 2:2) they always applied what He preached to others. The **Scribes** memorized the Word, but did not benefit from it. Why? Because the text tells us **Thy Words were FOUND**, not **Thy Words were MEMORIZED**. There's nothing wrong with memorizing Scripture – I highly recommend it – but as you memorize it recognize it as a gift from God to YOU. You could read another person's last will and testament and it would mean nothing at all to you. But to read a Will knowing that it speaks to YOU and blesses YOU – suddenly what could have been uninteresting is the most interesting of all.

Oh dear friends, do not hear the Word of God and apply it to another – you rob yourselves of great blessing. That Word was given to YOU. Look further at our text:

FOCAL {Jeremiah 15:16} **Thy words were found,**

¹ W.A. Criswell, *Why I Preach That The Bible Is Literally True*

and I DID EAT THEM;

ILLUSTRATE Notice what the Prophet said: **I did EAT them.** When we eat something we surrender to it. I remember as a young boy my momma making me eat turnip greens. I'd sit at the table for an hour and hope that she'd take that pile of mess away. She'd threaten, and eventually I'd put them in my mouth, chew, and gagging, I'd swallow what I could. I hated those things with a passion, but hot turnip greens are much better than cold greasy turnip greens, so I'd eventually eat them. I swore when I grew up I'd never eat turnip greens. Today they are one of my favorite foods. Why? Because as an adult I stopped *fighting* the food and started *surrendering* to it. When I fought against it – believing it to be disgusting – it was terrible. But as I matured my taste buds matured, and now I love a bowl of greens!

Jeremiah said that he **ate God's Words**. This is more than mere repetition, more than memorization, more than mere reading. When you eat something you expect it to taste good or else be good for you.

Children fidget in their seats and sleep through the preaching of God's Word. Adults should be focused on this Word. If you want to be saved from a future Hell then you need to do as Scripture says, and:

James 1:21 ... lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Receive His Word as a starving person would receive food. The life of God is in His Word:

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

When you eat something, you make it a part of your life! When the devil as a roaring lion comes and tempts you to run from Christ and to his evil grasp you will not if you have eaten His Word. **“How shall I give up what I have eaten? It is now part of me!”**

Eating makes that Word an intimate part of your life. You must eat the promise of the Gospel, taking it into your very soul, if you wish to be saved.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

The Word of God is the seed that brings life (Luke 8:11). If you will not hear the preaching of God's Word and apply it to your own life then you will die in your sins!

One day Jesus Christ was preaching that **He was the Manna that came from Heaven**, and that **whosoever ate of Him would never die**. We see again **eating of the Word**, to surrender to and make that which God has said

a part of your life. The Bible says:

John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

Today when people complain to the preacher often the preacher modifies the message. When the preacher preaches that Christ is the only Way unto God and the masses complain he quickly backs away so as to satisfy the lost. Oh Beloved, how foolish this would be! We must never compromise the message in order to please the masses. Jesus told those whom He offended:

John 6:61-63 ... Doth this offend you? {62} ... and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? {63} It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

There is **spirit and there is life** in the Word of God, but only if you apply that Word TO YOURSELF. Medicine may be bitter and taste horrible, but it will do you no good while it is still in the bottle.

The Bible says you are all sinners – you must receive this. The Bible says that Christ died for each and every one of you – you must find this. The Bible says that whosoever calleth upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. You must consume this truth!

2. Assurance Of Your Position In God

Always Brings Great Blessing

FOCAL {Jeremiah 15:16} Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:

The secret of a strong spiritual life is first of all to *find* God's Word – to find it sufficient for you. Next we *eat* that Word, ingest it, take it into our innermost souls. But lastly we are to *rejoice in our hearts*. Once a person has been assured that they are *in Christ*, they know that *His Word is Our Promise*. Every promise of God's Word is yours – but only if you are saved by faith in Him.

Before he met Christ on the Damascus Road Saul thought that he knew God, and that God knew him. Saul had *great confidence in the flesh*. The Apostle said that prior to his salvation by faith in Christ he had it all. He said:

Philippians 3:5-6 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; {6} Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

ILLUSTRATE I saw a sticker on the back window of a car the other day that said “**Stanley's Mom**”. Obviously this dear woman had lost her identity in her son. **Saul** belong to the **Sanhedrin**. He belonged to **Israel**. He belonged to the Tribe of **Benjamin**. He belonged to the **Pharisees**. But it was not until he met the Master on the Damascus Road that *he belonged to God*. The Apostle

said that he counted all of his former privileges but loss for Christ. The Apostle said:

Philippians 3:8-10 ... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, {9} And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: {10} That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

It is much better to lose your identity in Christ Jesus. What saves a person from eternal damnation? Faith in the promises of God's Word. What has God promised in His Word? God has promised that we who commit ourselves into the hands of Christ **will never perish, but have everlasting life (John 10:28)**. As Christians we renounce all dependence on our own efforts to get us into Heaven, and trust in the finished work of Calvary.

We who are His by faith are *purchased possessions* – we do not belong to Satan, we do not belong to this world, we do not belong to the trial, nor do we even belong to ourselves.

God says of us who belong to Him:

1 Corinthians 3:22-23 ... all are yours; {23} And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The Lord Who loves us has saved us and has promised never to leave us. When we suffer we can say with the Apostle:

2 Timothy 1:12 ... I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Those whom the Lord has purchased, the Lord keeps. Almighty God oversees all that are His.

This is why Jeremiah, even in the midst of terrible trials and tribulation, could say:

FOCAL {Jeremiah 15:16} Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts...

Thousands of God's people live in worry and in fear because they have not **eaten the Word of God**. They understand certain principles and doctrines of the Word of God but they have never *internalized what they know*.

What does the Child of God have in the midst of trial that the unbeliever does not have? We are **called by His Name**. We belong to the Family of God, and God is our Father. Think on that. If your father was the President of

the United States you would feel safe because the Secret Service Agents would be at your beck and call. That is a great amount of security and peace – but it is nothing compared to the peace that we as Christians should internalize.

The **Lord God of Hosts** is your Heavenly Father, dear Christian! God commands the millions of angels in the Heavens and in the earth. Furthermore God has control over every national entity.

There are times in His Old Testament when God bent the will of the Kings of Babylon, Egypt, and Greece to do as He decreed. God is God, and the Potter does have power over the clay. Do you belong to God by faith in Jesus? If so then no trial nor tribulation will come your way that is not overseen by the Infinite God. He loves you, and gave Himself for you. What is the inheritance of the believer in Christ? We look toward a day when we shall see our Heavenly Father in yonder glory. But while we live in this life we are always to remember that:

2 Timothy 1:7 ... God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Search the Scriptures before the trial comes. **Find His Word**, and **eat His Word**. Take the Word of God like you take food or medicine, as wonderful promises and beautiful treasures. As **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

“If you hold God's Word with a loose hand, if you are an inattentive reader, if you are a superficial believer,

if you have loose views about the authority of divine revelation, you will be lax in everything else, you will be loose in your obedience to the precept, in your love to the doctrine, and in your hope to the promise if the Word of God be not God's Word to you it will not comfort you..”²

Have you been **called by the Name of the Lord God of Hosts**? Are you tired of toiling and finding nothing in your net at the end of day? Then, dear friends, do as Simon Peter did. Let down the net of faith, trusting in Him. Call upon the Name of Jesus, surrendering your lives to Him. Repent, turn away from your evil way, and turn to God through faith in Christ, and be saved.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

2 From his sermon *The Secret Food and the Public Name*