**God in our suffering – Lam. 3:58 -66**

*O Lord, you have pleaded my soul’s cause;*

*You have redeemed my life* Lam. 3:58

How should the Christian pray for those who do harm to them?

What does Jeremiah’s suffering teach us about praying for our enemies?

Can Christians forgive their enemies yet ask God to bring vengeance on them?

**Focal Truth: Jeremiah prayed for his enemies**

**Observations**

1. **Jeremiah was persecuted by Israel and the nations**
2. He was despised & abused – *they will not listen –* Jer. 7:27
3. He was beaten & imprisoned – *then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet Jer. 20:1 -2*
4. He was sentenced to death – *this man deserves the sentence of death, because he prophesied against this city –* Jer. 26:11
5. His scroll of prophecy was burned by the King – *as Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll from Jeremiah, King Jehoiakim cut them off with a scribe’s knife and three them into the fire* – Jer. 36:23
6. He was imprisoned by Chaldeans – *they beat him & put him in the jailhouse of Jonathan the scribe* – Jer. 37:15
7. He was thrown into a pit left to die – *they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern…the cistern had no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud*

Jer. 38:6

1. **Jeremiah praises God for saving him from his enemies – 3:58**

*O Lord, You have pleaded my soul’s cause; You have redeemed my life.*

1. God was always with Jeremiah even in the worst of persecution – *you have pleaded my soul’s cause*
2. God redeemed – delivered Jeremiah from death from his persecutors – *you have redeemed my life*
3. **Jeremiah praises God for knowing the oppression of his enemies – 3:59 – 60**

*O Lord, You have seen my oppression; Judge my case. You have seen all their vengeance, all their schemes against me*

1. God saw the persecution of Jeremiah’s persecutors – *You have seen my oppression*
2. God saw Jeremiah’s persecutors vengeance & schemes – *You have seen all their vengeance and schemes*

Jer. 18:19 – *do give heed to me, O Lord, and listen to what my opponents are saying!*

1. **Jeremiah asks God to judge his life of persecution from his enemies – 3:59**

*Judge my case*

1. Jeremiah asks God to judge his life of persecution
2. **Jeremiah praises God that He has heard the words of hatred of his enemies – 3:61 – 62**

*You have heard their reproach, O Lord, all their schemes against me. The lips of my assailants and their whispering are against me all day long.*

1. God hears the words of hatred from Jeremiah’s enemies – *You heard their reproach… the lips of my assailants and their whispering against me all day long*
2. God heard the constant words spoken against Jeremiah – *against me all day long*
3. **Jeremiah thanks God for repaying his enemies for their persecution – 3:63 – 66**

*Look on their sitting and their rising; I am their mocking song. You will recompense them, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. You will give them hardness of heart, Your curse will be on them. You will pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the heavens of the Lord!*

1. Jeremiah asks for God to repay the persecutors

* Repay them according to the work of their hands
* Repay them with hardness of heart
* Repay them with a curse of judgment on them
* Repay them with the wrath of God on them

**Things to Remember & Do**

1. **Love and pray for your enemies as the Lord commanded**

Matt. 5:44 – 45 - *love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. So that you may be sons of your heavenly Father who is in heaven; for He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and send rain on the righteous and unrighteous*

* Pray for God’s mercy on them
* Pray for God to forgive save them

1. **Accept your enemies’ persecution without retaliation**

Luke 6:29 – 30 - *whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also, and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either…whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.*

1. **Endure your enemies’ persecution like the Lord Jesus Christ**

Jer. 15:15 -  *O Lord, remember me and take vengeance for me on my persecutors*

Lam. 3:28 -30 – *let him sit alone and be silent…let him put his mouth in the dust…let him give his cheek to the smiter*

1 Pet. 2:21 – 23 – *for you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth and while being reviled, He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously*

* Be silent in your persecution
* Accept the persecution without retaliation
* Trust God to judge those who persecute you

1. **Wait for the judgment of God on your persecutors**

Deut. 32:25 – *Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them*

Ps. 94:1 – *O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance shine forth!*

Ps. 149:6 – 9 – *let the high praise of God be in their mouth, and a two – edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all his godly ones. Praise the Lord*

Jer. 46:10 – *for that day belongs to the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself of His foes*

Rom. 12:19 – *never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, the Lord will judge His people*

1. **The Lord Jesus sees our persecution & rewards our righteous suffering**

Rev. 2:9 – 10 – church at Smyrna: be faithful to the end; I will give you crown of life