

Baruch

Jeremiah 45 - July 14, 2013

There is nothing like being recognized for a job well done. We all like to hear the encouraging words, “good job.”

Sometimes we are rewarded at work with a bonus check after completing a project that required months of hard labor and overtime. It is a nice way to say thank you.

It is often good for a young wife and mother to hear from her husband the words “good job” after changing endless diapers, forever doing the wash and picking up after the kids.

It is good have your spouse give some encouraging words after faithfully working hard. These are natural desires. It is also good practice to recognize others for their hard work.

Yet in a fallen world, even the most thoughtful person can fail to recognize a job well done. Sometimes instead of hearing encouraging words we receive critical comments or see only thankless attitudes.

It can be emotionally discouraging and sometimes crippling to go without hearing words of encouragement and receiving a reward. Some people get so discouraged they quit serving God. Even those who serve the Lord can go unrecognized, and when recognized they are criticized rather than rewarded.

This morning we are going to look at a man named Baruch. He was a significant player in world politics during the final days of the nation of Judah. He was also a vital component in spiritual affairs of Israel.

He is a silent unsung hero who worked tirelessly for Jeremiah behind the scenes and sometimes in the forefront delivering God’s message to the nation.

Yet most of us know little about him. We may have occasionally read his name without ever registering the importance and difficulty of his work.

Baruch was a godly man. Like many of us, he sought to honor God. However he grew very weary in his doing good.

Jeremiah 45:3 records the complaint he put before the Lord,

“Woe is me now! For the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.”

The root of his discouragement arose from his secret desire to receive praise now, rather than patiently wait for the appropriate time when the Lord would richly bless him for his work well done. His wrong expectations caused him to take his sights off the Lord. It resulted in him being paralyzed in his faithful service. But, we will see God in His great love speak to Baruch. He (God) reminds him of the task before him.

God’s message to Baruch is also a reminder to keep our eyes on the prize set before us; so we will continue to press toward the mark of the high calling of God.

Maybe you feel a bit unappreciated or underappreciated. It maybe at home; at work; maybe in your marriage; or in your service for Christ that you feel like Baruch, who said, “I faint in my sighing and I find no rest.”

This passage then, in Jeremiah 45 is also for you and for me.

Baruch in Hebrew means, blessing, or blessed. He was a godly man; a well-educated scribe; a biblical lawyer, and an authority on the word of God. His family was politically connected and most likely well to do. His brother was a high-ranking officer to one of the Kings of Judah. He was the personal scribe and loyal associate to the prophet Jeremiah.

He faithfully ministered with Jeremiah for over two decades and suffered many of the same hardships that faced Jeremiah. He literally recorded the messages of Jeremiah and compiled the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

The words of Jeremiah can be broken down into three main sections:

1. Jeremiah's Prophecies Against Judah - 1-44 - which ends with seven chapters describing the complete destruction of Jerusalem.
2. Jeremiah's Prophecies Against the Nations - 46-52
3. Jeremiah's Lamentation Over The Ruin Of Judah and Jerusalem.

However, wedged in between all these prophecies of Judah's spiritual demise and national and international affairs is Jeremiah 45. It is a personal note from God to Baruch - a man struggling under the immense burden of the hour and stumbling because his eyes slip from the throne of God to the immediate desires of men.

Oh, how vulnerable are we to such things. Note Jeremiah 45:1 -

“The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah.”

The time of this event is listed as the 4th year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. It is a reference to Jeremiah 36:1

“And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim . . .”

There, Jeremiah had Baruch record all the messages Jeremiah spoke against the Judah and the surrounding nations. Apparently Jeremiah was restricted from going to the Temple - Jeremiah 36:5. So Jeremiah instructed Baruch to

go to the Temple on the day of fasting and read all the messages to the people - Jeremiah 36:6, 10.

One of the leaders heard the reading and reported it to the princes of Judah. They sent for Baruch and had him read the prophecies to them - Jeremiah 36:15-18. The princes told Baruch and Jeremiah to hide as they go to read the scroll to the king - Jeremiah 36:19.

When the king heard it, he cut it with his penknife, and threw it into a fire in his fireplace - Jeremiah 36:23. The king then commanded that Baruch and Jeremiah be taken. Most likely to be imprisoned or killed. But they could not find them - Jeremiah 36:26.

Jeremiah had Baruch take another roll and record the messages again. It was during this time that Jeremiah 45 was written. In Jeremiah 45:2-3 - They Baruch and Jeremiah were fleeing, hiding, and hunted.

Baruch's sorrow was the message of Jeremiah. It was the prophecy of Judah and Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians. In Jeremiah's prophecy he records the defeat of Egypt, which was followed by the occupation of Judah by Babylon.

His grief was the burden of running and hiding; the hatred and ridicule. Shouldn't the man of God be honored? Shouldn't more people appreciate the sacrifices he made? When Baruch got into the business of serving the Lord he expected great things.

Note the source of his discouragement in Jeremiah 45:5a:

“And seekest thou great things for thyself?”

Here the message proclaimed that everything would be destroyed. Therefore, on a personal note, neither he nor Jeremiah would be rewarded with a house, retirement or praise from men for their tireless work.

God said:

“Behold that which I have built up will I break down.” - 4a

“That which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.” - 4b

The point. The Lord is in control. He is going to do His work.

“For, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey (*or as a prize of war*) in all places whither thou goest.” - v. 5

We should pause here . . . God is also in control of your life. He has things for us to do. We are to serve Him

It Corinthians 7:29-31

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; ³⁰ And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; ³¹ And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

The Lord is being gracious to Baruch in both the admonition and of comfort.

1. **The comfort** - you're not going to be killed. I will grant you your life.
2. **The admonition** - it is not the time to reap your rewards. That day will come, but not now.

The Lord also unfolds the source of his discouragement. It was his wrong expectations. He expected in this life the honor and praise from men, and maybe even material rewards.

Remember, Elijah's words to his servant Gehazi,

“Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants.” - 2 Kings 5:26

Gehazi wanted his reward now, not later.

Either was it time for Baruch and Jeremiah to receive material rewards when their nation was being destroyed by for its corruption? Baruch needed to learn it was not time to be occupied with self-seeking.

Jeremiah 45:5 “And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD”

How apt is our heart to seek “great things.” But in doing so, how unlike Christ we become Who “pleased not Himself” - Romans 15:3. Jesus said, “I do always those things that please him” - John 8:29. I came . . . not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” John 6:38.

Was not Jesus the Rejected One: Rejected at birth - no room in the inn;” Rejected in life; Rejected in death - buried in a borrowed grave? Let us remember the One we owe everything to for all of eternity

1 Peter 2:21-24

Who “suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: ²² Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ²³ Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: ²⁴ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

And yet, at the right time glorified. He was raised from the grave and seated at the right hand of the Father.

Our “great things” are coming by and by. Let our faith lay firm hold of these things. If you are tempted to turn aside from the narrow path for some easier path in order to be better thought of in this world, let us remember the words of God to Baruch.

Jeremiah 45:5 “And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD”

If “great things” attract us, “Seek them not.” The Lord adds, “Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest. - 5

No harm could come to Baruch. Let men rage as they might, while God was His protector. Famine, sword, and pestilence may destroy, but he should be preserved.

Precious it is to know that even though the body might be destroyed, yet nothing can touch the eternal life of the Christian.

Around the world every morning many Christians open and read from a small devotional book entitled, “My Utmost for His Highest.” Many Christians around the world possess a copy of this great work. Most are familiar with the name of the author, Oswald Chambers.

Yet, few really know much about Oswald Chambers. He was Scottish born, the son of a Baptist pastor. He was called into the ministry at 23 years old and studied at the University of Edinburgh for seven years. At age 30 he embarked on an evangelistic tour to Japan and the USA.

Later he worked with the League of Prayer, was a President of a Bible Training School in London. At the outbreak of WWI, He and his wife and young

daughter relocated to the Egyptian desert to serve as a military Chaplain to the British troop. It was there; in Egypt, in 1917 he died with a case of appendicitis.

He wrote over 30 Christian books, and published thousands of sermons and calendars. What few people know, is that Oswald Chambers never lived to publish any of those works.

Beside his name on all his works in very small type are the letters B. C. B. C. stands for Gertrude Hobbs.

He met Gertrude on a transatlantic voyage from NYC to London. Her mother had written to Oswald asking him to watch over her daughter since she was travelling alone. As a child she was plagued with illness so she did not have much of a formal education. However, she had taught herself shorthand at home and how to type. She was able to take dictation at 250 words a minute.

Oswald took an interest in her and renamed her Bidy. He felt Gertrude was too formal. Within three years He and Bidy were married. B. C. stands for Bidy Chambers.

When Oswald died at 43 years old, Bidy was a poor widow with a child. She had enough savings to get home to Oxford, England. There she purchased a house and turned it into a boarding house for students.

She rose every day at 6 AM feeding the students and tending to her daughter. At night she poured over Oswald's sermons and her notes and typed them out.

She could have said,

“Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.”

She did not even seek great things for herself. She just quietly worked in her basement for years. Serving the Lord and taking little credit for the enormous work she undertook.