

Faith in the Home

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost: Jeremiah 20:7-13, "A Dangerous Adventure, with an Eternal Reward."

"I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me." These words were uttered in a painful rant written by the prophet Jeremiah. He had a deep pain and anguish for he was beaten and put in stocks for the people to laugh at.

What was his crime? He was faithful to God. Jeremiah in his anguish even cursed the day he was born, wishing his father had killed him in his mother's womb! In fact, Jeremiah begins with God calling Jeremiah to be His prophet with these famous words, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." -Jeremiah 1:5. Jeremiah faithfully answered the call of God to go before the people of Jerusalem and Judea, and tell them to repent because the Babylonians were coming.

In Jeremiah 20, a priest at the temple in Jerusalem named Pashhur, beat Jeremiah and put him in those stocks. He didn't like being shown his sin, and thought himself to be righteous. Jeremiah who was called to preach repentance to God's people gets rewarded with a beating and being placed in stocks as a public spectacle. He even blamed God, "O God, you have deceived me." Here Jeremiah was just doing what he was supposed to and God led him to that point where he was beaten and cruelly mocked for his faith.

Yet, Jeremiah still proclaimed in verse 13, "Sing to the LORD; praise the LORD! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers." Why? Because deep down in his faith, Jeremiah knows that his true reward is with God. He knows in faith that there is more than this broken world. As Jesus told His disciples, "Do not fear those who can destroy the body, but fear Him who can destroy the soul in Hell," Jeremiah did this, but not only out fear for the Lord, but out of a trust that God truly is good, and truly does love us.

Like Jeremiah, our faith in God may place us in terrible situations. God brings us adventure in this life, and adventure is not comfortable. In fact, it can seem dangerous and is at times filled with pain. Why does God bring us through this? Because others are watching. Maybe even those who mock you for

your faith, may one day see your witness and turn and believe. Walking in faith in this world may have you in times of utter despair, but like Jeremiah did, praise the Lord. We know He is good. Jesus was laughed at and mocked when He was beaten, crowned with thorns, stripped naked, and nailed to a cross. He did that because He loves you. He did that to save your soul. He did that to bring you to an eternal life where we will not suffer for our faith, but be rewarded. You see, in Christ, we live our eternal life because He lives for us. In Christ, we do not live for worldly glory, but we live to show others our faith. God calls us to a difficult path in this world, but the reward of everlasting life with Him is worth it!

How do we teach and model these things to our kids?

1. Learn and know God's truth and don't justify sins to your kids.
2. When they see sinners and non-believer's live lives contrary to our own, we must tell them that Jesus still loves them and died for them to. We don't count ourselves better than them, but we look for ways that we can share the Gospel.
3. Let them know that others don't like Jesus, and we have to be smart in how we share about Him.
4. Be honest with your kids. When the time is right, tell them that people may hate them because they love Jesus. But remind them that our Heavenly reward is worth their hatred of us.
5. Read J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit," and "The Lord of the Rings," series to your children. Those stories capture how righteous creatures seem so small compared to the evil that is around them, and yet when they are brave and stand up to evil, good triumphs. Currently, I am re- reading "The Hobbit." As a pastor, I often feel small like Bilbo who has this adventure thrust upon him, and yet he becomes brave and the hero. As your pastor I want to show you Jesus, no matter the cost to me.
6. Remember, Jesus wins and has won. That victory He shares with us. Go have "an adventure"