

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**

December 11, 2016

**Jeremiah 19:1-20:18.** A broken jar and a disillusioned prophet.

**Romans 3:1–20.** Divine condemnation on all men is absolutely just.

**Proverbs 17:1–28.** Fellowshiping with our Friend and Brother Jesus Christ.

**COMMENTS.**

**Jeremiah 19:1-20:18.** The Lord instructed Jeremiah to buy a jar from a potter and then take some of the civil leaders and priests out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom. Once there, the prophet was to pronounce scathing judgment against Jerusalem because of the idolatry and child sacrifice its residents carried on in the valley. He was then to break the jar, illustrating what God would do to the city. This idolatrous valley would become a burial ground for the slaughtered idolaters. Having carried out his commission, Jeremiah went to the temple and delivered another announcement of judgment. Pashhur, one of the leading temple officials, had Jeremiah imprisoned and beaten. When released, Jeremiah gave Pashhur the symbolic name Magor-Missabib (meaning terror all around) and announced that this official would witness the death of his friends and the exile of the nation. Pashhur would die and be buried in a foreign land.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** In this reading, we see Jeremiah embarrassed and angry. His words reflect his confused thinking and confused feelings—wrong thinking and wrong desires. He even accused the Lord of deception and complained of being caught between a rock and a hard place. When he was faithful to preaching the Lord’s word, he was insulted and abused. Yet, if he held back from preaching the Word of God, the divine word burned within him until he was forced to declare it. However, in a burst of confidence Jeremiah affirmed his trust in the Lord. However, just as quickly as he got his eyes off the Lord, he sunk back into depression and cursed the day of his birth. The only way out of this misery is through *life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love*, as Job learned and as we all must learn. We all go through hard times and find ourselves battle worn from time to time—I certainly do. By turning to the Lord in love, seeing that being nearer Him is a greater good than any detail of life, we see the beauty of all life. It is focus on the Lord that makes us appreciate the fact that He gave us life and sustains us moment by moment with the prospect that we might turn to Him who loves us continuously and is preparing for us a life beyond what we could ask or imagine. This is a lot more important than the things we tend to think would make us happy in our temporary realm. Let us not get depressed about any bouts we might have with depression. It has happened to the best of us; even Jesus Christ, who provides the example of what to do with sufferings: He learn obedient love from them (Heb. 5:8). May we envisage His example in the trials of life.

**Romans 3:1–20.** Paul described the advantages of the Jews: primarily they have been “entrusted with the very words of God” (3:2). To suggest that God is unfair (as the questions of 3:5, 7 appear to do) is to blaspheme God. Those who question God’s judgment are therefore themselves condemned (3:8). Paul brings together a series of Old Testament quotations to show that Jews and Gentiles have all sinned, and therefore all are held accountable to God (3:9–20).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** After Paul demonstrates the universality of man’s guilt, he says that Law shuts up all mouths to any claims of self-righteousness. Man is fond of not only being self-righteous, he also loves to defend him—he loves to make excuses. None of us have any basis to boast before God. The whole world is guilty before God—and that includes you and me! We are all saved by God’s grace—period! We all stand silently before Him covered in the grace of Jesus Christ. As long as we think we merit anything before God, we are precluded from really knowing Him or loving Him. We love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). In sum, the only ones who really walk *with God by proper knowledge and proper love* are those who appreciate His matchless grace and love. May we never be named among those who are prone to fabricate excuses or self-righteousness before our holy God.

**Proverbs 17:1–28.** The opening verses relate in some way to strife or peace. Peace and poverty are better than strife and wealth (1). Parents and children are bound to each other by a common identity (6), although even a servant, if wise and faithful, can take the place of a disgraceful son (2). **Verses 10-16** refer to some form of evil or foolish action. Note the different responses to correction by the wise person versus the fool in **verse 10**. A mere rebuke helps a wise person more than the physical punishment of 100 lashes given to a fool. The point is that the wise are sensitive and learn readily, but a thickheaded fool is unresponsive even after extreme measures of correction. It has been my experience that the wise, the who seek total truth (rather than a religion that gets God to work for them), take corrections from the preaching of the Word, whereas fools get upset and thus never learn. The **last two verses** note that a wise man is cautious in what he says and thinks before he talks. Interestingly, it says that restraint in talking may be cause a fool to be considered wise. The point is that it is often much wiser to listen than to jabber.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Note the beautiful passage in 17:17, *A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity*. The highest form of this truth is in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We are called into friendship with Him, and He is the Brother born for our adversity in the most significant way (cf., Heb. 2). The highest love relationship available for any believer and the Lord Jesus Christ is a friendship relationship (John 15:14; James 2:23; 4:4). Note how Christ ties both knowing Him and loving Him to friendship love in John 15:13-15. There are five characteristics of true friendship: (1) Friendship entails mutual benevolence. Friendship is more than a solitary expression of love. Friendship requires at least two who love each other, whereby they will the good for each other. They will the friend to be and to live for the friend’s own sake and not for their own sake. (2) Friendship recognizes mutual benevolence. It is not enough to wish someone good. The mutual goodness must be mutually recognized. (3) Friendship includes mutual beneficence (good actions). It is not enough just to wish good for a friend or to recognize mutual well-

wishing, good actions must follow to qualify for friendship love. (4) Friendship is stable. It has a semi-permanent quality to it in that it is not easily lost, and it exists even when friends run through difficult situations, like misunderstandings. (5) Friendship is based on an active sharing or participation in life and qualities. For the Christian, this is a sharing in the things of God with Christ. All friendship is founded on some fellowship in life. Biblically speaking, fellowship is not about a state, but acts of sharing. In other words, it is not a matter of a believer being in fellowship or not; rather, it is a matter of acts fellowshipping with God in this or that thought or deed (read 1 John 1:7). This is just another way of describing life in a second personal relationship (which by its very nature is active and not a state) with God *proper knowledge and by proper love*. Anything else will always go awry.

*Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love.*

*Pastor Don*