

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

December 17, 2016

Jeremiah 32:1–44. Jeremiah buys a field and moves into the true, good, and beauty of God.

Romans 7:7–25. Our 1st and 2nd order wills.

Proverbs 21:13–31. More assorted individual proverbs.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 32:1–44. God provides an object lesson through Jeremiah. The year is 587 B.C. Jerusalem is besieged by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar and Jeremiah himself is in prison. But he is dreaming that the Jews will return from exile and that their land will be restored. God tells Jeremiah to expect a visit from his cousin Hanamel. Hanamel wants to sell a field, which by law must be bought by his next of kin (Lev. 25:25). Jeremiah is that person. It’s an extraordinary situation. Jeremiah is being asked to buy a field which will be immediately seized by Babylonian invaders. Any day now, the Jews will cease to own any property. Their legal deeds and agreements will be worthless. But Jeremiah agrees! He counts out the money, puts the documents in a clay jar (for long-term storage) and explains his crazy action. He has bought the field because God has told him to do so. It’s a sign of His promise that the Jews will return from exile at some time in the future—and resume their everyday life with houses, fields and vineyards (**33:15**). His purchase is a sign of hope for when the exile is over. Judah is being punished for her immorality and idolatry—and God is on the side of the ungodly Babylonians. But then comes the good news. After the calamity, God will give prosperity. There will once again be buying of fields and signing of deeds all over the country. And Jeremiah has acted on God’s word as though it’s already done.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. As we have noted in our last few Bible class on faith-knowledge, biblical faith is supernatural, immediate, absolutely certain, and undefeatable (as long as the believer does not suppress it). Consider the faith of Jeremiah as he obeys what seems like a foolish command of God. I am sure many people laughed at him and shook their heads in disbelief, and some probably thought he was crazy for buying worthless property. However, biblical faith is so compelling that one continues to be convinced of the supernatural truth despite the consequences. Faith believes no matter the consequences. However, note the true, good, and beauty of God that Jeremiah enjoyed *by proper knowledge and proper love* as he focuses on the greatness of God: Jeremiah 32:17 *‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. 18 ‘You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them-- the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts. 19 ‘You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.* Instead of going around worried what others might think or becoming depressed at the impending judgment of his nation, he lived his life in the context of the goodness and beauty of God.

Romans 7:7–25. This reading describes the tension between a believer's 1st order will and his 2nd order will. The 1st order will refers how we think and feel experientially or consciously without reflection. The 2nd order will refers to how we wish we felt and thought on the 1st conscious order. For example, on a 1st order level one may *not* think (intellect) and feel (will) like making God and the spiritual life the first priority in life and yet *at the same time* in his 2nd order level wish that he did want to make God top priority in life. In other words, one may wish he was a man after God's own heart (2nd order), but in his daily life finds that he falls very short (1st order)—he really does not want it on a 1st order level for one reason or another.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Sanctification is all about the 2nd order will lifting up the 1st order will by permeating it with its thinking and desires. In sanctification, the 2nd order will so saturates the 1st order will that a person actually becomes the kind of person that he wishes to be. The good news is that God's grace is there to perform this miracle. The bad news is that this process is extremely difficult because one must want it in the 1st order. Moreover, this is often a very long process, and requires right thinking and right desires on the 1st order, which is beset by wrongly ordered thinking and desires. When there is conflict between the 1st and 2nd order, the believer is fragmented not only with respect to God, but himself. He is alienated not only from God (at least experientially), but from himself. Given that the 1st order always seeks what it views as the greater good, there is no changing it unless it seeks God and His standards as absolute good. And there is no way anyone is going to see God as His overwhelming greatest good apart from life in God *by second person proper knowledge and proper love*. Again, the problem is far more difficult than almost all Christians can imagine. Before God will change or transform the 1st order will according to the 2nd order will, the 1st order will must really want it—but how can the 1st order want something that it does not want? Therein lies the crux of the problem. I can wish in my 2nd order will with all of my might, but unless and until my 1st order really wants the higher good, I remain fragmented, divided against myself. While there exists many vain philosophies and spiritual clichés which are often coated with Scripture, they all fail to address this fundamental issue and generally make things worse, ending in frustration and misery even after decades of attempts. They all fail because they all fall short of the incomprehensible life that only comes by partaking of the life of God by *proper knowledge and proper love*. It is 2nd person knowing and loving God that enables us to really be united to God experientially, which moves us into what is really good in the Super Real in our 1st order existence.

Proverbs 21:13–31. This chapter opens and closes on the same theme. Verses 1–2 and verses 30–31 observe that human beings, even the most powerful of them, may make their plans and act on them, but it is the Lord who really determines what will happen. The idea in the chapter is that the Lord is the one who is in charge. Moreover, throughout the whole chapter the most frequent topic is the contrast between righteous people and wicked people; there are six verses that make direct contrasts and another five that refer to either the wicked or the righteous, and leave the reader to think of the contrast.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. The last two verses of this section make it clear that human wisdom is no match against God’s wisdom. No “wisdom” or plans of any person can ultimately thwart the Lord’s plans. He is sovereign. It is useless to fight against God (30) or without Him (31). Living against God (sin) or without Him (evil) is doomed to failure regardless of one’s human resources. And the only way to avoid fighting against Him or without Him is to cling to Him *by proper knowledge and proper love*. As Proverbs points out, soldiers may use horses in battle, but the superiority of a cavalry unit against foot soldiers is no guarantee of victory. That comes only from the LORD, who can turn battles His way in spite of man’s efforts. To move into this regal wisdom of God is to enter a regal life with Him and *His* victories. However, this regal wisdom does not have as its highest goal to know for the sake of knowledge; rather, it is to love God deeper and more truthfully—more of the Real.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,

Pastor Don