

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

December 8, 2016

Jeremiah 14:1–15:21. God responds to Jeremiah’s prayers.

Romans 1:1–17. Introduction and the theme of Romans: “the righteousness of God.”

Proverbs 15:1–33. Pride will not listen, not even to Christ’s mandate to live for eternal rewards.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 14:1–15:21. Outline: (1) **14:1-18**, Jeremiah lamented that a severe drought had swept over the land, confessed the nation’s sin, and asked the Lord to restore His favor. In response, the Lord pointed to the nation’s wickedness, instructed Jeremiah to cease interceding for the people, and announced He would not accept their hypocritical sacrifices. Jeremiah blamed the nation’s condition on the false prophets and their promises of peace (prosperity gospel types). These liars would be destroyed with the rest of the nation. (2) **14:19-15:9**, Once more Jeremiah interceded for the nation, lamenting its condition, confessing its sin, and asking the Lord to intervene. He acknowledged that the Lord was incomparable to the idol-gods and that He alone was the source of the nation’s blessings. The Lord declared that not even Moses or Samuel could effectively intercede for such a wicked people. (3) **15:10-21**, Jeremiah once again lamented the opposition he experienced. Though he was innocent of wrongdoing and had faithfully declared the Lord’s word, he suffered reproach. He questioned God’s dependability and asked the Lord to take up his cause. The Lord assured him of divine protection and vindication before his enemies. However, the prophet had to confess his lack of faith and persevere in his mission.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Jeremiah was human and had many failings, but at least he honestly admitted them to God. Instead of piously covering up or suppressing his true feelings, he poured out his heart to the Lord, and the Lord answered him. I am sure God’s answer shocked him, for the Lord told him he needed to repent! “If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve Me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be My spokesman” (**15:19**). Because of his attitude toward God and his calling, Jeremiah was about to forfeit his ministry! In some ways, he was mirroring the words and attitudes of the people of Judah when they questioned God. The Lord balances His rebuke with reassurance. He promised once again to make Jeremiah a fortified wall and give him victory over all his enemies (**15:20**). Jeremiah had to learn to walk *by proper knowledge and proper love*, which meant obeying God’s Word no matter how he felt, what he saw, or what others might do to him. God never promised Jeremiah an easy job, but He did promise him all that he needed to do his work faithfully. It is not unusual for servants of God to become discouraged. Moses became discouraged and wanted to die (Num. 11:10–15); Joshua was ready to quit and leave the Promised Land (Josh. 7:6–11); Elijah even abandoned his place of duty and hoped to die (1 Kings 19); and Jonah became so angry he refused to help the very people he came to save! (Jonah 4) God doesn’t want us to ignore our feelings because that would make us less than human, but He does want us to walk with Him *by second person proper knowledge and proper love* regardless of the perturbations of life.

Romans 1:1–17. In the **first fifteen verses**, Paul introduces himself as a servant of God and an apostle who was set apart for the gospel of God. He, then, offers greetings to Christians at Rome. Paul tells them of his prayers for them and his eagerness to proclaim the Gospel there. In **verses 16-17**, Paul introduces his theme: “the righteous will live by faith,” which is a good summary of Paul’s theology as a whole.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. When you study Romans, you walk into courtroom language. First, Paul called Jews and Gentiles to the stand and found both guilty before God. Then he explained God’s marvelous way of salvation—justification by faith. At this point, he answered his accusers and defended God’s salvation. ‘This plan of salvation will encourage people to sin!’ they cry. ‘It is against the very Law of God!’ But Paul refuted them, and in so doing explained how the Christian can experience victory, liberty, and security—a truly abundant life. The metaphysical foundation of rightness with God, in both salvation and the Christian life, is *living in proper love and proper knowledge of God*. At salvation, it is the proper love (seeing the goodness of God in grace) and proper knowledge (salvation offered by Christ and appropriated only by faith) that moves the believer in co-determination to accept the gospel as *good* news. As far as the spiritual life, Romans shows that the spiritual life is the outworking of God’s righteousness in the life of the believer, which begins with dedication (**12:1-2**), continues with ministry in the church (**12:3-21**), and living in obedience and respect for government as God’s servant (**13:1-4**). Of course, *without proper knowledge and proper love* in these areas, it is impossible to live out these arenas of God’s righteousness. For example, if one does not desire/love the idea of dedicating his whole life to God, being an active part of a local church, or appreciating government, he will not move to live out God’s righteousness in these areas. Moreover, if one does not have *proper knowledge* in these areas, how in the world will he live out the righteousness of God in these areas for His glory?

Proverbs 15:1–33. This reading provides various proverbs on teaching and instruction. The wise deal with a problem gently (1), lead people rightly (2–7), and will themselves listen to a rebuke (14, 31). Fools only do harm when they speak (4, 18) and will not themselves listen to any admonition (5, 10, 32).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. One of the most common characteristics of pride is not listening. People get so trapped into their *Dasein* that they will not even listen to Scripture. Their mindset determines what is true rather than the Biblical text. For example, the Bible is as clear as it is adamant about living for rewards (Matt. 6:19-24; Heb. 11:8-17; Heb. 12:1-2; Col. 3:23-24; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Pet 1:10-11; Rev. 3:21; Lk 19:11-27; 1 Cor 3:15; et al), rewards which are always associated with being a lover of Christ (James 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8) and consisting of a rich life in Heaven with Him (2 Pet 1:11; Col. 3:23-25; Rev. 3:21). No matter how many passages you show them about the Scripture emphasis on rewards, the person rejects such a concept. They will not listen because their *Dasein* interprets rewards in a negative manner. Instead of respecting Scripture and taking the time to see the nature and the reason rewards are so emphasized, they will not listen. They reject it all out of pride concealed by false humility expressed by “all I care about is being in Heaven” (what a horrendous attitude!). While this attitude is couched in humility, it manifests pride and arrogance of not taking the time to listen and understand what the Bible actually teaches. Of course, arrogance will never admit this, so it will find put forth some caricature to demean the idea of rewards. Pride simply will not listen. The saying “his mind is made up” is true but only because the will has already made up the mind. In closing, it is none other than Christ who settles the matter regarding living for rewards. Either one is ultimately living for rewards here or in Heaven: Matthew 6:19 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.* Thus, we see the true motive as well as the results of not listening to Jesus Christ about living for Heavenly rewards. No amount of sophistry can change these facts. While one is free to invest his life in this world or the next, once he does so he is no longer free from the consequences. *Quo Vadis?*

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

Pastor Don