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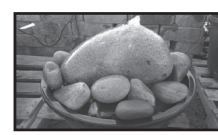
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Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"Jeremiah"

By Jerry Cummings, Pastor of Living Hope Fellowship in Norton

A couple of weeks ago, I was meditating on Jeremiah 31 and this verse spoke a number of things to my heart. We read in verse 6, "For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.'"

Watchmen speak of leaders who are spiritually aware of what is going on around them, especially what God is doing, what the enemy is trying to do, and what is going on in people's lives. The watchman then cries out to people or to God in behalf of the people.

This verse speaks of a special message that the watchmen one day would declare. "Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God." I remember as a boy growing up hearing people talking in church and in songs about "Zion". It seemed like a great word and place, but I had no clue what it meant. Hebrews 12:18-24 tells us a lot about what it means to "go up to Zion"

In this passage, the writer speaks about two mountains. One was Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given, and the other was Mount Zion, which was the mountain on which David set up his tabernacle and palace, etc. As we read in Exodus and in Hebrews 12, Mount Sinai was a mountain where God showed up in terrifying power... thunder, lightning, a loud trumpet sound, smoke and fire, etc. The people could not come near the mountain or they would die. It was a place of distance from God because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness.

On Mount Zion on the other hand, David set up a tent, and brought up the ark of God's pres-

ence to put in the tent. This arrangement was very different than the tent that was set up by Moses where people could not come near the ark lest they die. With the ark in David's tent, God's presence was accessible. He hired singers and musicians to praise the Lord continually before the ark.

So even though David lived under the Old Testament law, he made God's presence available to the people, just as Jesus would do in a much greater way when He died for our sin.

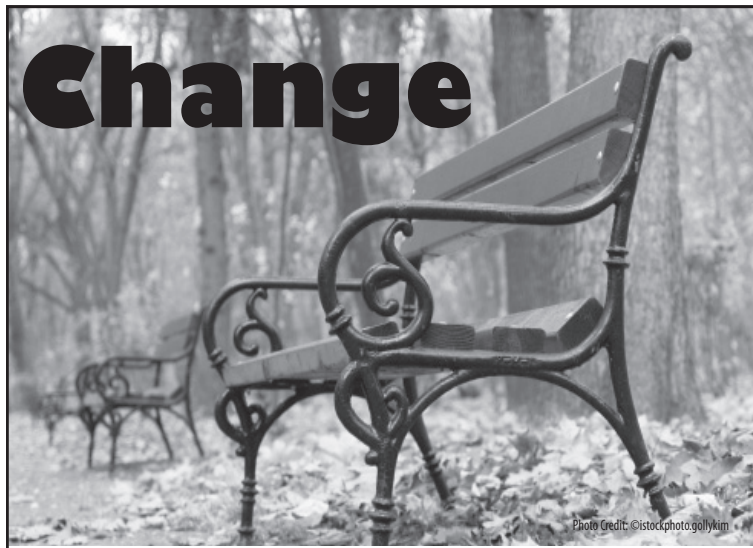
So when he speaks of going up to Zion, he is speaking of going up to the place where God's presence is acces-

sible, where we can draw near to God Himself. This is all because of Jesus' death, and blood shed for us. We are not called to a place where God is kept distant, but we worship Him from a place close to His heart, in the very Holy of Holies, before the throne of Grace.

Jeremiah in this verse says, "Let us". This call is to a people not just as individuals. God loves each individual, but has called a people to Himself. He is a Father, and desires family. So the call is to us, together, to come to the near place with God. We speak of a personal relationship with Jesus, and that is good. But God has redeemed and called a people, a holy nation, a holy priesthood, a generation, a special people belonging to God. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Jeremiah also says, "Let us arise and go..." If we are to draw near to God, the place of His near presence, then it takes action. We cannot get where we want to go while sitting where we are at. Scripture says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." We don't have to be experts, but He will somehow meet us as we take steps in His direction.

Lastly, Jeremiah says we are called to go "to the Lord our God." Going to Zion is not so much a place as a person. As God's people, there are many good places, events, meetings, conferences, ministries that we can go to, but God desires that we make Him, being with Him our destination. When we find a place of meeting with God, in His presence, then we are "there". In that place we find ourselves, our purpose, and greatest pleasure.



As the leaves turn color and fall to the ground they nourish the soil as they decay and they protect the tree's dormant roots from winter's chill. Though the leafless branches may seem sad, we know it is part of God's plan. We do not question His wisdom since we know summer will come again.

By the same token, we must have the faith to accept the sad times that we are helpless to change, realizing that God's plan for our lives is at work even if we can't see it. Experience has taught us that happy times will come again. Life will change, but God remains steady. Praise Him in worship this week.

Weekly Scripture Reading					
1 Samuel 24:1-22	1 Samuel 26:1-25	1 Chronicles 13:1-14	1 Chronicles 15:1-24	1 Chronicles 15:25-16:7	2 Samuel 18:1-17
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society					

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