

Jeremiah 20:1-13

Several years ago, I had a very difficult time while serving at my local church. Some of my close and long-time friends have opposed my view, and a few have rejected me by talking bad things at my back. Have you been disappointed while obeying God? Have you been discouraged in situations where you did the right thing? Jeremiah had that situation in Jeremiah chapter 20. Let's study this passage and learn from it.

Prophet Jeremiah's mission was to warn the Jewish people to repent, and tell the people what God will do if they don't. Chapters 18 and 19 describe that warning and prophecy, and the passage leads us to the study of Chapter 20.

1) The Disappointment (Verses 1 & 2)

a. **People don't listen to you and reject your position**

Priest Pashhur, representing spiritual authority, rejected Jeremiah's warning. In this case, they rejected God's message. People can also reject your view while you are right with God.

b. **People hurt you**

Jeremiah got beaten and locked up. People might hurt you in physical way like your body, in material way like your property or in emotional way like insults. We can be discouraged even we have certain faith in God.

2) The Immediate Response and Complaint (Verses 3 to 8)

Jeremiah responded to Priest Pashhur and God after the rejection and hurt.

a. **Stand firm on God's message/position**

Jeremiah talked to Priest Pashhur and stated God's message again even right after Jeremiah has been beaten and locked up. You can also stand firm on what is right.

b. **Talk to God (complain?)**

Jeremiah complained to God. He felt like he has been deceived by God. He got ridiculed by people. Our immediate response often complains to God. We don't understand why God put us in that position. We don't know why

God let the ungodly people win, why God let me down, etc. This can be a normal immediate response especially when we were badly wounded.

3) The Turn-around

Your enemy attacks you. Your close friends might turn away from you and even attack you (verse 10). It is a very difficult time. After immediate relief of frustration to God, take some time to pray to God and read the Bible. God will give you peace and assurance. As stated in James 4:8, “come close to God and God will come close to you.” You can then turn from complaint to praise as you draw closer to God.

a. Acknowledge God is with me

Verse 11 stated “But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior...”. God is still with you in difficult time, and shield you from harm to a level that he allows it to happen. God will not forget the enemies’ sinful acts.

b. Praise God

Verse 13 stated “Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.”

In conclusion, you might encounter rejection and attack from enemies while you are faithful. The enemy can even be your friend or ally before. This can happen in both serving God in spiritual assignments or at work in your career. Your friends might also side with your enemy. However, God is always with you. Come close to God and He will give you peace and assurance.

Back to my case while I was serving in a key role at a church several years ago, I was rejected because a lot of the church members, including some of my close friends, thought I have sided with the pastors. They were not satisfied with the pastors. One small group of members would like me to take action to terminate the pastors immediately. I was very stressful and disappointed. However, I remained faithful and upheld the truth. I stated the truth to those members that is “to love your brothers and sisters in Christ” including pastors. I was not sure why God let this situation happened in His church. But I prayed to God and sought Him like read the Bible. God gave me peace and assurance. It is fine that my close friends behaved that way. God will make things right now or in the future. Similar situation can happen to you. You can learn from this lesson to overcome and let God in control. God will give you peace and assurance.