**BCM Bible Study – 10/4 & 10/5**

**Jeremiah 21-23 Leadership & the Hope of the Branch of David**

**Background**:

*Chapter 21 begins with Zedekiah (king of Judah at the time) asking Jeremiah for a word from the Lord about Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon making war against them. Jeremiah reminds the leadership that destruction and devastation is headed their way and that the Lord Himself will keep them from prevailing in war with King Nebuchadnezzar. What follows is a serious message to the leadership of Judah.*

* In your experience, how have you seen negative or a lack of godly leadership affect a group negatively?

**Read Jeremiah 21:11-14 and 22:1-5**

*Helpful information: “House of David” refers to the king and those who rule alongside of him.*

* What seems to be the most important qualities in a leader to God? [look at the commands given to them in vs. 11-12, and 22:3-4]
* In 21 v.3, what do you think it means to “do justice and righteousness”?

*“So what we see in these first verses (21:11–22:9) is the declaration of what God expects from those who sit on the throne of David: ‘You and your subjects must let justice and righteousness rule in all your dealings. You must devote your time and energy for those who are oppressed. You must help and never take advantage of those who are most vulnerable: the refugee, the orphan, and the widow.’ If that's what kings are supposed to do in the Old Testament, how much more we who serve King Jesus. No matter what your vocation is, the reason you are alive is to celebrate the riches of God by meeting real needs. God's people, filled with God's Spirit, following God's way, will move inevitably toward and not away from the people with the greatest need.”* – John Piper

* What does it look like in this day and age to take care of those with the greatest need as poor and humble college students? What are some practical things this could look like?
* Look at 21 v.4. If the kings had obeyed God’s commands, what would have been the outcome for Judah? Given this information, how does that make you feel about the chances God gave Judah to save itself?

**Read Jeremiah 22:11-17**

* What are some of the qualities of bad leadership that you find in these verses?
* What are the contrasting qualities do you find in these verses compared to what God expects from leaders in the previous passage?
* In v.15, Josiah is remembered as being a good king, however his son, Shallum (or Jehoahaz) has done evil in the sight of the Lord. How do you think Jehoahaz turned so opposite of what his dad was as a king?
* How do you think leadership affects the attitude of the people that they rule over? (not just in Jeremiah, but in general)

**Read Jeremiah 23:5-8 [Hope]**

* Remember back to chapter 7: Judah’s leaders had assured the people of Judah that God would not bring destruction on them because they overemphasized the *Davidic Covenant*. “The people assumed David’s descendants would rule forever, and God’s blessing would rest on Jerusalem and the temple no matter how Judah lived.” *Encountering the Old Testament*
  + Knowing/remembering that background, how does this section become even more powerful to you as you read it?
* What are the characteristics of the king that the Lord will rise up to reign over Judah?
* Pay attention to v. 6. There are two powerful points here, “Judah will be saved.”, “And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.”
  + What new testament glimpse do you see here?
* **Read Romans 10:4 & 1 Corinthians 1:30**
  + How might God’s plan to save the Judeans be bigger than they may have ever imagined?
    - *Although the Judeans need physically saving from harms way at this point, God has a much bigger plan of salvation in store for their souls through Jesus birth, death and resurrection.*

**Read Jeremiah 23:13-32**

* Do you think God is harder on the government leaders, or the spiritual leaders? Why might this be so?
* “Spiritual adultery begins with ungodly spiritual leaders.” – ESV study bible footnote
  + How have you seen this come into play in your own life?
* Look back at vs. 13-14. How is Judah described as worse than the Northern Kingdom?
* How do vs. 23-25 make you feel when considering God’s presence and our sin?
* As Christians, why is it important that we be able to tell the difference between an ungodly spiritual leader (or false prophet) and those who are walking in God’s ways?
  + What are some ways we might be able to tell them apart?
* False teaching is a recurring theme in both the Old Testament and The New Testament. **Read Galatians 1:6-9**
  + Here, false teaching a problem for the church that Paul is trying to address. The Galatians have likely recently encountered visiting pastors who have tried to persuade them that they ought to require circumcision and obedience to the law as a means of justification before God.
    - Tim Keller adds his thoughts on how the Gospel was being misconstrued to the Galatians: “If you add anything to Christ as a requirement for acceptance with God—if you start to say: To be saved I need the grace of Christ plus something else—you completely reverse the ‘order’ of the gospel and make it null and void. Any revision of the gospel reverses the gospel.”
    - What are some things that we’re tempted to add to the gospel – (i.e. grace of Jesus + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ saves us)?
      * How can we protect ourselves from them?

**Closing:**

Pray together for our nation, for our leaders, for our spiritual leaders, pastors, etc.