

I recently finished reading through Jeremiah and Lamentations and found them rather sobering books to read and ponder. You can't help but feel the burden and agony of Jeremiah's heart. How he yearned to see the nation of Israel respond to the call of God to return to Him. Jeremiah's ministry wasn't a popular one and at times he grew discouraged and disappointed. Eventually he decided he couldn't go on being a prophet of God, so he decided to resign (20:7-11).

Try as he may Jeremiah just couldn't throw in the towel as he was God's man for the job. Externally he could put in his resignation but God wouldn't resign from Jeremiah because God still had work for him to do. (20:9) ... *"But His Word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not. The Word of God was like an unquenchable fire in his heart that was ready to leap out at any moment."*

I pray that Christians in today's church would have an unquenchable burden and vision to reach the lost. Like Jeremiah I pray that we may discover what he discovered in verse 11, "But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome one."

Circumstances, difficulties, trials and situations can blind us to the fact that we are not alone. Like Jeremiah we may face mocking, ridicule, derision, threats and intimidation, but we must not allow these to alter our understanding of just who God is, and that He is always with us.

Reading through the book of Lamentations we see a rather forlorn prophet walking through the ruins of Jerusalem. You can just imagine him thinking to himself; *Why didn't I listen to the Lord? Why didn't you turn back to God? Now look what has happened.* Yet despite this Jeremiah says in 3:22-24, "Because of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, for his compassion never fails. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

Despite the disaster before his eyes it didn't change Jeremiah's faith in God. However, we must see that God never condones our sin and that sin left unconfessed, eventually leads to bondage. In effect Israel wouldn't listen, so God had to use a dramatic measure to get their attention. Suddenly all that they valued and all that meant so much to them was vaporized through exile.

There are times when we as Christians feel we are missing out on life, because we don't have what the world considers essential for happiness. We get drawn in subtly to chase the world and find that it costs far more than we had ever anticipated. Take families for instance ... dad and mum work to provide for their families. However, if we don't watch our perspective on what we feel is needed for our families, we run the risk of losing the very thing that means so much to us.

Israel over a long period of time made wrong choices, but worst of all had come to accept them as being right choices in their own minds. Sadly their pursuit of false gods had brought about the sad picture of Jeremiah kicking through the smoldering ash heaps of Jerusalem.

Far too many Christian men and women end up as smoldering ashes. Far too many Christian marriages and families are nothing but smoldering ashes because wrong choices were made and left unconfessed and unrepented of.

But the picture doesn't have to finish there. Lamentation 5:21 tells us this; **"Turn us back to You, O Lord and we will be restored; Renew our days as of old."** Today can be the day you rise from the ashes of disobedience, back into the joy of the Lord.

— Carl Carmody, Editor Challenge

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## PRAISE

- Praise the Lord for the safe return home of the Impact Africa team and for the wonderful experiences they had as they ministered in the various areas whilst in South Africa
- Praise God for His faithfulness and provision for the work both here and overseas.
- Praise God for 'open doors' into the countries of southern Africa

## PRAYER

- Please pray for the Impact Africa team as they wind down after their recent ministry trip to South Africa. Pray that they will be able to share their testimonies of the Lord's hand upon them as they visited many people, churches, hospitals, prisons etc.
- Please pray for the many people who responded to their need of the Lord Jesus both here in Australia and in South Africa that they will grow spiritually as they are nurtured by local churches
- Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will continue to provide resources for the task at hand – distribution networks, personnel with writing skills, finance for print bills, visionary and praying people on our Board

## FEEDBACK ON CHALLENGE MALAWI

Patrick Kamwendo says: "Challenge News has been of more help as far as evangelism is concerned. I like the testimonies featured in this news as well as the articles."

Patsa Malunda comments: "I am glad that Challenge News is now available in Lilongwe. I like this newspaper because it encourages Christians and also reaches the lost world at the same time."

Fred Kwacha thinks that the "testimonies published in this newspaper give hope to others that are struggling with sin and are looking for an answer. It is a good evangelism tool also."

Lillian William describes the Challenge newspaper in this way: "People love this newspaper since it's given out freely. I like the way it is designed so that there are both English and Chichewa testimonies published meaning that it reaches both the rural and urban people. Challenge should continue publishing testimonies from all walks of life."

*Young man reading Challenge in market.*

*Note: Store sign top right*



## MY RESPONSE

Post to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 or Fax to **(08) 9453 3006**

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With God's help I would like to be a partner in supporting the ministry at Challenge in the following way(s):

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