

# Through The Bible In One Year

## The Adventure of Many Lifetimes

Unpublished Work, December 2005, David W. Shockey.

### Daily Scripture Selection

#### Week 42

**Day 288.** Read Jeremiah 26.1–27.22; 2 Thessalonians 3.1-18; Psalm 85.1-13; and Proverbs 25.16.

### Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** How desperate can God get? What more can he do? Will he risk shedding the innocent blood of his servant to turn the people back to himself, back into the way of life? ‘Stand right in the courtyard of the temple and tell them everything I command you to say,’ God orders Jeremiah. ‘Perhaps they will listen and turn to me. Then I will relent and not bring the destruction they deserve.’ Otherwise this ornate and imposing temple in Jerusalem will become like the temple in Shiloh: an empty and silent ruin. The religious leaders receive the message with rage. ‘This man must die!’ the prophets and priests shout when Jeremiah delivers God’s warning in the very precincts of their temple. ‘The Lord sent me,’ Jeremiah responds. ‘Now repent and reform—obey God and he will relent of the disaster he has pronounced against you!’ ‘As for me,’ Jeremiah says, ‘Do whatever you believe good and right. Only know that you will bring innocent blood on yourselves; for the Lord, in truth, sent me to speak all these words to you.’ Strangely, it is the officials and the people who protect Jeremiah from the rage of the religious leaders. ‘He should not die; for he has spoken to us in the name of our God!’ Too little, too late. The people still do not turn to the Lord. They still will not reform their ways. So God tried again! ‘Make a yoke and put it on your neck,’ he orders Jeremiah, ‘and say to the surrounding countries, ‘I will hand all your countries over to my servant the king of Babylon. If any nation refuses to bow and serve him, I will punish that nation. But if any nation submits to his yoke, that nation shall stay in its own land.’ Jeremiah, still wearing the yoke, delivers the same message to the king of Judah. Still the people refuse. Finally, Jeremiah prophesies that the huge bronze pillars and basin and all the other temple furnishings left when Babylon first captured Jerusalem would be taken to Babylon. Even in this dire warning is a word of hope, a hand or reconciliation held out to them: God would bring back the captured vessels and restore them to this place. God has a plan to bring them back. **Questions:** 1. What is the most difficult or risky thing God has asked me to do to date? Did I do it or shy away? What resulted from my obeying God (or not obeying)? 2. Why does God not prevent me from experiencing difficulties for following him but only promise to be with me through those difficulties? 3. What part do I have in helping people return to God to

have life? To whom is God sending me to proclaim his loving call to come to him and enjoy true life?

**2 Thessalonians:** He worked with his own hands—day and night- so as not to be a burden to them in any way. He would not accept food from anyone without paying for it. He had a right to food and support from them; but in order to be a model for them, he refused to insist on his rights. Some among the Christ-followers of Thessalonica were taking advantage of the freedom faith brings to be idle. ‘Never tire of doing what’s right!’ Paul urges them. They, too, are called to be models. Their works...or idleness...affects everyone around them. So, if a person won’t work, don’t let him eat. If anyone doesn’t follow Paul’s instructions, have nothing to do with them to cause them to reflect in their embarrassment. In all, be careful to treat them as brothers and sisters, never as enemies. Above all, Paul asks them to pray for Paul, that the message of Jesus Christ he proclaims may spread rapidly and be received joyfully as it was among them. The word must get out, for the word means life. **Questions:** 1. In my faith community, do I work diligently with my own hands so as not to be a burden to anyone and to set an example and encourage everyone around me? 2. In what areas of my walk with and for God do I tend to get lazy? In what areas such as prayer, serving, reading the Bible, giving, witnessing or fellowshiping am I ‘idle?’ 3. When someone in my faith community is idle or negative, do I still treat them as a brother or sister; or do I tend to treat them as an enemy because I feel unjustly burdened by their negativity? How can I show love to them while also firmly helping them to carry their load?

**Prayer:** Lord, I go back and forth between being super- religious and being lazy when it comes to you. Sometimes it seems I am up and down like a yo-yo. You aren’t interested in the externals, I know. Outward rule keeping, ritual, or religious acts mean nothing to you. You want my heart with you all the time. As once your Spirit hovered over the chaotic waters at creation, through the power of your Spirit make me your new creation. Turn my heart and mind to you, not just this minute or that but every moment. It’s all about you, all the time. It’s not about me at all. May my thoughts and words and deeds reflect that truth for everyone around me more and more, until you are all in all....my all in all...and theirs, too. Amen.

**Day 289.** Read Jeremiah 28.1-29.32; 1 Timothy 1.1-20; Psalm 86.1-17; and Proverbs 25.17.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** It is a battle of prophets, and the prize is the hearts and minds of the people. In the temple of the Lord, before the priests and people, another prophet proclaims...a lie. He says that God says he will break the yoke of the Babylonian king within two years and bring back all the holy vessels taken from the temple. Within two years! ‘Amen!’ Jeremiah,

still wearing the yoke God had commanded him to make and wear, replies lustily, 'May it be so! I and the prophets before me prophesied disaster; but the prophet like yourself who proclaims peace, that prophet will be recognized as true when the prediction comes true!' That's a nice way of saying he was lying...or at least totally mistaken. The false prophet took off Jeremiah's yoke and broke it, predicting again God would break their yoke of servitude to the Babylonian king in the same way. A word comes from God to Jeremiah: 'Tell him he may have broken this wooden yoke, but in its place I will get you a yoke of iron. All the nations will serve Babylon!' A battle of prophets begins. 'The Lord did not send you!' Jeremiah says to the false prophet's face, 'yet you persuaded this whole nation to trust in your lies. This very year you will die for preaching rebellion against God!' In the seventh month of the year, the false prophet died. The word of the Lord is powerful and true. All other words will perish...and cause people to perish. Jeremiah sends a word of hope and encouragement from God to the exiles in Babylon: build houses, plant gardens, marry and have children; for when seventy years have passed I will come and bring you back to this place!' God has plans for his people—to prosper and not harm them. He will gather them from wherever they have been scattered, from all the nations. They will seek him and find him, when they seek him with all their heart. **Questions:** 1. What false teachings are rampant in society today? What false teachings are there which would infect even the community of faith if they could? 2. To what difficult places did I 'exile' myself through my sinfulness and waywardness from God? How did God bring me back? 3. How should I live during the time of my exile (until I am finally face-to-face with God forever) so as to honor God and commend God to the people around me?

**I Timothy:** There can be a deeper bond between people than DNA. Paul calls Timothy his "true son" in the faith. *True* son. For all who believe, the people we are related to by the faith of Jesus Christ are our true relatives. This is our true family. Paul writes to Timothy as to a son, even though he is no blood relation. He mentors him as a father mentors his own son. Paul pours out to him his own history with all its lurid details: violently persecuting the church, blaspheming the name of Christ, he was still shown mercy and made an apostle of Jesus Christ. To his true son he makes sure to teach the most important truth of all. 'This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which I am without question the worst.' Coming to know Christ's forgiveness, Paul also came to know the depths of his own spiritual need and the limitless nature of God's grace. And by saving such a one as Paul, Christ gave great encouragement to all who would believe and receive eternal life. In an outburst of joyful praise, Paul, the saved 'worst of all sinners,' declares, 'Honor and glory to the immortal, eternal King, the invisible and only God, forever and ever!' **Questions:** 1. Who are my spiritual fathers and mothers—the ones who truly helped me to be reborn spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ? 2. Who are my true children—the ones I am mentoring into fullness of life through faith in Jesus? 3. How would I tell others about how God has loved and forgiven me? Have I prepared a brief story about it? Am I ready at a moment's notice to share it with others when appropriate?

Prayer: Lord, I am seeking you with all my heart... well, much of my heart...all the time...well, some of the time. Sad, but true, I can't even claim that I am seeking you as I ought. Why do you still love me? Why do you still allow me to find you...to discover sweet moments with you? Truly, I think you are always near and eager to be found, only I am not aware of it...or wanting it...so much of the time. Truly, I am an example of your patience and love that waits and longs for a deeper relationship. Very well, let me be an example. Lead me to long for you more and more and seek you with all my heart and soul. If nothing else, let me pass on to my children in faith the story of my lacking...and of my deeper longing. For those who long for you and seek you will find you. You have promised, and I believe it. Amen.

**Day 290.** Read Jeremiah 30.1-31.26; 1 Timothy 2.1-15; Psalm 87.1-7; and Proverbs 25.18-19.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** It's so sure that God bids him write it in a book, so everyone can read it. 'I will bring back my people from captivity and restore them,' God promises. He will break the yoke from off their necks and tear off their shackles. Instead of serving oppressors, they will serve God again and the King he will raise up for them. One from among them will rise to rule over them. They will be God's people; and he will be their God again, he alone. He will gather them from the far ends of the earth, even the blind and the lame, pregnant women and mothers in labor, a great throng of people. The Lord will ransom and redeem his people. He will refresh the weary and strengthen the faint. The people will be like a well-watered garden, green, flowery and fruitful. Old and young will dance and be glad. God bids his prophet—and his people—to set up road signs and put up guideposts so people can find the road to take back. 'How long will you wander?' God cries. If the people long for the coming of that day of ransom and redemption, and the coming of the King, God longs for it more! **Questions:** 1. How do I live differently now, knowing that I have been ransomed and redeemed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus? Is my life like a dance, glad and joyful? Why, or why not? 2. What kind of road sign or guidepost am I to those who still have to find the way? 3. How am I like (or not like) a well-watered garden?

**1 Timothy:** Pray first for those in authority. God wants everyone to come to knowledge of the truth and be saved. Even people with power. There is one God and one go-between, Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. Men and women both are to pray, with proper attitudes of heart and mind—without anger or disputing, modestly and decently. All are to pray that they may live peaceful and quiet lives in godliness and holiness. **Questions:** 1. How often do I pray for those in authority over me in my nation, community, and workplace? Do I really care for them with a Christ-like heart and put

them first before my own needs? 2. Because there is only one God and one mediator between God and humans, how can I show forth my unity with other believers? 3. Since Jesus gave himself as a ransom for everyone, and since I can never look in the eyes of someone Jesus didn't die for or doesn't want to live with him forever, what must I be doing to help those I know and meet come to know him?

**Prayer:** Lord, let my life be a dance before you, in joyful thanks for your freeing me. And as you want all people to come to know the truth and be saved, use me to bring others into the dance. You want everyone in the dance, even the people with positions of power and prestige. Teach me to pray for those over me...and use me to serve and speak to them, so they join the dance, too. Amen.

**Day 291.** Read Jeremiah 31.27-32.44; 1 Timothy 3.1-16; Psalm 88.1-18; and Proverbs 25.20-22.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** The old covenant couldn't cut it, so why would a new one? What? It's not like the old one when God redeemed his people by the hand to lead them out of slavery in Egypt? What's different this time? They broke that covenant, even though God was like a husband to them; he cared for them so. It won't be outside; it will be inside them? In their minds and hearts? You mean we will actually want to keep it, so one person won't even have to urge another to know the Lord? Whatever could possibly cause such a total turn around—literally turn people inside out?! Oh! God will forgive their wickedness and forget their sins. Yes, that would do it, of course. It's love. Who could love more than a brutally betrayed spouse who still forgives the hurt and humiliation of the adultery, to welcome back the wayward one as their Beloved once more? Jeremiah is told to proclaim the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people for all their adulterous wrongdoing, it is true. But he is also told to proclaim that God will gather his people back from all the lands to which he scattered them in his fierce anger. Then he will put into them a new singleness of heart and action, so they will always revere him and never turn from him again. Then he will make an everlasting covenant with them and will never stop blessing them. Now that's a covenant! One literally made in heaven! That's a covenant everyone would want to be part of. That's a covenant everyone can be part of. **Questions:** 1. Because God wants a new covenant with me, and because a covenant means an intimate, personal relationship, how does it effect my attitudes and actions to know the God of the universe wants a personal relationship with me? 2. How was my life before knowing Christ like adultery toward God? What things still tempt me to be faithless? 3. Now that the forgiveness of God is mine through the cross and resurrection of Christ, how has my desire toward God changed? How has my life changed to reflect the new relationship between us?

**1 Timothy:** How shall God's people act in God's household? What qualities and characteristics shall they evidence? Especially, how shall leaders in the faith community act, the ones most prominent? Not given to drunkenness or violence. Not greedy for money. Not quarrelsome. Temperate. Hospitable. Self-controlled. Holding fast to the truth with a clear conscience. Able to teach others these truths and qualities. Loving and wise toward their own families, earning the respect of spouse and children alike. Having a good reputation with outsiders. Tried and tested in the faith, not new converts. In this community, desiring to be a leader who demonstrates these godly qualities is an honorable and good thing; for to lead in this community means to serve and not to lord it over others. Even outsiders will recognize that this is the household of God, God's family. They will see the family resemblance...and be drawn into the family. **Questions:** 1. Which of the qualities in this passage am I strongest in? Which needs most work? What is one step I can take to grow in that quality? 2. What can I do to improve the climate and character of my faith community so more 'outsiders' are drawn to it? 3. In what leadership position can I aspire to serve in my faith community? What steps can I take to prepare for and receive it?

**Prayer:** God, lead me to serve more in your household, the faith community you have called me into. As it pleases you, I desire to lead. But prepare me in heart, mind and spirit, for leadership first. I know that means you will give me more opportunities to serve; for to lead among your people means to stoop lower and serve more. It means to follow Christ, your servant Son, becoming more and more like him. That is what I want most of all, to become more like him...so send me lower, to serve even by leading, as it pleases you. Amen.

**Day 292.** Read Jeremiah 33.1-34.22; 1 Timothy 4.1-16; Psalm 89.1-13; and Proverbs 25.23-24.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** In the midst of the storm, God comes to us. Confined in the courtyard of the guard in Jerusalem, Jeremiah receives the word of the Lord: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you unimaginable things you cannot guess." Destruction looms, but anyone can imagine that. The invincible Babylonian army is besieging the surrounded city. People, starving from famine caused by warfare, feed on a steady diet of despair. What Jeremiah hears is hope. God promises, 'I will bring my people back from captivity and rebuild their community. The sounds of joy and gladness, the laughter of bride and bridegroom, and the merriment of thankful people in God's house will again be heard.' To seal it with all the certainty and assurance God can muster to convince the people, God says, 'If you can break my covenant with the day and night so they no longer come at their

appointed time, only then my covenant and promise can be broken. Dawn and dusk will fail before God's promise. This hope is sure. This hope gives courage and confidence for life under siege, life in the prison of life. A glimmer comes in the darkness—a ray of light like the dawning of a new day—as the people free their slaves according to God's word of command. As God had freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, so every seventh year they were to release their Hebrew slaves; but they had never kept this command. Worse, after freeing their slaves, they changed their minds and enslaved them again, pouring bitter salt in their already wounded spirits. The old nature will not die easily. Their fate is sealed. God declares they are free: free to fall by the sword, plague and famine, since they were so free with enslaving others. But the promise still stands; God will bring the people back in a new exodus and establish a new kingdom. **Questions:** 1. Why is it that the difficult times are the most productive and growing times for me in my relationship with God? 2. How has God given me hope and strength to go on in my most difficult times? 3. After God has helped me, why do I tend to relapse or go back on my resolutions to live and work more purposefully for God? What can I do to avoid this?

**I Timothy:** Spiritual athletes. Christ-followers are called to be spiritual athletes, not neglecting the gift God has given them but developing and putting it into practice to the utmost. The Spirit predicted that in later times some followers of Jesus would abandon the faith and follow false teachings taught by deceiving spirits. These false teachers would forbid some good things God has given, like marriage or the eating of certain foods. Everything God has created is good and not to be rejected if received with thanksgiving, consecrated by the word of God and prayer, to honor and please God. 'Train yourself to be godly,' Paul urges Timothy and all followers of Christ. 'Monitor carefully your life and faith. Devote yourself diligently to public reading of scripture, proclaiming, and teaching. Persevere and you will save both yourself and your hearers. Be a model for others in speech, love, faith, purity, in life itself.' **Questions:** 1. What kind of spiritual athlete am I for God? What kind of example or model in faith, love, and life am I setting for the people God's put me in relationship with? 2. How can I 'exercise' my faith and love better and develop my spiritual 'muscle' more? 3. What false teachers and false teachings are seeking to undermine the freedom I have in Christ today? How can I better know Christ and God's word, so I don't fall prey to them and end up stunted and fruitless for God?

**Prayer:** God, you have given me a great gift. I confess, part of me is afraid to take the gift out of the package and put it to use. What good is a sailboat if it is always moored to shore? What good is an instrument if it never makes music? You didn't make me to be a decoration behind glass in a museum. You made me and gifted me to grow fuller of life and more fruitful for others. Cut the mooring, and set me free to follow you as you lead me into the unpredictable waters of serving and sharing faith with others. Only then will I fully and finally be what you want me to be: free and full of life. Amen.

**Day 293.** Read Jeremiah 35.1-36.32; 1 Timothy 5.1-25; Psalm 89.14-37; and Proverbs 25.25-27.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** Write it down. Every word I have given you. Perhaps when the people hear about all the disasters that loom on the horizon they will turn from their wickedness. I will forgive not only their sin, but their very wickedness—the deadly nature that strangles their souls. Jeremiah dictated all the prophecies God had given him; and because he was under arrest, he sent his servant to read them to all the people of Judah in the temple on a holy day. The court officials of the king listened. They took the scroll and gave it to the king. After every section was read to the king, he cut it off the scroll and burned it in the fire. It was winter, and he warmed himself with burning God’s word. He did not flinch or fear, hearing the warnings of impending destruction decreed by God. Then he commanded both Jeremiah and his scribe be arrested. But God had hidden them. God always protects his faithful people. And God ordered Jeremiah to make another scroll like the first. God’s word will endure. Worldly kings and rulers will not. **Questions:** 1. How am I at receiving God’s ‘hard’ words to me that call me to change my ways? 2. How do I treat God’s ‘messengers’ who bring me the tough news that I need to change my thinking and actions? How do I treat those preachers and teachers appointed in my faith community to speak to me for God? 3. What is my part in helping others who are wandering to come into the way of life God has given? Who are (or could be) my partners, like Jeremiah’s scribe and partner, in the work of helping others find and follow God’s way to life?

**1 Timothy:** Treat older people as though they were your father or mother. Treat younger ones as though brothers or sisters. In Christ they are, if you are in Christ yourself. With others of the opposite sex, seek absolute purity. Practice generous charity for widows and people in need. Exercise good judgment in helping people with their needs, always insisting people do what they can to help themselves and others. Honor and support the leaders of the community who preach and teach, not listening to gossip or accusations unless confirmed by two witnesses publicly. Show no partiality or favoritism. Give no opportunity for slander to those who are opposed to the faith. All these words of Paul to Timothy, his ‘true son’ in the faith, are words to all Christ’s followers. ‘Keep yourself pure,’ he urges. Purity of heart, as Soren Kierkegaard wrote, is to will one thing. The ‘one thing’ needful is to maintain our connection with God in every situation and relation.

**Questions:** 1. Do I show favoritism or partiality in my dealings with others? Do I give those outside the faith opportunity to criticize the faith by my words, actions, or inactions? 2. Do I seek to assist others but also insist on their doing what they can, not making them unnaturally or unhealthily dependent? 3. Do I honor and support the teachers and proclaimers in my faith community as much as I should?

Prayer: Lord, let me, like you, use wisdom and love with others. Your love and hope reached me first and made your difficult wisdom so certain and sure that I wanted to receive it. Your love made the hard words of where I had gone wrong sweet, as bitter as they were. In my dealings with others, now let me wisely lead with love, listening and serving before speaking. And let me speak wisely, when you have provided the proper moment and opportunity, of your love. I fear I will use fear unwisely and un-lovingly to force the result I long for and you long for before the right time. Oh, loving and wise Teacher, teach me both the way and time; and at the right time, let me leap to speak for you lovingly and wisely. Amen.

**Day 294.** Read Jeremiah 37.1-38.28; 1 Timothy 6.1-21; Psalm 89.38-52; and Proverbs 25.28.

## Thoughts & Questions For Reflection:

**Jeremiah:** The perfect opportunity came but in a most surprising way. When the Babylonian army besieging Jerusalem heard that the Egyptian army had marched out to meet them in battle, they withdrew for a time, leaving the city free. Jeremiah was arrested as he left the city and charged with deserting to the Babylonians. He was suspected of being a Babylonian sympathizer, because he had predicted their capturing the city and proclaimed God's command to submit to Babylon. He was going to get his share of his family's property in the territory of Benjamin. He was beaten and imprisoned in the dungeon. In the midst of the darkness, both of surroundings and his future, a most unexpected thing happens. The king sent for him secretly and asked him, 'Is there any word from the Lord?' The perfect opportunity had come for Jeremiah...to help himself...or show himself faithful to God. Other prophets had predicted peace and security for Jerusalem and the king. If Jeremiah would, also, perhaps he would be released. In his first face-to-face meeting with the king, Jeremiah responds, 'You will be handed over to the king of Babylon.' Jeremiah remained faithful. He told the truth, instead of seeking his own safety and security. He pleaded with the king to spare his life at least, not returning him to death in the dungeon. The king places him under arrest in the courtyard of the guard and orders him to be given bread each day, as long as there was any in the city. The officials clamored for his death. They lowered him into a cistern in the courtyard, with mud in the bottom, to die there, exposed to all the elements. One official heard about it and risked his own life by approaching the king. The king commanded him to rescue Jeremiah and bring him to a second, secret meeting. What will Jeremiah's word be this time? The king swears he will not kill or harm Jeremiah, but will he keep his word? Will he—or can he—keep his officials from killing Jeremiah? Jeremiah responds: 'If you surrender to the king of Babylon, he will spare you and the city will not be burned; but if you don't, the city will be destroyed and you will not escape.' Then Jeremiah pleads and proclaims to the king: 'Obey the Lord and it will go well with you, and your life will be spared!'

Jeremiah proclaims God's word of warning...and invitation. God wants the king and all the people to live...and so does Jeremiah. Jeremiahs wants even those who persecuted him and threatened to kill him to live! The king kept Jeremiah safe in house arrest in the courtyard of the guard until the day the word of the Lord was vindicated, when the Babylonian army captured Jerusalem, capturing and killing the king who would not surrender the city, as God willed. **Questions:** 1. How does knowing God and the power of his Word help me stand firm when I am called to witness to my faith? 2. What things work to weaken my resolve or cause me to waver when called on to speak for my faith? What steps can I take to strengthen my faith and skill in sharing it? 3. What opportunities do I have now to share God's love and the opportunity for new life God gives among the people I live and work with?

**I Timothy:** Nothing in, nothing out. We bring nothing into the world—for all is given us by God—and we take nothing out—because all belongs to God, who alone endures forever. So how ought we to live? Seeking to amass more and more? The endless desire for money is a bottomless pit, the source of all evil. That path leads through ruin its final destination, destruction. Some have even wandered from the faith following it. Pursue instead something which, if found, will completely satisfy. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Pursue righteousness, faith, love, endurance, generosity, gentleness—in short, pursue godliness, God-like-ness. Fight the good fight of faith...Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. It has to be fought for. The gift offered has to be opened...take hold of the gift...pursue the fulfillment of the gift with your every thought and word and deed. Nothing in, nothing out...except godliness. The only thing you take with you is the character and quality of godliness you develop by seizing and succoring-in the face of relentless resistance from yourself, the world and the evil one-the gift God has given you in Christ: a new nature and a new life that is truly life. **Questions:** 1. What am I really pursuing in life? The things of this world or the new nature and life that is mine, as a gift through faith in Jesus? 2. How actively am I pursuing godliness? What intentional steps am I taking to grow in godliness, in Christ-like character and action? 3. Realizing that I brought nothing into the world and will take nothing (literally no-thing) out when I die, what am I doing with the blessing God has given me to commend the faith and leave a legacy?

**Prayer:** Lord, a new day means another day in the relentless struggle. I wish you would just stop it, just give me the new character and life of Christ complete...and know you have, in promise. The Spirit of Christ is within me, the reality of the gift unfolding as you promised. But it is up to me to open the gift. Instead, another nature struggles within me to survive and prevail, pursuing its own ends and desires. Its desires are hopeless, because its ends are endlessly receding like the distant horizon...more and more leading to less and less. Let me fight the good fight every day. Let me pursue with eagerness and energy the only thing that fulfills me more the more I desire it: your character and life. You are my all-in-all, the only thing I want in this life...and the only thing I will keep from this life. Amen.

# Through The Bible In One Year: Week 42

## Sunday Worship Lessons

First Lesson (Old Testament): Jeremiah 29.4-14

Psalm: 86.1-10

Second (New Testament) Lesson: 1 Timothy 1.12-17

Theme: Hope For Your Hopeless Situations

### Sunday Scripture Selection and Theme Explanation, Week 42:

Life deals us situations where we are helpless and hopeless. How can we not only survive but prevail spiritually at such dark times. Jeremiah wrote a letter from God to people who had been carried away from their homeland to exile in the country that conquered them. They were essentially prisoners, almost slaves, far from home. They were in danger of giving up hope. The word of God told them to live with hope, to build houses, marry and have children; because a day of deliverance was coming. The promise of God gave them courage and confidence to survive and prevail. Paul, writing to his spiritual son, Timothy, retells how he had persecuted Christians and, yet, was forgiven and chosen to proclaim Christ. He had been helpless and hopeless; but now, through God's amazing grace, he found hope and help for a life that overcame that terrible wrong start and became a pleasing gift to God. Because of who God is—a forgiving God who offers salvations to all who trust in him—hope is available to all in life's hopeless times, to all who believe.

### Alternate Readings & Themes:

1. **“The Power For Total Transformation”** Through Jeremiah, God promises those who trust in him a new heart. He forgives and forgets all the wrong we have done and offers a new center and self from which to live a new life. Paul writes to Timothy about that very transformation which God worked in him, turning him from a persecutor of Christ to one who proclaims Christ. That same transforming love and power of God is certainly available to all, if it was available to Paul the persecutor! **Jeremiah 31.31-34; Psalm 85.1-9; 1 Timothy 1.12-17.**
2. **“False Teachers and True: You Need To Know The Difference”.** How can we know the difference between true spiritual teachers and false ones? Conflicting claims are all around us in today's world. What is the true way to God and to life? Not only eternal life hereafter but the right life we want now depends on knowing the difference between false

and true teachers...and being true ourselves. Because he brought a word of correction and warning, Jeremiah was accused of prophesying falsely and threatened with death. Both he and his message were true, however. Paul, writing centuries later, describes false teachers, while instructing his young disciple, Timothy, how to be true. **Jeremiah 26.1-17; Psalm 86.11-17; 1 Timothy 4.1-16**