



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### Complain < Confess < Sing July 4-6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### Jeremiah 20:7-13

<sup>7</sup> You deceived me, LORD, and I was deceived;  
you overpowered me, and prevailed.  
I am ridiculed all day long;  
everyone mocks me.

<sup>8</sup> Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction.  
So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long.

<sup>9</sup> But if I say,  
“I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,”  
his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones.  
I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

<sup>10</sup> I hear many whispering,  
“Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let's denounce him!”  
All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying,  
“Perhaps he will be deceived;  
then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him.”

<sup>11</sup> But the LORD is with me like a mighty warrior;  
So my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.  
They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;  
their dishonor will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup> LORD Almighty,  
you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind,  
let me see your vengeance on them,  
for to you I have committed my cause.

<sup>13</sup> Sing to the LORD! Give praise to the LORD!  
He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.

1. If you had to give this section a title, what would you call it?  
Some Bibles call it “Jeremiah’s Complaint” others “Jeremiah’s Confession” or “Jeremiah is Compelled to Preach”

2. Read Jeremiah 20:1-6. What is Jeremiah complaining about?  
*Jeremiah 20:1-6 <sup>1</sup>When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the official in charge of the temple of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, <sup>2</sup> he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the Lord's temple. <sup>3</sup> The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord's name for you is not Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. <sup>4</sup> For this is what the Lord says: ‘I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. <sup>5</sup> I will deliver all the wealth of this city into the hands of their enemies—all its products, all its valuables and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. They will take it away as plunder and carry it off to Babylon. <sup>6</sup> And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.’”*

He's complaining about his suffering. But also about the fact that God seems far away during his suffering.

3. Scan v. 7-10. Which one of Jeremiah's complaints have you thought before?

If people struggle to find what are Jeremiah's complaints, here's a list:

- v. 7 God didn't treat me fairly.
- v. 7 God made me do what he wants instead of what I want.
- v. 7 People look down on me because I follow God.
- v. 8 God's word has difficult teachings that people don't like.
- v. 9 I wish God didn't command me to share his word.
- v. 10 People are looking for a way to prove me wrong.
- v. 10 People I like are hoping bad things happen to me.

4. In what ways have you suffered for doing what God wants?

Examples from the sermon include...

- Be honest at work and you may lose money.
- Stand up for the unborn and you may lose respect.

- Define marriage the way God defines it and you may lose a friend.
- Confront a friend who's caught in sin and you may lose a relationship.
- What else can you think of?

## 5. Agree/Disagree. It's a sin to complain to God.

### Evidence for Agree:

- Jesus said to REJOICE in suffering (*Matthew 5:11-12 <sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*)
- St. Paul commanded people not to complain. (*Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing.*) But instead rejoice. (*Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; I will say it again, rejoice.*)
- St. Paul's personal example was to rejoice while he suffered. (*Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and other prisoners were listening to them.*)
- The other apostles rejoiced in suffering. (*Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*)
- Even if it's not a SIN, it seems a bit pitiful to complain about our suffering when you consider what Jeremiah and the prophets endured.

### Evidence for Disagree:

- God already knows what we are thinking so we might as well tell him. (*Jeremiah 20:11 Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have committed my cause.*)
- God invites us to bring our cares to him. (*1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him for he cares for you.*)
- Job complained against God, (*Job 10:1 I loathe my very life; therefore, I will give free reign to my complaint and speak it out in the bitterness of my soul.*) and God commended him for his words. (*Job 42:8 You have not spoken of me what is right, as my*

*servant Job has.*)

- Many psalms express complaints to God and Psalms are “the correct way to relate to God in a given situation.” (*Psalms 10, 13, 55, 64, 77, 102, and 142*)
- We know Jesus never sinned and he questioned his Father's plan. (*Hebrews 5:15 We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.*) (*Matthew 27:46 Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")*)

### Resolution:

Like so many things, the very same words or actions could be sinful or holy depending on the attitude of the heart. It is never ok for a believer to sit in judgement over God, thinking in anger that MY plan is better than GOD'S. But if we may voice our distress to the Lord, trusting that he will care for us in the best way. A trusting heart is not sinning. An angry doubting heart is.

## 6. Jeremiah's tone switches in verse 11. Explain why those words would be encouraging for Jeremiah.

If the Lord is a mighty warrior and he is with me, then I do not need to fear my foes. I will end up winning in the end.

As a mighty warrior the Lord has defeated sin and death.

Therefore, even if my enemies kill me, I will only be closer to him than ever before. As Jesus said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” *Matthew 10:28.*

As the Psalmist says “*The Lord is on my side; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*” *Psalms 118:6.*

That's a reason to REJOICE even if you are suffering. Which is what Jeremiah does in v. 13.

## 7. Some Bibles call this section “Jeremiah's Confession,” which means, “Jeremiah uncovers his heart.” What was in Jeremiah's heart? (Try to name both positive and negative things.)

### Positive:

- He had some anger toward God. (v. 7)
- He had some grim thoughts about the future (v. 10)
- It gets even worse in v. 14-18.

Negative:

- Jeremiah had amazing dedication to God's work. (v. 9)
- He had trust in that the Lord would be merciful. (v. 12)
- He had confidence in God's power. (v. 11)
- He praised the Lord for his work. (v. 13)

Answers will vary.

8. What in your heart is similar to Jeremiah's (both positive and negative)?

Answers will vary. If people have trouble understanding the question ask it this way: If everyone could see what goes on in your mind and heart, what would be some embarrassing things? What would be some God-praising things?

9. One mental pathway through suffering is from complaining to confessing to singing. What might move a person from complaining to confessing? What might move a person from confessing to rejoicing?

Complaining to confessing- maybe seeing another Christian example. Jeremiah 20:7-12 is a good example. Many psalms are also a good example to follow. We can start with a complaint, but take that complaint to God with a trusting heart. It will usually lead us to confess some evil about us and some praise-worthy thing about God.

Confessing to singing- Ok, maybe you won't actually burst into song, but the joy may still come! When you see that God does not run away from you even when you confess your sins, that brings great joy. Imagine a God who loves you just as you are, warts and all, even if you uncover the deepest nastiest corners of your heart to him—that God is the true God. He loves you as you are, that prompts joy.

Also, God is with you during every bit of your suffering. He knows what it's like to suffer and he's promised he'll help you through it. No Christian ever suffers alone because Christ goes with him. That companionship also produces joy. That's why the apostles rejoiced when they were "counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

10. What is one thing you'll remember from this study?