

JONAH OR JEREMIAH , DO NOT FEAR

Lamentations 3:55-57 (NRSV) ⁵⁵

I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit;

⁵⁶ you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear to my cry for help, but give me relief!"

⁵⁷ You came near when I called on you; you said, "Do not fear!"

There are times in life when we rejoice, there are times when we are gripped by fear.

Joy, love, peace, fear, suffering, agony, tears, laughter are part and parcel of our lives. No one is forever happy and no one is forever sad.

But when we are sad or afraid, we tend to shove it into the carpet and pretend as though everything is normal.

It is always good to acknowledge even the dark paths of our lives and take it to the Lord in prayer. We can ask a friend whom we can trust to pray with us, share our burden in the Lord. This is quite biblical.

Galatians 6:2 (NRSV) ²Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill ^{the} the law of Christ.

One need not be ashamed to be open with one's weaknesses, helplessness and vulnerability. Only when we think about ourselves as super heroes, we store up a lot of unnecessary tension within ourselves.

Many years ago I went to a prayer cell, where I had to give a short message. When I was praying for the evening meeting, I felt led to speak on the verse "Jesus wept," John 11,35. I was thinking twice whether to speak,

because I thought it was not a very positive message, anyway I spoke only that.

After the meeting one lady came and grabbed my hand and started crying. In between her tears she said that on that particular day she was beaten very badly by her drunken husband and was hurt both physically and emotionally. She kept telling in her mind, how can God know her pain. But when she heard the message that Jesus also weeps with those who are grieving, she felt so comforted. When she left she could really smile.

How true! We have a God who stands close by and feels all our pain, our fears, our loneliness. We only have to call, "Abba Father."

Jeremiah knew time and again, he can trust his God though he was cast in a pit for being the mouth piece of God. He was desolate and was afraid. He was let into a dungeon.

Jeremiah 38:6 (NKJV) ⁶So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah [£]the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

From the pit he called upon the Lord and he says, "The Lord came close to him and said, "Do not fear." How comforting it is to know even the most anointed prophet is scared to death and calls on the Lord. But more comforting is that when we call upon Him, He comes close to us and assuages our fears, confusions, pain and turmoil.

It was also the experience of Jonah who unlike Jeremiah went the other way from the God's direction. Yet when he was caught he cried to the Lord and the Lord had him and rescued him also.

Jonah 2:1-2 (NKJV) ¹Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly.

²And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, *and* You heard my voice.

Be it Jeremiah the obedient or Jonah the diffident, God is near in their times of danger.

Actually am more fascinated by the case of Jonah than Jeremiah. Jonah was hell bent not to go to the Nineveh where God wanted him to go. Not only did he go the other way, but when there was turbulence in the sea, instead of reconciling with God, he decided to commit suicide.

The gentile captain reprimands the sleeping Jonah to pray to his God. But Jonah tells him coolly the sea is turbulent because of me, so throw me into the sea. Yet the captain tried hard to save him. But the unrepentant Jonah was finally cast into sea. He would have never dreamed he would survive.

But God still wanted Jonah to fulfil His purpose in his life. What a wonderful God! And so down he went into the belly of a fish or underground and when his senses returned, he called on the Lord and His God answered him.

So whether we are like Jeremiah or Jonah, God still is close to us to rescue us, to comfort us and to be near us. Reach out and touch Him. He is still the same Deliverer who delivered His people from the tyranny of the Pharaoh.

God bless.

This is a very blessed song by the late Rich Mullins. One of these days I'll write about the Jesus like life of Rich Mullins. Keep reading☺

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac4GnpqXQAQ>