**Jeremiah 38:1-13**

***“Strange Grace”***

Have you experienced “Strange Grace” in your life?

**I. REJECTING GRACE 38:1-4**

 ***A. The People 1***

**1.** The four mentioned no doubt represented a larger group. Jeremiah’s confinement

 in the courtyard still made it possible to make his message known. They couldn’t shut

 him up!

 **2.** We don’t know all of these men, but Gedaliah was probably the son of Pashhur who

 beat Jeremiah and placed him in stocks (20:6).

 **3.** Jucal is mentioned in (37:3). These men were loyal to Judah. Jeremiah was

 killing morale!

 ***B. The Proclamation 2,3***

**1.** Jeremiah had one message. **It was from God.** He has been tested and confirmed

 as a prophet. To reject Jeremiah was to reject God.

 **2.** *Whoever goes over to Babylon will live. The men of war who remain (v. 4)* No doubt some

 had fallen in battle. Others were slipping out at night and surrendering to

 the Babylonians. Everyone was discouraged!

 **3.** How disheartening was this message of gloom to these patriots!

 ***C. The Pronouncement 4***

The ‘Gang of 4’ go to king Zedekiah. We don’t like the message. Kill the messenger.

 *For this man seeks not the welfare of the people, but their harm.*

1. Was the accusation true? Was Jeremiah a traitor? Was he seeking their good or ruin?
2. News of divine judgment is always perceived as bad news. It is unpleasant to hear that God punishes sin.
3. **The only thing that really matter is whether or not the bad news of divine judgment****is true!** Jeremiah was merely speaking the truth which was the word of God.
4. The ‘Gang of 4’ were rejecting God’s grace. The liberal theologian of our day does the same thing as the 4: They wanted God’s mercy, but not God’s justice. They wanted the God who gives victory, but not a God who permits suffering. The true church of Jesus Christ is like Jeremiah to a postmodern culture. We don’t say, “*There, there everything will be all right!”* We don’t say, *“Peace, Peace”* We say, *“You will not have peace until you get right with God.”* We proclaim God’s judgment. We call sin…sin! Flee the judgment to come! Many say and will say: *“You are a bunch of extremists.” “You are a menace to society.”* The question is not whether the message is acceptable, but is it true? Not whether it is popular, but is it true?
5. What have you done with Jesus? *Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”* That’s true!!!

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**II. RELENTLESS GRACE 38:4-7**

When someone knocks at your door what can be your reaction? *Go away…You do*

 *nothing…Come In*

How many times…How many ways…how often does God extend His arms of grace:

1. ***Passionate Rejection****…Judah* Throughout the book of Jeremiah God calls…then through ‘Gang of 4’ there is a hostile and passionate rejection. ***No!!***
2. ***Passive Rejection****…Zedekiah* The king has an opportunity to do what’s right, but he did

 nothing! *Behold, he is in your hands. For the king can do nothing against you.* Like Pilate

 with Jesus, he washed his hands.

1. ***Positive Reception****…Ebed-Melech* Grace was extended to a poor, Ethiopian slave. He

 surrendered and it changed his life forever! Grace comes to you…how will you respond?

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**III. REFINING GRACE 38:4,5,6**

The believers in Judah went through the same thing as the unbelievers.

 ***A. Misunderstood 4***

 ***B. Maligned* *4a***

 ***C. Malicious 4b*** *Kill Him!*

 ***D. Mistreated 6*** He was placed in a dungeon. There was no water in the cistern, but

 Jeremiah sank in the mud. Jeremiah had done nothing but what God told him to do. In v.

 13 he remained in the court prison. Refining Grace is strange. In John 15 *“I am the vine and you*

 *are the branches.” He prunes* in order to bring forth *fruit, more fruit and much fruit.* That *fruit*

 is Christlikeness just like the vine. You may suffer greatly and it’s not your fault. The gold is

 refined by the fire. That is Refining Grace and it is strange.

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**IV. REACHING GRACE 38:7**

Judah refused God’s grace. Ebed-melech received God’s grace. God’s grace reaches the

 most unlikely candidates.

1. ***His Identity*** *Ebed-melech* *the king’s servant.* He was a nobody. His identity came

 from his relationship to the king.

1. ***His Individuality*** He stood out. He was different in a bad way to the Jew, not a good

 way. *The Ethiopian* was a foreigner. He was a black slave.

1. ***His Idiosyncrasy*** He would have no wife or children. Being a servant of the king he

 most likely had his family jewels removed. *One of the eunuchs…*many cared for the concubines of the king. He would have been banned from the Temple by his sexual deformity (Deut 23:1).

1. ***His Interest*** This one heard they put Jeremiah in the dungeon v. 8. *“I’ve got to become*

 *involved in what God is doing!”* God’s grace reached down and saved him. God saves anyone who places his or her trust in Him. No one is too bad, too poor, too unaccepted that His grace cannot reach them. Have you received God’s good news?

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**V. RESCUING GRACE 38:9-13**

*He brought me out of the miry clay…*God will use any old stick as long as it is available.

1. ***The Men 9-10*** *Ebed-melech…Zedekiah…30 men (not to get him out, but to protect him)*

 ***B. The Material 11*** *Took their old rags and worn out garments*

 ***C. The Method 12,13*** *Put the old rags and worn out garments under you arm pits…under*

 *the cords.* The rags were to protect his skin and they pulled him out.

 God wants to use anything available to pull men and women from the pit of sin. Are you

 and what you have available?

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**VI. REMAINING GRACE 38:13,28; 39:11-14**

 ***God will take you out in His time and His way by His means to accomplish His purpose!***

Jeremiah was put into his fourth prison. He remained in the court prison. (39:11-14) God

 will take you out in His time.

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**VII. REWARDING GRACE 39:15-18**

 ***God takes care of His own and never forget a cup of cold water given in His name.***

***Have you experienced God’s Amazing Grace?* Do you know Him?**