***Jeremiah 15:10-21 Woe is me, my mother, That you have borne me, A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. Every one of them curses me. 11The Lord said: “Surely it will be well with your remnant; Surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you In the time of adversity and in the time of affliction. 12Can anyone break iron, The northern iron and the bronze? 13Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder without price, Because of all your sins, Throughout your territories. 14And I will make you cross over with your enemies Into a land which you do not know; For a fire is kindled in My anger, Which shall burn upon you.” 15O Lord, You know; Remember me and visit me, And take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. 16Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. 17I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, Nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, For You have filled me with indignation. 18Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail? 19Therefore thus says the Lord: “If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them. 20And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you,” says the Lord. 21“I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible.”***

Last week, we left Jeremiah as he heard from an Unrelenting God. We learned that, even if Moses and Samuel, two great intercessors, had been standing before God, God still would not have relented. The sin of Judah has reached it’s fulness and God’s wrath will be poured out. Jeremiah is praying for his people, but God has spoken. In Daniel 4, we read of the decree of the Most High God with regards to the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. What God decrees, no man can turn aside. God has decreed sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity for Judah, and these all will come to pass. In our verses this evening though, God reassures Jeremiah. God takes care of His own and Jeremiah is His own. Likewise, we can be assured that our faith and focus will be recognized and rewarded by our God. Let us remain faithful and true.

Verse 10 *Woe is me, my mother, That you have borne me, A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. Every one of them curses me.* Jeremiah now speaks out loud to God about the treatment he’s received from his countrymen. He has become unwelcome because of the truth he speaks. That still happens today. Jeremiah says – I am hated by the whole earth. All people contend with me on account of the truth I speak. As a Jewish man, Jeremiah has neither lent nor borrowed for interest (usury). Deuteronomy 23:19 forbids interest being charged when lending to brothers and sisters. The man violating this command was to be cured by all the people. Of course, the Jews found a work-around that may have kept the letter of the law, but lost the spirit of the law. We do that today. Jeremiah hasn’t done lent or borrowed, but he’s held in contempt as though he has.

Verse 11*The Lord said: “Surely it will be well with your remnant; Surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you In the time of adversity and in the time of affliction.* Now the Lord speaks, reassuring Jeremiah. Remnant here should not be taken to mean the remnant that God will hold Holy to return to Jerusalem 70 years from now. Remnant here is God speaking of Jeremiah’s remaining days. God tells Jeremiah that He will providentially protect Jeremiah when the Chaldeans overtake the city. In Jeremiah 39:11 & 40:3-4, we see this promise kept, as the Chaldeans allowed Jeremiah to go and live where he pleased. Jeremiah’s countrymen that treated his so cruelly will not have this same treatment from the Chaldeans. God ordained this and it came to pass.

Verse 12*Can anyone break iron, The northern iron and the bronze?* This has the idea of can iron break tempered steel? The iron of the Chaldeans came from the Chalybes, known for being the first people’s to temper steel with heat. It was very strong and used in the weapons of the Babylonians. This holds a second meaning though. Can the hatred of the people for Jeremiah contend with the love and protection of God? Of course, we all know that answer. It cannot contend. Their hatred will not break through God’s love. We see this further explained in verse 20. The Jews will have no luck resisting the weapons of the Chaldeans and likewise they will have no success against God’s love for Jeremiah either.

Verses 13-14*Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder without price, Because of all your sins, Throughout your territories. 14And I will make you cross over with your enemies Into a land which you do not know; For a fire is kindled in My anger, Which shall burn upon you.”* God now speaks of the Jewish people instead of the prophet. All the wealth and treasure of the people shall go as plunder to the Babylonians. Judah cannot be redeemed for a sacrifice or price now. Every part of Judah has contributed to the sins that are bringing God’s wrath. None are innocent. Therefore, all the people will pass over into captivity after seeing all of their possessions taken and their cities left in ruins. God’s wrath is burning hot, and He will pour it out upon the people. The fullness has come.

Verses 15-16 *O Lord, You know; Remember me and visit me, And take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. 16Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.* Jeremiah now picks up the conversation. He declares that God knows both his sincerity and his suffering. God knows how wickedly he has been treated. This should be a great comfort to all believers that God sees, and He will repay those that persecute His people. Jeremiah pleads with God to remember him and visit him. This has the idea of God vindicating Jeremiah and rescuing him from his persecutors. While God is demonstrating long suffering with the sins of the people, Jeremiah asks that God not allow harm to come to him through the people desiring his death. Jeremiah reminds the Lord that he has suffered for God’s truth. Jeremiah received God’s word (were found) and Jeremiah internalized them (ate them). Though much of what God said was foretelling of sufferings and woe to the nation of Judah, Jeremiah still found joy and rejoicing in the word of God. He knew the punishment coming, the calamities about to befall, but he rejoiced in his relationship and his communion with God. Jeremiah now recalls that he is a prophet called in the authority and anointing of God. He is God’s messenger and God will protect him.

Verses 17-18 *I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, Nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, For You have filled me with indignation. 18Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail?* Jeremiah does not sit in the company of those that make merry and ignore the warnings of God. Though being called to be a prophet of God brought him joy, it has also brought much heaviness. His life has become sorrowful. His heart breaks for the people he is sent to prophesy to. He didn’t tickle ears, but stomped toes. He is alone. He is despised and deserted by the people because of God’s hand or His judgements. Jeremiah suffers and weeps perpetually. God’s call exposed him to the rage and hatred of his own people. His misery is unending. His heart is breaking and there is no remedy. The wound of knowing his people will not repent and turn back to God before the coming sure judgement is like a sore that never heals. *Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail?* This question has the sense of being so ridiculous that everyone would respond – Of course not! Don’t be ridiculous. God cannot lie and He cannot fail. He is utterly dependable and always faithful. But remember, Jeremiah is human, and he is frail. Further, he is suffering and feels very alone.

Verses 19-21 *Therefore thus says the Lord: “If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them. 20And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you,” says the Lord. 21“I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible.”* Theologians believe that Jeremiah was experiencing doubt in his previous question and that God is answering this. God knows our humanness. He knows we are frail and weak. God assures Jeremiah with comforting words. If Jeremiah will set aside his doubts and trust God’s providential promises, God will restore him and separate Jeremiah from the vile people. He will protect the precious truth Jeremiah brings and separate it from the vileness of common men. But Jeremiah must return. Let the wicked repent and return to Jeremiah, but Jeremiah must not return to them. Now God makes Jeremiah a promise. I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall. Storms may rage against it, but nothing will shake that wall. The people will fight against it, and nothing will prevail against that wall. Why? *For I am with you to save you And deliver you,* God will give strength, courage, wisdom, and discernment to withstand any enemy Jeremiah encounters. He’ll do the same for us today when we are following Him. God promises to deliver His own out of the hands of the wicked and terrible. In this case, the wicked were the Jews and the terrible were the Chaldeans and Babylonians. God will preserve Jeremiah in His favor.

And so, we leave Jeremiah tonight in a place of reassurance. Though he is suffering many threats and much pain, God is still in control. The calamities and captivity are still coming. The people are still hating. God is still unrelenting… yet, with His chosen, He gives reassurance and hope even in times of great turmoil. And so, it is today. We have Hope in Jesus, and we know that one day God will set all things right again. The wicked and the terrible will face Hell, while we that persevere will live forever in Heaven. God makes us safe in the calamities and free from the captivity. We can rest reassured. Let us remain faithful and true.