



EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



From My Window

Over 200 years ago Christoph von Schmid wrote, *The Basket of Flowers*. The book was first published in German but has since been translated into several languages including English. Though written in a simple way, it has a profound message. The story is about a girl named Mary who grew up in the home of her widower father. Mary is falsely accused of stealing and imprisoned, but she held to her father's words: "it is better to die for the truth than to live for a lie." Mary endures many difficulties including the loss of her father, and fears her name will never be cleared of such disgrace—you must read the ending of the story! Yet the spiritual idea of the author is penetrating and needs to be rehearsed: God does not abandon his children no matter how grim circumstances seem. In Jesus' words (Heb. 13:5): "I will never leave nor forsake you!"



Don (MDiv, 2008) and Katrina Hines came to VBTS in 2003 so that Don could begin his seminary training. They distinguished themselves as a godly young couple who had a heart for ministry. Through providential circumstances, God led them in 2015 to begin their exciting ministry with CRU focusing on the Corps of Cadets on the Virginia Tech campus. They are enthusiastically reaching and discipling the next generation of military leaders for Jesus Christ. Don says, "Our heart is to help these future leaders grasp and internalize the Gospel of Jesus in such a way that this transforms them for a lifetime of impact and leadership for Christ." Don believes that many of these cadets will one day enter war-torn areas where missionaries are not allowed. This makes their campus ministry to cadets extremely vital. Thank you, Don and Katrina, for your hearts to serve. Our prayers are with you as you share Jesus with these future military leaders.





Truth for the Agora: *The Tears and Theology of Jeremiah*

No writings in the Bible are so little read and understood, yet more moving and convicting, than the books of Jeremiah the prophet. The book that bears his name may be the longest prophetic book in the OT; however, as Charles Feinberg notes, “Jeremiah has suffered from neglect.” G. Campbell Morgan aptly calls us to study this prophet’s writings: “No prophet of the long and illustrious line had a more thankless task than he, and none was more magnificently and heroically true to his sacred ministry.” In this brief essay, I have included some of Jeremiah’s focal quotes (in italics) to encourage you to plunge into these fifty-seven chapters. I pray the passages will engage your spiritual appetite and make you thirsty for Jeremiah’s prophecies and tender lamentations. As you read and meditate on the works of this prophet, keep in mind two details: his tears (brokenness)—*My eyes fail because of tears, my spirit is greatly troubled, my heart is poured out on the earth*; and his theology (view of God)—*The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning*. Let’s ponder these two noteworthy features for a moment to assist in your journey through Jeremiah’s writings.

First, consider Jeremiah’s tears: *My soul will sob in secret for such pride, and my eyes will bitterly weep because the flock of the Lord has been taken captive*. The venerable OT scholar, R. K. Harrison comments, “Jeremiah is unusual among the Hebrew prophets because of the extent to which he revealed his personal feelings.” At times he is so distraught he almost sounds like Job, *Cursed be the day when I was born. Let the day not be blessed when my mother bore me!* At the root of Jeremiah’s brokenness was his grief over the refusal of Judah to obey the words of God. In fact, Jeremiah writes, *the Word of God has become a reproach to them; they have no delight in it*. Such rejection caused Jeremiah to cry out, *My pain is perpetual, my wound incurable*.

Second, consider Jeremiah’s high view of God and his Word: *Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart*. Even though Jeremiah proclaims Judah a faithless daughter doomed to encounter the fierce anger of the Lord for their disobedience, he also prophesied, *Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*. The nation had broken the old covenant, *although God was their husband*; yet God’s word will come to pass in blessing as it came to pass in wrath. Jeremiah’s high view of God and his word can be summed up this way: Jeremiah was convinced that God would accomplish what he said! He acknowledged God’s great ability to do all that he says with this famous declaration: *Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You!*

What do these thoughts of Jeremiah mean to us today? This is a fair question. However, the more I contemplate the writings of Jeremiah, the more I see three wonderful truths. **First**, God uses and sustains people who have a broken heart for those around them living in disobedience and self-indulgence. Those who care are effective. **Second**, God’s word will accomplish its intended purpose. God said to Jeremiah, *Let him who has My word speak My word in truth*. The power is not in the messenger — it is in the message. **Third**, to fully understand Jeremiah’s tears and theology, you must read, reread, and reread his works. Are you now ready to do this? Why not begin today?