

TOO HARD ?

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INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah 32:27 Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?

It was a time of invasion. Hanameel was worried about the way things were going. A few kilometers away the capital city was under invasion siege. Things were getting tough – there was famine and disease had affected the crops. Food prices were soaring. Hanameel thought he should try to sell up his family property – liquidate – how else was he going to feed the family. But before he put it on the open market, the traditional ownership laws needed to be followed - he needed to offer it to his cousin to purchase.... his notorious cousin – he had been publicly outspoken about bad things that were going to happen to the nation... and so he was now a political prisoner. Still, because he needed to see him, Hanameel found a tricky way to get into the city – past the siege embankments – right into the prison courtyard. He hadn't seen his unpopular cousin for a while, and people said all sorts of things about him. Anyway – Hanameel found him, and got down to business quickly...time was short...'you have first option on my field in your family hometown Anathoth – please will you buy it...it's for sale'. To his surprise, his cousin said yes, and started weighing out some pieces of silver – seventeen in all. It was a very low price – but as good as he might get in the circumstances – who would buy property under occupation economy, and during a famine and failed harvest? Hanameel was amazed that his cousin made an offer without hesitation...maybe he didn't know what was happening outside...maybe he was a bit weird like some people were saying....and so the deed was done. Money exchanged, deeds signed and settled all in the same hour! And his cousin, when it was all done, spoke up in the prison courtyard for everyone to hear.... 'put these deeds in a pottery jar to keep them for a long time... **Jer 32:15** *For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."*

1. THE SITUATION

Jeremiah (God's man) was **in prison** – he was helpless to change his circumstances. You can be locked in, trapped because you did the right thing, or because you did the wrong thing, or because you did nothing! But, when we can't change our circumstances – God IS. What is my hopeless circumstance today? Is there a 'too hard' situation, humanly it looks hopeless, impossible: is it a crisis situation, a dead dream, a persistent sickness, a besetting addiction or sin I can't see my way through, a financial mountain, a loved one who has hardened their heart to the Lord and breaking your heart in the process... you can be locked in by circumstances, but...God is the God of the impossible. Jeremiah was not the only one locked in by circumstances, but he was the one whose open heart to the Lord was going to speak hope for the future, speaking restoration, return of the captives.

2. THE WORD

God spoke – into Jeremiah's situation. God always wants to speak into our circumstances. Paul found himself in prison chains...

2 Tim 2:8-9 *as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! **ESV.***

Even when we are bound by circumstances that might hold us like a prison, God's word is not bound. Jeremiah could still listen to the Lord – we can – whatever our 'too hard' situation we can listen for the word of the Lord.

God said something unusual, different – God doesn't do things the way we expect, usually. We think He can do something, a certain way, our way. But He wants us to trust Him. He told Jeremiah that his cousin would come and ask him to buy his property, as first-option holder. What a strange word. What did he need with the land – he was a prophet, and the city was under siege, and the people about to be carried off for years...Jeremiah wouldn't get to use the land in his lifetime.

It happened like God said. So Jeremiah knew this was God, and bought the field. This boosted his faith. He acted on the word of God. Faith is about obeying God in spite of what we see, feel, or what may happen. People probably laughed at Jeremiah or shook their heads in disbelief, or thought he was crazy. It was an illogical thing – investment in worthless real estate in the invasion market. Jeremiah had prophesied the city and country would be overrun and destroyed. But God said.

And he acted on it.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible'. **Heb. 11:1,3.***

Faith looks into the invisible, the unseen, and acts on that. Jeremiah, acting on God's word, purchased useless land for future use. The faith that acts in obedience pleases God. (remember Abraham and the obedient faith that made him the father of all that have faith).

Once he had acted on the word, **God gave him the promise of restoration** – he finished the 'deal' and got another word from God which he spoke out in front of all the parties to the deal...*for thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land'*. There is a future, beyond prison, beyond captivity – there is a promise of restoration! Amen. Into our 'too hard' situation today, God's word comes, and as we act on His word, not our own reasoning, in faith, God says 'I will restore', the land will produce, the fruit will come! Speak it out in faith. Like Jeremiah, we can say... **I know I am locked in by a prison and adverse circumstances, yet God has spoken, and I am agreeing with that - life will yet come into this dead, hopeless situation.**

3. THE PRAYER

After the word from God, after Jeremiah had acted on it and declared God's promise...he took his case to God in prayer... when circumstances are against us, when we are surrounded by trouble, storm – but are standing on a word from God – prayer is our resort. In His presence we find strength, the song, building up, courage, refuge; and we put ourselves in a place where God can speak to us and encourage us.

Prayer begins with praise - Jeremiah focuses on God's greatness – He is greater than our problems –

Jer 32:17-20 'Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. 18 You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them — the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. 19 You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

If you are in the 'too hard' time, take hold of God's word to you, and start your prayer with praise...(come on 20th August to night of worship!). In praise, you align yourself with what God has done, is doing and will do – you come before Him – if God is for you, who can be against you!

Recount what God has done for us, how He kept His promises.

Jer 32:20-23 You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. 21 You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; 22 You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them — "a land flowing with milk and honey." 23 And they came in and took possession of it.'

Give Him thanks for what He has done for you in the past. Recount His blessings. Faith builds as you do that.

Share our difficulty with God, and turn it over to Him - (v23b-25). Jeremiah tells God (what He knows) that the people have not done anything God told them to do, and so this disaster has come on them...'look, the siege mounds'...war, famine, disease is taking them out, 'and You have said to me, O Lord God, buy the field for money and take witnesses'. Jeremiah was wondering about all this, but he took it to the Lord...

The answer is a promise.... (vv. 26-44). The outset/opening of Jeremiah's prayer was "Nothing is too hard for You" (v17), and God speaks to Jeremiah again....**Jer 32:26-28** Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 "**Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? Nothing, nothing, nothing is too hard for Him.** God had said that once before in scripture, over Sarah's dead womb, and life came...now God said that the captivity would happen, as He had said, but God was saying '**I will gather them, I will bring them back**' **Jer 32:44** Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; **for I will cause their captives to return,' says the Lord.**" Amen. Let's claim this word for now in our personal situations where we are looking to the Lord for breakthrough.

CONCLUSION

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? God is speaking this into our situation today. Whatever the 'too hard' situation....nothing is too hard for our God...no crisis, no financial problem, no dead dream, no doctor's diagnosis, no storm waves...Jesus walks on storms, speaks life to the dead, brings back captives,

heals sicknesses, makes a path through the sea, walks with His people through fire so that they are not burned. Let's, like Jeremiah, act in faith taking God at His word, speak and agree with the word of the Lord...