



Let's Read! Oct, 2013 Hosted by Open Doors

*Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations

* Psalms 106-115

* Proverbs (chapters 24-26)

* Hebrews and James

We're on the home stretch now, with the 4th quarter of the year already upon us. Our Bible Study group here in West Palm Beach will soon be complete again as our snowbirds from Canada and MI make their way back to Florida. Meanwhile we stay in touch and keep our Lord Provides program moving ahead. We recently gave grants to: Helping Hands, which gives poor families a lift to a more independent and productive lifestyle; *Hepzibah House, which gives safe haven and life skills/opportunities to women rescued from human trafficking in this area; and Prayer House, which unites believers of various denominations to pray for the great needs we see and experience all around us. [*Hepzibah is the Hebrew name used in Isaiah 62:4, meaning *I delight in you*.]

In addition to supporting those on the frontline of God's work, we also endeavor to do some frontline work ourselves. So far this year we've set-up our Bible Read-Thru, our weekly Bible Study, and have done some Biblical storytelling for the high school youth group in Lake Worth. We have also gotten personally involved with two families recommended for our Closer-Walk grants. We awarded one child a scholarship to a Christian School and make it a priority to be there as honorary grandparents to three children who need grandparent-like love in their lives. More ideas are brewing for later this year...

And now, it's once again time to join together in reading this month's selections:

Jeremiah and Lamentations: *Jeremiah* is a prophet who lived through the worst of times—a good example and companion for today's hard times. He is often the prophet of choice because everything bad that could happen *did* happen and he lived through it with grace and, with the help of his friend Baruch, wrote magnificently about it. He sometimes even acted out God's messages so they'd be crystal clear (13:1-11; 19:1-11; 27:1-28:17; 32:1-44 and 43:7-13). A oft-quoted verse is 29:11: God's promise that He has a plan for us, to give us a hope and a future—a good one to memorize. In chapter 31 He tells us He will always love us, for we are precious to Him, and He will lead and protect us, for we are His own dear children. God chose Jeremiah at a very young age (probably still a teen), saying *Before I shaped you in the womb I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day I had holy plans for you: a prophet to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you.* We'll follow Jeremiah as he's declared a traitor, thrown into prison, and fearing for his life. And we'll be privy to all his complaints! Let's seek God's unique plan for *our* individual lives.

Lamentations is a collection of poems written during the Babylonian exile: 70 years of torment and suffering. The two landmark events in Jewish history are the exodus from Egypt (a joyous move from slavery to freedom) and the exile to Babylon (a heartbreaking judgement upon a wayward nation). This Book gives us a form and vocabulary for dealing with loss and pain—not a program to eliminate suffering but the comfort of knowing that God enters, and is companion to, our suffering. Note 3:21-24:

Then I remember something that fills me with hope. The Lord's kindness never failed!

If He had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed. The Lord can always be trusted to show mercy each morning. Deep in my heart I say, 'The Lord is all I need; I can depend on Him.'

Psalms and Proverbs: We have ten Psalms and three Proverbs to enjoy! In *Psalms* we'll experience a nation asking forgiveness and praising a wonder-working God that blesses His worshipping people. In *Proverbs* we get some good advice, such as:

Use wisdom and understanding to establish your home; let good sense fill the rooms with priceless treasures. (24:3-4)

Don't be happy to see your enemies trip and fall. If your enemies are hungry give them something to eat... (24:17, 25:21a)

Don't brag about tomorrow! Each day brings its own surprises. Don't brag about yourself; let others praise you. (27:1-2)

Hebrew and James: We may not be 100% sure who wrote the letter of *Hebrews* but we praise the Lord for it! It reminds us of the Gospel's powerful simplicity. It explains how Jesus is at the heart of the Christian faith, greater than the angels, the prophets, and the high priests/heroes of the Jewish faith. *He understands every weakness of ours, because He was tempted in every way that we are. But He did not sin! So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness, and we will find help. (4:15-16)* And don't miss Chapter 11, the Faith Chapter.

James is a short Book I learned by heart because of its many wonderful verses: *Draw near to God and God will draw near to you... Our tongues get out of control and spread poison... Faith without works is dead... God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble... He will bless you if you don't give up... Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created the heavens.*