**Is There A Fire In Your Bones?**

(Jeremiah 20:9 KJV)

*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

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adly in the text Jeremiah does not want to proclaim God's word anymore. He feels like a failure, he feels like he's collapsing spiritually, he feels as if his ministry is malfunctioning and that no one is interested in obeying the man of God and his words from God. In fact many theologians have labeled that Jeremiah is suffering with an acute case of “prophetitus” because not only are there no results in his ministry—but the people that he's leading are getting worse instead of better. And now he feels as if God is giving him no words of encouragement to change his mind. Jeremiah said that he wanted to forget about preaching God’s words, but there underneath the earth of his being was a fire shut up in his belly, and a burning in his bones—and he had to continue speaking God's word no matter how difficult the circumstance could become.

For years I wondered why firefighters carried axes to the scenes of fires. Hadn’t the fire done enough damage without chopping away at the remaining roof or walls? Then I learned that those axes serve a valuable purpose: They uncover smoldering hot spots that might later ignite. It keeps the firemen from having to return.

Jeremiah, like many servants of God today, came to the point where he felt like throwing in the towel and quitting. He had his share of problems and difficulties and decided it was time to retire, withdraw, quit, and give God a letter of resignation. But Jeremiah was a big fan of the Word of God and the Word would not let him quit—that is why when you serve the Lord, the Word must be very important to you. Simply because it will keep you from quitting and help you to have stamina, and staying power in your service for God.

It is a shame that the leaders and people had insulted him, abused him, and held him in contempt, hurting him very deeply within with no compassion. So he did what he knew to do—he went before the Lord in prayer and cried out for His help—opening his heart to the Lord, God’s prophet poured forth his innermost thoughts and feelings—crying out from the depths of his soul because of the agony and pain. Jeremiah seem to be discouraged but he knew God was a deliverer! So, instead of giving up he prayed about the situation.

Discouragement is part of life. Discouragement comes most often when you do right things but experience underprivileged results. You work hard, but you don't make progress. You show up to practice every day, giving it your all, but you lose every game. You spend time with your child going out of your way to parent the best you know how but she rebels.

Moreover, discouragement eats a hole in our hearts. It makes us want to quit, saying things we shouldn't say, shaking our fists at God. And that's exactly how Jeremiah felt. God called him to speak a harsh message to a rebellious people. He was obeyed! But yet on one occasion Jeremiah got so angered an assistant to the high priest and chief security officer for the temple, Pashhur, that the man arrested Jeremiah, beat him, and threw him in jail, locking him in stocks so that his body was contorted, writhing in pain. Here was a man in deep distress, sorrow, and torture! He endured physical, emotional, spiritual, and professional anguish. He walked into deep despair, all for doing God's will.