

**SERMON NOTES: FEB. 23<sup>RD</sup>**  
**SCRIPTURE READINGS...Jeremiah 20: 7-12, Luke 9: 37-43**

**DEFEAT IS A REQUIRED COURSE...we'd prefer defeat to be an ELECTIVE COURSE but it is a REQUIRED COURSE. No one escapes defeat. It can be as major as MALIGNANCY or as minor as a BAD DATE. What defeats have you known? How did you handle them? There is a DANGEROUS LINE we must not cross in defeat: to go from FACING DEFEAT to LIVING DEFEATED, from having a FAILURE to BEING A FAILURE. Defeats grow out of proportion to their real size; they can take on a LARGER LIFE than they deserve.**

**JEREMIAH AND HIS FAILURE... God has the LAST WORD on defeat, not us. With God, no FAILURE IS FINAL; all defeat can BE REDEEMED. What about Jeremiah, God's prophet to Judah? God gave him a TOUGH SCRIPT: to deliver BAD NEWS TO PEOPLE HE LOVED. He got a front-row seat to the fall of Jerusalem. His career felt like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. God was tired of being IGNORED, having his ways betrayed. Jeremiah saw DARK CLOUDS forming on the horizon: Babylon, their pagan neighbors to the North, whom God would use as INSTRUMENTS of his wrath. The exile was a train wreck waiting to happen. The worst part: God's people did it to themselves.**

**NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED...for speaking GOD'S TRUTH, Jeremiah got untold misery. People treated him like dirt. Kids mocked him as their parents watched; beggars pitied him; friends pretended not to know him. They accused him of TREASON, and they questioned his Patriotism. Then they GOT PHYSICAL and threw him in a cistern. Why didn't he leave town and let them suffer the consequences of their actions? Because he loved his audience. God's words of judgement tasted sour in his mouth. The world can be cruel to its prophets. When people don't like what they hear, they SILENCE THE MESSAGE/MESSENGER. What kept him alive was the SLIM HOPE that they'd wake up before it was too late. They didn't. His nightmare came true: Babylon marched into Jerusalem and God's people sinned their way into exile. Jeremiah felt like a FAILURE.**

**THE LESSONS DEFEAT TEACHES...instead of wisdom, many people just grow bitter from their defeats. What God might've used to IMPROVE THEM, they dismiss as waste. We learn more from DEFEAT than SUCCESS. Tasting the agony of DEFEAT/FAILURE is required course. It can't be skipped but its lessons are valuable. Lessons like...**

**No failure NEED BE FINAL or cause us PERMENENT HARM. We all get KNOCKED DOWN, we don't have to STAY DOWN.**