LIFEGROUP NOTES: JEREMIAH 38:1–28

NOTE: Although Sunday's sermon covered chs.37-39, that's probably a big ask for group discussion. These notes focus simply on ch.38.

As ever, please use (or discard!) these ideas as is most suitable for your group. Don't feel you have to use everything.

1. Throughout his ministry, Jeremiah faced stiff opposition. How do you react if you face hostility for speaking out as a Christian?

Read Jer 38:1-13

2. See vv.1-5: As Judah was besieged by Babylon, what were Jeremiah's enemies concerned about? How did they react? In view of the sequel (ch.39:1-2,8), how should they have responded to the prophet's words? Why did they get it so wrong?

3. Why are people today – ourselves included – so slow to heed God's warnings? In what area(s) of your life are you perhaps ignoring or dismissing God's word at the moment? What action are you going to take?

4. See vv.6-13: What happened to Jeremiah? How had God prepared him many years earlier for this kind of experience (see 1:8,17-19)? When you find yourself in trouble, what difference do God's promises make to you (be honest!)? Why? How can we grow in our ability to "walk by faith, not by sight"?

Read Jer 38:14-28

5. Bearing in mind all that Jeremiah had suffered, how do you think he found strength to keep speaking this unpopular message from God? How can we? And what are we doing – or what might we do – to help one another in this?

6. In what way was King Zedekiah more truly "sunk in the mud" (v.22) than Jeremiah ever was? How did he come to be in such a mess? What lesson should we learn from this? And if we are "sunk in the mud" at the moment, what should we do (vv.20-22)? Compare Romans 2:4, 2Peter 3:9-11.

Responding in Prayer

- Confess to God any areas where you have been ignoring His word and fearing the cost of obedience. Pray for help to see His word as it really

is – a love-gift from our Father who always wants the best for His children – and commit yourself again to "trust and obey."

Eddie Larkman, November 2016