

Fifth Friday of Lent - 3/14

"In distress Jeremiah raised his voice to the Lord. 'O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. All my friends are watching for me to stumble.'"

(Jeremiah 20:7,10)

At times we might question whether we have made a wise decision by allowing ourselves to become vulnerable to another person. On those occasions when we feel betrayed or neglected we wonder how could we have been thinking rationally when we decided to open our hearts. If we honestly reflect on the times when we allowed ourselves to be persuaded that love was worth any sacrifice we also know that we had probably wanted to be persuaded. We may have been nudged but we didn't offer much resistance. We may be angry with the other person but we would also like to kick ourselves for stupidly trusting in the first place.

Jeremiah is in a rough spot. His people are out to get him because his prophecies have struck a nerve. They don't want to hear what he has to say about the need for repentance. Jeremiah begins to think back on just how he got into this mess. In his distress he remembers that God really coaxed him into taking this job. God overwhelmed him with love and with the importance of the mission. Jeremiah now realizes that not only would it have been difficult to turn God down because He was so persuasive but he knows that there was a part of him that wanted to be persuaded all along. So here is Jeremiah. He is angry with God and angry with himself. We can almost hear him say to himself, "You idiot! Now look where you are. The people are just waiting for a chance to pounce and you have no one to blame because you let God take control of your life."

Hindsight is not such a wonderful thing when it brings us face to face with what we perceive to be mistakes. In fact, it can make us rather miserable. Yet when it is God that has enticed us, through another person, a situation in life or even through a calling that we have discerned then even though we might be frightened or miserable we will be where we are meant to be. If it looks like our life has been one big mistake but we got there because we were following the will of God then there was no mistake. We are where we were meant to be and God will provide for us.

Jeremiah may seem on the brink of collapse but he just doesn't see the whole picture yet. When we feel like it has been a big mistake to respond to God we need to wait for the whole story to be told. We too have been enticed but God's glorious plan will come only in God's time.

Reflection Questions

- 1. What "whole story" might God be writing for me?*
- 2. How am I preparing for it? Patiently? Prayerfully? Purposefully?*

Prayer: Lord, help me to continue to follow You even when the going gets difficult.