

Our text tells of a man named Ebed-Melech. He forms a pattern of how to have effectiveness with people. This is good if you want to be a blessing to people/the church and please God: Important if you want to preach.

I. PEOPLE AWARENESS

A. Effectiveness with people begins with awareness

1. You have to be attuned to needs in other people

a. **V7** *Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon.*

1. You can't help people if you're not aware of people needs

2. **We need eyes of compassion:** *You need to be looking for people in need*

a. Jesus challenged disciples: *Lift up your eyes...off yourself and onto others!*

1. *Looking for visitors/people who come in by themselves; That feels awkward for them!*

2. *Do you notice when people are missing? (Especially new converts)*

3. *Do you notice when people are not themselves? They seem sad/troubled/down...*

3. **We need ears of compassion:** *Ebed-Melech heard they put Jeremiah in the dungeon...*

a. We hear things about people: In hospital/lost a job...

B. The first thing we should do is to take their need to the King: **V8** *he spoke to the king*

1. This is a picture of prayer: Speak to our King about people's needs and ask Him to help!

a. **Ephesians 6:18** *supplication for all the saints...*

b. **Galatians 4:19** ¹⁹*My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

1. *Story: Praying for NCs signed contract to play professional football. Prayed – changed mind.*

II. WISE INVOLVEMENT

A. It is not enough to pray – sometimes we need to act in order to help

1. **V11** *So Ebed-Melech took the men and went...*

a. *Actions of love: Conversation/a call/a visit/take out for coffee/burger/pizza – have over for meal*

1. *I welcomed a backslider: He later told me how nervous he was – my greeting encouraged him*

B. But our involvement needs to involve wisdom

1. Jeremiah was stuck in mud: The ropes by themselves could actually do damage

a. It does no good to try and save someone if you rip their arms off! People don't survive our help

1. *You missed church: Are you an uncommitted flake?*

2. *Their problem once you know it: What, are you A wimp? Suck it up and live for God!*

2. So Ebed-Melech wanted to soften the pull

a. **V12** *Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes."*

1. *Soften by ignoring non-essential things*

2. *Show compassion – not correction*

3. *Speak kindly: Tell them about times you struggled – and how God can help them*

III. GREATER IMPACT

A. Ebed-Melech wasn't just helping a guy – he was helping a prophet; Would have a book of the Bible

1. But he didn't know that: He just cared & helped: He became part of Jeremiah's story/ministry

a. People we minister to may wind up being very helpful – men & women of God!