



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Jeremiah; Lamentations Sermon Series
Supports Session 9: Worthy
Sermon Title: "Greater Than, Lesser Than"
Passage: Jeremiah 35:1-19

Connection to Lesson 9

God's people to honor God through their obedience.

Introduction/Opening

Jonadab gave the Rechabites a series of commands designed to help them maintain a nomadic life. He did not want them to settle into homes, villages, or cities. He wanted them to travel through Israel and live in tents. Consequently, Jonadab prohibited the Rechabites from building homes, farming, or planting vineyards (Jer. 35:7). The Rechabites honored Jonadab's directives.

In Jeremiah 35, the Lord makes a "lesser than, greater than" argument. That is, the Lord argued that if the Rechabites obeyed a lesser authority, then Judah should obey the greatest authority. If the Rechabites obeyed Jonadab, then Judah should obey the Lord. The Lord could make the same argument to the followers of Christ. This text will motivate us to give our best obedience to God.

Outline

1. The Offer (Jer. 35:1-5).

- a. The Lord instructed Jeremiah to engage in an object lesson by offering the Rechabites wine in a chamber in the temple. This put pressure on the Rechabites to compromise their ancestor's commands. How hard would they find it to resist Jeremiah, the source of this instruction? Jeremiah offered them wine in a holy place, the temple, a sanctified place. The culture used wine as a common beverage.
- b. We face pressure, too, to obey lesser authorities. When our leaders do not demonstrate obedience to the Lord, we feel the freedom not to take God's commands more seriously than they do. Few of us rise any higher than our leaders. In addition, it can prove very hard to obey the Lord when the culture around us is unaware or opposed to His commands.
- c. Obedience always comes with pressure to disobey. No one obeys the Lord without pressure to do otherwise.

2. The Objection (Jer. 35:6-11).

- a. Despite the pressure, the Rechabites refused to compromise. They refused because the source of their instructions was Jonadab, their ancestor. Jonadab's vision for them was to live a nomadic life. They refused because of tradition; they had not had wine since Jonadab's prohibition. Their obedience to Jonadab was counter-cultural, shocking, and absolute.
- b. There is never a good reason to disobey the Lord. No excuse adequately explains compromise of His commands. There is never a good reason or acceptable excuse for disobedience.

3. The Outcome (Jer. 35:12-19).

- a. Three outcomes followed the Rechabites inflexibility. This included clarity, consequences, and a promise. When people are confused about right and wrong, it is sometimes due to disobedience. For Judah's disobedience, the Lord sent disastrous consequences (v. 17). For the Rechabites' obedience, the Lord made a promise: "Jonadab son of Rechab will never fail to have a man to stand before Me always" (v. 19).
- b. Not all suffering comes from sin (John 9:1-3; 11:1-4). However, some of our suffering is the direct result of our sin (John 5:14; Heb. 12:3-11).
- c. When we suffer, we must discern how the Lord is working in our lives. Is He disciplining us? Have we caused our own suffering? Is the Lord molding us for another plan? Standing in the Lord's presence and looking to His Word will provide discernment.

Conclusion

Those who obey lesser authorities can obey the Lord. Obedient children, successful athletes, and submissive employees have what it takes to obey the Lord. They may find it easier to repent and believe the gospel. Their obedience to lesser authorities prepares them to repent and believe the gospel.

Nearly 3,000 athletes compete in the Olympics. Just imagine if we gave as much heart to obeying the Lord as Olympic athletes give their coaches as they prepare for the summer 2024 Olympics in Paris, France. With almost 700 million evangelical Christians in the world, imagine the Great Commission impact we could make by obeying the Lord in faith. What if all of us shared the gospel and pursued holiness? Imagine the reward from heaven and the promises of God activated by such obedience!

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