

Jeremiah 2 – April 7, 2022
You've Left Your First Love
J.D. Farag

All right, let's get to it. Looking forward to what the Lord has for us tonight. We last week started in this amazing book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah Chapter 1.

Tonight, Lord willing, we will complete Chapter 2. It's a rather lengthy chapter. It's kind of involved a little bit. That might be an understatement, but really looking forward to what the Lord has for us.

So why don't we begin with a word of prayer before we jump in? We'll ask God to bless our understanding in our time together in His Word. If you would, please join with me.

Father in Heaven, thank You so, so, so much. Lord, this time that we have together on a Thursday night is for us a much-needed break and respite and sanctuary from the business of our very stressful lives, especially in this world in which we're living in.

Lord, we so look forward to just putting all of that aside and giving You our undivided attention as our Bibles are open, and our hearts are open, and our ears are open and our eyes are open to see, hear, and receive from You as You minister to us in and through Your Word.

Lord, tonight we want to give You our undivided attention with no distractions so that You can speak into our lives because this is an important message that You deem necessary to have recorded in the pages of holy writ, in this book, in this chapter. And the parallels to what the world is today are profound.

And so Lord, I know that You want to show us that tonight. You want to speak to us about that tonight.

So Lord, will You speak? Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name, amen and amen.

All right. So beginning here in Chapter 2 and on through the next several chapters, as we talked about last week, Jeremiah is called of God.

God says to him, I'm going to put My words on your mouth and you're going to speak that which I give you to speak. And you're not going to be afraid.

You're not going to fear man and their response to the message that I'm going to give you to speak; it's not going to be a popular one. In fact, it's going to be so unpopular that they're

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going to want to kill you. That's how unpopular the message that I'm going to give you to speak is.

And so He calls Jeremiah in Chapter 1, says, "Do not be afraid." And if you are afraid, I will give you over to that fear. If you fear man, I will give you over to the fear of man. No, you don't fear man, you fear Me.

And we're going to see that tonight. And actually, beginning tonight, we see why God was preparing Jeremiah for that which He was preparing for Jeremiah.

Because remember now, 40-plus years, 40-plus years, some believe it was about 45 years, some 42 years. We know it was no less than 40 years he is proclaiming this unpopular message.

And as we're about to see the Lord, through Jeremiah, is going to take them down memory lane, as it were, before they had left [keyword] their first love, left their first love.

Now, if that sounds a little bit like Revelation, Chapter 2 and the letter that Jesus had John write to the Church of Ephesus, the first of seven churches, that's because it is. It's exactly the same message.

Remember, that's going to be the keyword. And as only the Lord can, it is going to tie ever so beautifully into our celebration of communion, which is all about that same word, "remember." "Do this in remembrance of Me."

So the message now, starting out here in Chapter 2, is remember when... remember back when I was your first love? The point being is that I'm no longer your first love. You've left your first love.

This was the letter, the message, the indictment, if I can say it like that, to Church of Ephesus in Revelation, Chapter 2. "Remember [keyword] from where you have fallen."

It's been, as some have aptly framed it, really in the context of three R's. Remember, repent, and repeat.

Remember what it was like. You have, you have left your first love; not lost, because if you lost it you wouldn't be able to find it because it's lost. No, you left it, meaning deliberately you left your first love. So remember, first; this is what you can do about it.

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Remember what it was like, and then repent, which is do a 180 turn-around, come back to the first love that you left. And even in some ways, more importantly, repeat. And I'll explain why.

Repeat the first works, what worked at first. What first worked? The first works.

What do you mean?

Well, remember what it was like at first when, I mean, you were so in love with the Lord? I mean, you were in the Word, you were in prayer. And there was just this love for the Lord. And it was a get-to and not a got-to.

And then as time went on, you kind of got distanced from the Lord, backslid, and left your first love, and it's not the same.

So what can you do about it?

Well, go back and do what you did at first, the first works, what worked at first. Well, I don't feel like it.

Well, wait a minute. And this applies to marriage, by the way. I don't feel like it.

No, do it, and the feelings will follow. Do what worked at first.

Guys, come on, let's be honest. Remember when you were first in love and you opened the door for your bride? Awe! Now, all these years later, it's like, come on, get in, we're late! What's the matter with you?

Wow, where's the love? Not like it was at first. Even just the way you talk - My wife and I, this year, have been married for 33 years. We were just talking about this. The way we talked to each other, oh, it was pathetic.

[Laughter]

Oh sweetie - You know the names, the pet names, sweetie pie, you know, pumpkin and well, you know, whatever the words you used are.

But, you know, now it's - now some years have gone by, and it's not like that anymore.

Well, that's what God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, is going to say to His people.

Remember, repent, and repeat.

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So let's jump in, verse 1, **"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord, the firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend. Disaster will come upon them," says the Lord.'"**

So right here in the first 3 verses we have this, I guess you could say, heartbreaking appeal to God's people to remember what it was like at first. I remember; do you remember what it was like?

Verse 4, **"Hear the word of the Lord, O House of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: 'What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters?**

Neither did they say, 'Where is the Lord, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through a land of drought and the shadow of death, through a land that no one crossed and where no one dwelt?' I, [verse 7] brought you into a bountiful country, to eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land and made My heritage an abomination.

The priests [verse 8, listen to this, get this] did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' And those who handle the Law did not know Me. The rulers also transgressed against Me. The prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that do not profit."

Wow! If it weren't here and we didn't just read this in God's word, I wouldn't believe it. Because we just got done reading that the priests and the teachers of the Law, those who handle the Law, they didn't even know the Lord!

Is that, is that even possible?

Absolutely it is.

You mean to tell me a pastor today, like a priest then, who teaches the Word or handles the Law, if you prefer, doesn't even know the Lord?

Yeah.

How about the prophets that prophecy?

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Oh, they're prophesying, all right. I mean, after all their prophets. But the problem is they're prophesying by Baal and they're walking after these things and they're leading people astray as they walk after these things.

Listen, I don't know how God could be any more clear than He is here, very clear in no uncertain terms that - And notice the way He says what He has Jeremiah's say. It's almost like He's arguing His case against them because apparently they have a case against God.

They're bringing charges against God, and God is just questioning them. You're charging Me with this? You're bringing these charges against Me? They're false charges. They have no merit.

It's almost like you're in a courtroom setting where you have two sides arguing their case because in verse 9, we see God now bringing His charges.

“Therefore, I will yet bring charges against you, says the Lord, and against your children's children I will bring charges. For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, send to Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there has been such a thing,” *verse 11.*

What do you mean?

Oh, I want you to send people far and wide, and I want you to see, verse 11, **“Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens at this and be horribly afraid. Be very desolate, says the Lord.”**

Whoa. You know what He's saying here, right?

These are the charges now being brought against them. And He asks them: You can go as far as you need to go, and you see if what I'm saying is true.

See if you can find any people who have changed gods as you as My people have changed gods. In other words, the pagans are more loyal to their pagan gods, which are not gods at all, than you are. And I'm the true God.

And I mean – what a charge against them in this comparison with them. These pagan people worshipping their gods, they're more devoted to their gods than you are.

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Apparently, you guys decided that you want to change your gods and you want to worship different gods. They don't do that. Why do you do that?

Because the gods that they're so loyal to and faithful to and devoted to are not even gods at all. And yet, I'm the true and living God.

I mean, one cannot help but notice the strength with which God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, brings this charge against them.

You know, this is probably as good of a time as any because when we get to the end, there has to be this understanding, and I think I'd be grossly remiss if I did not teach this chapter this way.

Why would God – now at first read, you would almost get the impression that God is just so angry with them. And actually, it's the opposite that's true.

God loves them so much and He cares so much that He has to say this to them. Because if you think about it, if He didn't love them or care about them, He wouldn't bother.

But He loves them so much. You have to see this – and it's going to get pretty graphic here in a little bit.

You have to see this through the lens of God's love for them because in the end, God wants them to repent. God wants them to return. God wants them to repeat. God wants them to remember. God wants them back. God wants them back.

He loves them so much. He loves us so much and really this is going to be the takeaway for us. That's the whole point of this.

I mean, why would God go to this extent and inspire Jeremiah by the Holy Spirit to prophesy such a strong indictment and prophecy and message against them if He didn't love them?

He loves them so much, and He loves them too much to let them continue in this way.

Verse 13, "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, [Left their first love] the fountain of living waters, [Hang on to that, very important] and hewn themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

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Now, in that day, they would - this is how they would - this was their life source. The water was their water source. So they would carve out, hew these cisterns to hold the water in the stone.

But the problem is, is that all it would take would be just even a minor earthquake and there's a crack in that cistern, and no longer does that cistern hold water.

So he's drawing upon that, that picture, painting this picture of this broken cistern that is no longer good for anything but being used for a tomb, which is actually what they would do with broken cisterns.

You see the contrast here?

Life-giving water, living waters in broken cisterns. And so instead of life-giving water, your broken cisterns that you have hewn for yourselves, that's key.

Because it's almost like Jesus in the New Testament when He says, **“You drink from this water, you're going to thirst again. Come to Me. Drink of the water from Me, and you will never thirst again.”** That cistern will never be broken.

Verse 14, “Is Israel a servant? Is he a home-born slave? Why is he plundered?”

Now, this is believed to be a reference to the northern tribes of Israel, and this prophecy is for Judah, southern Israel. And Jeremiah is saying, look at your brethren in the north and look what happened to them. They were in bondage and plundered.

Verse 15, “The young lions roared at him and growled. They made his land waste. His cities are burned, without inhabitant. Also the people of Noph and Tahpanhes [These are two cities in Egypt, Ancient Egypt at the time] have broken the crown of your head.”

Now, some believe this could be a reference to when Egypt defeated Israel and Judah. And this king, this good King, Josiah that ruled at the same time as the Prophet Jeremiah, when he was killed at that time. So it could be a reference to that.

But then why is the Lord going into all of that to say this, verse 17? **“Have you not brought this on yourself, in that [And here it is again] you have forsaken the Lord your God when He led you in the way? And now why take the road to Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor?”**

[That's the Nile River]

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“Or why take the road to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River? Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you.

Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God, and the fear of Me is not in you, says the Lord God of Hosts.”

Give me a moment on this and bear with me because this is huge. There is a powerful principle here that I think we would all do well to take note of.

It's concerning sin, the consequences of sin being brought on by ourselves. Sin is its own reward. Make no mistake about it, your sin will find you out.

Now, just again, bear with me, I - this is a tough one. Because again, viewed through the lens of love God is saying, I love you so much; I don't want you to suffer needlessly and drink from such a bitter cup. This is an evil and bitter thing.

You have forsaken Me. You have left your first love to your own peril. And this sin, this backsliding, this wickedness, it's going to be the very thing that corrects you and rebukes you.

You're going to suffer the consequences that you yourself-and you alone have brought on yourself.

Oh, you want to try to blame God?

God tried to warn you, this is what happens when you turn away from the Lord, when you backslide from the Lord, when you leave and forsake the Lord.

Yes, the Lord will never leave us or forsake us, but if we forsake the Lord, the Lord's not going to force Himself on us, He has to - because He's given us free will - He has to say, okay, I'm going to be here. I want you to come back.

It's going to hurt My heart to watch you as you suffer needlessly the correction from your own wickedness, the rebuke from your own backsliding. It is going to hurt My heart.

Think about it. As a parent, an earthly, fallen father and mother with your own children, how painful is it - I mean, you never really knew that you could love so deeply until you have a

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child and you watch them go down this path and then you watch them drink from that bitter cup of the consequences of their folly.

Oh, you would have done anything to keep them from that. But they did it, they chose it and now they're suffering for it. And it's so heartbreaking.

That's the heart of our loving heavenly Father.

Please, and again, I'll say it again, it's going to get even more graphic. But please, we would be grossly remiss if we did not understand this through the lens of God's love.

Because if we don't see it through the lens of love, we are going to totally miss this. And the enemy is going to be right there, and he's really good at this and we fully cooperate with him, but the enemy is going to be right there saying things like, Wow, God's cruel.

In other words, you're now putting the blame at the feet of Almighty God for that which you alone have brought on yourself.

It's you alone that is suffering because of what you alone have done. And it's killing Me as I watch you do this.

I tried to warn you, but you did it.

Verse 20, "For of old I have broken your yoke and burst your bonds. And you said, 'I will not transgress,' when on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down, playing the harlot.

Yet [verse 21] I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?

For though [verse 22] you wash yourself-with lye, [I would not recommend that, by the way] [Wowie owie!] and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before Me, says the Lord."

In other words, you can try and use lye and wash yourself; you will not be clean.

"How can you say [verse 23] 'I am not polluted; I have not gone after the Baals'? See your way in the valley; know what you have done: You are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways, A wild donkey used to the wilderness that sniffs at the wind in her desire; in her

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time of mating, who can turn her away? All those who seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they will find her."

This is what I mean by graphic. I warned you. I'll try to do my best here. But God is, I mean - You know what you're like? You're like a wild donkey in heat. This speaks to spiritual adultery and idolatry on the part of Judah.

You know where He says, *verse 23*, **"See your way in the valley"?**

For those of you that went to Israel with us, you remember outside the city walls of Jerusalem, the valley of Hinnom? The valley of the drums, also known as, where they would take their babies and sacrifice them to Molech.

And this Molech god, there, right there. We drove by it in the bus.

Here's this valley. In that very place, you know what they would do? This is God's people. They would take their babies and they would place them on this statue, this iron statue of Molech.

And inside the statue was a fire that burned so hot and that baby would be burned alive as they sacrificed that child to Molech.

By the way, that's where we get the expression, 'fire in the belly.' That's where it comes from.

And I suppose you could say God is reminding them, because here they're, they're like, we haven't done anything wrong. We haven't gone after Baals.

Oh, really? What about what you did there in that valley? You don't remember? I do. I know what you did.

You're going after these other gods like a donkey in heat during the time of mating.

I read one commentary on it. I got to tell you, I had to walk away and just pray because it was so graphic and intense, and I won't repeat it.

But it's the - when a donkey is in heat, you don't want to be anywhere near. That's all I'm going to say.

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But I mean, that's the imagery. You're like that in your spiritual adultery, going after these other gods.

Verse 25, “Withhold your foot from being unshod and your throat from thirst.”

This is symbolism of slavery. Being barefoot and in bondage and in thirst. And isn't this true? Isn't this what sin does? It always leads to bondage.

But see, Satan doesn't package it like that. He always presents it as, Hey, nothing wrong. Spice it up, live it up!

And we buy it and we do it, and what always ensues is bondage. But that's not in the fine print when Satan tempts us.

And this is interesting. **“But you said there is no hope. No! For I have loved aliens, and after them I will go.”**

This is not what we would refer to in the modern-day sense of aliens, but foreigners.

So verse 25 is pretty packed, pretty full of some very important principles that I think, again, we would do well to take note of and take heed of.

You know, when Satan tempts us and we fall prey to sin and then become in bondage to that sin, then what happens is it just seems hopeless, like there's no way out so I might as well - I've already blown it, so I might as well just go for it. That's exactly what the enemy intended from the very start. He wants to enslave and get us in bondage to that sin. And then we become so hopeless in that sin and say, What hope is there? I've already kind of gone too far. I might as well go after them; after them I will go.

Verse 26, “As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, So is the house of Israel ashamed. They and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their prophets, saying to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.' For they have turned their back to Me, and not their face. But in the time of their trouble they will say, 'Arise and save us.'”

Oh, now you want Me! I mean, let me see if I got this straight. You've gone out to these other gods. You even, with and by your own admission said, **“After them I will go.”** Well, looks like after them you went.

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And you were so - I mean, to the extent to which you would say to a tree, You're my god, you're my father; to a stone, You gave birth to me.

That's not good. That's your god, that tree? How's that working out for you?

That rock? That's it? Your god's wood and stone?

You got a problem, sir, ma'am; you've got a problem. That's your god?

So now adversity strikes and hardship and trouble and trial and tribulation. And then you come to the Lord and cry out to the Lord, Lord, help me!

And the Lord's like, Really? I thought the tree and the stone - And then He's going to say that, by the way, *verse 28*, **“But where are your gods that you have made for yourselves?”**

Why don't you ask them for help?

Oh, yeah, that's right. They can't because they're rock and tree and not gods at all.

And God - and again, please see this through love, not cruelty.

But God says to them, **“Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble. For according to the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah.”**

That's interesting. In other words, they had a lot of these gods, a lot of cities, and I guess the number of their gods was comparable to the number of their cities. I mean, you got plenty gods. Can't one of them help you?

“Why [*verse 29*] will you plead with Me? You all have transgressed against Me, says the Lord.

In vain [*verse 30*] I have chastened your children; they received no correction. Your sword has devoured your prophets like a destroying lion.

O generation, [*verse 31*] see the word of the Lord! Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness? Why do My people say, 'We are lords; we will come no more to You'? Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?”

That would be weird, wouldn't it? Bride shows up on her wedding day, forgetting her dress. I wouldn't perform the marriage if that happened.

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Yes, we got a problem right out of the chute here. I'm sorry, that's - But that's what He's saying.

I mean that - How absurd is this? A bride forgetting her dress on her wedding day?

But you forgot Me!

No.

Yeah, My people have forgotten Me. You always forget; you never remember.

I know this is going to be a play on words, but, you know, as you get older, you forget to remember. You don't remember and forget because you can't remember, so you forget.

Can I get a witness here on this?

But again, the keyword is 'remember.'

You've forgotten, you've left. This is a deliberate act. You've forgotten all about Me.

Apparently, I don't rise to the level of being important enough for you to remember. You mean you really don't remember all that I've done for you?

Maybe that's the problem. Stay with me.

You know how it is when we pray, God, bless me. And then God in His grace - Oh, we so don't deserve it - He blesses us.

And then here we are now, basking in the blessing of God.

And what happens?

Oh, that very blessing becomes a curse because now we forget the Lord.

Oh, but let's flip that around. And this is cyclical throughout the history of Israel, isn't it?

They go through the judgment of God, the discipline of God, the chastening of God. God delivers them into the hands of their enemies.

They're in captivity, they cry out to God, they repent.

God delivers them, restores them, blesses them, prospers them, and then they forget the Lord and they sin against the Lord and they go back into captivity.

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Then they cry out to the Lord again and Lord, save me!

And God saves them and blesses them and prospers them and delivers them.

And then they forget about the Lord again, and then... Don't get too hard on them. We do the same thing.

Come on, let's be honest, let's be honest with ourselves.

You know, we're talking in James about self-deception. It was there last week. It's going to be there again this week on Sunday. He says, to do this is to be self-deceived.

Self-deceived means you can lie to yourself and believe your own lies. We all have the propensity to deceive ourselves into believing a lie we tell ourselves. And we're just like them.

If we're honest with ourselves and we're not given over to self-deception, we would have to admit that like them in those times of prosperity that's when we're the most vulnerable.

But isn't it true that during times of adversity, man, we're crying - Our whole prayer life has changed.

I mean, when things are going good, here's our prayer. God, bless me, bless them, bless this, bless that.

And then, (singing) "I owe, I owe, so off work I go."

And then that's it.

And we probably don't talk to the Lord until who knows when, maybe, maybe later on in the day, if not, well, there's a long period of time that transpires between the last time we talked to the Lord.

But boy, let adversity strike. Oh, God! I mean, we get very good at praying. Oh, creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is.

Oh, it's like, oh, now I have your attention?

This is Ecclesiastes 7:14. Here's a paraphrase of this very important verse. Solomon, by the Holy Spirit writes and says, During times of prosperity enjoy. Hey, God's blessing you, enjoy it. Don't apologize for it, enjoy it while it lasts because - You know why you can?

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Because when; I wish it didn't say when, I wish it said, if by chance, possibly adversity should happen to strike.

No, it doesn't say that. It says, during times of prosperity, enjoy! But when adversity strikes, stop and consider that God allows one alongside the other, the adversity alongside the prosperity.

Why?

So that man can discover nothing about his future.

What does that mean?

That means that you always have to be reliant and dependent upon the Lord. See because during times of prosperity, we tend to drift.

Again, be honest, we don't have to trust the Lord during times of prosperity. I mean, you know, we've already been provided for.

But, boy, adversity?

I mean, you're on your face before the Lord and you're close to the Lord and you draw near to the Lord.

And as James says, **“When we draw near to the Lord, the Lord will draw near to us.”**

The problem here for them then, is our problem for us now. We tend to forsake the Lord, backslide, leave, distance ourselves from the Lord.

Can I say it like this? It's almost like, again, because of God's love for us He's like, I love you so much. I really miss you. I would like for you to come back so we can have that intimacy that we once had.

Have you ever thought of it like that?

Again, I'll frame it in the context of an earthly parent.

As a fallen father, I know with my children, I love to be with them, and I'm close with my children. I have a great, by the grace of God, relationship with my children, not because I'm this amazing father.

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Boy, you want to talk about the grace of God? It was the grace of God, I mean, I mean grace of God that I have a great relationship with my children.

I love to spend time with them. And I miss them when I don't have that time with them. It's kind of an ache in your heart because you just, you love them so much. You love that closeness with them.

How much more, our Heavenly Father?

Could it be - and just think this through with me. So if it's during times of prosperity that we're prone to wander.

And conversely, during times of adversity that we draw near and come back to the Lord.

Could it be that God knows that and He loves us so much and misses us so much and wants us close to Him so much, and He knows the only way that He's ever going to have that closeness with us is if adversity strikes?

Okay, that's why.

Hey, if that's what it takes to get you back, to get your attention. I can't get your attention when things are going so well. I mean, I'm the furthest thing from your mind.

You've - It's kind of like, you know that saying, "You forgot where you came from?" You forgot back in the days when you despised the days of small things.

Remember those days? Remember those days when all you had was the Lord? It's all you needed too.

As one famously said, You'll never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have. But it was just you and Jesus, and you were content. That's all you needed.

Then all of a sudden, God starts blessing your life. And all of these other things creep in and you forget about the Lord.

And would to God, it would never be said of us, as graphically as this is said and described here, that we would forget the Lord like a bride would forget her wedding dress.

That we would never forget the Lord.

"Yet [He says] My people have forgotten Me days without number."

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Ooh!

Why [verse 33] do you beautify your way to seek love? Therefore you have also taught the wicked women your ways."

In other words, It's bad enough that you did this, but you modeled it for others and taught them to do it as well. That might explain, at least in part, the graphic nature of what He says in verse 34.

"Also on your skirts is found the blood of the lives of the poor innocents. I have not found it by secret search, but plainly on all these things."

In other words, I didn't have to look that far to find it. It's right there.

"Yet you say, [verse 35] 'Because I am innocent, surely His anger shall turn from me.' Behold, I will plead My case against you because you say, 'I have not sinned.'"

In other words, it's like this. It's like, you know, it wasn't that bad. And God didn't just bring the hammer down right away so it must not be a big deal. So you keep doing it.

No, God's a patient God. He's long suffering. He'll give you time to repent. You think God takes delight?

I mean, how do you as a parent - How much do you enjoy disciplining and chastening your children? You know how we say to our children when they're young, this is going to hurt me a lot more than it's going to hurt you.

Like any child believes that to begin with.

Of course, like we were talking about on Sunday, I just, Hey, I think we can just save both of us the hurt. Just don't do it and it won't hurt you or me. How about that?

Or how about this? I'm disciplining you because I love you. And is that not what the writer of Hebrews says? **"He chastens those whom, and disciplines those whom He loves."**

And that's how we know, that's the litmus test by which we're known as His children, because a parent is not going to spank somebody else's children.

How weird would that be? That would be a problem. Oh, that must be the parent because they're, they're disciplining their child; must be their child.

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That's what the Lord says. I discipline you because I love you; again, through the lens of love.

But they're protesting like, Oh, it's not a big deal. And now here's the Lord's response, verse 36, we'll bringing it in for an ending. **“Why do you gad about so much to change your way? Also you shall be ashamed of Egypt, as you were ashamed of Assyria.**

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Indeed [verse 37] you will go forth from him with your hands on your head. For the Lord has rejected your trusted allies and you will not prosper by them."

I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of this and this ending to this chapter.

By the way, this is just the beginning. Not tonight, so don't lose heart. But several chapters of this.

But why?

Well, it's the why behind the what. Because God loves them, and He wants them to remember because they have forgotten, which again, is a perfect transition into the celebration of communion because is that not what communion is about?

I don't ever want you to forget what I did for you. As often as you do this, you do this in remembrance of Me.

Here's the why behind the what of Jeremiah 2 and the communion celebration that we're going to partake of. Remember.

Why?

Because we're all prone to forget. I mean, the busyness and stress of life, especially nowadays, is such that we just forget.

Wait a minute, I'm saved, man.

It's not like I forgot, but I'm sure living like I don't remember that this is as bad as it gets for me because I'm saved.

This is the most hell I will ever know as a Christian. And as I'm sure you've heard said, doubtless for the non-Christian, this is the most heaven they'll ever know. I think I need to remember that.

You know, what the communion celebration does is what God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, was attempting to do to get them to remember. Remember. Repent. Repeat. Remember.

No greater love hath any man that he would lay down his life for his friend.

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And what Jesus says to the disciples in that upper room as they're celebrating the Passover in what we affectionately refer to as the Last Supper, He's basically saying to them, I'm going to lay down My life for you because of My love for you.

And what we're going to do here tonight as the fulfillment of the Passover prophecy, as the Passover lamb, in celebration of the Passover, I want you to do this. And when you do this, I want you to remember. Don't forget this.

Why is that so important?

Because if I live my life remembering what He did for me, that will change everything in my life, in how I live my life.

In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 22 beginning in verse 14, we have the account. Luke, by the Holy Spirit writes that **“When the hour had come, He [speaking of Jesus] sat down and the 12 apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’”**

He just got done telling them that He's going to go to the cross and die for them. **“For I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.’”**

That's the second time now He's said that. In other words, the next time I do this, it will be in My kingdom when it finds its ultimate fulfillment.

“And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, [and here it is] 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

For those of you that are here, if you'll take the packaging and peel back the top part, you'll have the bread and just hold on to it for a moment.

It's a symbol of the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us as a remembrance to us that He took our place and willingly of His own volition.

He could have declined, by the way. You know that, right?

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He could have declined, but He willingly went to that cross. His body, beaten and broken, not His bones. That would disqualify Him as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. No bones could be broken.

The skin was broken in seven places, by the way. Seven, the number of completion. The two hands, feet is four; the back whipped, five; the crown of thorns, six; by the way, very vascular, the forehead.

And then finally, to ensure His death, the Roman soldier pierced his side, and out came blood and water, seven. And by the way, blood and water are the two elements present at birth.

That was the birth of the bride from His side as the second and final Adam just the way that God took the rib from the side of Adam to birth His bride, if you will.

You see the symbolism there?

His body broken for us when He died for us. Don't ever forget it.

Always remember what I did for you because of My love for you. When you see your life, as hard as it might be, through the lens of love, and remember My love for you, My body broken for you, that I died for you, it will change how you see what you're going through.

Would you partake with me?

Thank You, Lord. Lord, we do this in remembrance of You. It is a celebration. It is a commemoration, symbolically, as we just partook of the bread of Your body broken for us.

Lord, we thank You so much for dying for us, for Your love, for us and Your body broken for us.

And Lord, we do remember, and Lord forgive us for forgetting and not remembering.

Lord, thank You for this that You've given us to do so we will remember. Thank You, Lord.

Luke goes on and writes, **“Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’”**

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If you'll take the rest of the packaging and peel it back, you'll again have the cup and hold on to it for a moment. We sing it, we say it, we know it, we believe it, we talk about it. There is power in the blood. But do we fully grasp what that means?

I mean, His blood shed in our stead. And He wants us to remember about His shed blood.

Why?

Because there's no remission [remission] of sin without the shedding of blood.

So His blood was shed in my stead. I think I would do well to remember that. And there's power in the blood, because His shed blood is for the forgiveness and the removal and the remission and the cleansing of all of my sin.

Sometimes I live my life like that's not the case. I've kind of forgotten about that. I need to remember that because that's a game-changer. That's a life changer, isn't it?

I'm saved because of His blood, the blood of the New Covenant. There is a New Covenant. I'm under the new covenant of His blood poured out for me, shed for me for the remission of my sin. Would you partake with me?

Kapono, why don't you come on up? And then when you're done, stand up and we'll close in prayer and Kapono will close us in song.

I hope for you tonight, the communion was not just a routine formality as it can so often become, but rather, especially in light of this chapter here in Jeremiah, that it's a much-needed reminder of God's love for us.

And sometimes I think the enemy succeeds in getting us to question that and doubt that. And we need to remember that, Yeah, God loves me. He really loves me. He's not angry with me.

The enemy is really good at that, trying to get us to think that God's angry with us, God's punishing us. God's had it with us.

No. He took all of His anger, all of His wrath, and He put it on His only begotten Son.

And so as Romans 8:1 says, **“There is therefore now no condemnation, [no guilt] for those that are in Christ Jesus.”**

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If you're here tonight or watching online and this is an issue, this is a thing, this questioning of God's love for you, I would really, really encourage you to spend some time in Romans, Chapter 8 because talk about a reminder.

It's a much-needed reminder that there is nothing that can separate you from the love that God has for you. Neither height nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers of darkness, nor any created thing.

That pretty much covers everything. No thing can separate you from God's love for you.

Think about that. There's nothing you can do to make God love you less.

I'll never forget the first time I told my daughter that.

She's like, Really? You mean God - Nothing I can do makes God love me less?

Nope!

Whoa, He really loves me!

I know. And get this, it's even better than that. He likes you too.

He likes me?

That almost packs more punch than love because the word "love" has been so marred and even profaned and made common.

God likes you. He's not mad at you. He loves you. Remember that.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You. I - Oh, there's coming a day soon and very soon. And we believe that, like You, eagerly awaiting, fervently desiring to do that which we did here tonight when it finds its ultimate fulfillment in Your kingdom at the wedding feast of the Lamb when we will partake with You as Your bride by Your side, boy!

Lord, we need to be mindful of that and remember that; that we have that to look forward to.

Thank You, Lord. We love You so much! In Jesus' name. Amen.