

Well, friends, with that, we have made it the whole way through the book of Jeremiah. So congratulations. You just made it through the longest book, in the scriptures. And really it has been, as you've shared already so wonderfully tonight as an incredible journey. God has promised to be at work in us, and he has been.

And coming to the end of the series. I've not found it difficult to think of examples of how he's been changing us and making us more like Jesus, and for that, I am just so thankful for all that God has done amongst us. He has. He's diagnosed us, sees, challenged us. He's changed us. He's called us to repentance, is humbled us.

It's been it's been wonderful. But after all that reading and all that studying grace group crossfire one two ones here. On Sunday we finally reached the climax of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 52 and I wonder what your reaction was as Angus read. Was it a bit? Is that really where this book is going to end? Where is the hope in all of that?

Jeremiah 52 reads like something of a disaster report, doesn't it? We we called this series Hope for Stubborn Hearts. And yet the book finishes with a city in a heap of rubble, a temple burned to the ground, a people being exiled out to Babylon in and in chains. And even Jeremiah himself has left the check. He kind of checked out of the chat in, in Jeremiah 51.

You remember this? The last words of Jeremiah. This chapter is luckily coming to us with, Jeremiah scribe Baruch. It's almost like Jeremiah doesn't have any tears left. He's handing it over to us, and we're left thinking, Lord God, where's the hope in all this? Why do you want us to stare at the rubble of Jerusalem? I think Jeremiah 52 is a little bit like, this painting called Guernica.

Anyone know the painting? Guernica? Oh, look at you guys. I didn't know it too much before. This way. It's a Pablo Picasso. And it's for those who know the painting. It's a painting that invites you to stare at the rubble of a city. It's a painting of the aerial bombing of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War. And I understand these paintings are enormous.

So you're going to walk in this enormous room, and you're invited to stare at it for a long time, and you're just trying to stare to figure out what it is. But what's in it? The longer you look is you see a fallen soldier on the ground. You see a large kind of horse shape in the centre in agony.

You see a woman trapped under a burning building. You see another

woman holding a child who has died because of the bombing. Now, why would you paint a picture like this? And why would you set up a room and invite the public to come in and stare at this painting? I understand it was commissioned as an anti-war symbol.

You meant to go into this room and walk, and you're meant to see the horrors of fascism. You meant to say violence, and you're meant to leave in agony. You're meant to be the one saying never again. We can never do such things again. And so that's what you meant to do when you stare at Guernica. So when God gives us Jeremiah 52, why does he want us to stare at the rubble of Jerusalem?

Two wonderful things about the Bible to remember. The first is that the Bible never avoids the hard realities of life. The Bible in the book of Jeremiah has not pretended that God's judgement isn't real.

It's showing it, clear as day. It hasn't minimised evil either, has it? Or suffering. It doesn't look away from destruction. In fact, the Bible is often inviting us to look at the darkest moments in history, in fact, the darkest moment in history. So God has a reason. He wants us to stare at the rubble of Jerusalem. Because second, one of the most astounding things about the scriptures is that as you stare upon the darkness and in the thick of this judgement moment, the Christian faith is the message that out of the rubble hope arises, that out of such things as sin, evil, suffering, death, destruction, and even judgement itself, God can provide eternal hope.

So there's a reason God wants you to stay here tonight. That the rubble of Jerusalem. He wants to give you living hope, namely, in Christ, His son. So I'm going to pray that God would help us grasp this hope tonight. Let's pray together.

Father God, as we do, stare upon the this ancient but broken city in Jeremiah. And really, as we face our own stubborn hearts one final time in this book. Help us to see tonight the hope of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to receive it by trust. And so may it be that you would help us to be the people who live in light of that eternal hope, and we ask it in Jesus name.

Well, tonight, as we stare at the rubble, you'll find three reasons for hope. At the end, we're going to continue to reflect on what God has been doing amongst us. That's going to prepare us for the Lord's Supper, which we'll share towards the end. But the first reason for hope as we stand, there's reason for hope because God always does what he says.

In many ways, Jeremiah 52 is not just a disaster report. We could

call it a fulfilment report, because the last chapter of Jeremiah takes us back to the first chapter of Jeremiah. Maybe you were thinking that already. You remember Jeremiah one, verse 11. If not, here it is. God said, I am watching over my word to perform it.

That is, God does what he says. We we say things and we don't follow through them. And it might have been even throughout the series you had said something that you would do that you didn't see it through. Guilty. But not so with our God. He speaks and sees that His word is performed. It's acted out. So by the time we get to Jeremiah 52, so many of the things God has said between chapter two and chapter 51, he's done it in many ways.

This is a proof text of what God says happens. Let me show you a few examples. In Jeremiah 34, you can flick there on the screen. I've got the comparison. Here's what God said about Jerusalem and King Zedekiah. God said, behold, I'm giving the city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

Use it. Acquire you shall not escape from his hand, but shall definitely be captured and delivered into his hand. Use it a call. You shall see the King of Babylon eye to eye, and speak with him face to face. And you'll go to Babylon. We get to chapter 52 and this happens in the ninth year of his reign, the 10th month, on the 10th day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it.

Verse seven A breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled. And we kind of think, oh, maybe Zedekiah is going to get away, because it said back in 34, you shall not escape. Well, verse 852 but the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And all these army were scattered from him.

And then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon, and rebels in the land of hammers, and they passed sentence on him. And as the chapter goes on, Jerusalem burned. And it all happened as God said. Another example. What did God say? What happened to the temple? This was a while ago in Jeremiah seven, God said, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name.

That's the temple in which you trust, and the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. So what God's saying is, I'm going to abandon my temple, just like I abandoned the Ark of the covenant back in Shiloh. In Samuel. Right? God saying, in other words, I'm going to abandon my temple to say it to destruction.

Or he says in Jeremiah 27, concerning the vessels that are left in the house of the Lord, in the house of the King of Judah, and in Jerusalem, they shall be carried to Babylon. And there remain until the day when I visit them, declares the Lord. And then I will bring

them back and restore them to this place.

And so again you get to Jeremiah 52. And what happens to the house of the Lord? It's burned to the ground. And what's happened to all those articles and things of the temple? Well, just as God said, they are carried off to Babylon. You see the point. God does what he says, and we could keep going with examples, right?

God said he would exalt King Jehoiakim in chapter 24. We see him in exile in this chapter. God said he would exile these people. In Jeremiah 25. We see them go into exile. In this chapter we have a fulfilment report and friends, that should give us much reason for grounded hope. Because as the people are staring at the rubble of Jerusalem, you're looking at the rubble thinking, oh yeah, this is what God said would happen.

In fact, there was a barely a week in our study of Jeremiah where God didn't say this would happen. And that means that our God is a God who keeps his word. And if he's done what he's promised now, then all he is promised in the book of Jeremiah he will bring to fruition. He will bring them back from Babylon.

He will restore the nations. He's going to give his people new hearts. He will remember their sins. No more, because our God is the God who does what he says. So, for instance, in the Christian life, we live life by faith in what God says. We live by faith in his promise because our God is a God who does what he says.

When you look at your circumstances around you, remember by faith what God promised he would do. He said, you're forgiven by the cross. So when the accusations and doubts come, he said, Unforgiven is I trust. In the cross. We sing. He said there would be trials, but we have overcome. The battle is the Lord and he is mine.

And so good, right? He said there would be trials. So when trials and said, all right, he said that this would be the case. He said he would even use these trials to grow me into the likeness of Jesus. He said he'd restore the nations so I can take the gospel to the nations to gather the elect. He said, he's going to take us home so I can live for heaven.

You see the point when we stare at the rubble of Jerusalem? There is hope because our God does what he says. He keeps his promises. And it's the same today. But there's a deeper hope. Still. There's a hope because God's judgement falls on his own. And that face value that doesn't look like a particular comment of hope. But think it through with me.

Because as we stare at the rubble of Jerusalem, we give him loads of historical details, aren't we? In fact, as Angus read, he was effectively reading three chapters of the Bible at once. Because if you flick to the end of two Kings 24 and 25, it's almost there. Mirror of a mirror, all the historical details. So the question is, why does God choose to focus in on those details?

Because he could have given us so many different stories. As the Babylonians arrived, he could have told a personal story about, you know, the perspective of a Judean military officer as he watched Nebuchadnezzar come. Or he could have given us a documentary about Babylonian battering rams. You know all the data. Why it's so incorrect. I'm glad he did it right.

He could of like John's romcoms or something like that, told us about what romances were going on for the youth or that this person, like this person and, well, the army was coming, and were they going to get together or you could have told a story like that, but God doesn't tell us those stories. He tells us a story about a city, a king, a temple destroyed and a people exiled.

Why? Because those threads are threads that are drawn all through Scripture. That is God's people, God's place, and God's rule of the dominant themes, if you like, of Scripture, all of them pointing to really the dominant theme of Scripture, the kingdom of God. When we're engaging with God's Word from beginning to end, we're kind of on this quest of how is God's kingdom going to be established?

When is the day going to come when God's people are in God's place, living under God's rule? If you've never seen some of these themes before, will cross train next time is going to be on this kind of very thing. I was chatting to someone at church this morning. He said when I first encountered God's people, God's place, God's rule, I got into a reading group.

We read a book called Gospel and Kingdom, and it changed my world and engagement with the Bible. Why I want to share with you tonight is because we can't unlock the significance of Jeremiah 52 if you don't understand the Bible story so far. So let's do it together. I creation God's people. What? You have to talk to me.

God's people were who? Adam. And these God's place was the Garden of Eden. That's right. God ruled by his word at the fall of humanity. God's people were cast out of the garden, and God's place was then guarded by an angel. So Adam and Eve roamed under the shadow of death. God still ruled by his word. Though he given promises and his judgements.

So under Abraham God gave him three promises. What did God promised Abraham? You tell me what would shout out a promise louder!

Oh yes, children's and universes and stars. That's right. That's chapter 15. And if you like, you could say that in chapter 12 that he's going to make a nation that is God's people are going to grow from Abraham. Yeah. That's one. What's another promise? Blessing. That's right. God's going to continue his rule by blessing those who come to Abraham.

Right. And the third promise land, a promised land, a place. So God's people grew numerous in Egypt, but God led them and saved them

out of Egypt and took them to Mount Sinai. And God's dwelling place changed because he started dwelling in the.

Tabernacle. Right, a tent. His glory descended into a tabernacle, tent. And God still rule by his law and word out they go from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land. Through Joshua, judges and the kings are established in God's promise land. That's the way God's people are at their most numerous. But God's place changes, right? It changes under in David and Solomon to the temple.

That's right. They build the temple where God's glory dwells and God's rule. Two Samuel seven. He gives David a promise that someone is going to come from his throne who will rule forever. So we get to this point now in Jeremiah 52. What's happening? Will God chooses to tell us three particular things about his people, place, and rule, and particularly that his judgement fall on first, his people 51 one Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Hamilton and the daughter of Jeremiah of Lebanon. And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For because of the anger of the Lord, he came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence. You say God's people's sin means verse three.

They were cast out of his presence. God's judgement comes on his own people because of their sin. And you notice, just like Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden under the shadow of death. So now God's people are cast out of Jerusalem. The exile in the story of the Bible is the spiritual death of God's people.

It's been cast out of God's presence. It's been placed under his judgement. But the thing is, God's not done with these people because in Jeremiah 52, we get a promise of specific people that God is going to save us and uses a remnant in the future. You see a bunch of colours there. You say the number of the people that is God's not done with these people.

You see the colours that flow from there. They're three waves of exiles, of the people who went to Babylon. And the point is, God's not done with his people yet. Although God's people came under judgement. What's God doing? He's going to raise these people from the dead again. He's going to make a new people. He's going to make a new creation, if you like.

Now, can you see how this is all a foreshadow of the gospel to in Jesus? God represents the people of God and critically, at his trial before his crucifixion, Jesus was cast out of Jerusalem. Hebrews 13 teaches us this Jesus also suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem in order to sanctify the people by his blood. That is, Jesus taught outside Jerusalem to teach that he was cast out of God's presence.

And so he cries on the cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken

me? That is, he's outside Jerusalem. He's out of God's presence under the shadow of death, where God's judgement and curse falls upon God's own son. Why would he do that? Will he does it at the cross so that a new people, friends us, might be reborn, that a people would be spiritually resurrected, made new.

God's judgement fell on the cross. He was cast out. So hope arises for us. Second, Jeremiah focuses a lot in this last chapter on God's place on the temple. And usually when you're you're talking about a house, I mean, at least in our country, you're talking about going to Bunnings and doing your deal. I was and you're trying to keep your house sign up.

But God, his attention is focussed on his house being destroyed. His house. Why is this the climax of the book? Well, there's hope in the rubble because God was planning for a new and better temple. Or better, he was planning for a new way for his glory to dwell with his people. So after their time in Babylon, God's people do come back to Jerusalem.

They do rebuild a temple, but it doesn't carry the glory of the old one. So much so that when Jesus arrives at the physical temple, that same temple still, well, it's going under a new renovation, right? That's taking 46 years. Have a look what Jesus says when he comes into that temple. John two Jesus answered them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Then the Jews said, it's taken 46 years to build this temple, and you raise it up in three days. But he was speaking about the temple of his body, when therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he'd said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. At first they walked.

Jesus walked into the magisterial temple. He says, I'll knock it down in three. They all say, that's nonsense until he says no, I'm speaking about my body because I am the temple that is. Jesus spoke of himself as the dwelling place of God, the word tabernacle with him. He's the temple. And he said that that temple, his body was going to be destroyed at the cross.

And that was he laid in the grave Friday, Saturday, Sunday, three days. In fact, when he hung up on that cross as Jesus died outside Jerusalem, back in Jerusalem, what happened to the curtain? What happened? Someone yelled down. It split. It tore in two, and it tore in two to show the end of the temple. The destruction of the temple.

That is when Christ's body was destroyed for us. God made a way to dwell with his people forever. Because as his body, the temple was destroyed. So our sins are forgiven so that Christ could dwell with us. The New Testament talks about us as the temple of God that is, the New Testament doesn't speak about God's presence being in particular places.

Sometimes people get stuck of thinking, Is God in a home or outside

of home or blessing particular rooms or something like this? When the New Testament speaks about God's presence, his presence is in people. He dwells in us by His Spirit. So we get called the temple of God. So, friends, in Jeremiah 52, in the rubble there's cause for deep hope because as the temple is destroyed, it looks forward to the temple being destroyed so that God might dwell with us.

So third, Jeremiah 52 focuses a lot on kings and rulers. Maybe you'd it to finish with a prophet, or that's what we've been focusing on. But now we go back to the kings. And the first king in focus was King Zedekiah. And if you've been with us, we've seen lots of bad behaviour by Zedekiah. And we're reminded, verse two, he did what was evil, atrocious in the sight of the Lord.

According to all that Jehoiakim had done. So what happens when God's judgement falls on his own? King? That's 11. Nebuchadnezzar put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him in chains, and the king of Babylon took him to Babylon and put him in prison till the day of his death.

God's king was sinful, so God King size is God's judgement. And yet there's a second king mentioned in the chapter. Do you notice him? He two was in the family line of David. He's in Jeremiah 52, verse 31. His name is Jehovah, and he's a kind of puppet king who's living in Babylon. And we get this story of what happens to the Israelites in exile, a kind of fast forward if you moment, one moment, 37 years in, it's a strange moment where a fellow named evil married back.

I mean, there's again never going to call a baby that name. Are you evil, Mary? Come on, get in the car. It's able. Marry amazingly. Lets this king out of prison. Verse 32. And he spoke kindly to him, this sorry evil Mary like this by kindly to King George, who gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon.

And Jeremiah finishes with this slither of hope, because God has not forgotten his promises. A king will rise from David's line, and the king is he lived. He's alive. God's promises endure. But to those who know the fullness of Scripture and a reading chronicles along the same time, two Chronicles 36 hang on. This king also did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

And maybe that makes your stomach churn a bit, that the book finishes with a king who did evil dining with others in Babylon, and it makes us long for God's true king. And so Matthew's gospel begins like this. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham, and critically, who who shows up in verse 12 and after the death rotation of Babylon.

Jehovah, Chino, Gemini, same, same guy was the father. Shield, heel. There he is. Who was the father of? Who was the father of? Who was the father of Joseph? The husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. For when Christ came, he was unlike the kings who went before him. Although he does have something in common with

these kings like Zedekiah, he was bound and he was imprisoned.

And actually, like Zedekiah, he was sentenced to death under the judgement of God. And he died with a sign above his head saying, this is the King of the Jews. But unlike Zedekiah, and unlike Jehoiakim, who died for their own sin and evil, Jesus died taking on my evil. Arrival.

And maybe that doesn't make your stomach churn so much, because we get invited to dine at the King's table. Because Jesus the King also died for us. The eternal King that came from David's line has arrived to establish his kingdom so that we, his people, might be and live with him forever in the kingdom of God. What a mercy, friends.

The reason God gets us staring at the rubble of Jerusalem like this is because here we see all the building blocks for the gospel of Jesus. God's judgement is falling on God's person, God's temple, and God's rule. And so Jeremiah 52. It's really about showing us the cross with God where his son was ruined for us. And so it means actually we can end the book of Jeremiah with massive hope.

Big hope. Because there is hope, friends, for the pattern of stubborn hearts. Jeremiah is a book that raises this problem. What about our stubborn sinful hearts? Will Jesus arrive in Jerusalem with this pattern of human hearts that's gone on and on and on. And as he arrives at the temple, it's almost like Jeremiah has been reborn. What it is, is, is he alive?

We know that weeping prophet. Prophet. But as Jesus arrives, he's weeping and he cries over the city of Jerusalem. Listen to what he says. And when he drew near to the city and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, would that you even you had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes, for the days will come upon you.

Jerusalem, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and him, you win on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying, as it is written in Jeremiah, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you've made it a den of robbers.

You say what he's saying, a visitor has arrived, like Jeremiah in Jerusalem again.

And they don't listen to him again. Human hearts haven't changed. And he arrives in the temple, and he sees the temple being used and abused again.

Because human hearts haven't changed. And so he says, Jerusalem will be destroyed again. He's talking about the Romans coming in the 30th of August, 70 A.D., where the Roman Empire burned Jerusalem and the

temple to the ground again, because human hearts keep placing their confidence in the wrong place. In fact, still today, people want to place hope in a city of Jerusalem, a movement of Zionism that goes on.

Friends, there is no salvation in a plot of land or in a city, but in Christ alone. For how does God undo the pattern of stubborn hearts? We need something different. We've seen for centuries the same pattern of human hearts. We need God to intervene. So, friends, Jesus comes to Jerusalem, to the temple, to his people, to us, to die for us.

The Bible wants us to stare at the rubble of the cross because it's their God, and does the pattern of human hearts because it's there. We get to see God's heart for us. His persistent stubbornness to show grace to a rebellious people ends in him coming to do it himself. To die so that the nations of his people might be saved and saved, to so be changed, so that God so dwells with us, so that we get new hearts to live for Jesus, the risen King, who is alive and reigns forever.

That sin no longer rules, but Jesus does. Friends, can you say the amazing thing about scripture? Really? The whole thing invites us to stand none of the destruction of the city of this city, but at the destruction of Christ at the cross. When you look at a painting like Guernica, we shout, that's evil! Never again! The barbarity. But when we stare at the cross, we shout, God have mercy on me!

Hallelujah!

My Saviour dies for me. He did it. He's won. A way to give us new hearts. Such that the promises that we've seen through Jeremiah are fulfilled through the cross. That our sins are defeated, forgiven, forgotten, and that we are freed from living for sin. We're freed from living for sin because at the rebel of the cross, we get new hearts.

Because Jesus is the King. Prince Jeremiah ends just like the central message of the Christian faith, that in the most unlikely of places, hope arises at the cross of Christ. So, friends, there's hope for your stubborn heart and mind. So on the screen there's some questions coming up and what I want you to do. I want you to nominate a question to your neighbour and say, I want to get this one.

And the other person can say, I know, and I have this question I want to share on this one. And just as we prepare to share the Lord's Supper together, one of these questions mysteries one why does the Bible keep us staring at the cross? Or two what difference does it make that God always does what he says?

Three share one thing you love that Jesus offers is at the cross. Or for what hope is the gospel given your stubborn heart? In the book of Jeremiah? Check your neighbour, share some gospel things and I'll

come back in just just a minute or two.