Small Group Guide

When Everything Falls Apart | Jeremiah 39-45

BEFORE YOU MEET

Encourage group members to read Jeremiah 39-45 before gathering. Ask them to come prepared to share one thing that really stood out to them about either the sermon or the chapters in Jeremiah.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. God's word is historically reliable. Verses like Jeremiah 39:1-2 are not accidental. The precision of Scripture in historical detail points to the same care being applied to its theological claims.

2. Faithful servants are not immune to hardship, but God watches over them even in dire circumstances.

3. Apparent spiritually is not the same as genuine obedience. Yohanan came to Jeremiah with all the right words, pledging to do whatever God said. He had already decided what he was going to do before he ever asked.

4. God cannot bless sin - or “mess,” but He will bring the blessings of obedience to those who humble themselves and repent.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding the Text

1. Nebuchadnezzar made specific provision for Jeremiah's protection, and God made provision for Ebed-Melech because of his faithfulness described in the previous chapter. What does it tell us about God's character that He watched over individual servants in the middle of a national catastrophe?
2. Gedaliah was warned by Yohanan that a coup was being planned against him and he dismissed it. What was the cost of that dismissal? What does his story say about the danger of ignoring wise counsel?
3. God's instruction to the remnant in Jeremiah 42:10-12 was straightforward: stay in the land and He would restore them. Why do you think they found it so difficult to trust that promise?
4. In chapter 44, the people who fled to Egypt continued the same patterns of idol worship that had brought judgment on Judah in the first place. What does this tell us about the nature of sin and the human tendency to repeat destructive patterns?

Going Deeper

1. What is the difference between seeking God's direction for your life and seeking God's approval of a decision that's already made? What are some ways we can make sure we aren't asking God to approve our decisions?
2. The prosperity gospel was addressed directly in the sermon, with the observation that Jesus, the apostles, and Jeremiah all experienced suffering despite full obedience. What does a more honest and biblical picture of the Christian life look like?
3. The sermon noted that some people who come into our lives and present themselves as spiritually mature may carry hidden agendas. How do you balance being discerning about people's motives with extending genuine trust and grace?
4. Jeremiah faithfully delivered God's word for 41 years and could not compel anyone to live it out. How does that reality speak to anyone in this group who is burdened over a family member, friend, or colleague who is living in disobedience? What is our responsibility, and where does it end?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Examine your prayers. Bring one specific area of your life before God this week and honestly ask whether you are seeking His direction or looking for His endorsement of something you have already decided. Be willing to sit with the discomfort of that question before moving forward.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. Be sensitive to topics that came up during discussion.