

Small Group Guide

"When Judgment Comes" | Jeremiah 4-6

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read Jeremiah 4-6 before gathering. Ask them to come prepared with one observation that stood out to them from their personal reading.

Key Takeaways

1. God's judgment is always just. The destruction that came upon Judah was not arbitrary or impulsive. It was the result of generations of rebellion, idolatry, and moral collapse. God's actions are always right and never sinful. What He allowed to come upon Judah was the just consequence of a covenant people who had abandoned their God.

2. Discipline is rooted in love, not hatred. Even as God released Judah to the consequences of their sin, He never stopped loving them. His discipline was purposeful. It established boundaries, carried expectations, and held people accountable. And crucially, God twice promised in these chapters that the destruction would not be final.

3. Spiritual drift is generational. Judah's condition did not happen overnight. It took generations of backsliding, false prophecy, and spiritual indifference to produce the moral and spiritual collapse that Jeremiah witnessed. The warning is clear: what one generation neglects, the next generation may never know.

4. God's patience has limits. God made repeated efforts to call Judah back to repentance. He sent prophets. He warned them. He pleaded with them. But when every call was rejected and ignored, judgment came. The long-suffering of God is real, but it is not without end.

5. Hope survives judgment. Even in the darkest passages of these chapters, God left room for future restoration. The destruction would be severe, but it would not be final. Wherever there is hope in the future, there is power in the present.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before diving into the sermon content, share one word that describes how you feel when you think about the concept of God's judgment. What shapes that reaction for you?
 2. The pastor described Judah as having lost its national and spiritual identity over generations. Have you ever witnessed a family, church, or community gradually drift from its foundational values? What did that look like?
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Digging Deeper

3. The sermon highlighted three spiritual defects in Judah drawn from Jeremiah 4:22: they did not know the Lord, they were spiritually immature, and they were skilled at doing evil but had no knowledge of how to do good. Which of these three defects do you think is most common in the church today? Why?
 4. God asked in Jeremiah 5:7, "How shall I pardon you for this?" The sermon made the point that God could not simply overlook Judah's sin and remain just. How does this challenge the idea that a loving God would never allow consequences for sin? How does understanding God's justice actually deepen your understanding of His love?
 5. The pastor noted that false prophets were preaching prosperity and peace while Jeremiah was preaching repentance and coming judgment. He described those false prophets as "windbags." How do you discern the difference between a message that genuinely encourages you and one that simply affirms your lifestyle at the expense of truth?
 6. God searched Jerusalem for even one righteous person and found none among those who were sincere, drawing a parallel to Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18. What does this tell you about the weight that one faithful person can carry in the eyes of God? How does that challenge or encourage you personally?
 7. The sermon described God's discipline as something that "often feels like the hot anger of God being breathed upon our necks" but is always rooted in love. Can you share a time, without oversharing, when you experienced what felt like God's discipline and later recognized it as an act of love?
 8. The pastor closed with seven personal commitments drawn from these chapters. Which of the seven resonated most with you, and why?
 - Remembering God daily
 - Teaching children about God
 - Maintaining a soft and pliable heart before God
 - Refusing to be deceived by voices that affirm your lifestyle over truth
 - Standing firm in your identity and calling in Christ
 - Walking on the old paths
 - Remembering God's nature, especially in seasons of discipline
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Bringing It Home

9. The pastor said, "Trouble comes to pass. It doesn't come to stay." Is there a current difficulty in your life where you need to hold onto that truth? How can the group pray with you about it?
 10. The sermon warned against the idea that being a Christian is a "get out of hell free card" that permits careless living. How does a right understanding of grace actually produce a greater desire for holiness rather than less?
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Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- **Personal Inventory:** Set aside 20-30 minutes this week for quiet reflection. Ask yourself honestly: Are there areas of my life where I have been ignoring the warnings of God? Write down what comes to mind and bring it to God in prayer.
 - **Legacy Letter:** Write a short letter, even just a paragraph or two, to a child, grandchild, or the next generation in your life. Describe the spiritual legacy you want to pass on and the God you want them to know. You do not have to send it. The act of writing it is itself a clarifying exercise.
 - **Truth Audit:** Reflect on the voices you regularly listen to, whether podcasts, social media personalities, friends, or mentors. Ask yourself honestly whether those voices are telling you the truth or simply affirming what you already want to hear. Make one adjustment this week if needed.
 - **Old Paths Practice:** Identify one spiritual discipline, such as prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, or worship, that you have neglected or drifted from. Commit to returning to it this week, even in a small way, as an act of walking on the old paths.
 - **Gratitude and Remembrance:** Make a list of at least ten specific ways God has been faithful to you. Read the list aloud. This is an act of remembering God daily and guarding against the kind of forgetfulness that led Judah into spiritual ruin.
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Closing Prayer Guide

Close your group time by praying through these four areas together:

1. **Gratitude** - Thank God for His patience, His love, and His faithfulness even when we drift.
2. **Confession** - Invite group members to silently confess any area of spiritual drift or hardness of heart.

3. **Intercession** - Pray for the next generation, that God would raise up men and women who walk on the old paths and pass on a faithful legacy.
 4. **Surrender** - Ask the Holy Spirit to produce soft, pliable, and teachable hearts in every member of the group.
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Memory Verse for the Week

Reflect on the promise embedded in Jeremiah 5:18, where God declares that even in the midst of judgment, He will not make a complete end of His people. Let that truth anchor you: God's discipline is purposeful, and His love is unending.