

Small Group Guide: The Broken Covenant

Based on Jeremiah 11-17

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read Jeremiah 11-17 before gathering. **Ask them to come prepared to share one thing that stood out to them from the passage.**

Key Takeaways from Pastor Joel

Use these summary points to orient your group before diving into discussion.

1. Covenants carry real consequences. Judah's suffering was not random -- it was the direct result of breaking their covenant with God.
 2. God does not bless our mess. Obedience is not optional for those in relationship with God.
 3. Sorrow and repentance are not the same thing. Judah cried out to God in hard times but did not change their behavior.
 4. Difficult seasons have purpose. Jeremiah's hardships were not pointless.
 5. God has a future hope for his people. His discipline is an act of love and investment, not abandonment.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Pastor Joel described several biblical covenants -- with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Covenant in Christ. Which of these were you most familiar with before today? Which was new or surprising to you?
2. God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 12 that if he could not keep up with the footmen, how would he run with the horses? What do you think God meant by that?

3. In speaking on God's judgement toward Judah, Pastor Joel said it was something that will hurt, but it is best for what is *right now*. Although it may have been difficult, how has God's discipline shaped and sanctified you?

Connecting to Our Lives

1. Pastor Joel drew a clear line between sorrow and repentance. In your own words, what is the difference? Can you think of an example -- from your own life or from culture around you -- where sorrow was mistaken for repentance?
2. Pastor Joel said that Judah wanted the Lord's help but not the Lord himself (rain without the Rain Maker). Where do you see that tendency in yourself or in the broader culture today? How do we remind ourselves that God is not just a resource?
3. Pastor Joel closed with this quote: "You have too much history with God to act like this chapter is where he suddenly stops being faithful." What are some ways that God has been faithful to you in your own life?
4. In what area of your life is God asking you to trust Him more?

Psalms 23

1. Read Psalm 23 together as a group. Sit with these images for a moment: God setting a table, God as shepherd leading us to green pastures and still waters. These images are also found throughout Jeremiah. What do these images of God's care mean to you personally? How does that change the way you think about your current or past circumstances?

Going Deeper

1. Pastor Joel identified five lessons for New Covenant Christians from Jeremiah 11-17. Which one landed most personally for you today, and why?
 - We are in a covenant with God that calls us to obedience
 - Obedience invites blessing; disobedience invites chastisement
 - If God has called you into a difficult season, trust there will be provision.
 - Difficult seasons deepen our understanding of God and grow our dependence on Him.
 - God has a hope for us even in seasons of discipline.

Practical Applications

Examine your obedience. Pastor Joel reminded us that biblical Christianity is repentance and faith evidenced by obedience. Take an honest inventory of your obedience to Christ this week.

Identify your history with God. Take time this week to write down some moments in your life when God proved faithful to you. Keep that list somewhere visible.

Sit with the 23rd Psalm. Rather than reciting it quickly from memory, read it slowly and deliberately this week. Pause at each phrase. Ask God to make it personal and alive for you in your current season.

Encourage someone in a hard calling. Think of someone in your life who is walking faithfully through a difficult season -- a difficult ministry, a hard marriage, a demanding job done with integrity. Reach out to them this week with a specific word of encouragement.

Closing Prayer

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