Small Group Guide

"A Beating for Babylon" | Jeremiah 50-51

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read Jeremiah 50-51 before gathering. If time allows, also read Daniel 5 and Ezra 1 for helpful context. 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 is sovereign over every nation, every king, and every era of history -- nothing catches Him by surprise.
2. God disciplines those who He loves; discipline's aim is always restoration.
3. One reason we can trust God is the prophetic accuracy of scripture.
4. God never abandons His people, even in their darkest seasons of consequence.

Discussion Questions

Getting Into the Text

1. Pastor Joel said that "God may use you as his hand of chastisement…in the life of another person…and when that happens, make sure that you've got a broken heart over it." When being used to discipline someone else, why is your heart posture so important? Knowing that the purpose of discipline is restoration, what damage could we cause if our heart is not in the right place?
2. The sermon described how Babylon, after the days of Nebuchadnezzar, drifted back into full-blown paganism by the time of Belshazzar. What are some things that can cause dedication to God to be lost from one generation to the next? Have you seen this pattern in families, churches, or communities?
3. Cyrus the Persian was named by Isaiah 150 years before he was born, and God declared a divine purpose for his life before he ever existed. How does that truth shape the way you think about your own life and calling?

4. The sermon said, "The heat of affliction is always meant to kindle the fires of revival." Have you experienced a season of spiritual renewal that originated from affliction?

Deeper Reflection

1. The sermon touched on trusting God when things do not make sense, referencing Proverbs 3:5-6. There are times in our own life when we strive to “make sense” of God’s workings. What does it look like to trust God with events in our life that we can’t control?
2. The sermon mentioned that God is sovereign over the rise and fall of nations and national leaders, and that this truth helps us trust God when political or cultural circumstances are confusing or discouraging. How does the sovereignty of God practically change the way you engage with current events?
3. The sermon noted that “God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to act on behalf of the Hebrew people.”Has there been a time when the Lord stirred the spirit of someone to act on your behalf? What about when the Lord stirred your spirit to act on behalf of someone else?

Practical Applications

- **Practice trusting without fully understanding.** Identify one situation in your life right now that does not make sense to you. Write it down. Pray over it specifically, surrendering your need to understand it fully and choosing instead to trust God's sovereign hand.

Closing Prayer

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