
MAIN POINT

When we make room for more OF God, we are filled with more FROM God.

INTRODUCTION

What comes to mind when you think of the word “faith”?

How does a biblical understanding of faith differ from how our culture thinks of faith?

Which is more important: the quality of a person’s faith or the object of his or her faith? What about the source of a person’s faith? Why are all of these essential?

What keeps a boat at dock? The answer is not the boat itself, but what is attached to the boat. A rope connected to a dock (or anchor) preserves the boat’s location. In order for the boat not to drift off into the sea, the boat must stay connected to both the rope and the dock. The quality of the rope matters since the boat will be lost if it breaks. The dock’s durability matters as well. If not suited to its environment, then the dock would nullify the utility of the rope. *What is a rope tied to a boat without a dock after all?* Analogously, faith is like a rope that connects us to Christ. To stay connected, it needs to be of a certain quality. Our concern is not the durability of Jesus as the object of our faith. He is the dock that can endure any and all things. The quality of faith is the greater concern, as is its source. *Is our faith the kind that will last? Can it handle Jesus’ hard teachings and radical claims on our lives? What is the source of lasting faith? How do we get it? Do we muster it up ourselves or does God produce it supernaturally within us?*

UNDERSTANDING

READ [JEREMIAH 35:1-2, 5-8A](#).

The Lord asked believers to model faithfulness to the world.

What are some obstacles and temptations we may face in fulfilling this goal?

What does it take to remain faithful to God despite these pressures?

What are the consequences if we do not stay true to our commitments?

Who are some individuals or groups of people you respect because of their faithful commitment to their beliefs?

When you were growing up, did your family have any distinctive rules that helped you serve the Lord faithfully? Explain.

READ [JEREMIAH 35:12-14](#).

The Lord was not necessarily commending the nomadic lifestyle of the Rechabites or their asceticism, but He did emphatically commend their obedience to the commands of a dead ancestor. The Lord had spoken to His people “again and again” (lit. “rising early and speaking”), but they did not obey him. Sometimes secular loyalties to an earthly cause or person put to shame the loyalty of God’s people to Him and His commands.

On what grounds does the Lord have the right today to expect His people to live faithful, godly lives?

What happens when children repeatedly disregard instructions or warnings from their parents? What do you think happens to children of God when they continue to disregard His instructions?

What is the difference between faith and faithfulness?
How can the Lord's people model faithfulness in visible ways?

READ [JEREMIAH 35:15-17](#).

What did the Lord announce that He would do as a result of His people's refusal to obey Him? Are there any hints of relenting, or any "unless" conditions in this warning? Explain.

We live in the church age, trusting in God's grace. What significance do warnings like the one in this verse have for us? What are some potential consequences we face if we disobey the Lord's commands?

READ [JEREMIAH 35:18-19](#).

What did the Lord promise the Rechabites as a blessing for their faithfulness?

In the New Testament, [Luke 21:36](#) refers to the hope believers have of standing before the Lord. How is this similar to and different from God's promise in Jeremiah 35:19?

What kinds of rewards do you think people expect from the Lord today for their faithfulness? What are some of the ways God blesses us when we obey Him?

APPLICATION

Why do you think faith is so important to God?

Do you place the same value on faith that God does? Why or why not?

Faith is at the core of everything. It's at the center of our being. It's the driving force behind everything we do. We fool ourselves when we think belief and trust are related to only some of life's issues. Whether or not a person is a Christian, what they believe is at the core of everything else.

How is believing different during difficult times?

There are certain times in life when it's harder to believe than others. That almost goes without saying. But what makes believing doubly difficult during those times is that it's not a one-time choice but one that must be made over and over again. Trusting God is something we must consciously choose many times during the day, especially on those days when we're fighting to hold on to faith.

PRAYER

Thank God the Father for revealing Himself to us in His Son, Jesus. Credit Him with giving us eyes to see and ears to hear the gospel. Ask God to help the group members to trust Jesus continually for their salvation and to see Him as the only Bread that can truly satisfy us forever.

COMMENTARY

JEREMIAH 35:1-19

35:1-19 After devoting several chapters to King Zedekiah, Jeremiah in this chapter skips back to approximately 10 years earlier, the time of Jehoiakim son of Josiah (609-598 b.c.).

35:2 The house (household) of the Rechabites is known largely from this chapter. Their founder was Jonadab or Jehonadab, son of Rechab, who lived under King Jehu of the northern kingdom. Jehonadab apparently supported the king's radical reform movements ([2Kings 10:15-23](#)), which included demolishing the Baal cult and other elements of Canaanite culture. The Rechabites also promised their ancestor that they would not build houses or plant vineyards, apparently so they would be able to remain mobile. They were devout worshippers of the Lord. The Lord told Jeremiah to invite the Rechabites into the temple to offer them a drink of wine.

35:3-4 Jaazaniah and Habazziniah are not mentioned elsewhere. The father of Jaazaniah, identified here as Jeremiah, is not the prophet. Jaazaniah must have been the head of the Rechabites at this time.

35:4 The chamber Jeremiah used for this occasion was near the officials' chamber, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. Maaseiah may have been the father of the priest Zephaniah ([21:1](#); [29:25](#); [37:3](#)).

35:5 The jars filled with wine were large drinking bowls with dipping cups. Drink wine, Jeremiah invited them.

35:6-11 The Rechabites declined the offer of wine, making it clear that they had obeyed the voice of Jonadab, son of...Rechab, in all he commanded us. Their rejecting a sedentary culture and its trappings, such as wine cultivation and indulgence, was just the illustration Jeremiah needed to teach obedience to the Lord's commands.

35:14-16 Three times in these verses Jeremiah contrasted the Rechabites' obedience to a human command with Judah's disobedience to the living God.

35:17-19 Disaster would be Judah's lot because of her persistent disobedience, but the Rechabites would never fail to have a man to always stand before Me. The phrase "to stand before the Lord" is used for those who serve Him ([7:10](#); [15:19](#); [Deuteronomy 4:10](#); [10:8](#); [1Kings 17:1](#); [18:15](#); [2Kings 3:14](#)). What happened to the Rechabites after 587 b.c. is unknown except for Malchijah son of Rechab. He repaired the Dung Gate in the days of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 3:14](#)).