

# PERSONAL

## JEREMIAH 7:1-16

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. What are some things that go together like salt/pepper? (Socks/shoes; peanut butter/jelly; hammer/nail/ bread/butter; love/marriage and so forth.)

For Christians, true worship and obedient living are two things that must "go together."

2. What would you include in a list of reasons people go to church? (Obligation; fellowship; to be seen; worship; etc.)
3. What makes participating in church services more appealing to many people than obedience to God's Word? (I'll give God this small amount of time each week and the rest belongs to me. I have fulfilled my obligation to God. Etc.)

Corporate worship is an important element of church life, but sometimes we forget that the rest of the week matters as well. Religious activity can never substitute for obedient living. The expressions of worship that God accepts come from sincere and submissive hearts. Anything less is offensive to God.

4. In what ways do our actions really speak louder than our words? (Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "Your actions speak so loudly I can't hear what you are saying.")
5. What makes that so challenging in terms of living out our faith? (We must be on guard constantly to allow the Holy Spirit to live through us or we may lead someone astray.)

In today's study, Jeremiah delivered God's message to the people, calling them to obedient living and true worship. Let's see how those two things are connected in Jeremiah's words to the people.

### **LISTEN! Read Jeremiah 7:1-2**

When the word LORD is in all caps it is translating the name YAHWEH, the holy name of God. In fact, they considered it so holy that they didn't use the vowels, they spelled it YHWH! It is the personal name of God.

1. What did God command Jeremiah to do? (Stand at the entrance to the Temple area and proclaim the Word of the LORD!)
2. What would happen if someone stood on the sidewalk outside the entrance to our church and proclaimed that they were preaching the Word of the Lord as we came to worship today? (Most likely the police would be called.)
3. What is the difference between simply hearing a person and listening to a person? (Listening implies paying attention to what is being said. Hearing is going in one ear and out the other.)
4. What did Jeremiah mean by "worship"? (Bringing their sacrifices to the Temple; praying; singing psalms; perhaps hearing Scripture read; Etc.)
5. What is the significance of God's telling Jeremiah to deliver this message to the people as they were entering the gates of the Temple to worship? (It was meant to draw their attention to the contrast between their acts of worship and their obedience to God's commands.)

The message was to be a reminder to the people of the proper posture their hearts and daily living should have been taking before God. **They were going through the outward motions, but there was no inward emotion. They were going through the actions, but there was no passion. There was ritual but no righteousness, religion but no relationship.**

Jeremiah spoke the Word of God. This is the one thing we must not concede when we are talking with people about the Bible: what is in it is NOT just another "opinion;" they are the words of God. Never back off that!

### **CORRECT! Read Jeremiah 7:3-8**

1. What does God want them to do? (He wants them to change the way they are living. He says, “amend your ways” and deeds.” God is very specific, “change your ways!”)
2. What will God do if they change their ways? (“I will let you dwell in this place.”)  
God is talking about Jerusalem and the Promised Land He had given them. We must see God’s promise to give them this land as a “long term” promise and a “short term” promise. God gave the land to the Jewish people “long term” forever. BUT in the “short term” His people must be obedient to Him, or they will be expelled. It’s theirs “long term” but they don’t get to live there if they are disobedient.
3. What good things can we put our trust in more than God? (Our own abilities. Our good deeds. Military strength. Etc.)
4. Is it possible to make church an idol?
5. What are some evidences someone is trusting in church more than in God? (They come to church on Sunday and live an immoral, ungodly life Monday through Saturday. They are most likely never thinking of God, even at church on Sundays—they are focused on what is going to happen during the coming week.

The people of Judah had made the Temple an idol. They used it as sort of a “lucky charm.” They said, “We’ve got the Temple of the Lord; He’s not going to let anything happen to us.”

6. Do you think we, here in the United States, feel the same way? (We pledge “One nation under God.” We have “In God we trust” printed on our money. How ironic, most people trust in money more than they do in God.)
7. How is the treatment of others, especially those who are helpless like orphans and widows, a barometer of true worship of God? (How we treat others reflects what is in the heart. We might be able to fake it for a while, but eventually the truth of the condition of our heart will be revealed.)

No matter how clearly God laid out what He expected of the people, they continued refusing to listen to His prophet, Jeremiah. They thought they could enjoy the blessings of their relationship with the Lord without accepting the expectations and responsibilities that came with it.

### **STOP! Read Jeremiah 7:9-11**

1. What specific commands did God point out to the people about their sin? (God listed six of the Ten Commandments they were ignoring: Do you steal—8<sup>th</sup>; murder—6<sup>th</sup>; commit adultery—7<sup>th</sup>; swear falsely—9<sup>th</sup>; burn incense to Baal—2<sup>nd</sup>; and follow other gods you have not known—1<sup>st</sup>.)
2. After committing all these abominations what did the people do? (They run back to the temple and think God is going to save them because they are in the temple. That’s not going to save you.)  
Jesus quoted verse 11 in Matt. 21:13.
3. What are some ways a person might try to justify his or her continued sin? (Look at all the good I do, surely God will let me get by with this little sin.)

Violating God’s law had become a way of life for the people of Judah. God pointed out the error of their ways. Still, the people had no shame as they came to the temple and presented themselves to God. Like a band of robbers hiding in a cave, they came to the temple seeking God’s refuge with no intention of changing their evil ways.

4. Why do we think we can get away with sin?

Maybe the people thought their sin had gone unnoticed. God’s words to His people show that He had seen their “detestable acts.”

### **REPEATED! Read Jeremiah 7:12-15**

#### **Can you hear God’s heart breaking?**

“Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was first erected (Joshua 18:1). Ephraim, the largest of the tribes, speaks of the entire northern kingdom of Israel. “Go to Shiloh,” the Lord says. “See where My glory was once perceived but where now there is only destruction. The people ignored Me and trusted in their

structures, in their religiosity—and now it’s empty. That’s who Jerusalem will be if you don’t realize your need to draw close to Me.”—Jon Courson.

1. What happened at Shiloh? (The Philistines destroyed it. Eli and his sons died the same day because of their sin.)
2. What warning was God giving His people? (This place will be destroyed just like Shiloh if you don’t repent and turn back to me.)
3. How does examining how God dealt with disobedience in the past help us understand how He deals with disobedience now? (God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He expects obedience from His people. It may seem we are getting away with sin for a while, but sin will reap its harvest of judgment!)
4. Thinking about how God deals with sin, what Bible character comes to mind? (Sampson—he kept dabbling in sin until it finally got the best of him.)

The warnings given in God’s Word are there for our benefit. Situations may change over time, but His expectations for His people never do.

5. If we have placed our faith in Christ and become Christians...can we sin as much as we want? (Yes. In fact, I sin more than I want. But if we do purposely it brings into question how genuine our conversion was. But we will have to give an account for our sins someday.)

### **Read Jeremiah 7:16.**

In telling Jeremiah what he is to say to the nation, Yahweh has a strange further instruction for him: ‘do not pray for this people... for I will not hear you’. This could have come sometime later but none the less it would seem the people had rejected Yahweh for the last time.

### **SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!**

- We are to listen to God’s message, acting on what He says.
  - We are to demonstrate faithfulness by showing love to others.
  - We must honestly confront our sin instead of making excuses for it.
  - We must listen to the warnings found in God’s Word to experience true worship.
1. How can we encourage one another to put into action during this week what we have studied today? (Pray for each other.)
  2. If the treatment of others is a barometer of true worship of God, how would you evaluate your worship?
  3. What actions can you take this week to demonstrate faithfulness by showing love to others?