

REDEEMS

JEREMIAH 31:23-34

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

1. How do we use the word "redeem" today? (Most of the time we talk about redeeming coupons to get a discount on something.)
2. How would you define the word "redeem"? (The American Heritage Dictionary gives the first definition as follows: "To recover ownership of by paying a specified sum.")

There are other definitions given but the first one given is exactly what God did to redeem us from our lost state in sin.

3. How would you explain redeem as it applies to God's work in salvation? (God recovered ownership by dying on the cross to purchase our salvation. We accept that through faith and become a child of God—redeemed by His blood.)

God has been speaking through Jeremiah about how Judah is being judged for their sin against Him and will be taken into captivity by Babylon. It looks like the nation will be extinct. Jerusalem is destroyed; the Temple leveled, thousands were killed and taken into captivity. It looks like the nation of Israel will be finished. But here in Jeremiah 31, God makes it clear that they are NOT finished. We just saw in Jeremiah 29 that God promised "a future and a hope" for them; that they would be gathered again. This message expands on that some more, and He promises a "new covenant" with them. This new covenant would change everything for those who came to God in faith.

BLESSINGS PROMISED! Read Jeremiah 31:23-26

1. How did Jeremiah identify God in verse 23? (There it is again! We say it every week, but it's so important: "Thus says YHWH of hosts, the God of Israel..." This is not just "Jeremiah's sermon" but the Word of GOD! We will see it five more times in this passage!)
2. How does a deeper understanding of who God is facilitate greater trust in Him? (What He says can be trusted.)

Some of what Jeremiah had prophesied was already a reality so they could trust what was about to be foretold as well.

3. What was God's message to the people in these verses? (They will be restored in Judah and all their cities. The "Holy Mountain" will be restored.)
4. How did God give Jeremiah this message? (Evidently in a dream.)
5. How did Jeremiah feel when he awoke? (It's almost as if his dream was so real, he thought it had already occurred.)

6. Why would the promise of God's presence and provision bring joy to Jeremiah? (The vision pleased Jeremiah, which set it apart from many of the messages he had been called on to deliver in the past.) A significant fact here is that God uses the word "restore" 19 times in the Book of Jeremiah! It is amazing that God's message to His people is as much about restoration as it is about judgment! There is always a message of hope!

7. What is the message for us today? (God is in the restoring business today! He restores lives, marriages, families, churches and even countries, like Israel.)

There is no restoration project too difficult for God to handle!

RESTORATION SOUGHT! Read Jeremiah 31:27-30

"The days are coming"! God said it and it will come about!

1. What is encouraging about these verses? (God watched over them when judgment came, and He will watch over the process of restoration just as closely.)
2. What difference does it make that God's watching over His people is not passive but active? (God is involved in the process not just sitting back watching it happen.)

God promised He would oversee a repopulation of the Promised Land. At that time, He would restore everything that had been lost to foreign nations during His judgment.

3. How have you experienced God watching over you?
4. How does knowing God watches over His people bring security and comfort? (He is in total control.)
5. Why do we tend to blame others for our problems or mistakes? (It is our sin nature. It is easier to blame someone else than it is to accept responsibility for our own sin.)
6. What sayings do we have today that are like the one quoted here? ("He that lies down with dogs, will rise up with fleas." "A penny saved is a penny earned.")
7. What the Lord is addressing here through Jeremiah is one of those "old sayings" they used to have in Israel. Do you see what the point of the proverb is? (The parents do something, but the children must pay for it. And like most proverbs, there is some truth in it. Who is going to pay our national debt?)
8. But what about when it comes to our sin against God, who is accountable? (The one who sins.)

Jeremiah clearly stated this generation was guilty and deserved the judgment they received. Everyone is accountable to God for his or her own sins, not the sins of others.

We can know that God's timing is good and that he is at work in every situation. His close attention to us strengthens our hope!

COVENANT ESTABLISHED! Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

1. You hear a lot in the Bible about the word "covenant." What is a "covenant"? (A covenant is basically an agreement between two parties; a "treaty.")

God made a covenant with His people in the Exodus, the covenant of the Law—the Ten Commandments and the other articles of the Old Testament Law.

2. What does verse 32 say was wrong with the first covenant God made with Israel? ("Which THEY BROKE.")

The problem was, Israel BROKE the first covenant with God. They broke it while Moses was bringing it down from Mt. Sinai. Then they broke it in the wilderness, and then they broke it when they came into the Promised Land, and set up idols, and broke the Commandments over and over for more than 500 years, before God finally judged them with Babylon!

3. How did the old covenant point to the need for a Savior? (They could not keep their part of the covenant. It was impossible, and so it is today.)
4. How does the new covenant point to the need of a Savior? (Only someone perfect can satisfy the covenant requirement. So, God sent His Son to fulfill that requirement.)

The day was coming when God would change the hearts of His people. He would put His teaching inside them so they would understand what it means to live for God and have a God-given desire and ability to obey Him.

5. How is that made possible? (Through the indwelling Holy Spirit! The Law shows us we can't meet God's holy requirements but the Holy Spirit living in us gives us the strength we need to be obedient to the Father.)

The same is true for all of us!

—Romans 3:20 says "By the works of the Law, NO flesh shall be justified in His sight."

—Romans 3:23 says "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

6. Who can keep the Ten Commandments? Nobody! We've all broken them. We've all fallen short.
7. Do these verses really mean that God literally "cannot remember our sins? (No, this doesn't limit His omniscience; He knows everything there is to know. But it means He TREATS us as if He had forgotten them.)
8. Which is better, the "Old" or "New" covenant? (NEW!)

9. Why is the “New Covenant” better? (Because it’s in us, it gives us a relationship with Him, it forgives us and cleans our record, and it’s for all of us. The NEW covenant is obviously much better!)
10. How do we get this “New Covenant?” (By faith through grace we come to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.)

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!

1. Why is Jeremiah’s description of the New Covenant good news today? (We are all in need of a Savior; we cannot meet God’s requirements through our own efforts.)
2. How does it point to the gospel?
3. Consider the phrase “from the least to the greatest” in verse 34. Can you identify people who need to hear this good news? Add them to your prayer list.

If you do not have the assurance of a personal relationship with God, review the inside front cover of your book for more information or reach out to you leader or your pastor.