

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

Redemption Crisis • Week of October 8

## Introduction

Have you ever known people – a group of friends, even a church – that distanced itself from persons who ‘fell from grace’? Sadly, there are times when we forget that the church is to be a hospital for sinners. Instead of helping the sick and the sinner, too often we close the door in their face, telling them to go somewhere else. By our actions, we say: “Go find a church that helps *your kind* ... maybe down the street, you’ll find a church... But not here. This church is only for the ‘blessed and highly favored.’” Redemption is in crisis.

Surely redemption is not in crisis for the Christian who has it-all-together – the person with no problems. We may think that; but is going on behind the scenes? What about the individual who is sick with sin and wants to change, yet does not know where to turn? Who is going to help that person find healing? Do we really believe our neighbor, family member, marriage can be redeemed? We say we believe in redemption, yet why do we seldom practice it?

## Background

It is difficult to practice redemption when someone *has* spoken against you, betrayed you, or walked away because you speak God’s truth. Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. He sees the impending disaster over God’s people because their sin and idolatry has angered God; thus, Jeremiah receives message after message from the LORD – words of anger, warning, yet also words of compassion. But God’s people refuse to turn back to God. They don’t want to hear what God has to say, even though God is ready to redeem and restore Judah:

*“This message came to Jeremiah from the LORD early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah. ‘This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard in front of the Temple of the LORD, and make an announcement to the people who have come there to worship from all over Judah. Give them my entire message; include every word. Perhaps they will listen and turn from their evil ways. Then I will change my mind about the disaster I am ready to pour out on them because of their sins’” (Jeremiah 26:1-3).*

But the people of Judah are determined to continue their path of destruction.

## Read Jeremiah 8:18-22

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

2. What are you going to do about it?

3. How can we help you?

## Reflection

We often hear quoted Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you... plans for good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope” – yet it is not always made clear that this word (Jeremiah 29:11) was a promise for the spared remnant sent into exile. The people who chose to defy God and thus *remain* in Judah were “like bad figs, too rotten to eat” (Jeremiah 24:8-10). So Jeremiah’s heart breaks. He knows God is ready to forgive if they turned from sin; the sinner too could be spared, if only he or she would respond to God’s voice. Yet, they refuse to turn.

Why do we refuse God’s invitation? Why does the church, the very place where the sick should find a ‘balm in Gilead’ – often turn people away because of sin and brokenness, race or ethnicity, social awkwardness, embarrassing lifestyle, or perhaps moral failure? And why, so often, do the leaders – the very ones who are supposed to be guiding the flock of God’s sheep – strive to please people over God, and thus, ignore His Word, leaving the sheep deep in sin?

*“What sorrow awaits the leaders of my people—the shepherds of my sheep—for they have destroyed and scattered the very ones they were expected to care for,” says the LORD”  
(Jeremiah 23:1)*

When God heard the cries of His people in Egypt, he made a way for them to be rescued. He sent Moses, and through great signs and wonders, brings down the pride of Egypt while bringing His people out of bondage. On the eve of the tenth plague – the eve of their exodus, when every firstborn son of Egypt would be struck down – God had instructed each Hebrew family to take the innocent blood of an unspotted lamb and apply the lamb’s blood over the doorposts and mantle of their homes. The blood applied would be the only way the Death Angel would pass over their home, sparing their firstborn (Exodus 12:1-13). Because of this, the people of Israel from that time forward, would tithe the firstborn of their sons back to God, through the offering of a firstborn, unspotted lamb (see Exodus 13:1, 11-16).

God has done that for us. When an individual is struggling with sin, Christ-followers should not be afraid; we should not fear the potential of gossip. Instead, we should ask: “What did God do? Let me do what God has done for me!” God sent His only begotten Son into the world, to redeem (buy back) all of us lost

# Redemption

**Text:** Jeremiah 8:18-22, Exodus 13:1-4

## PLAIN TRUTH

To redeem is to \_\_\_\_\_, once  
\_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ back.

1. The reason Redemption is in Crisis is because we don't \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of Redemption.
2. THE CHURCH MUST GIVE BACK BECAUSE WE ARE IN THE \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS.
3. It's time God's people start \_\_\_\_\_ back and \_\_\_\_\_ with others on the road to \_\_\_\_\_.

and wayward sinners. Jesus came to save husbands and wives – men, women, boys, girls bound by chains of brokenness and addiction, battling depression or anxiety, struggling with a severing moral failure. We cannot turn our backs on people in need. We may be that person! We cannot check out and say 'let somebody else deal with it...'

### In Closing

Christ is calling his Church to be a hospital for sinners. We must rise up and *be* the balm in Gilead. Resolve to live what you say you believe. God is ready to forgive and redeem the repentant heart; He is ready to restore those in exile of the soul—

*“Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies. For he has gathered the exiles from many lands, from east and west, from north and south. Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless. Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died. ‘LORD, help!’ they cried in their troubles, and he rescued them from their distress”*  
(Psalm 107:2-6)

### There is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead  
to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead  
to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged  
and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit  
revives my soul again. Refrain

If you cannot preach like Peter,  
if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus  
and say, "He died for all." Refrain

### One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

October 8: Jeremiah 10:1-11:23, Colossians 3:18-4:18, Ps. 78:56-72, Prov. 24:28-29

October 9: Jeremiah 12:1-14:10, 1 Thess. 1:1-2:8, Ps. 79:1-13, Prov. 24:30-34

October 10: Jeremiah 14:11-16:15, 1 Thess. 2:9-3:13, Ps. 80:1-19, Proverbs 25:1-5

October 11: Jeremiah 16:16-18:23, 1 Thess. 4:1-5:3, Ps. 81:1-16, Proverbs 25:6-8

October 12: Jeremiah 19:1-21:14, 1 Thess. 5:4-28, Psalm 82:1-8, Proverbs 25:9-10

October 13: Jeremiah 22:1-23:20, 2 Thess. 1:1-12, Psalm 83:1-18, Prov. 25:11-14

October 14: Jeremiah 23:21-25:38, 2 Thess. 2:1-17, Psalm 84:1-12, Proverbs 25:15

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