

Don't Abuse the Grace of God | Jeremiah 7

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[0 : 00] Go to Jeremiah chapter 7. Jeremiah chapter 7, if you would. Well, I like the Lord's Supper. It alarmed me that Trent said, some Baptists said they could go without it.

I don't doubt he's right. It just alarms me that they'd think that. I like taking time to remember he died for me. And sometimes this routine of church, we can get too busy and we cannot think, but boy, he's been good to us, amen?

And he saved us, and I think it's a great thing that we take. The Lord gave us the time to take and to remember him and to think of what he did. And I watched the men and the young ladies.

I'm just so blessed that he saved us and changed us and doing such a work in our life. I want to read with you to start Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 10. The verse that I'm about to read is horrific, but it sums up much of what I think may be almost taught in many of our churches in the United States.

It could be a place where we're stumbling and falling personally and individually, somebody in the room. And I want you to think with me as you read through this chapter, and we're going to get most of it.

[1 : 18] If you keep your Bible open, you won't go anywhere but this chapter, but if you keep your Bible open, and I may go some other places, but you won't, but if you'll keep your Bible open, you're going to see this. Look at this verse, And come and stand before me in this house.

God's talking to his people and said, And y'all come, and you guys stand before me in my house, which is called by my name, and then you say, Well, you saved us so we could do all this wicked stuff.

We are delivered to do all these abominations. You brought us out of Egypt. You built us a place to worship you.

And you saved us so we can live any way we want. We can live like wicked sinners if we want. And this chapter is a mean chapter, to be blunt and honest with you.

I'm going to take you through it in what I think is a good way to help you break it up and understand it. At least it helps me as the way I look at it, but I want you to just focus on the one verse.

[2 : 18] They basically said, or God said to them, Y'all come here to my place. You stand in my house, and you say to me, You delivered us so we could do these things.

And you're going to find out they're doing horrible, horrible, horrible things beyond any mention of what you would even consider possible. They're going to be doing horrible things.

And God said, And you have the nerve to tell me to my face that I saved you so you could do that. And I don't ever want to be a guy that thinks grace is a license to sin.

Amen? I don't want to be the guy that says, I can live anything I want, do anything I want, because God's good, and He'll keep on loving me. I've been married 46 years. I am pretty sure she'd keep on loving me.

I do not know why she does. I'm always confused by that, just like about how the Lord loves me. I can do anything I want to do. I think I'd pretty well get away with it. But man, I don't want to do that.

[3 : 22] I would never want to do that. And she might keep on loving me, but I ought to never do that. And God says to His people, What are y'all doing thinking that about me? Why would y'all look at me and say to me, here in my house, that's called by my name, and you would say to me, Well, you saved us so we could do all this wicked stuff.

What a horrible condemnation. Father in heaven, I pray you would teach us as a church. Lord, I love these people. I often fail them. I don't explain the scriptures as well and as clearly as I should or could.

And I'm not always the person I ought to be. But God, as we come before you tonight, we need you, Holy Spirit of God, to speak. I know that you and only you can change lives.

I know that you and only you can make the word of God come alive and not be the letter that kills, but the spirit that gives life. I pray, God, that tonight, you would raise us up and open our ears and open our eyes and let us hear and apply this to our lives.

And we'll give you praise for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Chapter 7 in verse 22, if you would, is where I'd like to start as we go through the chapter. You're going to kind of go backwards in the chapter a little bit, but it's going to get to the invitation, which he puts at the first part of the chapter.

[4 : 41] This is what God told them at the beginning. Look, if you would, at Jeremiah chapter 7 in verse 22. For I spake not unto your fathers. I didn't say to your fathers, nor commanded them.

I didn't command them. And the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. Now, I want you to go just because you're here. I want you to look back at verse 10, and I want you to notice he said, they say we're delivered to do all these abominations.

Those abominations are going to contain even wicked sacrifices that will be made in the very house of God. They would actually come to God, into God's house, and they would worship false gods.

And Jeremiah says that Jesus, or God says to them, when I first called y'all out of the nation of Egypt, when I saved you and rescued you and delivered you, I never talked to you about the offerings and the sacrifices.

I didn't talk to you about the offerings and the sacrifices. I talked to you about the commandments. Look at Jeremiah chapter 7 in verse 23. This thing commanded I them. I said to them, obey my voice, and I will be your God.

[5 : 50] You will be my people, and walk you in all the ways that I've commanded you, and that it may be well with you. He said, if you want to know what I talked to you about, I didn't talk to you about your worship service.

I talked to you about your obedience. I talked to you about living out what I had to say. That's very similar to a verse that everybody in this room knows that is heard preached, and if you're a young person, probably heard lots of messages on it.

In 1 Samuel 15, 22, Samuel said, has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Does God really like your burnt offerings as much as he likes your obedience?

And then he says, To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, to pay attention, to listen, than the fat of rams you'd put on there, because rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, because you have rejected the word of the Lord.

He has rejected you from being king. The people are making a big difference about their sacrifices, and their worship, and their offerings. We heard the offering devotional this morning was about that.

[6 : 57] I mean, I don't think he had any idea. He may have had an idea of what I was preaching. I don't know, but the devotional was about that. It's the same thing. You're bringing an offering to me, but you don't love me. You're bringing an offering to me, but you're not doing it for the right reason.

God gave them the commandments with promise. If you'll go back with me just to verse 23, 1 Samuel 7, 23, when he gave them the commandment, he made beautiful, sweet promises.

Look, if you would, chapter 7 and verse 23. I'll bring back this to you later, but look at this. Obey my voice, listen to this, and I will be your God. That's pretty sweet. Say amen.

Obey me, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. Walk you in the ways that I have commanded, and it may go well with you. God gives commandments with purpose.

God gives commandments with promise. God knew exactly what he was doing, and he gives us commandments. Because maybe as you read the Old Testament, you're like, he's talking to Israel there.

[7 : 59] But when you get to the New Testament, and a passage of Scripture you know well, in 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 14, and down, he gives us the commandment to separate ourselves from sin and wickedness.

In 2 Corinthians 6, 14, he says, be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And then he just proceeds through 2 Corinthians, and he says this, what fellowship, what communion, what concord, what part, what agreement, does my temple have with idols?

And then he said to them, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. So come out from among them, and be ye separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father, and you shall be my sons and my daughters.

In chapter 7 and verse 1, Paul said, having therefore these promises, let's do it. Let's cleanse ourselves. I mean, if you can imagine the God of heaven looking at you and saying, come out, come on, come out of that, don't be like that, get out of that sin, and come to me, and I will be all this to you.

You had those promises, you wouldn't want to come to him. That's what he told them. In Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 23, he told them, I'll be your God. You'll be my people, and things will go well with you.

[9 : 22] But God's people, in the book of Jeremiah chapter 7, they rejected the promises, and they did their own thing. Look at Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 24.

They hearkened not. That's just a big word for it. They didn't pay attention. They didn't listen. They might have acted like they didn't listen. They might have had their ears on, but they didn't pay attention.

That's like in the New Testament, sometimes the Holy Spirit will say, he that has ears to hear, let him hear. So you might have ears, but you have ears to hear. And he said, he said, they hearkened not.

But rather than that, in 724, they walked in the counsel and in the imagination of their evil heart. They didn't want to know what I had to say. They want to know what they thought. They want to know what God wanted.

They want to know what they wanted. They walked in the counsel and the imagination of their evil heart. They didn't come towards me. They went away from me. They didn't come forward. They went backward. God had wanted them to express their love for him.

[10 : 25] There's a clear Bible truth. This whole message tonight is about, this whole message tonight is about, is about don't abuse grace.

Don't abuse grace. That's the whole point of this chapter, I think. Did you know that God wants you to express your love for him and the way you do it is keeping his commandments.

Would you write that somewhere? John 14, 15. If you love me, keep my commandments. As a born again believer, I ought to be living my life all the time saying, what's he want?

What's he asking from me? What would he have me do? How would God have me react? How would God have me act on this situation? In Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 10, the Bible says, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Not what's acceptable to me, not what's acceptable to my parents, not what's acceptable to my society. I need to think this thing through and say, is this what God wants? Is this acceptable to God?

[11 : 33] In Colossians chapter 1 and verse 10, he said that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing and being fruitful in every good work.

Sometimes you can put so much emphasis on, I'm already accepted in the beloved. I'm already, he's already pleased with me. My sins are already forgiven. I'm already a new creature and you can just take a very low view of holiness and a pretty high view of your freedom.

That's the opposite of the Bible attitude. Can I get an amen right there? We are never, I didn't get one, but I'm telling you, there ought never be an attitude here. I'm saved.

I can do anything I want to do. I can, I'm saved. I can be an adulterer if I want to be an adulterer. I'm saved. I can, God won't, he's not going to kill me for anything I do. That is not a godly attitude.

Please, if you agree with that, say amen. The whole chapter of God said, I never ask y'all to give big offerings. I ask you to obey me. I never ask y'all to give big offerings. I ask y'all to obey me.

[12 : 34] Are you expressing your love for your savior? Go back with me to Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 25. So God's, the way we're going through this chapter, God starts off saying, now guys, I want to take you all the way back to when we got started.

When we first got started, I never talked to you about how many animals you were going to bring in here and sacrifice. What I talked to you about was obeying me. What I talked to you about was this is what I wanted for you and you would obey me.

And then he says in chapter 7 and verse 25, and I have sent preachers to remind you of that truth over and over. Look, if you would, at Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 25. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants, the prophets, early and late, daily rising up early and sending them, I have sent men of God to tell you what I want you to do, to remind you of truth, to remind you to do what God wants you to do.

It's not God's fault they're not obeying. He has continued to call his people to himself. But in chapter 7 and verse 26, they refused to listen. I don't want this to be your story.

I don't want this to be my story. It says in 726, they hearkened not. They did not incline their ear. They stiffened their neck. They had hard necks. They wouldn't bow their head and say, yes, sir.

[13 : 56] They wouldn't pay attention. They wouldn't say, I really want to know what you got to say. They want to stick in their own way of doing things. We can so easily come in this room and be like, do you know how old I am?

Do you know how many times I've read the Bible? You know, I don't need you to tell me what to do. You know, I don't need anybody to explain anything to me. And he said, I sent preachers. And that was your attitude every time they came. In chapter 7 and verse 27, they were ignored.

And he told the preachers, they're not going to listen to you. Get used to it. Chapter 7 and verse 27, Therefore thou shalt speak all these words, but they will not listen. They will not listen.

They will not answer. That's probably one of the most discouraging things a preacher could read. I got a message for you to take to them. Take it to them, but they won't be paying attention when you say it.

You can preach this to them, but they will ignore you when you do it. And he said, and when they do, I'll take truth away from them. If they won't listen, I'll take truth away from them.

[14 : 59] Look at chapter 7 and verse 28. This is a nation that obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God. They would not receive his correction. So truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth.

We could get to the place that we would have a church where truth would not be taught in Sunday school, talked about in discipleship, spoken about in the halls, and preached in the pulpit because truth's only going to work here as long as we're willing to listen to truth.

You can refuse the Lord and his truth till he refuses to work in your life. In Jeremiah 7, 29, he said, cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, which is a shameful thing. Cast it away and take up a lamentation on high places.

For the Lord has rejected and forsaken this generation of his wrath. The children of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the Lord. They're not doing what I want.

They're doing what they want. By the way, they're learning that from their worldly friends. They're learning that from the people that don't love God, don't believe God, and don't serve God. And if you'll look at chapter 7 and verse 30, they have set their abominations in the house.

[16 : 10] So here they were. This is the house of God where there's no idols going to be in here at all. He does not like idols. They've been bringing idols in and just setting idols in there. And so when they went to the temple and it looked like they was worshiping their God, they could do both.

They could be worldly. He said they were polluting his house. So go back with me to chapter 7 and verse 6. And their sins had grown increasingly worse.

They started out in 7-6 by walking after other gods. I want you to, I got to run quickly to get through with this. A long chapter. He says, oppress not, shed not, neither walk after other gods.

Don't walk after other gods. Don't you believe other people. Don't you believe what Buddha's got to say. Don't you believe what the Hindus have got to say. Don't you believe anything but the Bible, the Word of God.

And if you do believe that stuff, it will hurt you. You got your Bible open underlined in verse 6. To your hurt. To your hurt. You know what they did? They began to enjoy false preaching.

[17 : 15] They began to enjoy false preaching. Look at chapter 7 and verse 8. He said, You trust in lying words. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is your best life now. And he passed through the largest church to get the largest crowd and sell more books and be the guy. And here's exactly what he said.

The day will come when it will not be the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. The day will come when you won't want to tell people that they're a sinner. They will trust in lying words.

Robert Shuler, kind of the daddy of that whole movement, this prosperity movement and this positive thinking movement, he used to say, Don't ever tell people they're sinners. It makes them feel bad.

And the Bible would say, Yeah, well, that's good. That's true words. And Jeremiah would say, Yeah, but they like lying words. Amen. Look if you would at chapter 7 and verse 9. Their bad preaching led to bad and worse living.

[18 : 16] They stole, they murdered, they committed adultery, they swore falsely, they burned incense to Baal, and they walked after other gods. And they got so bad that they blatantly abused the grace of God.

That's in verse 10. We are delivered to do these things. They had the audacity to feel like grace gave them a license to do what God saw as wicked.

We have been so afraid of legalism that we've run into a license. We've been so afraid of rule setting that we've turned to freedom to do things that wouldn't please God.

They seemed to want to anger God. In Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 17, God's talking to Jeremiah. He said, Don't you see what's going down in the cities of Judah?

In verse 18, They're making cakes to the queen of heaven. That's a demon. They're making cakes to the queen of heaven and they pour out drink offerings. When they pour them out, they're pouring them out to other gods. It was an offering to a false god.

[19 : 18] And here's why he said they did it. You got your Bible open? That they may provoke me to anger. It's like people down there, my people, the Jewish people, the nation of Israel, the nation of Judah, they want to do what they know will make me mad.

But you see, when you decide not to obey God, you will just start getting worse and worse. You'll listen to a lot of words. Your sin will keep getting worse. And look how bad they get, if you would, in chapter 7 and verse 31.

This is a pathetically horrible verse. And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is the valley of the son of Ennon, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire.

To burn their sons and daughters in the fire. And he said, I didn't tell y'all to do that. I never told you to do that.

Those false gods, they might ask you to do stuff like that. I would never do that. They had idols made out of metal with arms there, and they'd heat that up through his own fire like a grill, and then they'd lay their babies on that, and lay their children on that.

[20 : 20] And they did it to worship God. That's how sick. He never wanted such wickedness.

Do we sacrifice our children on the altar of success? Society, sports, and self? We are too cultured to burn our kids.

But a brown ball might be more important than a Bible. Playing a ball, or riding a bike, or going skating, or whatever it is you do nowadays might be more important.

And we are doing wrong. I really wish you had your Bible open. I'd like you to underline in chapter 7 and verse 31 a very interesting statement. Now God never predestined anybody to sin.

God didn't predestine anybody to sin. And this is a very interesting statement. He said, I didn't command y'all to burn your kids, and it never crossed my mind you would.

[21 : 27] Look at that. Neither came it into my heart. That's not what I'd have ever wanted for you to do. For you that might want to criticize and say, well, that's how the King James writes it.

Check any version you want. They all say the same thing. They might change heart to mind, but you listen to what I'm telling you. God didn't make them do wrong. And here's what the Bible says.

What the Word of God says. Right here is for your theology. Never crossed my mind. Never crossed my heart. Wasn't in me to tell you to do wrong. But who were they really hurting?

Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 11. What happens is when they sin, they're trying to make God mad, and they're like yelling at God and insulting God. And God says, you guys are really messed up.

And I've got to fly through this, so let me just tell you what happens. In chapter 7 and verse 11, he says, I'm going to treat y'all like I did Shiloh. And Shiloh was a place where the prophets went, and Shiloh was a place where the judges went, and Shiloh was where they divided up the land, and Shiloh was like where God worked.

[22 : 31] And when they did enough sinning in the days of Eli and his two boys, God said, that's it. I'm not working in Shiloh anymore. I'm abandoning Shiloh. And God says to Jeremiah, keep it up, and I will abandon you too.

I will not use you if you keep playing with sin. I will not use you if you keep playing with sin. In the New Testament, he'll remove our candlestick.

That's a revelation reference. See, there's angels there. That's a word for the messenger of the church, the pastors of the church. And there's a candlestick, and that's the power of God in a church. And then Jesus walks among the angels in the churches, and he said, y'all keep messing around me.

I'll pull your candlestick out of your place. Y'all can still meet there, but I won't be there. And by the time you get to the Laodicea in church, he says, behold, I stand at the door and knock on your church door. And if any man would let me in, I'd like to come into church.

I'd like to come into your church. Could I come in? You got my name on the door. Can I come in? And they're not allowed in. Jesus isn't allowed in. Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 13.

[23 : 34] They refused. Look at 7 and 13. Why is it all going to happen? Because you have done all these works. And now, because you have done all these works, and I talked to y'all early in the morning and late at night, but you wouldn't listen to me.

I called on you, and you refused to answer me, so I'm going to quit using you. 7, 14, and 15. I'm moving out of here. They were so far gone that it was a waste of time for the man of God to even pray for them.

This is a crazy verse. Look, if you would, at Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 16. He tells Jeremiah, just don't pray for them. Look at 7, 16. Pray not for this people.

Don't even lift up and cry or pray for them. Don't make intercession to me because I will not hear you. They had gone so far that God was like, that's it, washing my hands, not working with them, not helping them, not going to be here.

They thought they would hurt God. They would provoke God. In verse 19, God said, do you think they provoke me to anger? Do they provoke them or do they not provoke themselves to confusion of faith, to embarrassment because they're hurting themselves?

[24 : 43] Verse 20 is one of those horrible verses. Behold, mine anger and fury shall be poured out. This nation was going to be destroyed.

Look at the verses that follow. Jeremiah's preaching. He's in front of a church of people and he's talking, or a congregation of people and he's saying these ugly things.

In 733, he said, your carcasses will be bird food. 733. In 734, he says, I will take all the voices of joy out of your city.

No more bridegrooms and brides happy. No more voices of gladness because your land will become desolate. In chapter 8 and verse 1, he said, I will bring your history out and put the bones of your leaders, the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of the princes, priests, and prophets and I put them out there before the sun and the moon and all the hosts of heaven and they will be like in verse 2, the dung.

Go down to the graveyard and dig up the graves of your parents, dig up the graves of your preachers, dig up the graves of your spiritual leaders and lay their bodies and bones out like poop on the ground.

[25 : 52] He said, because I've had it with you. It's going to get so bad that people will prefer to die. Jeremiah 8.3, Death shall be chosen rather than life.

The residue of them that remain of this evil family, their sin hurt them more than it hurt God. And so here's the point of the chapter. He doesn't want you abusing grace. He wants you getting right.

So go back with me now to the first part of the chapter. In this chapter, in my opinion, Jeremiah put the invitation before the message. It was like, you already know how bad you are.

And so I'm just going to give the invitation. Ready to start service? Everybody ready? Open your Bibles. No. Get out of your seats. Come down and get on your knees. Let's make a decision to get right. Okay, you're not going to? Let me tell you why you should have. And that's what we've been through so far.

I look at Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, at the door of the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord.

[27 : 01] Jerusalem's in Judah. That's where the house of God is. Stand there. Verse 3. Amend your ways and your doings, and I'll cause you to dwell in this place.

You should underline that. Amend your ways. Verse 4. Stop trusting lying words. Verse 5. Change your attitude and your actions.

Amend your ways and your doings. And do right. Execute judgment. If you do that, I'll still bless you. Chapter 7 and verse 7.

Then will I cause you to dwell in this place. Can I just summarize the chapter for you real quickly? Time's gone, but let me summarize the chapter for you. God's telling the nation of Israel, I am tired of messing with you.

You don't pay attention to me. You don't listen to me. You think that because you give big money in the offering plate that you're okay with me. I never even talked to you about your offerings. I talked to you about your obedience, and you're not obeying me.

[28 : 03] In fact, instead of obeying me, what you're doing is you're coming up with your own cockamamied ideas and the imaginations of your heart, and you're doing what you think would be a good idea, and you don't really care what I got to say.

And I sent preacher to you after preacher to tell you what I said. And by the way, today we don't have those preachers. These are those preachers. These are those preachers now. We still have them, but they're written here. I'm not one of those preachers.

I just say what the preacher said. And he said, I told you, I told you, I told you, and you've been getting worse and worse and worse. And I'll tell you what, unless something happens here, I'm pulling out.

By the way, the nation of Israel is no longer. That great nation, God's not blessed them. They're not the people of God anymore. He substituted the church in their place.

He's going to bring them back. But even the tribulation period, there's going to be a time of pouring out wrath. Did you ever consider that you and I could get to a place where God would say, you may still be my people, but I ain't about to tear your backside up.

[29 : 10] That was my daddy's son. You know, he never just told me I wasn't his son. Sometimes being my daddy's son was not the best thing in the world. Other boys and girls in church ran up on the platform and not a thing happened.

I ran up on the platform and heard one snap. Boom. I was like, oh brother, he's here. And I am dead. I have more than one time as a little boy at Wrigley Baptist Church with no air conditioning.

The windows open, being carried out behind the building, which is just like right behind the pulpit. All the windows are open on the sides. And I was shouting hallelujah in the middle of the service because I was my daddy's boy.

And your kid might get away with it, but not daddy's boy. I didn't like being daddy's boy, to be blunt and honest with you. I kept thinking, that other deacon, he ain't so mean. Amen. But my daddy's a deacon and he's a mean deacon.

You know what God's saying? Quit messing with me. Don't abuse my grace. Don't you dare stand up here and say to me, it doesn't matter how I live. It doesn't matter if I honor my wife or not.

[30 : 12] It doesn't matter if I look at porn or not. It doesn't matter if I commit adultery or not. It doesn't matter if I miss homosexuality or not. It doesn't matter what I do because I'm under grace. Try that with God.

Oh, you'll still go to heaven, just maybe quicker and maybe not feeling so good. And that probably made you mad at me. And so with that, I will close.

Father,