

# Jeremiah 14 & 15

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Jeremiah chapter 14 and 15. I don't regret having a bad mother-in-law. Wow, Brother Chuck, what happened? I'm with you here, shooting kids, making fun of mother-in-laws. This is not going well right now for us.

In chapter number 14 and 15, there's nothing but iniquity here. I really hate this. I really hate where this chapter is going to leave us. I told Stephanie in going through Jeremiah that I'm afraid that every time I go to study the Scripture, I'm going to find the same thing.

I went out to eat with Dan and Penrod and Brian Cherry this week, and we were at a place, the Gyro Cafe. They say Euro Cafe, but it's got a G in it, so it's a Gyro Cafe. We went in there, and Brian Cherry walked up, and he ordered wings, chicken wings.

I said, there's no chicken wings on the menu. He said, no, but I bet you they have them, and they had them. I didn't even know there's places that will sell chicken wings that don't have it on their menu. I know what I'm eating next time I'm at Olive Garden.

I'm ordering chicken wings. But anyway, Brian and I find what we want in life. We find chicken wings wherever we go. When I go to the Scripture, if I'm not careful, I'm always going to find what I'm looking for.

[ 1 : 04 ]     And this is what I want to find in Jeremiah. I want him to find comfort for Jeremiah because he has a really hard job, because nobody's listening to what he's saying, and I want to find comfort for Jeremiah. Then I'm wanting to find that if the people would just repent and do right, then everything would be restored to them.

I love that message. I love knowing that if people would just put their faith in Jesus, that things can change. I love knowing that God could use us to warn people and to help people. I love knowing that people matter to God.

They should matter to us. Here in this chapter, that's not the story that's being told. There's nothing but iniquity. We have a prayer, and God says, I don't want to hear your prayers anymore. Jeremiah, don't pray for these people.

These people have made God weary with their faked repentance, and it's just such a heavy, heavy chapter. I want to rush ahead to chapter number 31 and verse 34.

It says, where I'll forgive their iniquity, and I'll remember their sins no more. But that's not where we're at tonight. We're in chapters 14 and chapters number 15. When Brother Steve Morgan prayed, he said, Lord, I thank you for your holiness, your mercy, and your grace.

[ 2 : 09 ]     I know that Brother Steve loves God's mercy and his grace, but also know that he loves God's holiness, because without God's holiness, God is not God. Without God's holiness, there is no mercy and grace.

We're thankful that we serve a God that does not change, even when it takes us to sad chapters of the Bible and in life. And so tonight, I'm going to give you a truth, and I'm going to find my place on an altar.

I'm going to pray for someone who is walking towards their own destruction. I'm going to ask you in here that if you continue to ignore God's call for repentance in your life, tonight you will wake up. And I really mean that.

Yes, I believe that in a crowd of people that would come to church on a Sunday night, that there would be a need for people to come to an altar and say, God, I repent of what I'm doing. I need forgiveness of my sins.

I am living in opposition to you. And I know it's possible tonight, because I've been there on Sunday nights. I've been there on Sunday mornings. I know that I live often in times of need of coming to God and saying, God, I don't want to continue down this path.

[ 3 : 08 ] And some of us live it, and there'd be no way of knowing, because we're so good at making sure that nobody knows. That's why we enjoy, one of the things that we enjoy so much about church is because we're all so good at making sure that nobody knows that we have problems, and it's not difficult for us.

Then tonight, if you're pleading with God for someone to come to return to God, this will be hard, because we will be reminded that there's no guarantee that they're going to respond.

There's no amount of sincere prayers. There's not enough tears that you can give that's going to guarantee that other people make the right decision. And that's absolutely horrible. And that hurts. And that's hard.

I want to read with you verse 7 through 10 of chapter number 14. This is a prayer that they gave. And then it sets out, it's a model prayer for us, and those of us that really want to come to God and come to Him in full repentance.

The words are right, but we'll find that their heart was not. Verse number 7. So what a prayer, 7 through 9.

[ 4 : 40 ] Verse number 10. Thus saith the Lord unto His people, Thus have they loved to wonder. They have not refrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them. He will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins.

Heavenly Father, we come to a heavy truth tonight. Lord, you know my temptation and desire to stay away from topics that are heavy like this, Lord, and to focus on certain aspects more than others.

Lord, I ask that you'll help us tonight as we look at your word. Lord, we have full confidence that your word is exactly what we need. We have full confidence, Lord, that what you have for us in the book of Jeremiah tonight is what you've called for this church to be given.

So, Lord, I do not know the responses that need to happen in this room. Lord, I cannot preach for those. Lord, I can only be faithful to the word. Lord, I know the Holy Spirit can take your word, take it deep in the hearts, can have people yield in the way that they should.

And that is my prayer tonight. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. When the chapter starts off, we get a contrast between what could have been and what really is. Verse 7 always said, O Lord, through our iniquities, testify against us.

[ 5 : 49 ] The way they've been living testifies against who they were as a people. When they went into the land, in Deuteronomy chapter 8, 7, it talks about what the land was going to be for them. It was going to be a good land, a land of brooks and waters, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines, and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, and land therein, wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not like anything in it, a land whose stones are iron, iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

Iron for protection, the brass for all the kind of things, all the food that could be imagined to them. We don't fully understand. I can't do justice to what that verse said about the land because we don't have the appetite for olives, and we don't understand what it's like to need a place that would provide the water for us or the land of wheat and barley, but it's just a land of abundance for them.

But it wasn't a land that would receive, like in Egypt, water from the Nile. It was a land that would need God to meet its need every time through the rain. That God's promised land required that they received it from the hand of God.

We spoke about this in Life Group and Bridge Builders today. You would think maybe that the promised land would have some sustainable way of water, but no, the promised land had something better than that. It had God for the people, right?

He provided rain for them when they needed it. And it was a beautiful thing, but Canaan land, without the presence of God, it's just going to be any other type of land. It's just going to be a place of drought.

[ 7 : 19 ] And now they're dealing with it. Because of their disobedience now, their covenant curse that's on them, the Lord's purpose in sending this drought was to bring these people to repentance. Deuteronomy 28, 24, The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust.

From heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed. Your rain will no more be rain. It will be dust. That's what he told them was going to happen. He says, I love you too much to live a life that does not have an awareness of me.

I love you too much to leave you in a land where you're just going to live like the other nations, not serving me. And if you will not obey me, if you will not do my word, then the water will be turned off and you're going to be in a drought.

And so they're having some horrific problems. Even every class of people was dealing with it. The noble men would send their kids to get water and they would come back, verse number three, and they'd come back from the well with their heads in shame and they would say, there was no water here.

The farmer would do whatever he could in digging the trenches and he would be ashamed and he would cover his head in verse number four because he could not get anything to grow. Even the animals left their maternal instincts and they went to just natural preservation so that a deer would have a child out in the field and it would just leave it alone.

[ 8 : 30 ] Verse number six talks about donkeys that were going to the highest places and they were sticking their nose in the air to try to breathe oxygen because they had nothing to drink and they were about to die and they were blind.

They had went so long without water that the animals were now blind. Just a very descriptive picture of not a land that seemed to be abundant but a land that is now dealing with the drought.

Verse number eight, oh, the hope of Israel, the savior thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, as a wayfaring man that turned aside to tarry for a night, a place and a people that God promised that he would dwell among, that God wanted to be with.

It's now as if he's somebody that just passes by as a stranger in the night. There's a spiritual battle going on and it's now being lived out in the lives of these people and now it's becoming to have an effect upon their everyday life.

The pain of what's going on outside ought to cause them to want to repent but they don't. It's a spiritual battle repeated over and over again, we're reminded of what Satan's weapon of choice is.

[ 9 : 35 ] Who would be happy about people dying in a land of drought? Who would be happy about God's children not having all the things that are there for him? Why would he care? Satan most certainly cares. He loves for God's children to be in a place of drought.

He loves for God's children not to enjoy all that's available to us as his children. And how does he go about it? It goes about this false teachers. Verse number 13, O Lord God, behold the prophets saying to them, you shall not see the sword, neither shall you have a famine, but I give you assured peace in this place.

Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name and the deceit of their heart, their false visions, and the false teachers are coming. I really want to put myself in this story.

I want to bring that story to where we live. But Mike, I can't imagine us sitting and watching a basketball game and some guy coming in this like long robe and a big beard and just being quite obvious, he is a false teacher of the day and teaching us that, you know?

That's kind of what it may be in Jeremiah. It looks like some kind of religious leader who's not teaching the truth, but he had this. But I don't have that in my life, you know? I don't see it on television. I don't go to the places I would have it.

[ 10 : 40 ] But I know this is true for me because I know that lies get into my mind and my heart and I don't know exactly where they come from, but they've always been there and you have to recognize them when they come.

And so no one doesn't look like some Old Testament false prophet walking up to you, but they come into your mind, right? They come into your marriage, they come into your life, and it's just these voices that tell you whatever it is.

It's that no, you don't need to do right in this because you deserve a break. Yes, this is okay because nobody is watching. No, you don't need to spend time in the Word because you will later.

It doesn't matter what the lie is, it's coming to us. So I can identify the false teachers, but I know they're there, and I know that they have said stuff, and they rattle around in our brains.

And so what do we do? We come together at 9.30 on Sundays, and we have somebody teach truth to us, and we discuss truth, and then we do it the next hour, and then we come again on Sunday night, and then our kids are on a program on Thursdays, and then we meet in discipleship because we want our hearts and minds filled with the truth of God's Word because so much is there that needs to be pushed out.

[ 11 : 43 ] If not, we will find ourselves living in a spiritual drought just like these people. Change the name of the story. It's just about us. You're the salt of the world. You're a salt of the earth. You're the light of the world.

These sometimes sound more like irony than promises. Alexander McLaren said this in his day, and I think it's still true today. Let me read this slowly. I want to make sure you hear what he says.

Dear brethren, if I think of the lowness of our own religious characters, the small extent to which we influence, the society in which we live, of the slow rate at which the gospel progresses in our land, I can only ask the question and pray you lay it to heart.

And the question is, what is going on? When we watched the video before we started, and it says that 70% of men, even in church, are involved in pornography, I say, God, if that's true about our church, then all of this is a lie.

It's all pretend. We can put up websites. We can make tracks. We can say we're reaching the world. We can have slogans. We can have pictures of missionaries on the wall. But if that's really who we are as a church, then it's just all pretend.

[ 12 : 51 ] If we're not really people who want to serve God with our lives, then what is it that we are doing? And if it's not happening, then why are all these things so true? Why is our influence so little in our community?

And why is it that the gospel progress is so slow at times? Micah 2.7, Which means, Is the spirit of the Lord impatient here?

Are these things he is doing? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Micah is being criticized by false prophets. They're saying that God would never do bad things to his people, that God would never bring punishment to his people.

Why are you saying this? But they're forgetting about the nature of a good father. Yes, most certainly a good father would bring punishment upon his children. But these false prophets say, No, do not the words do good to them who walk uprightly?

Has God not followed through on the discipline if he would have been untrue to his word? God's word do good to them whose ways are upright. But the Bible is for us.

[ 13 : 57 ] The Bible is teaching us. But when we don't want to do what's right, it doesn't change. It stays the same. And it doesn't waver. And so the Bible is good and welcome for us by when we do upright.

But then it's ignored and rejected in the times that we don't. But God's word should be preached and it should be taught. How did we get here? Verse number 8. Why shouldest thou be a stranger in the land?

God, why are you doing this to us? Why are you just showing up and not being among us? Why isn't it like it used to be? Why isn't it like you promised us that it would be? Why shouldest thou leave? Have all these things come upon us?

And the same quote that I've already started. Oh, let me urge upon you and upon myself that the first thing which we have to do is prayerfully and patiently and honestly to search after this cause and not look to superficial trifles such as possible variations and improvements in order and machinery and polity or creed or some new program or some kind of change how we could do things or we could try to meet at a certain time or we could try something new, some small variation or anything else as the means of changing and bettering the condition of things but to recognize this as being the one sole cause that hinders the slackness of our own hold on Christ's hand and the feebleness and the imperfection of our own spiritual life.

We're not knowing God more because we simply don't want to and we change things. I'll be personal because I can't speak for you but when I am not being right for you as a minister of the gospel in this church it's not when I'm forgetting to put something on the calendar and it's not when I'm misprinting something in a bulletin and it's not when I'm forgetting to make a phone call it's when I am not following God with my life and nothing that I can do for you would be any greater than just coming to God and saying, God, I want to serve you in living in awareness of His holiness.

[ 15 : 54 ] Now you say that back to each other. The best thing that you can do for this church no matter how many hours you put in the ministry and no matter how many great things you do for us and no matter how beautiful songs that you sing or how many times you drive a van or sign up and all the things that take our energy the best thing that we can do is be people that love God and love His holiness and say, God, we want to live pure and holy lives so you can work in and through us.

Would you say that you're living in a land flowing with milk and honey or in a time of drought? I told you it's a model prayer here. It starts off pleading with their guilt. Our iniquities testify against us.

God, you know the truth. We can't hide it from you. There is no denying that we have wondered. Admit that even as a mature Christian our backslidings are many. This is important here because our iniquity is many meaning that we know that we're sinning we're falling down and we're getting up something a new Christian says but we're saying our backslidings are many meaning that even as mature Christians who ought to know better we're choosing at times to sin and to move away from God.

Even at times where we know exactly what needs to be done to have a relationship with God that is strong and that is fervent we voluntarily choose to backslide and it's many.

Admit we have sinned against thee the God of heaven not just one another but against the God of heaven. Petition was not based upon their goodness their ability to change.

[17:17] Aren't you tired of telling God that you'll do better next time? We're like Peter. He says, Lord, I will never deny you and we're denying him immediately afterwards. So in this prayer their petition wasn't based upon them doing better but it says, Lord, our iniquities testify against us but for your namesake.

God, you have to make a change in our lives for your glory. God, you have to do this because I'm tired of not doing it. Recognize God's place as a master of your heart.

Verse 8. Why shouldst thou be a stranger in the land as a wayfaring man? Recognize that God deserves your life completely. Not just weekend visitations but he deserves all the time that he would give.

He deserves that rightful place in your heart. Verse 9. Why shouldst thou be as a man astound as a mighty man that cannot save? Recognizing God alone is able to help you. It says, God, are you going to be like somebody that's in the house that's just caught by surprise and not help us?

And then, will you please help us? What a strong prayer that is said here. The people knew what needed to be done. They knew the words that they needed to say. It would probably convince anyone who heard it but God knew their hearts and all and that's all that mattered.

[18:24] I already read for you verse 10. After that beautiful prayer recognizing their iniquity and saying that they have backslidden and recognizing that God alone could make a difference. Verse number 10 says, Thus saith the Lord, They have loved the wonder and your feet have been refrained.

The position of your feet are showing where your heart is. Not the words that you're saying to me in your prayer that your feet are pointed in the wrong direction. So no matter how much you're saying in your heart when you get up from this prayer you're headed down the wrong way.

It always shows what is in our heart. So this repentance they had was an imagination of their evil heart. 724 says, They hearken not nor incline their ear but walked in the counsels in the imagination of their evil heart and went backwards and not forwards.

The prayer that we wanted to hear from them that sounded so sincere. Now the hour of doom was come and the scaffold was ready. The executioner was at hand. It appears that they did not come to God in His timing or honest terms.

Psalms 51, 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken heart, a broken and contrite heart or God will not despise. Brother Eric, as I looked at this passage this week and I looked for different people to give me different opinions I was just saying how is this prayer not answered?

[19:35] How is this not enough? Because I know my God. I know that He, when people come to Him with a broken heart some people wanted to say that these weren't the prayers of the people this was the prayer of Jeremiah praying on their behalf here.

because we just don't like the idea that somebody would say those words and it would not be enough. It's hard to believe these words could be said by people who did not truly repent. Prayers are not being answered.

What a mercy it is that God does hear real prayer even when it's presented to Him only in a time of distress. Call upon me, the Lord says, in a day of trouble and I will deliver you. He hears the prodigal son when He cries out for Him.

But what a dreadful state we are in must those men must have been whose prayers the God of all grace has resolved to shut His ears. God told Jeremiah not to pray for them in chapter 14 verse 11.

Then He says that even if you fast in verse 12 I will not hear your cries. If you offer burnt offerings I will not accept them but I will consume you with a sword. But God declared that even if Moses and Samuel were to come to me and they were to pray on your behalf I would not listen to them.

[ 20 : 42 ] What is missing? And what is it we don't want to recognize? Is that we come to God in His own terms in His own timing. Which is to say that there is a time when it's too late.

There is a time when it's going to be too late for unbelieving people. I was very fascinated with the Left Behind series as a teenager. I went to every judgment day trail place that they would have. And I was so fascinated with this idea was could it be possible that people that would live through the rapture would not be able to put their faith in Jesus because they had waited and it had been too long that there was timing.

But do you know even in your own life as a Christian God's warning you because He loves you the consequences of sin and you think that you're always going to wait to the last minute that you're always going to throw up this kind of flare prayer to God at the last minute but there's going to come a time that says no you have not repented you have not turned from your ways you have been warned and now you must live through the consequences of this.

Regardless of the emotional condition of Jeremiah the people would not repent. Verse 17 so that his tears were the endless they would run down day and night. He had an extreme love for them he said they were the virgin daughter of my people they were broken of great bricks they had never been taken off until they said he doesn't want them taken off to the idolatrous nations referring to Judah the religious leaders were no help to them.

Jeremiah is told to stop and to pray to stop to pray for them. Jeremiah recognizes that if God doesn't do nothing nothing will happen even after God told Jeremiah to stop praying verse 22 are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain or can the heavens give showers on thou he O Lord our God therefore we will wait upon thee for thou hast made all these things.

[ 22 : 24 ] We can love people and we can cry out to God with endless tears and we can recognize that unless God does something nothing is going to happen and people can still choose to walk away from God.

There's nothing more to be done they have to live with the consequences the time to let them go and it's now time to trust God. Chapter number 15 verse 1 Then saith the Lord unto me though Moses and Samuel stood before me yet my mind could not be towards his people cast them out of my sight and let them go forth.

It even brings into some remembrance let them go when they left Egypt and let them go but now the words are completely different. It says let them go let them leave Canaan let them now go they're going to be taken in the captivity death to sword starvation and captivity four different options and the best option was captivity.

You know you have a pretty horrible list when your best option on that list is to go into captivity. Listen to how our Father speaks to them in verse number 5 it says For who shall have pity upon thee O Jerusalem who shall bemoan thee who shall go aside to ask how thou doest thou hast forsaken me saith the Lord thou art gone backward therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee and destroy thee I am weary with repenting.

This is hard language from a loving God and how dare we ever question him for not being loving. We say that we can never talk to somebody we love like that we can never give that hard truth to somebody and why do we say that we can never present somebody the truth about God's holiness because we say that we are just too loving.

[ 23 : 59 ] No that's not loving. What God did here was loving. What God says is loving. To give somebody the truth to stand in front of them and to warn them of judgment is loving and that's what God does.

There's a reversal of the promises. Remember Genesis the Abrahamic covenant your seed will be like the sands of the sea you're going to have so many children it's going to spread. Now it says in 15.8 the widows are increased to me above the sands of the seas.

The amount of widows that are happening they're not multiplying but they're losing they're not going forward and Joshua said that the sun would stand still in the middle of the day now it says that the sun's going to go down in the middle of the day.

Everything that could have been is now being reversed. Why? Because they will not return. Look at verse number 7. What a strong passage. Those of us that know the character of God and know he's loving it says I will bereave them children I will destroy my people since they return not from their ways.

That's the holiness of God that Brother Steve prayed about. That's the holiness of God that we do not want to change. That's the holiness of God that we're not comfortable of talking about.

[ 25 : 09 ] I will destroy my people. You know what is worse than having loved ones who will not change? It's having a God who would. When it comes to confronting people that we love when it comes to confronting sin in our own lives we either have a choice.

We've got to say you have to change I have to change or we have to make God in our own image. The only thing worse than having loved ones who wouldn't change is having a God who would. And how many of you are grateful tonight to have a holy God who does not change?

The Titus says he does not tell a lie that he is always faithful he is always true we always know what he wants out of us. Isn't it great? He doesn't have a sliding scale. What's good today is bad tomorrow and what's bad today is good tomorrow.

We can never live but he is holy and he's consistent and our message has to be holy and it has to be consistent. Jeremiah makes a final case. I have your words were found I did eat them and the word was unto me a joy and rejoicing in mine heart for I have called by my name O Lord God of hosts verse 16.

He says I have lived a pure life I have set not in the assembly of the mockers nor rejoiced I sat alone because of thy hand for they have filled me with indignation. Jeremiah says I hate your word God I loved your word I consumed your word I took it in I didn't do like these mockers I did what was life why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable which refuses to be healed without all together unto me as a liar as a water that fell do you hear what Jeremiah is saying the God who is a living hope a God who is a living spring a God who is water to us as Jesus said at the woman with the well he says if you would drink of me you would never thirst again but Jeremiah says are you a God that fails or is nothing going to happen will this heartache ever stop he wondered if God would claim to be a living water but now be a deceptive brook these are strong words we aren't feeling the emotion of the Bible enough because we're not getting into what's saying there is so much going on in this chapter Jeremiah his heart is broken his people have not repented his people are going into captivity and he's crying out to God and saying



[ 27:17 ] God I can't say anything good about those people but for your namesake and God is going to do what is right and what is holy despite that he gave his messenger the message to preach look at God's response in closing here verse 19 therefore thus saith the Lord if thou return then will I bring thee again thou shalt stand before me and if they take forth the precious if thou take forth the precious from the vial thou shalt be as my mouth let me return unto thee but return not unto them Jeremiah you need to repent of the words that you are saying the Lord's response shows that Jeremiah is making an unwarranted accusation against the Lord just because his opponents have not yet been silenced Jeremiah cannot assume that the Lord has abandoned him and he says if you will take those vial words and you'll once again replace them with the precious words you can be my mouthpiece Jeremiah which I have called you to be now all of this may sound easy and theoretical for some of you but if you've ever loved someone who would not return to God our God is long suffering and Jeremiah gives them warning after warning but there is still no hope if they choose to wonder your sincerest prayers do not guarantee that your loved ones will return to God and this hurts

Jeremiah knows your hurt more importantly God knows your hurt but let us thank him for being unchangeable while we pray for our loved ones to change if you're praying for your loved ones in here today don't change God for them stay strong preach the holiness of God warn them tell them right is wrong right and wrong is wrong don't coward everybody in this world will make compromise and tell them what they're doing is okay and tell them for this reason or that reason they can live the way they're doing but stand for truth take the vile words out of your mouth put the precious words of God in it and stand up for truth if you're in here today and God is calling upon you to repent don't assume that he'll always continue like this don't believe that you'll always just continue to come to church on a Sunday night and get to make a choice about this decision that God's been long suffering to you but don't make it in vain don't make the grace of God vain in your life there's going to come a day where a prayer can be said and God's going to say I hear your words but I see your feet and you're headed in the captivity and that captivity that you put yourself in it won't only hurt you but it's going to hurt everybody around you because God loves you too much to leave you in your sin so ask for forgiveness tonight don't be like these people who know all the words but don't have a heart for God let's be real as a church let's not be a church of statistics let's not live the normal Christian life let's live a life fully dedicated to God let's live holy lives whatever he's been working in your heart on say yes to him and then as messengers in this world don't compromise the message because he's only holy and just he can only show mercy and grace because he is holy and just and let's love that about him as much as anything because he has been and he can only show and he can only watch and there's none because he has been dating