



## SESSION SNAPSHOT

WHAT QUENCHES YOUR THIRST?

### NARRATIVE PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 2:1-19

### GOSPEL FOCUS:

John 4:4-26

### TAKEAWAYS:

- Stop drinking from the cracked cisterns of the world
- Live a life that creates thirst for God's Word in others

### LAST WEEK'S READING:

- 2 Kings 17-18
- 2 Kings 19-21
- 2 Kings 22-23
- Jeremiah 1-3:5
- Jeremiah 25; 29

## KNOW THE WORD

### PASSAGE OVERVIEW

Jeremiah, the “Weeping Prophet,” prophesied in Israel for forty years without seeing a single convert. From the time he was about seventeen, when he was called to be a prophet, he devoted his life to speaking the Word of the Lord, even if it was hard or brought him trouble. Regardless of how they responded, Israel needed to hear it, especially when the message was as heavy as it is in today’s passage: Israel had turned her back on the Lord and would never find fulfillment until she turned back to Him.

### COMMENTARY AND STUDY MATERIALS

- vv.2-3 One of the first metaphors to demonstrate God’s relationship with His people is that of a wedding ceremony. In v.3, the wedding imagery shifts to a picture of agriculture. Interestingly, Jesus refers to both weddings and agriculture on His last night with His disciples. In John 14, He compares what He is doing to what a groom does when preparing a place for his bride (going and building rooms off of His Father’s house); and in John 15, He tells how He is the true vine (as opposed to the vine that went astray—Israel).
- v.4 Jeremiah leaves no aspect of God’s people untouched. At the time of this prophecy, they were a divided Kingdom; the Word Jeremiah has is for both of them. Jeremiah was speaking from Jerusalem, where both Northern and Southern Israelites were represented. So his calls for Israel and Judah to “remember” would have come across like, “Remember your calling in the past? Look at how far you’ve strayed from it.” To how many believers could this apply today?
- v.5 Here, Jeremiah uses language from Mosaic divorce proceedings (Deut. 24:1). God continually tells His people that they have divorced Him to pursue other worthless things and had joined themselves to them, becoming worthless themselves. What humility that the Creator of the Universe would speak like this to such a rebellious nation!
- v.13 The sin Israel was guilty of is one sin with two parts, for turning away from something implies turning toward something else. They have turned from the living, flowing water provided by God toward the stagnant water of poorly dug cisterns. They’ve abandoned the endless, clean refreshment that comes solely from the Word of God for the festering, always-draining efforts that came from their own hands. How often do we turn from God toward our inferior, man-made replacements for what only He can provide?

## STUDY THE WORD

### ***What is the story behind the longest time you've gone without sleep?***

Sometimes it just so happens that we don't sleep. We might be working long shifts, cramming for a test, or suffering from a medical condition. Regardless of the reason, if you've gone for a long time without sleeping, after a while, it is the only thing you can think about. Sitting and relaxing won't do what you need; the only thing that will quench your exhaustion is to sleep.

Jeremiah had some difficult words from God for the people of Israel, who was desperate for restoration of a different kind: the spiritual kind. Let's read his words and consider what truly satisfies us so that we can be filled in the way the Lord intended for us to be filled.

### **OUT LOUD, READ JEREMIAH 2:1-8**

Jeremiah writes with many metaphors: images that represent something else. As you read through these passages, pay attention to the kinds of images Jeremiah records and consider what bigger truths he is trying to communicate.

Jeremiah uses a lot of poetic imagery in this chapter to describe different aspects of Israel's walk with the Lord. He refers to newlyweds (v.2), flowing water and broken cisterns (v.13), and slaves (v.14), for instance.

### ***How does thinking about God with imagery help us understand Him?***

### ***What is a metaphor either that you've seen in this passage or heard somewhere else that resonates with you the most? Why?***

Trying to describe God is like trying to catch all of the water in a rainstorm with a cup. We simply don't have the capacity for it. That is why imagery and metaphor is so useful—it uses concepts we understand to describe the indescribable.

By beginning the passage with the newlywed metaphor, God gives us something to compare Israel's rebellion and adultery to. It started out so well—the bliss of a new marriage. They walked hand in hand and Israel faithfully followed where her groom took her. Soon, though, Israel departed from Him and sought her satisfaction somewhere else. All she had to do was return to Him, but she insisted on constantly leaving.

### ***If you had to describe your relationship with God with an image or a metaphor, what would it be?***

### ***How do you think God would describe His relationship with you?***

## **OUT LOUD, READ JEREMIAH 2:9-19**

Pay attention to the new metaphor that comes up in this section, about the cracked cistern. If a cistern is cracked, any water you put into it will seep out of it; it would need constant filling, and none of the filling would ever satisfy its purpose.

***Why does the image of the cracked cistern feel so poignant even today?***

***What are some examples of cracked cisterns that the world offers us?***

***How is what Jesus offers different?***

In verse 13, God is described as a “fountain of living water,” and is contrasted with our own “cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.” The fountain of living water never runs out and is a continuous supply of clean refreshment that will come to us so long as we stand at its mouth and drink. Our best efforts at finding this refreshment, however, are dug-out cisterns that are cracking along the lining, leaking whatever water we can scrounge together as soon as we deposit it.

***Verse 19 says that Israel’s own evil would discipline her. What do you think that means?***

***How have you seen someone’s own sin be punishment enough before?***

Many times, the sin we are engaged in carries its own consequence—it doesn’t even need to be supernatural. Also, sin only leads to more sin; it is never enough. In Romans 1:21, Paul wrote about how those who don’t know God are given over to their own senseless minds. Not all sin needs to be supernaturally punished, because it ultimately leads each of us to a thoroughly unfulfilling and constantly darkening place apart from God.

***God remains faithful even though we so often are not. How have you experienced God’s patience with you in the past?***

***Tell about a time when you had to repent and turn back to the Lord. What prompted you to do that?***

## APPLY THE WORD

Jeremiah's message was one directed toward a people who were prone to wander from the Lord. Though we are not his initial audience, the same can be said of us a lot of the time. It doesn't take any special training to know how to wander from the Lord; we do it all the time.

When we start turning to things that will not ultimately fulfill us, we end up looking a lot like Israel in today's passage. The only way to combat this outcome is to acknowledge when we are wandering and turn around so that we can again start walking with Jesus.

Before you close your time in prayer, encourage those in your group to take a few minutes when you are done to answer the following and share updates next week:

***How are you prone to wander from the Lord?***

***What steps can you take to continually turn from that and focus on Him?***

## PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK

***Next Week's Reading:***

- ***Jeremiah 31:31-40; 32-33***
- ***Jeremiah 52; 2 Kings 24-25***
- ***Ezekiel 1:1-3; 36:16-38; 37***
- ***Daniel 1-2***
- ***Daniel 3-4***