

Message #11**Jeremiah 7:1-34**

At the beginning of our worship services we greet the congregation. We typically welcome the people and let them know we are happy and thankful they are here.

Let's imagine it is time to go to church. It is time to go worship to hear from God through His word. Everyone is happy to go. You get into the car and you travel to church. But now let's say that the moment you get there the minister is standing by the main entrance, and as you approach the building he starts preaching to you and your whole family and all guests.

Let's say he is proclaiming that God wants you to know that all of you who have come here today are so pathetic in the sight of God that He is livid and angry with you. In fact, He is so sick of you that He is going to destroy you. If you can imagine running into a greeting like that, you can well relate to what you are about to see in Jeremiah 7. One commentator called this chapter "A Religion of Lies."

Now according to **verse 1**, what Jeremiah does here is directly from God. What Jeremiah says is directly from God. So God gave Jeremiah the specific words He wanted him to say directly to His own people.

But what is so unusual from verse 2 is that we learn where God wanted him to say those words. He wanted Jeremiah to go to the gate of the Temple and proclaim and preach these words to all the people who came to worship the LORD.

This is the greeting God wanted Jeremiah to give to His own people who came to worship Him. And when you look at what God wanted Jeremiah to proclaim to His own people, it was no shallow, feel good message of love, love, love. **This message was a hard hitting message designed to confront the people of God with their own sin.** God was not going to fool around with His people much longer. He was fed up with them and their sin.

What this chapter strongly teaches is this:

GOD'S PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD SEES EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM AND IF THEY REFUSE TO AMEND THEIR WAYS AND CONFORM TO HIS WORD, HE WILL SEVERELY JUDGE THEM AND STOP BLESSING THEM.

There are a series of messages that God specifically wanted Jeremiah to communicate to His own people. They are confrontational messages that are designed to convict and cause change:

**CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #1 – Amend your ways and God will let you dwell here.
7:3**

This is a pure grace verse. It is a great way to begin this. God identifies Himself as the LORD of hosts, which means He is sovereign over everything, and the God of Israel, which means He is the God of His nation and people. There is one true God and it is the God of the Bible. God says what you need to do is to amend your ways right now (7:3, 5; 26:13; 35:15).

The Hebrew word “amend” (yatab) is a very interesting word. It is a word that means to make a right adjustment and obey what God deems as good with a mindset that is happy and joyful to do it (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 347). The word is closely connected to changing one’s lifestyle and obeying the word of God.

When God says if you will amend your ways and adjust to Me and My word and be happy to do this, then “I will let you dwell in this place.” This not only refers to their geographical place of house residency, and their Promised Land, but it also includes this very place of worship.

So God begins by informing His people that if they will amend their ways in conformity to Him and His word, life will be good. The real problem with these people is that they foolishly believe they don’t need to amend anything.

The proof that Israel has never done this is the fact that her Temple is not even standing today and she only has a fraction of the land she is supposed to have.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #2 – Do not trust the deceptive words that this is My Temple. 7:4

The threefold repetition indicates what the false religious leaders were stressing, namely this is “the Temple of the LORD” and nothing bad can ever come here. God’s presence is here. God will never permit it because this is His house.

God says what you have here is a building, but it is not My Temple because it is not a place after My truth. When His own people refuse to amend their ways in conformity with His word, His presence and power will be non-existent no matter what the religious leaders are saying.

God expects His own people to come to church and hear the word and be convicted and do something about it. If they don’t do that, it is nothing more than religious ritual.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #3 – If you will amend your ways in several areas, I will let you live in the Promised Land. 7:5-7

Now by virtue of the fact that the challenge is to amend your ways, we know they were doing these things. These people were going to worship services but living a life of sin. There are four specific conditions that must be met if the people were to be protected by God:

Condition #1 - They must practice justice between man and his neighbor. **7:5**

Condition #2 - They must not oppress the helpless people. **7:6a**

This means that they must not oppress the alien, the orphan or the widow.

Condition #3 - They must not ever murder those innocent. **7:6b**

Condition #4 - They must not follow after idolatrous gods. **7:6c**

God says if you refuse you will come to ruin. If you amend your ways I will permit you to live here. **Turning from sin as a child of God leads to God's blessings.**

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #4 – You trust in deceptive teaching that does not affect your life in any godly ways. **7:8-10**

Whatever these people were listening to was not working because they were not listening to the word of God, when they went to their “worship services.” Their lives were filled with sin, not righteousness. The teaching they were getting did not make these people godlier. They were guilty of all kinds of evil.

False Teaching Result #1 - They would steal. **7:9a**

False Teaching Result #2 - They would murder. **7:9b**

False Teaching Result #3 - They committed adultery. **7:9c**

False Teaching Result #4 - They swore false promises. **7:9d**

False Teaching Result #5 - They worshipped false gods. **7:9e**

They actually attended Baal worship services and offered sacrifices to false gods.

False Teaching Result #6 - They would go to worship and claim they were forgiven. **7:10**

These people thought they could continue in a sinful lifestyle and duck into church and all would be great.

They would go to the place of worship and convince themselves their guilt was gone. They never dealt with anything. They put all of their trust in their ceremonial worship services and never sensed any conviction of a need to change.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #5 – God has seen everything. 7:11

This point of God seeing everything is one that is stated in both the O.T. and the N.T.. For example, in Hebrews 4:13 we read “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” God wants His people to know “I see everything.”

God says to His own people do you honestly think you are getting away with this religious masquerade? Do you honestly think that I don't see this? You are a bunch of robbers, turning My sacred place of worship into a den of thieves. You have robbed people of the truth.

God says, “I declare to you” I have seen everything. I have seen your phony religious spirituality and I have seen your corruption. The very presence of these people defiled God's Temple.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #6 – Go to Shiloh and see what I did to it. 7:12-15

Jeremiah says let us give you a little history illustration to show you what can happen. Shiloh was the place where the Mosaic Tabernacle once stood, after Joshua took the people into the Promised Land (Josh. 18:1). It was located about 18 miles north of Jerusalem. For many years the ark of the covenant and the word of God was there.

When Israel pursued idolatry, God allowed the ark to be taken by the Philistines and eventually He completely destroyed the city and the people (Jer. 26:6, 9). God says go take a look at what I did there, because you are about to get the same treatment. Because you will not listen to My word I will do to you what I did there.

If you went to Shiloh you would not find God. You would not find worship. You would not find the word of God. What you would discover is that Shiloh is a place where God is no longer present. It is a place He has abandoned. You cannot find God in Shiloh anymore. Just as I sovereignly caused Ephraim (Israel), the northern kingdom to be chased out of the land, I am going to do the same to you.

Kent Hughes said, “There are Shiloh's all around” (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 129). There are places that used to be places of God's presence, power and truth. In those same places today, God is not there.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #7 – God demands that Jeremiah not pray for these people. 7:16-19

One of the great responsibilities of leaders is to pray for the people. When people are rebelling and sinning, the leader's responsibility is to intercede and ask God to spare, restore and save. **God tells Jeremiah to stop praying for these people.**

In fact, in chapter 14:11, God says stop praying for the welfare of these people because it will not do any good. He tells him not to pray or intercede for them anymore because He will not listen.

God says in **verse 17**, look at these people. See what they are doing in the cities and streets. They are worshipping false deities. They support false religion. They worship female deities.

God says they spite Me and My word when they should be spiting themselves and their own sin. Jeremiah says stop praying for them, I am all done.

There comes a point where the people are so rebellious that there is no point even praying for them because God will not answer.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #8 – God promises total destruction because of His anger.
7:20

God says I am so angry that I will destroy man, beast, trees and any produce that comes out of the ground. God says I will burn it all up.

The Apostle Peter says that one day God is going to burn up the whole world (II Pet. 3:10-13), before He creates a new heaven and new earth. He will do that for the same reason. The vast majority of people do not spite themselves or their sin, they love it and relish in it.

A critical point to see here is that the people have brought this on themselves, by spiting the word of God and by not amending their ways into conformity to His word.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #9 – God says your pursuit of your evil ritualistic religion means nothing to Me. **7:21-26**

A relationship with God is much more than just religious rituals and sacrifices. It has to do with understanding and applying His word. God says His people have never been serious in carefully understanding God's word. They weren't really interested in making changes.

There is a tremendous, gracious invitation given in **verse 23** to these rebellious people: if they would obey the word of God, God would be their God. In spite of their horrible evil, God was willing to bless them if they would turn from their sin and turn to Him. But they would not obey.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #10 – Jeremiah is to proclaim this message when they come to Worship. **7:27-29**

God says to Jeremiah, you speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You tell them that they are the nation who does not obey the Lord their God. They do not accept correction from the Word of God and they do not want the truth.

Look carefully at **verse 28**, "truth has perished" from the people of God. The people of God were dead to truth. They did not even speak the truth out of their mouths.

In **verse 29**, God tells Jeremiah to tell them to “cut off their hair” and mourn over their sin because the LORD has rejected and forsaken His own people.

CONFRONTATIONAL MESSAGE #11 – God’s people are detestable in the sight of God and God will punish them, remove them and destroy them. **7:30-34**

The people of God had done detestable things in God’s house and defiled His name. They set up some of their idols in the sacred property of God. They built idolatrous high places for worship in valleys around Jerusalem.

According to **verse 31**, they sacrificed their own sons and daughters by burning them in a fire. The word “Topheth” refers to a fireplace or oven where people burned to death their own children.

They literally made their children human sacrifices and God says I did not ever command that and that idea never came into My mind.

Ladies and Gentlemen, God is not pleased with a culture that kills babies. They call this “right to choose.” Do you know what “right to choose actually means?” It means one person has a right to choose to kill another person. Many in this country applaud this. In fact, we have a governor in this state who thinks that the right to choose to kill a baby is wonderful. God will destroy people who promote these things and do these detestable things.

God says there will come a day when dead bodies will be piled up so high in these areas that you will not even be able to bury them.

God says there will be no joy, no gladness, no weddings because I will judge this area.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF GOD’S PEOPLE WHO ARE USELESS:

- 1. People can go to worship services living a life of secret sin - Worship is useless.**
- 2. Any teacher that suggests that believers living sinful lives do not need to be convicted or guilty is a false teacher - Teaching is useless.**
- 3. If one pursues a lifestyle of sin as a believer, it can reach a point when God will not listen to the prayers of God’s people for that believer - Prayer is useless.**
- 4. Sacrifices without obedience to God’s word are unacceptable to God - Sacrifices are useless.**
- 5. God’s people out of fellowship with God are capable of any evil or immoral sin. Spirituality and lifestyle are useless.**
- 6. God will not ever let His people get away with their sin. He sees every bit of it.**