

Obedience, Not Sacrifice

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[0 : 00] I need you to listen to me. I heard, overheard, a mom say that one day to her son.

And the tone of her voice told me that what she wanted from her son was not merely for him to hear her, what she is saying, but to listen in the sense of obey.

That her patience running thin, hearing wasn't enough, and it was time for him now to do what the mom was telling him to do. And in Hebrew, the word listen, in a similar way, has two senses. It can mean hearing something, an auditory function, but it also means to obey, to listen. And Jeremiah here plays on that word skillfully to drive home the point that God wants his people to listen to him rather than paying lip service to him.

That's really the main point of this passage, that God wants us to listen to him rather than pay lip service to him. And the word listen, hear, obey throughout this passage are all the same word in the original language.

[1 : 12] And so using that, there's this kind of flow. First, God calls disobedient Judah to listen, verse 15 verses of chapter 7. Then God says, I will not listen to disobedient Judah, chapter 7, verse 16 to 26.

And at the end, it says that disobedient Judah will not listen. They will continue to not listen to the Lord. That's kind of the outline that I will follow here. And so we see here that it's the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah, which means it's God's word.

It's the authoritative word that came to him that he is calling God's people of Judah to listen to and to hear. And then we see whom the word of God came to, whom it's directed toward at verse 2. It says, all you men of Judah who entered these gates to worship the Lord. So this is referring to men and women who worship the Lord in the temple. And it's using, it's referring to the worshiper. So at this point of the chapter, it kind of reads like a psalm, right, that invites people to come and worship him. And it sounds good so far because maybe these are the ones that are faithful who still remain in the land because up to this point, we've only heard of God's judgment.

[2 : 20] But these are people who are coming to worship the Lord. So so far, it sounds good. And the worship, the word literally means to prostrate yourself before God, to bow down to him. It's an acknowledgment of his superiority, and it's an act of, it's an expression of total submission to him.

So it's a deeply humbling gesture. And for that reason, kings of the ancient world, when they conquered a kingdom, would subject the kings to that treatment. They would make them bow down and worship, or bow down and prostrate themselves to them.

And so surely the people who are coming to the temple to do that, to prostrate themselves in an expression, a gesture of submission to God, are ones that are faithful to him. That's what you'd be led to think.

Until we get to verses 3 to 4. Read verses 3 to 4 with me. He says, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place.

Do not trust in these deceptive words. This is the temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord. Far from commending these worshipers, God commands them to amend their ways and deeds.

[3 : 32] Only then, God says, I will let you dwell in this place. The designation this place is a little bit unclear. It's ambiguous. But later in verse 7, it tells us that this place refers to the land that God gave of old to their fathers forever.

So it's a reference to the promised land of Canaan that stands and represents God's dwelling among them, his presence with them, his favor toward them. And apparently there was an often mentioned saying among the people of Judah that fostered this sense of false assurance.

Because when prophets like Jeremiah warned of impending judgment and doom due to their unfaithfulness and sin, they would say to themselves, this is the temple of the Lord. This is the temple of the Lord.

This is the temple of the Lord. You see that building right there at the heart of Jerusalem? That's the temple of the Lord. The very dwelling place of God.

God promised to David and his descendants that they would rule over this kingdom forever. God lives here with us. What can possibly go wrong? What can possibly happen to this place?

[4 : 36] Who can possibly harm us? Stop being paranoid. This is the temple of the Lord. Leave us alone. But God warns them, do not trust in these deceptive words.

The existence of the temple is no guarantee of the presence of God. It's not like God was somehow bound physically to Judah because of this temple.

God's dwelling among his people was an act of pure grace on his part. So for that reason, people were wrong to think that the land was somehow above reproach, that it's inviolable, that it's their birthright, that they didn't have to be true to God or just toward their neighbors.

All they needed to do was dwell in the land where the temple existed and everything would be fine. But God challenges that false belief in verses 5 to 7. Read with me.

It says, As we saw last week in Jeremiah 5, 1, the covenant requirements, the requirements that God had for his people entailed being true and faithful to God and being just toward their neighbors.

[6 : 05] And we see here both the horizontal obligation that we have toward one another and the vertical obligation to God in this requirement that God's laying out again here. They're to execute justice one with another.

And it's common for sinful people to seek justice only for themselves. But when God speaks of justice, his mind goes immediately to the weakest and most vulnerable members of a society.

So he says, If you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place. The true moral fiber of a society is not tested and seen in the way it treats its strongest members, in the way it treats its most powerful members, but in the way it treats its weakest and most disempowered members.

So do the sojourners who have no home find a home among us? Do the fatherless who have no family find a family among us?

Do the widows who have no one to advocate for them, who have no champion for them, find advocates and champions among us? Have you been careful and fair in your execution of justice so that no innocent blood is shed in this place?

[7 : 18] To claim to love God while hating people who are created in the image of God and loved by God is hypocritical. And that's what God is pointing out here. Nor can we be just toward our neighbors without being true to God.

Because if we're not spiritually right with God, we cannot have a reliable moral compass. Because God is the north point to which our moral compass is supposed to point. And God is the one for whom we were created and to whom we should be directed.

Without being true and faithful to God, we will be misled by our blind spots and prejudices and inevitably will be unjust toward our neighbors. So God has another conditional statement to that. And if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of all to your fathers forever. Then in verses 8 to 10, God continues to expose the hypocrisy of his people.

He says, The offenses mentioned in verse 9 are taken directly from the Ten Commandments.

[8 : 41] The first half of the Ten Commandments deal with loving God, and second half of the Ten Commandments deal with loving our neighbors. And so people of Judah have kept neither of the halves of the Ten Commandments.

They steal from their neighbors. They murder their neighbors. They commit adultery with and against their neighbors. They also swear falsely using the name of God in vain. They make offerings to Baal instead of bowing down and making offerings to God alone.

They go after other gods that they have not known, instead of following the very first commandment, which says, You shall have no other gods before you. And the verb to know in Hebrew has covenantal overtones.

It deals with God's enduring and loving and intimate personal relationship that we have with God.

That's why in Amos 3.2, God says to Israel, his people, You only have I known of all the families of

the earth.

That knowledge refers to covenantal knowledge. It means that we have a connection to God. We're committed to him. That we are supposed to be loyal to him. Have this binding, enduring relationship with him. Yet, these people of Judah, instead of going to the God whom they have known, the God who knows them, they have gone after gods that they have not known.

[9 : 57] Gods who are no gods at all. Gods who have done nothing for them. Gods who have no relationship with them. Gods to whom they have no obligation.

And yet, they have forsaken the Lord, their God, and have gone after gods that they have not known. The Ten Commandments are represented of the entire Old Testament law.

And so, by specifically charging Judah of breaking the Ten Commandments, God's charging them really of breaking all the laws. There isn't a single commandment that they're keeping satisfactorily. Yet, in spite of all of this, they have the audacity to enter the house of God, which is called by his name and say, we are delivered.

Only then, afterwards, resume doing all their abominable deeds. And so, God asks a biting question in verse 11. Read with me. Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?

Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. You could hear God's indignation in his repeated description of the temple as the house, which is called by my name.

[11 : 08] This is not any temple. This is not any house. It's a temple that is known by the name of the Lord God, the one true God. Yet, these so-called worshippers of Judah are sinning in every imaginable way.

And they are brazen enough to stand before God at the temple and take him for a fool. By doing that, God says, they are treating the temple like a den of robbers.

That's a really apt metaphor, right? Because in the ancient world, robbers would commit robberies, and then they would retreat to a hideout or a safe house, a cave somewhere, where they can stay under the radar until they are no longer being sat out by the authorities and hunted by the authorities.

And then they would come back, rear their heads again, and go back to commit more robberies. So the people of Judah then are treating the temple like a den of robbers. They're treating it like a hideout.

When they're out there, they do all kinds of evil deeds, and then they come to the temple thinking, oh, we'll be safe here. No one will get us here. This is the temple. They're saying to themselves, we're in God's temple performing the required rituals.

[12 : 16] What evil can possibly befall us? But God has a stern warning for them in verse 12. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.

So Shiloh was a city in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. It was the place where the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God then was set up after the conquest of Canaan in Joshua 18.

And even though Shiloh was a dwelling place of God at that point in Israel's history, due to Israel's sin, they were defeated by the Philistines. The ark of God was captured, and Shiloh was destroyed, and it was abandoned and left the heap of ruins.

And God uses that vivid memory that these people still have to tell them, to use it as a cautionary tale. He tells them, go take a look at my old sanctuary, in Shiloh, and see for yourself what has happened to it because of Israel's sin.

The fact that God established a dwelling place among them as a place for his name to dwell did not guarantee their safety and prosperity. If they want to enjoy the covenant blessings, they have to keep their end of the covenant obligations by being faithful to God.

[13 : 29] Isn't that an accurate description of our demeanor, sometimes toward God? How many times do we presume upon God's grace?

When faced with recurring temptations, how often do we think to ourselves, I really shouldn't do this, but I'm a Christian, God will forgive me anyway. And then go on sinning.

After describing a list of sins that God condemns, Paul says in Romans 2, 2-5, we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

Do you suppose, O man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and

forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance, but because of your heart and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

God's grace and forbearance are meant to lead us to repent of our sins, not to persist in them. The fact that we acknowledge that we are sinners and we admit that sin is sin doesn't make it okay for us to go on sinning.

[14:59] As people who know that God's righteous judgment will fall upon sinners, we should take all the more care to avoid sin rather than presuming on the grace of God. I'm not saying that God's not going to preserve his saints to the end.

He will. God will preserve all of his saints to the end and all the saints will persevere to the end. But this does not mean that you will be saved whether you persevere or not.

Every true saint perseveres to the end. You cannot take that perseverance for granted. Our perseverance in good works until the end is proof that we are truly in Christ, that we really took hold of him in faith and therefore belong to him.

So our assurance of salvation can't be severed from our perseverance of faith. The more you persevere, the more you will be assured. And the more you're assured in God's grace, the more you will have the strength to persevere in faith and good works.

Those two things go hand in hand. And Judah presumed upon the grace of God and believed that they were beyond judgment. They believed that the temple guaranteed God's perpetual favor.

[16:04] And God says to them in verses 13 to 15, read with me, Verse 2, remember, Verse 2, remember, But now at the end of this section, first section, God says, Though he spoke to them persistently, they did not listen.

The same word. God has repeatedly called out to Judah to listen, but they have not listened. And for that reason, in the same way, the sanctuary in Shiloh, of the northern kingdom of Israel, was destroyed, and Israel was exiled from the promised land, in the same way, God will destroy the sanctuary, the temple in Jerusalem, and the southern kingdom of Judah will be exiled from the promised land.

God wants them to listen to him rather than pay lip service to him. Jeremiah then transitions to his next point, that God calls, that from, he said that God called disobedient Judah to listen, but they have refused up to this point.

And the second point is that God will not listen to disobedient Judah. God says to Jeremiah in verse 16, As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.

Judah has refused to listen. They have now gone past the point of no return, and God says, I will not listen to you. I will not hear your intercessory prayers on their behalf.

[17:56] That's a fearful thing to hear from God. You know it's a bad sign, right? When you're in the middle of a relational conflict, and you've been going back and forth, and then all of a sudden, you don't get anything back.

There's no return texts. There's no phone calls. They've cut off communication. When God says, I will not hear you, that means the line of communication is being cut.

Because Judah has been so stubborn and unrepentant in their sins, they've gone past the point of no return. And of course, God's assessment of this is perfect, and he's correct. Because if we find out later that even after God's discipline, even after his judgment falls on them, and they are exiled out of the promised land, and after fleeing the Babylonian Empire, some of them are, you know, a remnant is kind of trying to survive in Egypt.

Guess what they're doing? In Egypt, they are worshiping the same queen of heaven that could do nothing to save them. That's how stubborn they were in their sin.

Unrepentant they were. That's what we find in chapter 44. So God was right. They were past the point of return, and God says, therefore I will not listen to you. Look at verse 18. God brings another accusation against him.

[19:13] He says, The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the woman knead dough. Doesn't that sound like such a beautiful portrayal of a harmonious family? Right? They're all working together. And the Jewish vision for the family that's basically rooted in the Old Testament was to see the family as a real mini sanctuary.

See the home as a mini sanctuary where the father served as a priest-like figure, and the dinner table was the altar. And they were supposed to teach their children, the father and mother, together. And so there's this picture of a family as a sacred unit that's supposed to preserve and protect and pass on the worship of the Lord God.

And so that's kind of what it looks like. They're harmonious family. The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the woman knead dough. But then for what? That's the kicker at the end. To make cakes for the queen of heaven.

And they pour drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger. The queen of heaven is a reference to the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of Astarte or Ishtar, which may be another name for the Canaanite goddess Asherah.

Right? It was an astral deity, a god associated with the stars, the heavens, and hosts of heaven mentioned in 2 Kings 21 and 23. And so this, and during the days of King Manasseh of Judah, the cult of the queen of heaven was quite popular, as we find in 2 Kings.

[20 : 41] And archaeologists have actually found 47 molds of cakes representing a goddess shaped in the form of a female goddess from the early 2nd millennium BC.

It's probably the same thing that's going on here. There, it's a whole family working together to bake these cakes in the shape of the queen of heaven. For the queen of heaven.

The worship of Yahweh, the Lord God, was meant to be a whole family affair, yet instead of maintaining the worship of the Lord, the whole households have sold themselves to the worship of the so-called queen of heaven.

And they did this seemingly to provoke God's anger, according to verse 18. But more than provoking God, it says in verses 19 to 20 that they were provoking themselves. It is I, is it I whom they provoke, declares the Lord.

Is it not themselves to their own shame? Therefore thus says the Lord God, behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground.

[21 : 43] It will burn and not be quenched. It says earlier in verse 6, God said that going after other gods was to their own harm. The worship of the queen of heaven is to their own shame.

Though God alone is worthy of worship and he calls us, all of us, all people, to worship him, it's not like God needs us to worship him so that, you know, we can boost his fragile ego.

That's not what's going on, right? God's glory itself in and of itself is not damaged. He incurs no loss or damage to his own glory because we rebel against him, refuse to worship him.

He doesn't need us. It's not to his shame. Rather, God says, it's to Judah's shame. They're the ones that will incur tragic loss. They're the ones that are doing great injury to themselves by not worshipping the Lord but turning to idols.

And because God created human beings to represent and rule, represent God, represent him and to rule over the rest of the creation as his representative, the sin of humanity affects all of the created orders.

[22 : 47] So God's judgment falls not just on man but man and beast. And it falls on the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground. Because God is already determined to pour out his judgment upon Judah and it's declared that he will not listen to them, he goes on also to negate the sacrifices that they were bringing to him.

Read verse 21 with me. It says, add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat the flesh. The burnt offerings were sacrifices that were entirely devoted to God.

And as such, they burned the whole thing up. Nothing remaining. So there's nothing left for people to eat. That's the nature of a burnt offering according to Leviticus 1. Other sacrifices, however, were to be eaten by the worshipers afterward.

You don't burn it, consume it, all of it. It was not devoted wholly to the Lord. So when God says, add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat the flesh, God's essentially telling them that it makes no difference to him.

Your sacrifices are all the same. They are altogether worthless. So keep the burnt offerings for yourselves. Eat the flesh. And he gives his reason why this is the case in verses 22 to 23.

[23 : 58] For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or commend them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, obey my voice and I will be your God and you shall be my people and walk in all the way that I commend you, that it may be well with you.

But they did not obey or incline their ear but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts and went backward, not forward.

As I mentioned in the beginning, the word obey, here is the same Hebrew word that's been repeated up to this point. Hear, listen. God has repeatedly commanded them to listen to his voice but they have stubbornly refused and now God rejects their sacrifices.

What God is referring to is this. After rescuing Israel out of their slavery in Egypt and when he came to Mount Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai in Exodus 20, at that point, God didn't give any requirements and commands about sacrifices.

All he was requiring of them was to obey him, to follow the Ten Commandments. That's what he did in Exodus 20. It was only later after that covenant was already established, later in Exodus 24, that God gave detailed provisions for how to maintain the tabernacle and to perform sacrifices and he gave instructions for the priesthood.

[25 : 21] And what Jeremiah is referring to is that that order of God's revelation reflects the divine priority. As 1 Samuel 15, 22 says, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams. Sacrifice was to be an expression of obedience that stemmed from their heartfelt commitment to God, but instead, sacrifices had been reduced in Judah to a formality, an empty ritual devoid of love and devotion. So God reiterates the proper priority of obedience over sacrifice. Sacrifice apart from obedience, he says, is useless. But just like their rebellious descendants now, the forefathers whom that Jeremiah is talking about here also did not listen or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

And in doing so, they thought that they were progressing beyond this primitive religion of the Lord God and they thought they were evolving and growing into this cosmopolitan religion of Canaan, but in reality, they were regressing.

They went backward, not forward. So God continues in verses 25 to 26, from the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I persistently sent all my servants, the prophets, to them day after day.

[26 : 56] Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. It's generation after generation of disobedience.

It seems they're getting worse and worse as they go. And the stiffening of the neck is such a helpful metaphor. It's a farming metaphor. It's when a farmer is trying to control an ox to plow the ground, for example, and they try to direct them using a yoke or what's around their neck, the binding.

A yoke, an ox that is rebellious and does not want to do its owner's will, will stiffen its neck and not move, like a dog that's on a leash that's trying not to go the direction you're trying to take it to go, right?

That's the image here. These people are stiffening their necks. They refuse to heed God's direction. They stiffen their necks and refuse and want to stay in the course of their sinful ways.

So it's no wonder then that their descendants now are following exactly in their footsteps. God wants them and God wants us to listen to Him rather than pay lip service to Him.

[28 : 01] So let me ask you, what are some sacrifices that you offer? In an attempt to appease God, all the while persisting in sin.

God cannot be hoodwinked in that way. Are you maintaining a superficial semblance of being a Christian but is your life not wholly given to the Lord? With the same tongue you bless our Lord and Father, do you turn around and curse people who are made in the likeness of God?

Do you sing words of praise to God on Sunday morning and then utter profanities to your friends and say hateful and hurtful things to your spouse? Do you act like you are filled with the Spirit when you're at the church service and then fill yourself with drugs or get drunk elsewhere?

Do you put on an air of humility on Sunday morning but at work on Monday morning turn into an insufferably prideful boss or employee? Do you think that you can make up for your disobedience to God by doing some community service or by going to church services and act an act of worship without the heart of obedience is meaningless to God?

God wants us to listen to Him rather than pay lip service to Him. Imagine this with me, maybe this analogy will be helpful. Imagine a husband who brings His wife flowers.

[29 : 34] Not out of His love for her, not out of His delight in her but as a calculated maneuver to score a favor of some kind.

I can bring her favor, put her in a good mood and then I can float this idea of making this big purchase that I want for myself that I know she will not approve of. Is that romantic? That's paying lip service without really listening to the heart of the wife's desire. We are not, and we do this to God, we're not submitting to God but instead we're manipulating Him.

We seek to control Him, keep Him at our arm's length but God's not looking for such sacrifices. He wants our obedience.

He wants to listen to Him rather than pay lip service to Him. So, so far as we saw how God calls disobedient Judah to listen but then they don't listen so God says God will not listen to Him and then now in the final section in chapter 7 verse 27 to chapter 8 verse 3 we see that disobedient Judah will continue to not listen in the future.

[30 : 52] God says to Jeremiah in verses 27 to 28, so you shall speak all these words to them but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them but they will not answer you and you shall say to them this is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God and did not accept discipline.

Truth has perished it is cut off from their lips. Once again the word obey is the same as the word that means listen. So as God's appointed mouthpiece Jeremiah will declare the word of the Lord but as the Lord has experienced this stubborn refusal and rejection from His people Jeremiah will experience the same rejection.

They will not listen to Him and Judah will become known as the nation that did not listen to the voice of the Lord their God. There's a warning for us here. When we repeatedly refuse to heed the voice of God we become desensitized and our ability to hear God decreases.

to illustrate my family and I live in a condo that's right next to the train tracks and shortly after moving there we were amazed by how quickly our brains were able to adjust because we got so used to tuning out the sound of the train not long after we moved we stopped hearing it all together. Our consciences and our hearts work in a similar way. If you keep tuning God out if you keep ignoring His voice when He's speaking to you His warnings His consolations His proddings your ability to hear Him will diminish.

[32 : 27] Are you listening to Him? Or are you merely paying lip service to Him? Because of Judah's failure to listen God commands Jeremiah to announce in verse 29 Cut off your hair and cast it away raise the lamentation on the bare heights for the Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.

Cutting off the hair was a sign of mourning and grieving and there may be also a deeper meaning here in the sense that Nazarites who were to give their lives as wholly devoted to God were commanded to grow out their hair and to never cut their hair.

And Israel in a similar sense were a people a nation that were consecrated to God sanctified for Him for a special purpose yet God's saying you are no longer fulfilling that obligation and you have been rejected and now cut off your hair.

Raise the lamentation. And once more God gives His reason for this judgment in verses 30 to 31 for the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight declares the Lord.

They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name to defile it and they have built the high places of Topheth which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire which I did not command nor did it come into my mind.

[33 : 47] The word detestable things occurs about 28 times in the Old Testament and most of the time it refers to some kind of pagan ritual object a cult object that represents a pagan god an idol and they had they were bold enough brazen enough to bring this item into the temple of the Lord God that is called by His name to the house that is known by His name to His house with His name on it they brought a pagan god they defiled the temple and by doing so they rejected the sovereign reign of God over them and if that weren't enough they built the high place for idolatry and burned their sons and daughters in the fire this is a reference to worship of Molech in 2 Kings 23 10 Molech is mentioned and even though Old Testament explicitly and repeatedly forbade human sacrifice these people engaged in that abominable practice and not only that as they were doing it it seems at the end of verse 31 it suggests that perhaps they even imagined that human sacrifice were acceptable to God because God says to them no I did not command it nor did it come to my mind not only did I not tell you to do such things yet I also never even thought of it it is far it was far from my mind as it could have been and yet you were so ingenious and creative in your sinful abominations that's what God's trying to tell them for this they will receive a fitting just punishment

verse 32 34 therefore behold the days are coming declares the Lord when it will no more be called Topheth or the valley of the son of Hinnom but the valley of slaughter for they will bury in Topheth because there is no room elsewhere and the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth and none will frighten them away and I will silence in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride for the land shall become a waste the people of Judah sacrificed their children whom they should have protected in a vain attempt to please the so-called gods to secure their own welfare it was an extremely self-serving atrocity and God decrees that now they themselves will be slaughtered by the invading army and the valley of the son of Hinnom which they had wrongfully consecrated for the worship of Molech will instead become the valley of slaughter and those people who repeatedly refuse to listen to the voice of the Lord will find their own voices of mirth silenced and then God continues his announcement of judgment chapter 8 verses 1 to 3 the final part at that time declares the Lord the bones of the kings of Judah the bones of its officials the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs and they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the hosts of heaven which they have loved and served which they have gone after and sought and worshipped and they shall not be gathered or buried they shall be as dung on the surface of the ground that shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them declares the Lord of hosts can you hear that growing sense of indignation and passion that God has as he's as he's indicting his people he's charging his people of these sins they're worshipping the sun, moon and all the hosts they have loved these idols and served them they have gone after them they have sat and worshipped them yet in right underneath the nose of these so-called planets and gods your dead bodies will be displayed and those gods whom you loved and served and went after and sought and worshipped will look on your corpses in cruel indifference powerless before the Lord God Almighty to do anything for their devotees what are

the sins the idols in your life that you love that you serve that you are going after that you seek and worship because the picture that scripture paints of us today is not far so different from the picture that is painted of here of people of Judah in the gospel of Mark Jesus makes use of this passage of Jeremiah to describe the sins of his people and actually throughout the gospel of Mark the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders in particular are portrayed as people who are breaking specific commandments of the Ten Commandments and remember that Ten Commandments were specifically cited here in chapter 7 verses 8 to 10 so these Jewish leaders are seen as stealing from their parents they are seen as conspiring to share innocent blood they are swearing falsely by professing love for God yet they avoid the most important commandments they have committed idolatries of the heart and have been blind and deaf toward God's voice and especially in Mark 7 1 to 23

Jesus goes on to describe the sins of these people in very similar ways as is described here people in Jeremiah's day as well as people in Jesus' day as well as people in our day are guilty of paying lip service to God rather than truly listening to Him and it's these stubborn and incorrigible people that God sent Jesus Christ to save and in Mark 11-17 after you know cleansing the temple of money changers and people who are trying to profit from the worship of the Lord Jesus quotes this expression from Jeremiah 7-11 he said has this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes behold

I myself have seen it declares the Lord so what God was saying in Jeremiah was this is my house and you think you see this as a den of robbers you see the temple as a den of robbers but I myself as the owner and the Lord of this house have seen the house too and that's what Jesus does when he uses this word when he comes out in Mark he says when people ask him by what authority he says it is not written is it not written my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations but you have made it a den of robbers and Jesus when people ask him after Jesus says this by what authority are you doing these things who gave you the authority to do these things and Jesus tells them he implies to them that it's because he is the one who has come from heaven he is the one to whom this house belongs his name is the one that is on this house it is his house he is the Lord the son of God who has come and he has come to save us because he recognizes and that's the truth is that we as people it's easy to judge the people who are described in this way as the stubborn people rebellious sinners yet as Jesus describes we too create dens of robberies we too

pay lip service to God rather than listening to him and Jesus that's why he had to come to save a people who do not listen to him because that judgment that is prophesied here in Jeremiah of the people of Judah is the same judgment that we would face of being separated from God and being rejected by him and Jesus came to restore the true worship of the Lord God and to raise up people who will obey him and follow him

Jesus is the only one who can save us because repeatedly in this passage we're told that they were believing and spreading deceitful words yet Jesus is described in 1 Peter 2:22 this way he committed no sin neither was deceit found in his mouth Jesus is the one who faithfully proclaims the word of God in fact he's the embodiment of the word and Jesus is the only person who has faithfully listened to God and yet according to 2 Corinthians 5:21 for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God this is how we get out of this judgment that's prophesied in Jeremiah we have not listened to him but Jesus who knew no sin Jesus who listened to God perfectly took on our sin and when we entrust ourselves to him in faith he gives us his righteousness and counts it as our own so that we can be restored to right relationship with God and that great exchange of salvation is what we call the gospel of Jesus Christ there's still a lot of deceptive words nowadays as there were in Jeremiah's days you don't need to listen to God all you need is this temple you don't need to listen to God you just need to bring sacrifices you don't need to listen to God know him you just need to do good deeds and try to be a good person you don't need to listen to God you just need to follow your own religion faithfully these are deceptive words they are terrible words that lies that lead you to the awful judgment of being rejected by God as described here in Jeremiah your only hope is in Jesus Christ who committed no sin your only hope is in Jesus Christ in whom no deceit was found because there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which you must be saved there is salvation in no one else except in Jesus so

[44 : 04] I ask you stop paying lip service to him turn to him listen to him obey him and cling to Jesus Christ for your salvation let's reflect on that truth take a moment of silence think about what ways in which you may be paying lip service to him instead of truly listening to God and then after you've reflected for a moment we'll respond by praying out loud together as a church and see you seated in