

OUTLAWS

MESSAGE NEXT STEPS

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Having an unpopular message to share with others can be a daunting task. But just as we need friends and family in our lives to share truth with us, we also serve a God of both truth and love. How can God's truth, even when tough to hear, lead us to a more hopeful future?

Work through the following questions and Scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a lighthearted example of a time you held an unpopular opinion that you felt strongly about and were surrounded by people who thought differently (e.g., at a sporting event rooting for the visiting team instead of the home team)? How did you handle that?
2. Have you ever struggled to understand how certain things in the Bible pertain to your life or current times? What do you do when you encounter this difficulty?
3. Do you imagine there's been a time in your life when God was pleading with you to turn back to Him, but you seemed to remain hard-hearted? Have you ever observed such a season in someone else's life? What might be helpful in seasons like these?
4. Are there any aspects of our current culture that sometimes make it difficult for you to stay focused and to never compromise your faith? If so, what is it about culture that makes things difficult?
5. We learned this week that even when Israel ignored God's pleas to turn back to Him, God continued to pursue them. And the God that passionately pursued Israel is the same God that pursues us today. What does knowing this detail about God's character mean to you?
6. **Read Jeremiah 26:1-3.** Have you ever felt like you were receiving multiple clear warning signs about a need to turn away from a certain path or behaviors in your life? What were some of those signs? What did it take for you to heed those warnings?
7. **Read Jeremiah 29:10-14.** God is a God of love, but He is also a God of truth. But even when God's truth may be hard to face or brings us sadness, God promises us hope. This week, concentrate on the promises God has for you. How can you begin to focus on God's promises in a real way in order to bring you hope, even at times when things seem hopeless? What practices can you put into your life that will help you remember God's promises on a daily basis?

KEY SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 26:1-3 – This is what the Lord says: “You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. This message came to Jeremiah from the Lord early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah. This is what the Lord says: Stand in the courtyard in front of the Temple of the Lord, and make an announcement to the people who have come there to worship from all over Judah. Give them my entire message; include every word. Perhaps they will listen and turn from their evil ways. Then I will change my mind about the disaster I am ready to pour out on them because of their sins.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord.

DIGGING DEEPER

As you look to dig deeper into the topics of this week’s message, consider checking out the Obey God outcome on Gateway’s Spiritual Growth Path.

Central to Scripture’s teachings is the understanding that our relationship with God is based on grace: “For it is by grace you have been saved...not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).. Paul again addressed boasting when he wrote that he would “never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). We stand before God, not because we have been good, but because the cross of Christ has brought about needed justification and reconciliation. This teaching, though, is often grossly misunderstood and misapplied. Scripture does not teach that obedience is optional....Authentic followers of Christ come to Christ, because they are fed up with the corruption in this world and in their own lives, and they ache to be free from it. Freedom is not freedom to sin, because we love sin, but freedom from sin, because we hate sin. Grace, in Scripture, is not only described as the gift of God’s forgiveness, but Scripture tells us that “the grace of God has appeared... and teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:11-12).

To complete the Obey God outcome in its entirety, head to gatewaychurch.com/spiritual_outcomes/obeygod

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