

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

PASTOR JEREMIAH JOHNSON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

Overview

Faith Righteousness and the New Covenant

Core Scriptures: Hebrews 8:6–13; Romans 10:3–4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Luke 15:11–32

Overview

This message explores the foundation of the new covenant — that our right standing before God is not earned through our own performance or obedience, but received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as our righteousness rather than on ourselves, faith flourishes, grace flows freely, and genuine love becomes possible.

Key Takeaways

1. **No one is too lost for God.** Pastor Jeremiah shared his own story of being a drug addict, atheist, and outspoken enemy of Christianity before being radically transformed by the Holy Spirit. God does not need our permission to pursue the people we love.
2. **The weak link of the old covenant has been removed.** The old covenant depended on human obedience and was therefore vulnerable to human failure. The new covenant was made between Father God and Jesus — and because we are now in Christ, we participate in a covenant we cannot break.
3. **Self-focus is the enemy of faith.** Whether it shows up as pride and self-righteousness or as self-pity and unworthiness, excessive focus on ourselves short-circuits faith and frustrates grace. Both are forms of trying to establish our own righteousness apart from the cross.
4. **Salvation is rescue in every area of life.** The Greek word *soteria*, translated as salvation, means rescue. God's desire is to rescue us not only from sin and death, but in our relationships, health, finances, and every other area of life.
5. **Grace changes your want-tos.** Lasting freedom from sin and destructive patterns does not come through willpower or trying harder. It comes through awakening to who you are in Christ. When your identity grows, your desires change.
6. **The gospel produces strong faith, pure motives, and real relationship with God.** When we know we are loved and made righteous through Jesus, our actions toward God and others flow from genuine love rather than performance or obligation.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question — Getting Honest

Go around the group and share briefly: Is there an area of your life right now where you need rescue?

Section 1 — No One Is Too Lost

Pastor Jeremiah described himself as an atheist, drug addict, and outspoken enemy of Christianity before his conversion, and he said, “God doesn’t need our permission to pursue our loved ones.” Has someone in your own life ever seemed too far gone, only to be reached by God? How does that statement bring comfort or challenge to you personally? What does it look like practically to “stand in the gap” for a lost or prodigal loved one? How do you maintain hope over a long period of time?

Section 2 — The New Covenant and Righteousness by Faith

Read Hebrews 8:12, where God promises to be merciful to our unrighteousness and to remember our sins no more. Pastor Jeremiah explained that the old covenant was vulnerable because it depended on human obedience, while the new covenant was made between Father God and Jesus. How fully do you actually believe that promise applies to you personally? What makes it difficult to receive?

“You did not qualify yourself for the blessing, so you cannot disqualify yourself from the blessing.” Does that statement bring you freedom, or does something in you resist it? Why?

Section 3 — The Danger of Self-Focus

Two forms of self-focus came up in the message: pride and self-righteousness on one hand, self-pity and a sense of unworthiness on the other. Which of these do you find yourself more prone to? Pastor Jeremiah pointed to the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son — physically closest to the father, yet farthest from the father’s heart. In what ways can religious activity and moral effort actually distance us from genuine relationship with God?

“As a born-again child of God, you’ve actually lost the right to judge yourself.” What does that mean? Does it feel liberating or unsettling to you?

Section 4 — Grace, Identity, and Real Relationship

Pastor Jeremiah did not get free from drug addiction by trying harder to stop using drugs. As he put it, “I found out I wasn’t a drug addict before I stopped using drugs.” What does this tell us about the relationship between identity and behavior? How have you experienced grace — “the divine influence upon the heart and the reflection in the life” — changing your desires, rather than just your outward behavior?

“Christianity is not the great performance, it’s the great confession.” What would it look like in this group to create the kind of safety where people can be honest about their failures without fear of judgment?

Practical Application

This week, choose one or more of the following to put into practice:

Speak it out loud. Pastor Jeremiah encouraged the congregation to confess aloud: “I am right with God because of Jesus. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.” Set aside a few minutes each morning this week to make this declaration. Notice how it affects your mindset and your interactions with others throughout the day.

Identify your self-focus pattern. Reflect honestly on whether you tend toward self-righteousness or self-pity. Journal about one specific situation this week where that pattern showed up, and then bring it before God, asking Him to redirect your attention to Jesus.

Pray for a lost loved one. Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know the Lord or has walked away. Commit to praying for them daily this week, declaring that they are part of your inheritance and that God is pursuing them.

Examine your motives in one relationship. Think of someone you serve, help, or give to regularly. Ask yourself honestly whether your actions toward that person flow from genuine love or from a desire to perform, earn approval, or manage guilt. Bring that honestly before God and ask Him to fill you with His love for that person.

Have a real conversation. Identify one person in your life — a friend, spouse, or group member — with whom you tend to wear a mask. Take a step toward authentic relationship by sharing something real about a struggle or weakness you have been hiding.

Closing

Pastor Jeremiah closed by saying the gospel is “not elementary, not ABCs — it is the air that you breathe.” Close your group time by praying together in three directions:

1. **Receive** — Ask God to make the truth of your righteousness in Christ more real to each person in the room.
2. **Release** — Surrender any area of self-focus, performance, or self-condemnation that has been frustrating faith and grace.
3. **Reach** — Lift up by name the lost and prodigal loved ones represented in your group, declaring that God is pursuing them and that their whole household will be saved.

Then declare together: *“I am right with God because of Jesus. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.”*

News & Events

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- October 1 – Ladies Bible Study, Thursdays at 10:30 AM, Study: Perfect Forever by Chad Gonzales
- October 3 – Ladies Event
- October 4 – Biblical Citizenship in Modern America Class begins at 4 PM
- October 24 – Harvest Party
- October 29–31 – Men’s Advance
- November 7–8 – Guest Speaker, Chad Gonzales