

Small Group Guide: Jeremiah - The Weeping Prophet

****Character Studies in the Old Testament Summer Series****

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

****Icebreaker Question:****

When was the last time something moved you to tears? What was it about that situation that touched your heart so deeply?

Key Scripture

****Jeremiah 1:4-10**** (Read aloud together)

Big Idea

Like Jeremiah, God is calling us to a life where we carry His Word in our mouths and His tears in our eyes—a life that both confronts and weeps over the lostness and hurting of our culture.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Understanding God's Calling (15 minutes)

1. ****God's Purposeful Design****

- Jeremiah was told that God formed him, knew him, and set him apart before birth. How does understanding that God has purposefully designed you change how you view your current circumstances and relationships?

2. ****Responding to God's Call****

- Jeremiah's first response was "I am only a youth." What "I am only..." excuses do you find yourself making when God prompts you to step out in faith?

3. ****The Hard Work of Ministry****

- God's plan included six verbs: pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow, build, and plant. Why do you think the tearing down must come before the building up? How have you experienced this in your own spiritual journey?

Part 2: Developing a Heart That Weeps (20 minutes)

4. ****Private Grief vs. Public Indifference****

- The sermon described Jeremiah's tears as "a sustained emotional posture" rather than a single moment. When you look at our culture's rebellion against God, what is your honest emotional response—irritation, superiority, indifference, or grief?

5. ****Weeping with God****

- In Jeremiah, it's sometimes hard to tell if God or the prophet is speaking because their hearts were so aligned. What would it take for your heart to become so aligned with God's that you feel what He feels about people?

6. ****The Root Disease****

- Jeremiah identified pride as the root behind idolatry, injustice, and immorality. How do you see pride manifesting in our current culture? How does pride show up in your own heart?

Part 3: Jeremiah's Relevance Today (20 minutes)

7. **Religious Performance Without Repentance**

- The people said "This is the temple of the LORD" while oppressing the poor and worshiping false gods. How do we sometimes hide behind religious activity while avoiding genuine repentance in our own lives?

8. **The Third Way**

- The sermon described two caricatures: "harsh truth-tellers with no tears" or "sentimental empathizers with no backbone." Jeremiah models a third way: soft hearts, firm spines, tear-filled eyes. Which extreme are you more naturally drawn toward? How can you move toward the biblical balance?

9. **Speaking vs. Weeping**

- "The biggest mistake for the believing church today is we speak about people we have never wept for." Who are you tempted to speak about (or post about) without having first wept for them in private prayer?

Part 4: Moving Forward (15 minutes)

10. **From Emotion to Action**

- Jeremiah didn't just feel; he acted—buying a field in a war zone, writing letters to exiles, giving practical guidance. How can genuine compassion move beyond feelings into concrete acts of love in your life?

11. ****Hope Without Naivety****

- How can we maintain clear-eyed honesty about sin and judgment while remaining relentlessly hopeful about God's future? Why is it important to avoid both cynicism and naivety?

Key Takeaways

1. ****We are formed, known, and set apart by God**** - Our lives are not accidents; we have been placed in this cultural moment with divine purpose.
2. ****True ministry begins with God's initiative**** - It's not about our plans or ideas, but about responding to God's purposes.
3. ****Faithful ministry requires both truth and tears**** - We must be uncompromising in truth while remaining unshakably compassionate.
4. ****Jeremiah's tears were covenant grief**** - He didn't weep over what culture did to him, but over what it was doing to God and to itself.
5. ****We must weep in private before we speak in public**** - Hidden prayer must precede public proclamation.

Life-Change Challenge for the Week

Choose at least one of these challenges to complete before your next meeting:

1. One Hour of Hidden Weeping

Set aside one uninterrupted hour this week to be alone with God over our community.

- Name specific people who need Christ
- Confess specific sins you see in our culture
- Identify specific wounds in your community
- Ask God to share His heart with you

****Accountability Question:**** When will you schedule this hour? Put it in your calendar now.

2. One Act of Genuine Compassion

Do one concrete, inconvenient act of love for someone far from God or deeply hurting.

****Ideas:****

- Mentor a teenager
- Help a single parent
- Volunteer at a recovery program
- Invite someone into your home
- Provide practical help to someone in need

****Accountability Question:**** Who specifically will you reach out to this week?

3. One Honest Spiritual Conversation

Initiate one gentle but clear conversation about Jesus with a person God puts on your heart.

****Preparation:****

- Pray for the person daily before the conversation
- Ask God for wisdom and timing
- Remember: soft heart, firm spine, tear-filled eyes

****Accountability Question:**** Who is God bringing to mind right now?

Prayer Focus (10 minutes)

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray for:

1. ****Eyes to see**** - Ask God to give you His perspective on your community and the people around you.
2. ****Hearts that break**** - Pray that God would soften your heart toward those far from Him and give you His grief over their lostness.
3. ****Courage to act**** - Ask for boldness to speak truth in love and to take concrete steps of compassion this week.

4. ****Specific people**** - Share names of specific people you're burdened for and pray together for their salvation.

Closing Thought

"God is still looking for men and women, students and grandparents, who will say, 'Lord, I will carry Your Word in my mouth and Your tears in my eyes for this place, these people, this time.'"

****Will you be a Jeremiah-shaped Christian in this generation?****

For Next Week

- Complete at least one of the Life-Change Challenges
- Be prepared to share how God worked through your obedience
- Continue praying for the people God has laid on your heart