

Small Group Guide

Jeremiah Series | Week 3 | Jeremiah 7-10

September 06, 2026

Big Idea

Religious performance without a heart of obedience is offensive to God; God calls His people to truth, obedience, and a real knowledge of Him.

How to Use This Guide

Read through the key takeaways before your group meets. During your time together, work through the discussion questions at whatever pace fits your group. Do not feel pressure to cover every question. The goal is honest, unhurried conversation rooted in Scripture and personal reflection.

Key Takeaways

****1. The temple slogan is not a shield.****

The people of Judah believed that having the temple meant they were protected from judgment. They trusted in a religious identity rather than a covenant relationship. God

rejected that logic entirely. No church name, tradition, or reputation substitutes for genuine obedience.

****2. Religion can become cover for sin.****

False religion does not always look like open paganism. It can look like consistent church attendance, doctrinal knowledge, and ministry involvement that functions as moral camouflage over an unrepentant heart. God sees through all of it.

****3. Obedience is the foundation, not a supplement to ritual.****

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, His foundational command was to obey His voice. Sacrifice and ceremony were always meant to flow from a heart yielded to God, never to replace that yielded heart. The same is true for every form of worship today.

****4. The only lawful boast is knowing God.****

Jeremiah 9:23-24 strips away every human credential. Wisdom, power, and wealth are not the measures of a life well lived. Knowing God in a real, covenantal, experiential way is the only boast that holds.

****5. Every idol eventually exposes itself.****

The idol must be carried. It cannot carry its worshiper. Whether ancient or modern, idols drain those who serve them. Only the living God is worthy of trust because only He can truly carry, forgive, satisfy, and save.

****6. Truth and tears belong together.****

Jeremiah wept over the very people he was rebuking. Faithful witness is neither cold criticism nor empty sentiment. It holds hard truth and deep love together at the same time.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Choose one to get the conversation started)

1. When you hear the phrase "false religion," what image first comes to mind? How did this sermon challenge or expand that initial image?

2. Have you ever been part of a church culture or personal season where religious activity felt more like routine than genuine communion with God? Without over-sharing, what did that feel like?

Digging Deeper

3. The people of Judah chanted "The Lord's Temple is here" as if the building itself guaranteed their safety. What are some modern equivalents of that slogan that churches or individual Christians might lean on today?

4. The pastor described false religion as providing "moral camouflage." What does that look like practically in a church setting? What makes that kind of camouflage so difficult to recognize in ourselves?

5. God told Jeremiah that His foundational command was not about sacrifice but about obedience. How does that reorder the way we think about our Sunday worship, our giving, our service, and our other religious practices?

6. Read Jeremiah 9:23-24 together (summarized: do not boast in wisdom, power, or wealth, but boast only in truly knowing God who shows unfailing love, justice, and righteousness).

What does it look like practically to boast in knowing God rather than in any of those other things? What makes that so difficult in everyday life?

7. The pastor said, "Truth without tears can become cruel. Tears without truth become sentimental." What does it look like to hold both together? Can you think of a person in your life or in history who modeled that combination well?

8. Jeremiah described idols as objects that must be carried by their worshipers rather than carrying them. The pastor applied that to modern idols like money, image, pleasure, power, and ideology. Which of those do you find most subtly present in your own life? What does it cost you to maintain it?

9. The pastor offered a word of comfort to those who fear they have hardened their hearts beyond recovery. He pointed to ongoing conviction, fear of the Lord, and a pricking conscience as signs of grace still at work. How does that distinction between hardness and struggle land with you personally?

10. The sermon closed by pointing to Christ as the true temple, the obedient Son Israel failed to be, and the One who creates a people who worship in spirit and truth. How does seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of everything Jeremiah warned about change the way you approach your own worship and obedience?

Practical Applications

Work through these individually before or after your group meeting, or discuss them together if time allows.

****Examine your motives.****

Set aside ten to fifteen minutes this week for honest self-examination. Ask yourself: Is my church attendance, ministry involvement, or doctrinal knowledge functioning as genuine worship, or has any part of it become cover for an area of my life I have not surrendered to God? Write down what surfaces honestly.

****Identify your temple slogan.****

What label, reputation, or religious identity are you most tempted to trust in? Name it specifically. Then bring it before God in prayer and ask Him to replace your confidence in that label with genuine obedience and knowledge of Him.

****Audit your idols.****

Using the categories the pastor named (money, image, pleasure, power, ideology), identify which one demands the most maintenance from you right now. Ask a trusted person in your group to pray with you and hold you accountable in that specific area over the next month.

****Practice truth with tears.****

Think of someone in your life who is living in a way that will lead to harm. This week, pray for that person with the kind of grief Jeremiah modeled. Ask God to give you both the courage to speak truth and the compassion to do it with genuine love, not detached correction.

****Memorize and meditate.****

Spend time this week with the summary of Jeremiah 9:23-24. Write it out. Pray through it. Ask God to make knowing Him the single thing you boast in above every other credential or achievement in your life.

Closing Prayer Points

Use these to guide your group's closing prayer time.

- Pray for honest self-examination and the courage to repent where conviction comes.
- Pray for your church, that it would be a place where God's Word searches and restores rather than a place where sin finds cover.
- Pray for those in your group or in your lives who may be hardening under repeated calls to repent.
- Pray for a growing, experiential knowledge of God that outweighs every other boast.
- Thank God that Christ is the true temple, the obedient Son, and the One through whom we truly know the Father.

Jeremiah Sermon Series | Week 3 | Jeremiah 7-10