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CHURCH**
EDINBURGH

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Living Faithfully (Jeremiah 7)

How to live when the world is upside down - Living faithfully (Jeremiah 7)

Many of the constants are changing in our world- that means they weren't ever true constants! God is showing himself to us as the constant that doesn't change.

Jeremiah was a lonely prophet to God's people. Portraying the constancy of God and his desire for Covenant relationship. V23 "I will be your God and you will be my people". Like a marriage vow such a promise requires a response.

But Israel was half-hearted in her response: 7:9 "Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known" In addition they mixed idol worship in with temple worship. Jeremiah's message in summary: God is Lord of all or NOT Lord at all.

Jeremiah calls them back to the plan and purpose of God.

Jeremiah 7:22-24

22 For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, 23 but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. 24 But they did not Listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backwards and not forwards.

Faithfulness to God is spelled OWL:

OBEY, WALK and LISTEN

OBEY v22

"I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, 23 but I gave

them this command: obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people"

The whole of the old covenant was built on a sacrificial system that God had chosen. But that whole system was a distant second to heart obedience. Yet they became preoccupied with methods rather than right relationship with God.

King Saul (1 Sam 15:22) was given a military victory. He kept a few animals against God's instruction to sacrifice to God: God said "To obey is better than sacrifice"

Are you holding out on an area of specific obedience to the WORD? Baptism? Forgiveness? God telling you to do something.

Corrie Ten Boom.

"Don't bother to give God instructions- just report for duty"

WALK v23

V23: "Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you."

WALK. Obedience is momentary. Walking is continuous. Life is about decisions and follow through. Some are better at one than the other.

Faithfulness always involves plodding.

Micah 4:8 "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God"

ENOCH- Gen 5 He walked with God and he was no more. He has some kids and walked with God. If you met him today you'd say he was an underachiever. What if our biggest achievement wasn't our career or how many kids we had - but that someone said of us "She/he walked with God"

Emmaus road - he's a walking saviour - he walks alongside with power. Companion. Alongside you. Right now.

LISTEN

V24 "But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backwards and not forwards"

Luke 8:18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen.

Listening is one of the signs of truly belonging to God:

John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

It's about listening to Jesus.

Mark 9:7 Some disciples up a mountain.... Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

THE PROBLEM and SOLUTION All of us have fallen short of God's OWL standard. Only Jesus has met the mark.

In the new covenant Jesus substitutionary death paves the way for the Hope Jeremiah went on to prophesy in chapter 31:

"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

In the time of challenge- Jeremiah brings future hope. In today's challenge- here is the hope You can know God. Not based on your behaviour. As Jesus lived perfectly for you. But if you let Jesus in- he will inscribe his word into your heart and mind.

And you can know a relationship that goes beyond any in this life. A faithful God who loves you even when you falter through feelings of faithlessness.

Questions:

For fun: What was a fun childhood discovery you made growing up?

Constants. What "constants" have been shaken in our world in the last few months? Why is this a helpful thing for us as Christians?

Obedience v Busyness. Can you remember a time (or is God challenging you now?) when God convicted you on an Obedience issue?

Walking v emotional response. Are you better at clarity (making a choice) or follow through (process)? Why are both needed to being faithful?

Your biggest achievement: knowing God. How does the story of Enoch in Genesis 5 help us see our lives in perspective?

Listen. How does God get your attention? What devices does he use?



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