

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 11
WEEK OF AUGUST 23



Growth Group Summer 2020
Saying No and Staying True
Week 11 – August 23, 2020 - Jeremiah 35:1-16

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

In Jeremiah 35, we are introduced to the Rekabites. We read about them first in 2 Kings 10:23 and following. Jonadab ben Rekab is mentioned in connection with Jehu’s destruction of the house of Ahab in 842 B.C. and his removal of the Baal-worshippers, who had flourished under Jezebel. They are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2:55 and seem to have a connection to the scribes of later years.

The Rekabites, that we meet in Jeremiah, had made their way to Jerusalem and sought safety there because of the constant war that was happening, first in Israel and then in Judah.

God wants Jeremiah to use the Rekabites devotion and obedience as an example for all of Judah to witness. God is confounded by how a group of people like the Rekabites can be faithful to a couple of simple commands from their ancestor, and yet Judah cannot be faithful to the God who had saved and redeemed them.

Jeremiah invites the Rekabites to join him at a gathering in a chamber room that belonged to the son of Haman. This chamber was next to the chamber of the court officials and above the chamber of Maaseiah, the keeper of the threshold, which appears to be an important priestly office. It appears that various priests had “offices” at the temple. The Rekabites found themselves in the midst of very important officials all of whom probably knew what was going on.

Jeremiah offered them large portions of wine which was refused. The Rekabites told the story of why they did not drink wine and talked about their nomadic life. What is interesting is that Jeremiah does not commend them for their faith, but for their obedience. Because so little is known about them, we are not certain of their faith commitments to God. However, we very clearly see their obedience. It is this type of obedience that God would like for the people of Judah to exhibit.



Exploring the Text

Read Jeremiah 35:1-16

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: 2 “Go to the Rekabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink.”

3 So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Rekabites. 4 I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. 5 Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the Rekabites and said to them, “Drink some wine.”

6 But they replied, “We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. 7 Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.’ 8 We have obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine 9 or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. 10 We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us. 11 But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, ‘Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies.’ So we have remained in Jerusalem.”

12 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: 13 “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?’ declares the Lord. 14 ‘Jehonadab son of Rekab ordered his descendants not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather’s command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. 15 Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, “Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors.” But you have not paid attention or listened to me. 16 The descendants of Jehonadab son of Rekab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me.’

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Are there any traditions your family has that have been passed down through the generations?
- 2) God chooses to make his point about obedience by using the Rekabites as an example. Why do you think God chose the Rekabites?
- 3) Why do you think people struggle with being obedient to God? Why could the Rekabites keep the challenge from one of their ancient ancestors, but Israel/Judah couldn’t live in obedience to the one who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt, and led them to the Promised Land?
- 4) Being obedient to God requires sacrifice. Can you think of a time in your own life when you had to make sacrifices in order to remain faithful to God?
- 5) How would you define the word integrity?
- 6) Who do you know, that has modeled a life of integrity? What characteristics does/did that person exhibit?
- 7) Pastor Paul used Matthew 11:28-30, from The Message, in his sermon this week. “*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.*”

How do these verses speak to you? What does it look like to you to get away with Jesus and recover your life?

- 8) Integrating our faith into our lives is a difficult process. What have you found to be helpful in making your faith an “integral” part of your life?