

Jeremiah 21-24

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[0:00] We're in Jeremiah, chapter 21 to 24. You'll need a Bible. It'll be difficult to follow without a Bible. They're by the door there. Please do get up and grab one.

Next week is 25 to 29 in our race through Jeremiah. One of the things about sport that we love is you can have a team, let's say, or a boxer, and he's pretty average. He's something of a journeyman.

And then suddenly he has the fight of his life and he comes alive. Or a football team. They're doing okay. And suddenly they came alive and you think, well, where did that come from?

Can't be preaching as well, can't it? Preaching normally. And then suddenly it comes from nowhere. It's a bit like that in Jeremiah 21 to 24. Last week you're in the depths of despair. Jeremiah felt and experienced the pain of God's judgment like few others have or certainly have articulated.

Chapter 16 to 20, Jeremiah is creaking under the strain of being committed to embracing and living and proclaiming the message of judgment. It's almost too much for him. He almost breaks under the strain at the end of chapter 20. And then you get to chapter 21.

[1:17] The bell goes and Jeremiah comes out swinging. Jeremiah looks like a different man. He's recovered his prophetic mojo and he starts to preach with unmatched power and courage.

He takes on all corners and all comers in the name of God. God who's called him and equipped him for such a time as this. He's taken us down into the depths.

But now there is a new confident, unshakable, fearless Jeremiah. And he exposes us to the fearless blast of his prophetic preaching. Four chapters, four basic commands from the living God that you and I would do well to heed.

The first in chapter 21 is submit to God. Submit to God. In chapter 21 to 24, we're confronted with a carefully arranged snippet of sermons.

It's like a, now that's what I call Jeremiah's preaching. Pronouncement, oracles, proclamations, whatever you want to call them. Made by Jeremiah to the leadership of Judah.

[2:18] And these snippets cover each of the kings that Jeremiah saw come and go. But they're not in chronological order. In fact, they're in reverse order. Because Jeremiah or Barak has selected the material to step us through this four-part response.

To the God who speaks into our world. So we pick up the narrative in chapter 21, verse 1. Where just for a change, Jeremiah is under pressure. This is the word that came to Jeremiah. From the Lord, when King Zedekiah sent him.

Pasha, the son of Malchiah. And Zephaniah, the priest, the son of Messiah. Saying, I inquire of the Lord for us. For Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is making war against us.

Perhaps the Lord will deal with us according to all his wonderful deeds. And will make you withdraw from us. Now to refresh your memory, Zedekiah is the last king of Judah. He is one of the godly Josiah's sons.

Three of whom sat on the throne. All of them, I think it's fair to say, were spiritual idiots. The dad, Josiah was godly.

[3:22] The son was spiritual idiots. And Zedekiah has just had his name changed from Mataniah. And he's been stalled as the puppet king of Jerusalem. For ten years, he sits on the throne.

And he's now in the process of blowing everything by starting a pointless rebellion against mighty King Nebuchadnezzar. Who's already invaded Jerusalem. He shows his barefaced cheek by sending his chief advisor and chief priest to ask for a miracle through Jeremiah.

Get us out of this, Jeremiah. And Jeremiah can hardly contain his laughter or his scorn. You'll see that from verse three. Jeremiah said to them, thus you shall say to Zedekiah, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel.

Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands. And with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon. And against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city.

It's not quite the answer they were expecting. Did you hear that? God is on the side of the opposition. It's the ultimate betrayal. In fact, Jeremiah says you really need to get used to the idea of God not being on your side.

[4:29] Because both the exodus and the conquest are about to be reversed before your very eyes. Look at verse five. I myself will fight against you with outstretched arm. With outstretched hand and strong arm.

It's classic exodus language. Exodus, conquest, phrase. God will fight for you with an outstretched hand and a strong arm. Except now, he's coming against you in anger.

And in fury and in great wrath according to verse five. Can you even begin to imagine how much this must have felt? For generations, Judah had rested on the fact that God had repeatedly said, I will be your God and you will be my people.

Yet now, this same God is smashing his own people with a hammer. Nebuchadnezzar. Look at verse six. I will strike down the inhabitants of the city, but man and beast.

They shall die of great pestilence. After it declares it all, I will give Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his servants, and the people in the city who survive. The pestilence, sword and famine, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

[5:39] And into the hand of their enemies. Into the hand of those who seek their lives. He shall strike them down with the edge of the sword. He shall not pity them, or spare them, or have compassion. Listen. Now, I'm guessing that the king wasn't overly enthusiastic about this message.

It's a bit disorientating, isn't it? You know that TV show, Who Do You Think You Are? And all the way through, isn't it, the twist in the program is, you are not who you think you are.

When you find out that your grandfather was Reggie or Ronnie Cray, it can be a bit discombobulating, isn't it? Or when you find out there was kind of terrible, terrible behavior in your ancestors, you're not who you think you were.

It's discombobulating. It's disorientating. How much more, if our lives, in our lives, we think God is on our side. How disorientating it is to find out, in fact, that God is against us.

And Jeremiah announces to the king, and the freshly energized Jeremiah couldn't really care less about what the king thinks. Because his concern is to call the kings and the people to submit to God their judge.

[6:54] So, 21 verse 8, to this people you shall say, thus says the Lord, behold, I set before you the way of life and death. Again, Jeremiah is preaching Deuteronomy, chapter 30, verse 20.

He who stays in the city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. But he who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans, who are besieging you, shall live, and shall have his life as a prize of war.

For I have set my face against this city for harm and not for good, declares the Lord. He will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire. The way to live is to submit to God.

To God who comes in judgment. Similarly, chapter 21, verses 11 to 14 is an appeal to face reality. He appeals to the king to choose justice and integrity over exploitation and fraud.

But he knows that he's whistling in the wind because the king has already decided to self-destruct. The coming judgment is inevitable. I'll punish you according to the fruit of your deeds, says the Lord in verse 14.

[8:02] Jeremiah is under no illusions about either the motivation or the likely response of Zedekiah to his message. But it doesn't stop him calling on both the king and, more importantly, actually, the people to submit to the Lord.

Now, I know that things have changed since Jeremiah's day. The Lord Jesus became one of us. He lived and died and rose again for us.

He ascended for us. He is seated at the right hand of God for us. God's grace has been poured out on us in new and fresh ways. Including the fact of the Holy Spirit's presence with us.

He has moved into us, enabling us to know and to love God. But we mustn't make the mistake of thinking that the basic shape of our daily experience of life with God is radically altered.

You see, for Jeremiah, the basic building block of his discipleship was submitting to the God of the universe. And for you and I, it's exactly the same.

[9:10] Listen to these words of a New Testament writer, who I think was more sensitive than any of the others to the basic continuity of the shape of faith across the whole of the Bible.

Jesus' half-brother James. Here's what he says in typically prophetic language. Chapter 4, verse 1. What causes quarrels? And what causes fights among you? Is it not this? That your passions are at war within you?

You desire and you do not have. So you murder. You covet. You cannot obtain. So you fight and you quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.

You adulterous people. Do you not know, therefore, that friendship with God is enmity with the world? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that it's no purpose that Scripture says he yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us? But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

[10:08] Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil and he'll free from you. Draw near to God and he'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. And purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourself before the Lord and he will exalt you. That could be Jeremiah, couldn't it? Now, there are far more details than we've got time to go into.

But I want you to get the basic point. The basic point that we all face is submission. God calls us to humble ourselves before him.

Jeremiah calls the king and the people to submit to God. James says, submit yourselves to God. And that is the basic building block of discipleship. And just in case you have noticed, it is really hard.

Why is it hard? It's really hard to submit to other people because of our passions, our longings, our desires, because we don't want to. It's really hard to submit to God because we don't want to, do we?

[11:13] We want to get our own way. We want to deal with our own appetites by satisfying them. We want to feel good about ourselves. We want to keep our pride intact. We want to laugh and not cry.

We want to avoid, not face the truth. And the challenge is to accept that God is God and we are not. And so we submit to him. Jesus himself said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

And so let me ask you, how is that going for you tonight? To what extent is your life, if any, about submitting to God?

Of dying to yourself? Where are you feeling the struggle right now? Where are you finding that you have to fight every day?

What is weighing heavily on your heart? What are you praying about every day? Because you actually are deeply concerned about the gap between that. Between what you're thinking and doing and saying and what God asks of you in his words.

[12:21] And equips us for in the Lord Jesus by the Spirit. And I would go as far to say tonight that if there is no struggle to submit in your life now.

That if you can't actually identify areas where you're having to fight in the strength which God supplies. Then the strong likelihood is this. You are drifting dangerously into pretense or apathy or cold heartedness.

You're heading for the rocks. And it may be that you've drifted off the path of real daily glad painful submission to Jesus.

Because that is real discipleship. You see the problem is if we're not submitting to God. Then the only possible alternative is we're living for ourselves.

It may well be on the outside. The appearance of our life looks healthy and relatively impressive. But beneath the surface it has become subtly and definitely all about us.

[13:27] Doing what we want. Pursuing what we want. Living for ourselves. And if that is us what are we to do? There's only one solution to this kind of spiritual condition.

It is, isn't it, seeing the beauty of Christ again. Taking hold of him by faith as we repent of our renewed quest for dominance.

No one has expressed this more clearly than Thomas Chalmers in his famous sermon, The Expulsive Power of a New Affection. It's a remarkable sermon.

Let's think of the teenage boy. The teenage boy, he loves sport. He loves playing games. He loves mucking about. You can't get him into the bathroom.

He stinks. You can't get him into the bathroom. He wears tracksuits all the time. That's all he wears. He's in tracksuits. You just can't get him out. You say let's go for a dinner with the family and he's just in a tracksuit all the time.

[14 : 33] Suddenly, he's in the bathroom all the time. He stinks of lynx Africa. He puts stuff in his hair. And he's clean.

He started wearing jeans. Is that what teenagers are? He's wearing branded sportswear. I don't know. What's happened?

What has happened? There's something happened. He's become interested in the girl. And that affection for her has driven out his grey tracksuit bottoms. And it's driven out the not caring about what he smells like or what he looks like.

Because there's a new affection in his life. And this is how we fight sin. The expulsive power of a new affection. As we see Jesus in his beauty, it drives out our rebellion.

It drives out our apathy. It drives out our stubborn pride. You see, you will not change tonight by beating yourself up and trying to work yourself into a froth of repentance.

[15 : 38] What will change you is actually knowing the Lord Jesus as he's portrayed to us at the table tonight through the gospel. That it's when you see Jesus broken for you, given for you, that you will gladly bow before him.

That you'll throw your hands up, I hope, and you'll say, I've been an idiot. I've been utterly foolish. And so tonight, I invite you to gaze by face at the Lord who loves you. As you come to the table, the Lord who died for you.

The Lord who reigns for you. The Lord who is interceding for you. And submit to him. That's the first thing. Now the second thing in chapter 22 is where Jeremiah urges his peers to pursue integrity.

The further we go in Jeremiah, the more I admire this intense, introverted prophet who's unafraid of no one. We've already seen him front up to Zedekiah right at the end of his reign as the Babylonians come knocking on the door.

It turns out there wasn't a new thing. In the extracts of his preaching in chapter 22, we find that Jeremiah has gone head to head with the previous three kings. His basic message is laid out in verses 1 to 9, where judgment is announced and explained to the king of Judah.

[16 : 51] And the prospect for all the kings is the same. Verses 8 and 9, again, draw on Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 29, verse 22. Here's what Moses said. He said, the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick, all the nations will say, why has the Lord done this to this land?

What caused the heat of his great anger? Then the people will say, it's because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord. The God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they went and served other gods.

And worshipped them, gods whom they had not known, whom he had not allotted to them.

Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon all the curses written in this book. And the Lord uprooted them from the land.

In his anger and fury and great wrath. And he cast them into another land as they are this day. So Jeremiah goes and takes God's word and he preaches this message to Shalom. Jehoaz, as he's called in Kings.

And Jehoiakim. That's Josiah's other two sons. Jehoiakim and Jehoiakin. Confusingly, he's also known as Jeconiah and Keniah. Josiah. Josiah's grandson.

[18 : 03] And they shared none of Josiah's love for God. Which explains why he begins chapter 22, verse 10, by telling them, don't mourn for Josiah.

Josiah, he's gone. And his feckless sons are not going to measure up. Now just look very quickly at what he says to each of these kings. Chapter 22, verse 11. Shalom, okay. He shall return here no more.

But in the place where they've carried him captive, there shall he die. And he shall never see this land again. Jehoiakim's turn in 22, 13 to 19. And Jeremiah points out that his reign, unlike his dad, was marked by exploitation, consumption and fraud.

Woe to him, verse 13, who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice. Jeremiah hates loft extensions. He makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages.

Who says, I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms. Loft extensions really got to him. Who cuts out windows for it. Panels it with Caesar.

[19:07] And painting it with vermillion. Beware of vermillion. Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and the needy.

Then it was well. Is not this to know me, declares the Lord. But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain. For shedding innocent blood and for practicing oppression and violence.

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah.

They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother, ah, our sister. They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, Lord, or Ah, his majesty. With the burial of a donkey you shall be buried. Dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Go, Jeremiah.

He actually said this stuff to the king. Did you notice the striking phrase in the middle? He, Josiah, judged the cause of the poor and the needy. And it was well.

Is not this to know me, declares the Lord. His point is quite simple. Josiah was the real deal and you are not. And no wonder that the whole region is breaking out in lament in verses 20 to 23.

[20:10] There's a massive chasm at the heart of Judah for King Jehoiada. It's not the real thing, nor was Jehoiakim Jeconiah. Verse 24. As I live, declares the Lord.

Though Keniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with a signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off. Give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

And the Chaldeans, I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country. Verse 28. Is this man, Keniah, a despised broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why is this happening?

It's not from a lack of love. It's because they've refused to seek God and live. So verse 30. Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.

It's actually quite simple. For example, Jeremiah says, you are self-seeking shams. These are the anointed ones of God.

[21:12] They are the Davidic kings. They are the Christ's. They are the messiahs. And they are not there to expose our lack of integrity because none of us are the messiah.

But I do think we need to remember that in Israel, the king was to be the model Israelite. Which certainly included pursuing righteousness and justice. And in the New Testament, it is equally clear that as men and women who follow in the steps of the perfect king, we too are called to righteousness and justice.

And in that sense, their lives do speak into our lives. James again picks up this prophetic teaching. Do you remember?

He applies it and he says this. Be doers of the word, not hearers only. Deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

He looks at himself and he goes away. And he forgets what he looks like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he'll be blessed in his doing.

[22:21] And this. If anyone thinks he's religious and doesn't bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God. The father is this.

Visit orphans and widows in their affliction. Keep oneself unstained by the world. 2 verse 8, he says, if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. You're doing well. For as Jeremiah says and puts it more succinctly, is not this to know me, declares the Lord. One of the dangers of being a reformed church like ours, I think, is that we are slow to pursue integrity.

We are so scared of legalism that we often don't put enough emphasis on the importance of being Christ-like.

Which reaches every part of our life, not just the religious part, and shows itself in speaking the truth, in loving fearlessly, unapologetically, and backing that up with real compassion.

[23 : 22] A deep sense that God is sovereign Lord of all, and he knows what is best for all people, and he's shown us that in his word and in the Lord Jesus.

And so we need to throw ourselves into pursuing integrity. If you think that you can cut corners, if you think you can break your word, do you think in the end God will let you get away with that? Of course we do it in the strength that God supplies, and it's often very difficult. Knowing, of course, that the only way we can actually depend on, and the only one who can actually deliver us, is the true leader, which Jeremiah takes us to in chapter 23.

He continues with this charm offensive with the Judean leadership, verse 1. Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, declares the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people, you've scattered my flock, and I've driven them away, and you've not looked after them.

Behold, I will look after you, for your evil deeds, declares the Lord. You think you can mess about with God? Incredibly, God meets the staggering stupidity with verse 3.

[24 : 41] Then I will gather the remnant of my flock, out of all the countries where I've driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. Where have you seen that before? It's Genesis language. And I'll set shepherds over them, who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed.

Neither shall any be missing. Nothing can deflect God from his loving purposes for his people. Which is why he promises what he does in verse 5. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord.

When I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as a king, and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land in his days. Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called.

The Lord is our righteousness. A Davidic king will come. The real deal will arrive. He'll reunite Israel, which does exist at the moment, and Judah. He'll bring God's people to live together in peace with God and each other.

When he shows up, the exile will be over. In 23 verse 7, people will say, As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But as the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel, out of all the countries where he'd driven them, they shall dwell in their own land.

[25 : 49] The guy who can do this is the only one worth depending on. And in the rest of the chapter, God is speaking through his prophet.

He exposes the sheer stupidity of relying on anyone else apart from Jesus. Let me walk you through the lowlights. Verse 23 verse 9. Concerning the prophets, my heart's broken within me. All my bones shake. I'm like a drunken man. Like a man overcome with wine. Because of the Lord and because of his holy words. Verse 11. Both prophet and priest are ungodly. Even in my house I've found evil. Verse 13.

In the prophets of Samaria, I saw an unsavory thing. They prophesied by Baal. By Baal and led my people Israel astray. But in the prophets of Jerusalem, I've seen a horrid thing. They're worse. They commit adultery. They walk in lies and so on.

Ungodliness has gone out from Jerusalem to all the land. And so 23 verse 16. Thus says the Lord of hosts. Don't listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. Filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds.

[26 : 44] Not from the mouth of the Lord. These prophets have no mission. No message. No mandate from God. They cannot be trusted. They cannot be relied upon.

And they need to face that. And I am sorry to break it to you. But neither can we. Because you are not the center of the universe. And neither am I. And on our own, we have no answers.

No strategies worth saying out loud. No resilience. No wisdom. Nothing. Not only are you and I not the real deal. But we are intrinsically inconsistent.

Unreliable. We have nothing apart from God. But God, on the other hand. Look at verse 28. The prophet was a dream. Tell the dream.

But let him who was my word speak my word faithfully. Verse 29. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord. And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Our job is not to manipulate or manufacture words.

[27:44] But to depend on the one who will come speaking all truth. Ultimately, the one who is the word of God made flesh. And so what has all that got to do with us?

We need to depend on the one true ruler who comes from God. And all our authority, all our content, all our energy, anything good in us, ultimately comes from him.

And then, sin in us makes it very easy to have too high an opinion of ourselves and our own ability. And especially that is true of those of us who are leaders. Sin makes it far too easy to slip into thinking that we are nicer than we actually are. And we're smarter than we are.

And we are more significant than we actually are. And Jeremiah stridently reminds the leaders of his day and all of us down through history that the only word worth listening to is the word of God. And the only leader worth following is the one who comes from God.

[28:46] And so our job is very, very clear as a church to speak where it is from God as we follow the one who comes from God. It's not rocket science. But we are still very sinful.

And so it is hard. Which is why, finally, in chapter 24, we need to rely on grace. Jeremiah draws this part of his book to a close by relating the vision that he saw during the period right back at the beginning when Zedekiah was supervising affairs in Jerusalem for the Babylonians.

The vision, again, is not complicated. There are very good figs and very bad figs. And there's that beautiful moment in verse 3. And the Lord said to me, What do you see, Jeremiah? I said, figs. What does come as more of a shock is the interpretation because it's all the wrong way around. The good figs are the one that go into exile. Verse 6, I will set my eyes on them for good and I will bring them back to this land.

I will build them up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord and they shall be my people and I will be their God for they shall return to me with their whole heart. It's Exodus 19 and 20 and 30 all rolled into one.

[29:57] The new covenant figs are the figs who go into exile. And King Zedekiah and his cronies are the bad figs, in fact very bad figs. And I'm not really sure I can spot the difference between the bad and the very bad.

But God can. Verse 9, I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt and a curse. There's the choice that we all face embodied here. And it's the choice between relying on God's grace and doing it ourselves.

That's the thing about exile. When you're faced with exile, the only option is to go on relying on the grace of God. Because you've got to face the fact that you've been beaten, you've been defeated, you've been disenfranchised, you've been disappointed and you've been dispossessed.

Real exiles have lost everything. And they've faced it. And they have to throw themselves on the mercy of their house. But in doing so they find grace. Look at verse 6. God's sovereign grace actually gives us the one thing that we need more than anything else when we've got nothing and that is a new heart.

And the ability to live for him. To live for him and with him that we don't possess on our own. And that is the gift that brings us the ability to please God.

[31:16] This gift comes with batteries included. It is grace. But it's such a difficult lesson to learn, isn't it? I wish I could tell you that the last 30 odd years of my Christian pilgrimage have been all paths of grace.

I think the path to Christian maturity is not a smooth one, is it? We switch back to growing pride followed by being humbled. of increasing competence which leads to self-reliance and ends with painful repentance.

That is something that is deep rooted in me and in you. There is something, isn't it, that wants to say to the Lord, I'll take it from here. You know that prayer when you're in the car park?

You're driving around the car park and you cry out to me, Lord, please find me a space. And they say, oh, don't worry, Lord, I've found one. It's a joke. It's just lighten the mood. But that is, it's quite a good joke if you've only got it.

But there's something in us, isn't it, which says, Lord, we'll take it from here. And we can spot that kind of foolishness in other people, but we find it very hard on ourselves. There's something in us that makes it very easy to rely on our very impressive selves rather than the God of the universe.

[32 : 36] There's something in us which finds it far easier to talk than to listen to the word of God. Which is why we must constantly remind each other that we live by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

And this is another one of those areas where the pattern of the Old Testament is actually replayed in the New Testament. How does Galatians begin? Do you remember it? Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age but verse 6, I'm astonished that you're so quickly deserting.

Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel. That's us. The marvellous truth of Jeremiah 21 to 24 and the entire Bible is that you can sum it up by saying submit to God as you pursue integrity depending on the one true leader Jesus Christ who gives us his grace.

That is the beauty of the gospel. It is that God doesn't simply call us to but he actually gives to us the resources that we need to do it.

The grace that he holds out to us in the Lord Jesus he gives us new hearts and through the power of the Spirit this amazing grace enables us to submit and enables us to pursue integrity and grace that enables us to run to the only one who can give us grace.

[34 : 05] It is amazing grace. John Newton once wrote these words to a friend I am not what I ought to be ah how imperfect and deficient I am not what I wish to be I abhor what is evil and I would cleave to what is good I am not what I hope to be soon I shall put off with mortality all sin and imperfection and though I am not what I ought to be nor what I wish to be nor what I hope to be I can truly say I am not what I once was a slave to sin and Satan and I can heartily join with the apostle and say that by the grace of God I am what I am and it is by the grace of God that we will become what we will become and so in the light of that grace let us submit to God tonight let's pursue integrity let us run to the Lord Jesus Christ run to the table this branch of David in whom we find grace upon grace let's pray