



# Summer Study Discussion Guide #7

**Sermon Title:** Disillusioned with God

**Biblical Reference:** Jeremiah 20:1-18

**Date Preached:** Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 @ 11am

**Summer Study Date:** Wednesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Sermon Summary

Jeremiah suffered a breakdown and had a very dark conversation with the Lord. He accuses God of deceiving him, stating he wished he were never born. Jeremiah was angry at God and became very despondent. This passage teaches false expectations can deceive us and make us angry with God. If we bring our expectations in line with the Bible God can continue to use us.

## Quick Review

Looking back at your notes from this week's sermon, was there anything you heard for the first time or anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Were you able to apply something you learned from the sermon this week?

## My Story

Have you ever been through a time in your life when it seemed like everything was going wrong and the people you should have received support from made things worse?

## Digging Deeper

### 1. Anyone Can Be Affected

*Ask a volunteer to read: Jeremiah 20:14-18*

*14 Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.*

*15 Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad.*

*16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;*

*17 Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me.*

*18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?*

The person saying these things is the prophet Jeremiah, a man so revered that Jesus was mistaken by some to be Jeremiah (Matt 16:13-14). This shows us anyone can be affected by anger at God for our circumstances.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Why do you believe God included these verses in the Bible?
- How should we react when we hear people say things like this?
- Why does the Lord expose the weaknesses and sins of his most prominent servants?
- What are the negative consequences of Christians projecting themselves to be free of sins and weakness?
- Give us an example of a person admitting to a weakness or a sin that encouraged others?

## **2. Constant Pressure Cracks the Strongest**

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Jeremiah 20:2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.*

*Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.*

*Jeremiah 20:8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.*

Antagonism against Jeremiah's message has reached a fever pitch and for the first time Jeremiah's persecution turns physical. Even the priests, who should have been on his side, start to persecute. It becomes too much for Jeremiah, he snaps and begins to accuse God of deceiving him.

**Discussion Questions:**

- As you scan through verses 7-18, how would you describe both the positive and negative responses Jeremiah had to these pressures in his life?
- Why does God allow these pressures in the life of His people?
- Contrary to the widely held belief, “God will never give you more than you can handle”, He often does give us more than we can handle. Why do you think this is?

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

Jeremiah tried to quit but he had too much of God’s Word in him to be able to quit. When he saw the situation around him, he knew God’s Word was the answer and he just had to speak up.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Can you tell us about a time you tried to quit and why you were ultimately unsuccessful?

**3. Expectations Can be Very Unhealthy**

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.*

Jeremiah accuses the Lord of deceiving him. This passage is about the difficulties Jeremiah experienced because his calling. With this in mind, we understand the deception he is accusing God of happened when he was called. When God called Jeremiah, He told him he was to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah had an expectation that a prophet to the nations would be treated better than this.

Jeremiah was the one who deceived himself with his own expectations that things would be easier.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Why do many Christians have an expectation of a trouble-free life?
- Give us an example of how adjusting your expectations to the Bible led to a healthier life?

- As a child of God, what are some things we can and should be expecting based upon His promises?
- Where have you seen in your life, or the lives of others, where false expectations hurt or held us back?

#### 4. God Uses the Broken

God healed Jeremiah and continued to use him for many more years in the ministry. He was suicidal, he was angry at the Lord, and he was saying things that were not true. He tried to quit and God still healed him and used him.

##### **Discussion Questions:**

- Why do so many Christians believe God cannot use them?
- How can we help others who have been hurt or broken to heal and serve?

#### 5. Help Comes from God

*Ask a volunteer to read:*

*Jeremiah 20:12 But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.*

*Jeremiah 20:13 Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.*

Here Jeremiah opens his cause to the Lord telling him about his suffering and despondency. He puts his faith and trust in the Lord and sings to God by faith trusting Him for future deliverance and justice.

##### **Discussion Questions:**

- Why are we sometimes resistant to opening our cause before the Lord?
- How does us bringing our cause or problems to the Lord help us?
- How can we follow Jeremiah's example in these verses?
- In what way can Jeremiah's story give hope to others?

## Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of hearing the message:

1. What point in this message was most impactful for you?
2. How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
3. How will you put into practice what you have learned today?