

Stay True
August 7, 2011
Allen Power

Jeremiah 35:1-19

The Lesson in a sentence: The Lord expects His people to be FAITHFUL and TRUE to Him.

- God told Jeremiah: "Invite the Rechabites over for drinks."
- You're kidding, right?
- That's not in the Bible!
- It is...not in those exact words...but that's the beginning of this account in Jeremiah 35.
- First, regarding Jeremiah 35...the book of Jeremiah isn't always in CHRONOLOGICAL order, sometimes it's in THEOLOGICAL order.

Jeremiah 35:1-2

The Faithful Recabites

1 This is the message the Lord gave Jeremiah when Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah: 2 "Go to the settlement where the families of the Recabites live, and invite them to the Lord's Temple. Take them into one of the inner rooms, and offer them some wine."

- Who were the Rechabites?
- Descendants of a man named Rechab
- Metal workers
- They were a little odd in a couple of ways...they lived in tents and they didn't drink wine

Jeremiah 35:5-8

5 I set cups and jugs of wine before them and invited them to have a drink, 6 but they refused. "No," they said, "we don't drink wine, because our ancestor Jehonadab[a] son of Recab gave us this command: 'You and your descendants must never drink wine. 7 And do not build houses or plant crops or vineyards, but always live in tents. If you follow these commands, you will live long, good lives in the land.' 8 So we have obeyed him in all these things. We have never had a drink of wine to this day, nor have our wives, our sons, or our daughters.

Matthew Henry's Commentary:

Jonadab was famous for wisdom and piety. He lived nearly 300 years before, 2 Kings 10:15. Jonadab charged his posterity not to drink wine. He also appointed them to dwell in tents, or movable dwelling: this would teach them not to think of settling any where in this world. To keep low, would be the way to continue long in the land where they were

strangers. Humility and contentment are always the best policy, and men's surest protection. Also, that they might not run into unlawful pleasures, they were to deny themselves even lawful delights.

- Wine might have been fine for others in Judah...but not the Rechabites.
- So, what is the point? Why is this little story inserted in Jeremiah 35?

Jeremiah 35:12-14

12 Then the Lord gave this message to Jeremiah: 13 “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: Go and say to the people in Judah and Jerusalem, ‘Come and learn a lesson about how to obey me. 14 The Recabites do not drink wine to this day because their ancestor Jehonadab told them not to. But I have spoken to you again and again, and you refuse to obey me.

- This group, this family of people strictly observed what their EARTHLY father had commanded them when it came to where and how they lived and not drinking wine.

17 “Therefore, this is what the Lord God of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘Because you refuse to listen or answer when I call, I will send upon Judah and Jerusalem all the disasters I have threatened.’”

Simple lesson: UNFAITHFULNESS...DISOBEDIENCE to God has DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES!

God gently nudges us about the areas where we are disobedient and many times we PRESUME ON HIS MERCY AND PATIENCE.

We get so comfortable in an area of sin in our lives that we become HARDENED in our ways.

Hebrews 3:13

13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

UNFAITHFULNESS...DISOBEDIENCE to God has DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES!
On the other hand, OBEDIENCE has rewards...

18 Then Jeremiah turned to the Recabites and said, “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘You have obeyed your ancestor Jehonadab in every respect, following all his instructions.’ 19 Therefore, this is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘Jehonadab son of Recab will always have descendants who serve me.’”

Obedience has rewards...

John 14 beginning in verse 15 Jesus said:

15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth.

Verse 21...

21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Verse 23...

23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

- UNFAITHFULNESS...DISOBEDIENCE to God has DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES!
- Look no further than the people of Judah who were exiled to Babylon for a 70 year "time out" to " think about what they had done."
- On the other hand, OBEDIENCE has rewards...
- Think of the Rechabites...they may have been a little different and a little extreme...but they knew what it meant to be FAITHFUL AND TRUE...and were rewarded.

Psalms 1

1 Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

Remember the movie Chariots of Fire? It's the story of Eric Liddell the best sprinter in Scotland.

He was entered in both the 100-meter and the 200-meter races. Three months before the Olympic Games in Paris, Eric received a schedule of the events. Eric stared at the list in shock. Next to the qualifying heat for the 100-meter race was the word Sunday. Eric had a principle he clung to religiously. He would not run on Sunday.

The British and Scottish public that had so admired Eric turned on him with a vengeance. Many felt he was unfit to represent Scotland in the games. Some even called him a traitor to his country.

The British Olympic Committee asked Eric to enter two events that were not scheduled on Sunday—the 200-meter and 400-meter races—even though these were not his best events. Eric agreed. Eric won the bronze medal in the 200-meter final behind two

Americans, but no one gave him a chance of winning the 400-meter race that Friday evening in July 1924. It was not his event. He had barely squeaked into the finals during the qualifying heats. Further, he drew the outside lane, the least desirable spot. And worst of all, he was running against two world-record holders. As Eric left the hotel for his race, he reached into his pocket and found a small note that the British team masseur had slipped into his pocket. It read, "In the old book it says, 'He who honors me, I will honor.'" (Quoting 1 Samuel 2:30)

The rest is history. Eric won the 400-meter race. He set a new world record. He received the gold medal. He was honored as a national hero.

(Holman Old Testament Commentary - Jeremiah, Lamentations by Max Anders, Fred M. Wood, Ross H. McLaren)

So, What's The Takeaway?

- This isn't a lesson on temperance or abstinence from alcohol.
- It's a lesson on OBEDIENCE and FAITHFULNESS to God
- It causes me to take stock this week: Is there any area of my life where I'm not being FAITHFUL AND TRUE to Gods commands?
- It's simple...
- UNFAITHFULNESS...DISOBEDIENCE to God has DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES!
- On the other hand, OBEDIENCE has rewards...
- "Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.