**Today we are continuing our series, discussing nine characteristics of God’s Hesed toward those who place their trust in Him.**

**The Hebrew word Hesed is usually translated, steadfast loving-kindness, or faithful loving-kindness.**

**We have already discussed …**

1. **God’s faithful loving-kindness in salvation.**
2. **God’s faithful loving-kindness desires a response.**
3. **God’s faithful loving-kindness as the creator and sustainer of life.**
4. **God’s faithful loving-kindness is a refuge, a safe place in a sinful and fallen world for those who place their trust in Him.**

**Today’s topic is a difficult one; one that reminds us of the reality that even though God is patient and slow to anger, God’s faithful loving-kindness can be withdrawn.**

***Please turn to Jeremiah 16:5-13.***

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**The setting of our text….**

**After the death of Solomon in 931 BC the nation of Israel became a divided nation.**

**When that happened, it marked a downward spiral of idolatry, sexual immorality and injustice within both the Northern and Southern kingdoms.**

**For the Northern Kingdom from 931 BC to 722 BC**

* **Over a 209 year period, the NK had 20 Kings and only 1 is described as doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet that 1 king still allowed the worship of false gods to continue.**

**For the Southern kingdom of Judah, from 931 BC to 587 BC,**

* **Over a 344 year period of time the SK also had 20 kings and only 8 are described as doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet only 5 of those 8 sought to extinguish the worship of other gods.**

**In 722 BC, the NK was destroyed and overrun by Assyria and you would think that Judah would have learned from the NK’s mistakes.**

**Jeremiah is called into ministry in 628 BC.**

**The Southern Kingdom of Judah is now 41 years away from experiencing the Lord’s discipline, as the Babylonian Empire was about to overtake Judah in 587 BC.**

**As Jeremiah delivers the Word of the Lord, we find ourselves at a place where God’s patience has run out.**

**In our text, God withdraws His faithful loving-kindness, His *Hesed*, from Israel because of their unrepentant heart and their love affair with sin.**

**1. God promised to provide salvation to and through the nation of Israel.**

**After the infection of sin entered into the world, the promise of the Gospel began, the promise of One who would come from the lineage of Eve. The One who would crush the head of the serpent, Satan (Genesis 3:14).**

**From that point forward, God’s promise of salvation was continually and progressively being revealed to and through the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament.**

**From Adam and Eve to Noah to Abraham, that promise was continually and progressively revealed.**

**Abraham was chosen by God and was made aware that he would be the father of many nations. God also revealed that Abraham would be the beginning of the nation of Israel.**

**From this nation all the peoples of the world would be blessed, because from this nation One would come, One who would provide salvation to every nation, every language, every nationality. Amen!**

**God also promised Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to this nation as heritage, the land that God describes in Genesis 15:17-21.**

**God was faithful to that promise as He called Moses to be His anointed prophet. As Moses stepped into His ministry, Moses would lead God’s people out of bondage into the land that God promised to Abraham.**

**As God saved His people Israel from the slavery of the Egyptians, God also gave Israel His Law and instituted yet another anointed office, the office of the High priest.**

**As Moses died, Joshua was the one who led Israel into their promised land, their new home. Israel took possession of the land that God promised to them, and the slow rejection of God as their king began to take place (the book of Judges).**

**As the nation of Israel rejected God as their king, and asked for a human king, God continued to be faithful to His promise even though Israel rejected Him as their King.**

**While Israel was united, they had four kings.**

* 1. **Saul reigned about 30 years.**
	2. **Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, reigned for 2 years (2 Sam 2:8-11).**
	3. **David reigned for 40 years and**
	4. **Solomon, David’s son, reigned for 40 years.**

**When the office of king entered into the salvation history, it was the third anointed office that became a reality for Israel.**

**The three anointed offices were**

* 1. **The Prophet**
	2. **The High Priest (inaugurated at Mt. Sinai)**
	3. **And now, the King**

**All three offices where chosen and anointed by God Himself, all three offices reveal an aspect of the soon and coming promised Messiah. These three offices not only ministered the presence and promises of God to the nation of Israel, these three offices pointed forward to the Messiah who would embody and fulfill all three of God’s anointed offices.**

**The Messiah would be THE Prophet, THE High priest and THE King.**

**The Messiah was promised to and through the nation of Israel.**

**The Messiah would provide salvation for the world.**

**And that Messiah is Jesus.**

**Study Question:**

* 1. **How is it encouraging to you to see God’s faithfulness all through the history of Israel?**
	2. **Does God’s faithfulness to Israel reflect His faithfulness to you?**

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1. **God is patient and slow to anger.**

**Early in my walk with God, I wondered why God waited over 400 years to give the land He promised to Abraham to the nation of Israel.**

**Then I stumbled upon Genesis 15:13-16, more specifically verses 16.**

**Genesis 15:13-16 (ESV) Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, *for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”***

**That last phrase in verses 16 clarified things for me, it revealed that God is patient and slow to anger. He wanted to give the people in the land of Canaan ample time to repent from their sin. *Some might ask why?* The people that lived in the land of Canaan were all direct descendants of Noah and his family, more specifically Noah’s son, Ham (Genesis 9:18).**

**With that in mind, let’s fast forward to the time that Israel divided into the Northern and Southern kingdoms after the death of Solomon. God was still patient with His people. As I stated earlier, God waited over 200 years for the Northern kingdom to repent, and He waited over 300 years for the Southern kingdom to repent. Over that time period, God sent prophet after prophet to warn both the Northern and Southern kingdoms to repent of their sin. *God was patient in the midst of His people’s unfaithfulness.***

**Many of the funeral traditions stated in our text, vs 8 and 9, are pagan rituals, ones that embodied the worship of other gods. That’s why God commanded Jeremiah to NOT engage in these rituals. God’s command to Jeremiah reveals the idolatry that had taken foothold in both the Northern and Southern kingdoms. So even though it may seem that God is angry all throughout the OT, God was patient and often waited hundreds of years before bringing judgment upon a nation.**

**One more fact that is really important in understanding our text properly, is the warning that God gave to Israel at Mt. Sinai concerning the land they would take possession of, the land that God promised to Abraham.**

**The land that God promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 was occupied by Noah’s son Ham’s direct descendants. Ham and his descendants strayed very far from the ways of the Lord even though Ham knew God and experienced His salvation from the flood and saw the mighty hand of God preserving His promise (Genesis 6-9).**

**Ham strayed from God and his descendants and took it to a whole new level. The sins of Ham’s descendants, the people of Canaan, are listed in Leviticus chapters 18-20. The list is thorough and it contains the most vile of actions and sins that God commands the nation of Israel NOT to participate in.**

**Chapters 18-20 of Leviticus are marked with a warning to the nation of Israel.**

**Leviticus 20:22-23 (ESV) “You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may NOT vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things…**

**God withdrawing His faithful loving-kindness in Jeremiah 16:5, is the fulfillment of God’s promise to vomit the nation of Israel out of the land if they participate in the sins of the people who occupied the land before them (Lev 18:27-29 & 20:22-23). That’s why God states what He does in verses 10-13 of our text. And as Israel did participate in these practices, God warned them over and over again, reminding them of the consequences of their sin, but many would not listen.**

**Study Question:**

* 1. **How does Israel’s unfaithfulness reveal our own sin and our great need for Christ’s intervention in our lives?**

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**3. God is faithful to those who place their trust in Him!**

**But even though many would not listen, some did. God preserved a remnant of the people of Israel, those that refused to worship other gods or walk in the sins listed in Lev. 18-20. God did bring judgment upon the nation of Israel according to His warning, according to His promise in Leviticus, but God remained faithful to individuals who were faithful to Him.**

**People like Daniel, Esther and Ezekiel. Faithful servants like Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, maybe better known to us as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**

**In the midst of God’s judgement on the nation of Israel, God remained faithful to those who placed their trust in Him. As God used the Babylonian Empire to execute His judgment upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah, many faithful followers of God were preserved as a remnant that would bring glory to His name.**

**Faithful people that would proclaim the excellencies of the Great God of Israel, the great Creator of the universe. As Daniel, Esther, Ezekiel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and many others were deported to a foreign land, God used them to reveal Himself and His faithfulness.**

**And after the nation of Israel received its due judgment, God faithfully brought His people safely home to dwell in Jerusalem once more. After being in a foreign land for about 50 years, God brings His faithful remnant home.**

**God preserved His promise to provide salvation through the promised Messiah by remaining faithful to HIS promise that was made to and through the nation of Israel. The promise of a Messiah King who would come from Israel, One who would provide salvation through the great sacrifice described in Isaiah chapter 53. A sacrifice that would make many to be counted righteous and by the Messiah’s stripes we would be healed.**

**God withdrew His faithful loving-kindness from Israel because of His Word (Lev 20:22-23) and the sin of the nation.**

**Yet, in the midst of Israel’s unfaithfulness, God was faithful to His promises to those who placed their trust in Him. God was faithful and sent Jesus, the Messiah KING, to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

**God is faithful, and He keeps His promises!**

**What We Take Away:**

1. **We do not deserve, nor can we earn the faithful loving-kindness of God.**
2. **God’s patience and faithfulness should never be tested.**
3. **God fulfilled all that He promised and provided salvation through Jesus our Lord and Savior, may we never take that for granted!**

**Study Questions:**

* 1. **What is Lord revealing about Himself in this lesson?**
	2. **What is God revealing about you in this lesson?**
	3. **How does the Lord desire you to respond in the power of His grace, and apply it to your lives and your small group?**