

# 06

JEREMIAH 23:1-4

## A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH



### THIS WEEK'S **focus**

All of us need leaders in our lives. But it can be tough to find good leaders to follow. Often, the kind of people who are looking for followers end up being manipulative and selfish. Our Hollywood heroes and sports icons consistently let us down with scandal after scandal. Politicians rarely follow through on all of their campaign promises. Even our pastors and parents are imperfect and fall short sometimes. We crave good leadership but have a hard time finding it. This gap points to the need for a wise, righteous, and perfect leader. In today's session, Jeremiah not only criticizes the terrible leadership in Judah—he also tells about a future leader who will be everything God's people need.



### CENTRAL **truth**

Jesus is the perfect King we need.



EXPLORE

# scripture

JEREMIAH 23:1-12

## JEREMIAH 23:1-4

**1** Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" This is the LORD's declaration. **2** "Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered my flock, banished them, and have not attended to them. I am about to attend to you because of your evil acts" — this is the LORD's declaration.

**3** "I will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands where I have banished them, and I will return them to their grazing land. They will become fruitful and numerous. **4** I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them. They will no longer be afraid or discouraged, nor will any be missing." This is the LORD's declaration.

## JEREMIAH 23:5-8

**5** "Look, the days are coming" — this is the LORD's declaration — "when I will raise up a Righteous Branch for David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land. **6** In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. This is the name he will be called: The LORD Is Our Righteousness. **7** Look, the days are

coming" — the LORD's declaration — "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites from the land of Egypt,' **8** but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other countries where I had banished them.' They will dwell once more in their own land."

## JEREMIAH 23:9-12

**9** Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me, and all my bones tremble. I have become like a drunkard, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD, because of his holy words. **10** For the land is full of adulterers; the land mourns because of the curse, and the grazing lands in the wilderness have dried up. Their way of life has become evil, and their

power is not rightly used **11** because both prophet and priest are ungodly, even in my house I have found their evil. This is the LORD's declaration. **12** Therefore, their way will seem like slippery paths in the gloom. They will be driven away and fall down there, for I will bring disaster on them, the year of their punishment. This is the LORD's declaration.

# DAILY devotions

## MEMORIZE JEREMIAH 23:5

### 7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

# JEREMIAH 23:1-4

## DWELL

Judah's leaders had neither protected nor provided for their sheep. They had led God's people to worship idols, starved them of sound teaching, and had taken advantage of them. So God promised to remove these leaders from power and raise up leaders who would care for God's people like good shepherds. Unlike Judah's leaders, God cared for the needs of His people. God is a great Shepherd who lovingly cares not only for the entire flock, but each individual person's needs. Jesus Christ will not only lovingly lead you—He will also teach you to love and lead others the way He does.



What does it mean that we are the sheep of God's pasture? What does this say about His desire to love and care for us?



How is a good leader like a good shepherd?

## MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 23:5 in a journal each day this week and read it aloud 2–3 times. If you'd like, you can decorate the margins with doodles related to the verse.

## PRAY

Thank the Lord that He is your Shepherd who loves and cares for you. Ask Him to teach you how to be a leader like Him to others.

day 2

# JEREMIAH 23:5-8

## DWELL

The new King whom God's people so desperately needed—and still need—is *righteous* above all else. Jesus is unlike any other king because He walks in the righteousness of God—He *is* the righteousness of God. Jesus always thinks, feels, says, and does what is right. Second Corinthians 5:21 says we are made into the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ; His righteousness fills us through His Holy Spirit living inside and among us. Jesus's righteousness lives in us! Over our lifetimes, we can learn to live for what's right and lead others into what's right because our righteous King leads us.

← What did this "branch" have to do with David? Why did that matter?

↔ If Jesus is the Leader of your life, how should that shape the way you treat others?

## MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 23:5 on a note card and post it somewhere you'll see it regularly, or save it as the lock screen on your phone. Say it aloud 2–3 times whenever you see it.

## PRAY

Thank the Lord that He sent Jesus to transform us into His righteousness. Ask His Holy Spirit to lead you to rightly relate to God and others today.

day 3

# JEREMIAH 23:9-12

## DWELL

One of the main reasons Jeremiah's message wasn't fashionable is that he called people to worship one God and one God only. In that region, it was culturally stylish to go down the line of available gods and customize an idol-worship experience for you and your family. One key test of whether a message was from the true God was whether or not the messenger called people to extreme and exclusive devotion to Yahweh alone. This is still true: we have to be careful who we go to for truth and listen to. As with Jeremiah, a true message from God will always require radical and exclusive devotion to Christ.

↑ Why does God care so much about whether you are following Him alone? What does this say about His love?

→ What are some ways you can grow in loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength?

## MEMORIZE

Every time you wash your hands today, say as much of Jeremiah 23:5 aloud as you can remember.

## PRAY

Thank the Father for His eternal, unextinguishable love for you. Ask Him to fill you with His love and empower you to love Him with all your heart, mind, and strength.

day 4

# PSALM 23:1-6

## DWELL

David was a great shepherd who knew how to protect and provide for his sheep, but the greatest Shepherd that David ever knew was the Lord. As David received the Lord's loving and gentle care, David in turn became Israel's greatest king—that is, until Jesus. Jesus called Himself “the Good Shepherd” and His disciple Peter called Him “the Chief Shepherd” (see John 10:14; 1 Pet. 5:4). Not only is Jesus the greatest and most gracious leader you could ever have, He's your ultimate example and teacher for becoming a gracious shepherd and great leader yourself.

↑ What does Psalm 23 teach us about the Lord's work in our lives?

→ What are some ways in which you can grow to become a leader like Jesus?

## MEMORIZE

Ask 2–3 people if you can practice reciting Jeremiah 23:5 for them today.

## PRAY

Thank the Lord that He is your Shepherd every day and always. Ask Him to lead you and help you become a leader like Him.

day 5

# 2 CORINTHIANS 6:16-17

## DWELL

In Christ, we become a temple for the presence of God because His Spirit lives us. Therefore, we're called to be holy and set apart to God for His worship alone. When we dedicate our lives solely to worshiping God, we experience a depth of relationship with Him that is intensely satisfying. We learn to know the Creator of the universe as our perfect, present Heavenly Father. The temple of our lives becomes saturated with His overwhelming love, grace, peace, and joy.

↻ What is the point of pursuing holiness?

↻ Are there any “unclean” attitudes or actions the Lord wants to remove from your life? Are there any holy attitudes and actions you can grow in? What does God want you to know?

## MEMORIZE

Write out each of the words of Jeremiah 23:5 on note cards or scraps of paper, and mix them up. See if you can put them in the correct order from memory.

## PRAY

Commit to continually letting God make you more and more holy for Him. Ask the Father to remove anything unclean from your life and lead you to becoming a more holy temple for Him.