

Hard Hearted

When God doesn't matter enough to try
Ties that Bind Series – Part 3

Je 25:1-7
Jan 24-25, 2026

Introduction

- How many Christians? - 65% of Americans identify as Christians. two thirds = nation. does it feel like there are two Christians for every 1 non-Christian? checked a box? or live for Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit within them? I guess 25% if God's grace is broad. So, we have two problems:
 - 65% = 223 mil = a ton of people think they are Christians when they are not.
 - 25% = 86 mil = true believers are not walking in their identity, power and purpose to such a degree to shape our nation more effectively.
 - 120 + Paul = it's possible.
 - Why isn't there more true Christian impact? those two things
 - Don't get me wrong – God is doing great things in America and I am spoiled = God is still deeply saturated in the fabric of the US. Israel during the time of Jeremiah = a secular nation with religious culture.
- Distracted by – the greatest distraction (IMO) to humans is our terrestrial nature ('the earth bound part of us.') physical. Although we are 2/3 intangible (Body, Soul & Spirit), = we ASSUME that is ALL WE ARE. We are taught 5 senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, & hearing. But none of those interact with the supernatural (spirit) or even with our emotions (soul). What's more powerful? Love or gravity? Have you ever felt a weird vibe but unable to explain it? Which of the five sense explains what happens after we die? Which of the five sense makes sense of emotional connection or imagination? We should know physical well, but that is not all we are and to only look through that lens is to miss out on what it means to be FULLY HUMAN. We are more complex than that.
 - Goal setting – We will set our goals for life based upon what we believe is achievable. But what if our scope is too small? What if there's another dimension of existence not only available to us but in which we concurrently live? That would mean our goals and dreams could expand. Suddenly, we are setting our sights on being WITH God personally. Now we talk about prayer that changes things. Suddenly interaction with demons and angels and other spiritual beings becomes a possibility. The Bible is a doorway to see THROUGH the physical. It doesn't ignore it, it simply isn't limited by it. It walks easily between Body, Soul and Spirit as if they were all in play at the same time.
 - Living for this world – Unfortunately most people more dangerously live FOR THIS WORLD. We leave the noble for the mundane. Our beauty and hopes are diminished. We buy into a corporal existence and lift our eyes no further. This will lead us to live lives below what God intends for us because HE lives in the upper.

- A new goal – Those of us who engage with the Bible, or call ourselves Christians must **resist the temptation to live for less**. We must walk by faith and not only by sight. **We must keep our eyes lifted to be fully HUMAN**. Because...

Above all, we are SPIRITUAL beings

- 2026: Year of Breakthrough = **breaking through anything that is holding us back from God's best**.
 - Jeremiah Series – 6 part series = 6 major themes = **what took Israel out of the game and forced God's hand to bring judgment on His chosen people in order to radically pull them from their Promised Land to start them over again**. The big question is how much we have become like them, or can learn from their mistakes.
 - Review from history (week 1) – **Israel was designed to be a uniquely influential and thriving Godly nation. holy priests to the world**. Unfortunately became a practically secular nation.
 - Last Week – **Pastor Rodney**
 - First Week = **Forgot their identity** –
 - Rodney's highlights and main points
 - 2nd Week was a **wandering heart** – **they didn't stop believing in God they started wanting other things more = distraction = unfaithfulness**.
 - They lost their love for God. **They broke their marriage vow to God. They broke God's heart**.
 - This Week = **hearts had grown hard** – they didn't even bother or care to try anymore. They were either apathetic or resistant toward God and His plans.
 - **Israel lived and thought like a secular nation, separated from God**.

Lesson

- Scripture: Je 25:1-7 - *"The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), ² which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ³ "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. ⁴You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, ⁵saying, 'Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. ⁶Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.'" ²Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm."*
 - God had been ignored and rejected time and time again. How is that possible? **Some principles about how God is and works with mankind:**

- God is motivated by love = His patience, kindness, gentleness, and perspective. He is not motivated by efficiency or crude effectiveness. He could scare us all into subservience or He could simply force us. So, God is not interested in forcing, but interested in relational bonding. That is a slow and gentle process, which can make us feel like we have room to do what we want with impunity.
- God's love makes us feel special (center) = we think it's all about us. We relish in being the center of His attention and mistakenly put our eyes on ourselves as well.
- God leads with carrot, not stick – God is in the business of winning hearts not crushing resistance. Justice alone would end all of us. It's grace that provides us time and opportunity. God's kindness and grace makes it look like people get away with stuff and sins not that important.
- God is King but not active ruler of earth...yet the Invasion is real – Jesus was bringing the KINGDOM OF GOD upon the world. This meant an invasion of heaven. It meant that God was going to start ENFORCING His rule and expanding His influence. We, on God's behalf, are setting up new structures, new culture, new kingdom, and setting people free to live in this new reality. God has been running a grass roots rebellion into Satan's territory not a full scale domination assault of Shock and Awe. That subtlety leaves many to wonder who is in charge.
- What makes human hearts disconnected from God? – born disconnected and self-interested. He must introduce Himself to us and pursue us to connect. We are unable to discover Him, find Him, connect to Him on our own. But once we begin to grow up and God has provided sufficient opportunity to connect, what are the most common reasons why people don't have a deep, connective, and thriving relationship with God? Here are the 7 most common reasons why people are not walking with God.
 1. Ignorance – no opportunity yet to know = never had anyone connect the dots that He's real and waiting for them.
 - Ro 10:14–15 – *"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*
 2. Unbelief – Unconvinced. They don't think that the spiritual realm is real. All of their faith is focused on what they can see, touch and prove.
 3. Disbelief and Refusal – relatively examined and REJECTED. ardent resistance. reasons this rejection manifests in people.
 - On emotional grounds – They believe deeply and honestly that God hurt them. They are now angry and resentful toward Him and they want nothing

- to do with Him. Religion is not just bothersome to them, it's emotionally irritating because it constantly grinds against their disappointed heart.
- On relational grounds – believe that God didn't answer their prayers and thereby failed to prove Himself as present or good. They needed something and believed that if He was real and interested He would do what they "needed." 'If He's going to be like that, I don't want Him anyway.'
 - On theoretical grounds – the trap of the intellectual. rejecting Him based on their understanding of reason. They create scenarios = He must not be real, present, or good.
 - On theological grounds – reject the systematic theology of Christianity for another religion. They deem it the wrong answer to the questions of life.
4. Derailed – under teaching that has created another system other than God to believe in. This could be a false form of Christianity for us or another religion or faith altogether. God is reaching out to them but when they seek help to understand it, they are turned toward another path.
- Je 9:25-26 - *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—²⁶ Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart."*
5. Selfishness & Disinterest – it's not what I want to focus on because it's not what I want. it's not 'worth it'. It's not working for me. It doesn't fit what I want for my life.
- Je 9:23–24 – *"Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."*
 - The stubbornness factor – sometimes God's biggest obstacle in our lives is our stubbornness. we don't want to and we refuse to be forced. The more pressure the more we dig out heels in.
 - Je 5:3 – *"LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent."*
 - Je 6:13–15 - *"For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.¹⁴ They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. ¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD."*

- The Potter's Clay vs. Broken Flask – chapters 18 & 19. The potter had the right and the role to make the clay into anything he so chose. The potter was in charge not the clay. And the reason why the potter could continue to use the clay to make something valuable was that it was still soft in his hands and he could RESHAPE it, at will. But then an earthenware flask shattered = with wickedness of Israel's level there is no more reshaping, it's time to shatter it and start all over again.
6. Laziness and Apathy – minimal effort if at all. No reason to bother thinking about it. It's just another thing. We feel okay with no responding to the commands of our commanding officer. It's driven by disinterest.
 7. Distraction – good hearted Christians = good intentions but no follow through. We are embarrassed by it. But again, admitting it doesn't change it.
 - Je 17:5–10 – *“Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. ⁶ He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. ⁷ “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. ⁸ He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” ⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ¹⁰ “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.””*
- What God Really Wanted – Commitment & Attention (focus) – To HIM and His Plans.
 - The Example of the Rechabites (Chp. 35)– Temple = offer wine = test of their faithfulness. The group refused = we have never deviated from that plan to this day and we won't today.' God said, 'that's the type of follower I'm looking for...commitment.'

Conclusion

- Who's in charge? – At the end of the day we need to answer the question: Who's in charge of our lives? Is it us or God? How we answer that question will determine how we LIVE OUR LIVES, but it never changes the Truth. The truth is that God is the Creator and sustainer of life that means He is in charge. And here's the problem with that: God will only be ignored for so long. He built us for a reason and a purpose. He's got stuff He needs us to do with Him and for Him. That means at some point He's going to get radical to get our attention. And that's what He did with Israel.
- It's going to take 70 years of captivity to get your attention – How long would it take to win the heart of a nation back? How long do they need to be in difficulty,

challenge and pain in order to shake off the arrogance? How long do they need to sit in their mistakes and misery before God can use them again? the answer was 70 years.

- Je 29:10–14 - *“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”*