

Does It Hold Water?

Main Scripture: Jeremiah 2:1-2, 2:11-13

Additional Scriptures: 1st Peter 1:10-12, Acts 13:24-31,
Acts 14:15, Acts 16:30-34, Acts 20:21

Hearing: Discussion Questions

- **Read Jeremiah 2:13.** How did Pastor Mike describe the difference between living water and a cistern in our own lives?
 - What are some aspects of your faith that are more like cisterns (i.e. stagnant, full of holes) rather than active and moving like the way that Pastor Mike described living water?
- **Read Jeremiah 2:11-12.** Pastor Mike talked about how as humans we always want more and are never satisfied. What kind of stuff, relationships, accolades, or advances do you long for more than you should?
 - We are told “Jesus is all you need” and we will reply, “I know, *but...*” How do you break this type of thinking?
 - How do we really live out the reality that Jesus is all we need?
- **Read 1st Peter 1:10-12.** Peter says that the angels *lust* after the Gospel. How much of a priority do you place on the Gospel being the central focus of your life? How do you get to the place where the Gospel is the focal point of everything you do and are?
- Pastor Mike cautioned us that there is a vast difference between the Gospel and religion. Spend a good amount of time dialoguing about these differences and which areas you are predisposed to the Gospel and in which areas you fall more in line with religion. (These points are on the next page)
 - Why do you tend to lean that way?
 - If you are leaning more towards religion, how do you change that to be more Gospel centered?

Doing: Application

- Take some time this week and really meditate on the Gospel. Have everyone pray over their VIPs cards and commit to sharing the Gospel at least once this week.

November 15, 2009

RELIGION: *If I obey then God will love me and accept me.*

THE GOSPEL: *I'm loved and accepted - therefore I obey.*

RELIGION: *Once I clean up my act I will draw near to God.*

THE GOSPEL: *Only by drawing near to God do I ever get cleaned up. My own efforts at trying to clean myself up are like filthy rags.*

RELIGION: *Heavy rules, little relationship.*

THE GOSPEL: *God's rules and Law are His loving expression in relationship.*

RELIGION: *Strong focus on avoiding the big sins.*

THE GOSPEL: *Strong focus on running after and loving God.*

RELIGION: *We obey to get things from God.*

THE GOSPEL: *We obey to become more like God.*

RELIGION: *Depends on what I do.*

THE GOSPEL: *Depends on what Jesus did.*

RELIGION: *Good advice.*

THE GOSPEL: *Good news.*

RELIGION: *Has good people and bad people.*

THE GOSPEL: *Has either repentant or unrepentant people. There is none righteous – on their own.*

RELIGION: *My motivation is based on fear and insecurity.*

THE GOSPEL: *My motivation is based on grateful joy in response to amazing grace.*

RELIGION: *When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or my self, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.*

THE GOSPEL: *When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while he may allow this for my training, he will exercise his Fatherly love within my trial.*

RELIGION: *When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.*

THE GOSPEL: *When I am criticized I struggle, but it is not critical for me to think of myself as a 'good person.' My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ. I can take criticism.*

RELIGION: *My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.*

THE GOSPEL: *My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with Him.*

November 15, 2009

RELIGION: *My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.*

THE GOSPEL: *My self-view is not based on a view of my self as a moral achiever. In Christ I am simultaneously sinful and yet accepted in Christ. **I am so bad he had to die for me and I am so loved he was glad to die for me** ...leads me to deeper and deeper humility and confidence at the same time.*

RELIGION: *My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'*

THE GOSPEL: *My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for His enemies, who was excluded from the city for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace I am what I am. I've no inner need to win arguments.*

RELIGION: *Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them so they serve as my main hope, meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.*

THE GOSPEL: *I have many good things in my life—family, work, spiritual disciplines, etc. But none of these good things are ultimate things to me. None of them are things I absolutely have to have, so there is a limit to how much anxiety, bitterness, and despondency they can inflict on me when they are threatened and lost.*

RELIGION: *It's really all about me.*

THE GOSPEL: *It's all about Jesus.*