

## Jeremiah 26:1–24 — “Do Not Diminish a Word”

### 1) Setting the Scene (Jeremiah 26:1–2)

While Jeremiah is delivering messages in the days of King Zedekiah, he recalls what God told him earlier, “*Stand in the court of the Lord’s house... speak... all the words that I command you... do not diminish a word*” (Jeremiah 26:2).

God’s messenger is not allowed to soften the message. We are forbidden to add to or take away from God’s Word (see Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18–19). Truth in love is still truth.

### 2) God’s Purpose in Warning (Jeremiah 26:3–6)

God explains why the message must be plain: “*If they will listen and turn... I may relent concerning the disaster which I purpose to bring*” (Jeremiah 26:3). “Relent” here echoes a sigh of relief—God takes no pleasure in judgment (Ezekiel 33:11). His warnings are invitations to return.

If Judah refuses, the temple will become “like Shiloh”—a deserted ruin—and Jerusalem a byword among the nations (Jeremiah 26:6; see also Psalm 78:60–61). Sacred places cannot protect stubborn hearts.

### 3) The Immediate Backlash (Jeremiah 26:7–11)

The priests, prophets, and people hear Jeremiah’s sermon in the temple and shout, “*You shall surely die!*” (Jeremiah 26:8). Their charge: he spoke against the house of God and the city (Jeremiah 26:9). When the royal officials (the princes) arrive from the palace to investigate, the religious leaders demand the death penalty (Jeremiah 26:10–11). Notice the tragic irony: the guardians of worship are offended by God’s Word being preached in God’s house.

### 4) Jeremiah’s Courageous Reply (Jeremiah 26:12–15)

Jeremiah answers the princes and the crowd:

- Source: “The Lord sent me to prophesy... all the words you have heard” (Jeremiah 26:12).
  - Appeal: “Now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God. Then the Lord will relent...” (Jeremiah 26:13).
  - Surrender: “As for me, I am in your hand... but know for certain, if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves...” (Jeremiah 26:14–15).
- This is fearless fidelity. Jeremiah will not edit God’s Word to save his life.

### 5) Historical Discernment Prevails (Jeremiah 26:16–19)

The princes and the people answer the priests: “*This man is not deserving of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God*” (Jeremiah 26:16).

Elders then recall Micah of Moresheth, who in the days of Hezekiah prophesied that Zion would be plowed like a field (Micah 3:12). Hezekiah did not kill Micah; he feared the Lord and sought Him, and God **relented** (Jeremiah 26:18–19).

Point: when leaders humble themselves under God’s Word, judgment can be averted.

## 6) A Sobering Contrast (Jeremiah 26:20–24)

They also remember Urijah of Kiriath Jearim, who preached a message like Jeremiah's, fled to Egypt, was extradited by King Jehoiakim, and executed (Jeremiah 26:20–23).

Jeremiah is spared this fate because Ahikam son of Shaphan protects him (Jeremiah 26:24). God can raise one courageous ally to stand in the gap.

### Reflection

Jeremiah 26 reveals a God who truly **calls**, warns, and invites. His purpose in warning is restorative, not fatalistic. He does not desire the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11); He desires that people turn and live. Human beings are genuinely responsible to hear and respond. God's judgment is morally serious, yet His heart is merciful—ready to “relent” when people repent.

And all of this drives us to the Gospel. Judah could not save itself by place or pedigree. We cannot either. Our only hope is the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross—He bore the judgment our sins deserved (Isaiah 53:5–6; First Peter 2:24). His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord (Romans 1:4; Acts 2:36). In Him, God's justice and mercy meet.

### Practical Application

1. Do not diminish God's Word. Truth may offend, but edited truth cannot save. Let Scripture set the agenda for what we believe and say (Second Timothy 3:16–17).
2. Respond while the door is open. God's warnings are invitations. Delayed obedience hardens the heart. Repentance today is easier than repair tomorrow.
3. Measure teaching by Scripture, not by titles. In Jeremiah's day, “priests and prophets” opposed God's message. Test every message by the Word (First John 4:1; Acts 17:11).
4. Courage under pressure. Jeremiah models faithful witness when it costs. Ask God for holy courage to speak truth humbly and clearly.
5. Be an Ahikam. God often preserves His servants through ordinary people who step up at the right time. Use your influence to protect truth-tellers and to promote righteousness.

### A Challenge for Believers

Where are you tempted to diminish what God says—about sin, holiness, marriage, forgiveness, generosity, or the exclusivity of Jesus Christ? Confess any compromise. Ask the Holy Spirit to align your convictions and your voice with Scripture. Like Jeremiah, choose fidelity over popularity, obedience over safety.

*“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” (Hebrews 3:15)*

### **An Invitation to Non-Believers**

God's warnings are not meant to crush you but to call you home. Judgment is real, but so is mercy. Jesus shed His blood on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He offers you forgiveness, a new heart, and eternal life.

You can turn to Him now:

*"Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and rose again. Have mercy on me. Forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new. I turn from my sin and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Teach me to follow You. Amen."*

If you sincerely called on Him, begin reading the Bible, be baptized as an open confession of faith (Matthew 28:19–20), and join a church that teaches the Word faithfully.

### **Closing Thought**

Jeremiah 26 teaches us that God's Word must not be trimmed and God's mercy must not be ignored. When we humble ourselves, judgment gives way to joy. When we look to Jesus Christ—crucified and risen—we find the righteousness, courage, and hope we need to stand faithful in any court.